Paul Smeyers
Marc Depaepe *Editors*

Production, Presentation, and Acceleration of Educational Research: Could Less be More?

Springer

Educational Research 11

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Production,

Presentation,

and Acceleration

of Educational

Research: Could

Less be More?

Educational Research

Volume 11

Series Editors

Paul Smeyers, Leuven, Belgium

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Leuven, Kortrijk, Belgium

Freedom of inquiry in educational research can no longer be taken for granted.

Narrow definitions of what constitutes 'scientific' research, funding criteria that

enforce particular research methods, and policy decision processes that ignore any

research that is not narrowly utilitarian, in many countries, create a context that

discourages scholarship of a more speculative, exploratory, or critical sort.

In this series, internationally leading scholars in philosophy and history of educa-

tion engage in discourse that is sophisticated and nuanced for understanding contem-

porary debates. Thus social research, and therefore educational research, is again

focused on the distinctive nature of what it studies: a social activity where questions

of meaning and value must be addressed, and where interpretation and judgment

play a crucial role.

This educational research takes into account the historical and cultural context

and brings clarity to what actually constitutes science in this area. The timely issues

that are addressed in this series bear witness to the belief that educational theory

cannot help but go beyond a limited conception of empirical educational research to

provide a real understanding of education as a human practice. They surpass the rather

simple cause-and effect rhetoric and thus transgress the picture of performativity that

currently keeps much of the talk about education captive. The authors are united in

the belief that there is a place within the social sciences in general', and within the

discipline of education in particular, for 'foundational' approaches that enable the

systematic study of educational practice from a discipline-orientated approach.

More information about this series at
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Paul Smeyers · Marc Depaepe

Editors

Production, Presentation,

and Acceleration

of Educational Research:

Could Less be More?

Editors

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Incentives to Embrace Plurality

and Diversity in the Study of Education.

An Introduction

Paul Smeyers and Marc Depaepe

Abstract Is educational research chasing the trends one can observe in big sciences,

mimicking what happens, some would say successfully, elsewhere in academia?

Obviously, there is no clear or final answer to this nagging question; the reader

may be warned not to expect that in what follows in this book: firstly, because the

chapters address only some aspects of the issue; secondly, the *Research Community*

never identified itself as belonging to the strand of 'evidence-based research' and

instead wanted and wants to reflect upon its various aspects; further, because the

stance and 'method' of History and Philosophy of Education are themselves not part

of empirical quantitative educational research, rather, they are characterized by the

disciplines they originated from, i.e., History and Philosophy. The question in the

title of this edited collection took its inspiration from a verse by Goethe: Wer Großes

will, muss sich zusammenraffen. In der Beschränkung zeigt sich erst der Meister.

Such confinement or limitation that may show mastery does not characterize at all

the present state of the educational research publication scene. Instead,there have

never been more of such publications which follow each other with an increasing

speed. It may therefore be interesting to delve into the reasons of this development

that is characteristic of what is published in this field as in many or almost all fields

of scholarly work.

Is educational research chasing the trends one can observe in big sciences, mimicking

what happens, some would say successfully, elsewhere in academia? Obviously, there

is no clear or final answer to this nagging question; the reader may be warned not

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itself as belonging to the strand of 'evidence-based research' and instead wanted and

wants to reflect upon its various aspects; further, because the stance and 'method' of

History and Philosophy of Education are themselves not part of empirical quantitative

educational research, rather, they are characterized by the disciplines they originated

from, i.e., History and Philosophy.

Previous meetings of *The Research Community 'Philosophy and History of the*

Discipline of Education' focused on one or two themes of educational research

nowadays; instead, the final two meetings, which took place in Bressanone/Brixen

(October 2017) and Leuven (September 2018), focused on at least five aspects:

(re)presentation, dissemination, and reception, and the production and acceleration

of educational research. Such processes occur in what are traditionally taken by

colleagues in education as exemplary models for research in the educational field,

i.e., the natural sciences and medicine (see Depaepe, 1993). Witness to this and to their even more and explicit character in those areas is the 2020 race for knowledge about

Covid-19. Addressing these aspects in the area of 'Human Sciences' (including the

educational field, philosophy, and history of education, and the philosophy of science

studies within these) could highlight a particularly interesting characteristic: that

development is not so linear as presupposed by late nineteenth-century positivism, a

position in general embraced somewhat naïvely by most empirical researchers. This

is not the first time our discussions pay attention to an evidence-based educational

research policy or to the misleading attraction of statistics or psychology for the

study of the educational field (see Smeyers & Depaepe, 2006, 2010, 2013). It looks like a worn-out phrase but one that is important: scientific research even in the highly

commended 'positive sciences' calls for more questions than it delivers answers. If

the continuing crisis due to Covid-19 teaches us one thing, it is that it is hard to find in

science universal directives to which human behaviour should adjust because these

imply ethical choices which are beyond scientism.

Whether this is enough to justify the aspects that papers address in this collection

may be disputed. But rather than asking our contributors to investigate from their

disciplinary stance the problems of practising science nowadays in the (post)modern

society, where one often (has) wanted to replace quietly a religious and/or ideological

framework, we have only passed on to the colleagues the mentioned subthemes

leaving it to them to develop these as they see fit. This results understandably in a

variety of contributions, but we preferred this above a straightjacket of predetermined

questions and are confident that this openness to authenticity does more justice to

the individual expertise of our colleagues.

Because of their affiliation in universities worldwide, the participants of the

Research Community seminars can still determine their own research agenda and

what they present at these meetings, even if far-distanced from what initially was

looked for. This is not necessarily a bad thing, not even from a principled posi-

tion. As Nietzsche claimed (see On the Genealogy of Morals 1887/1996), humans

always embrace a 'perspective', a matter echoed by Foucault (see his *L'archéologie*

du savoir, 1969) which resulted in his reminder that truth is unavoidably character-

ized by dissimilarity and plurality. Being aware of these penetrating relativizations

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throughout history and of the *'illusion scientiste'* (as identified by de Certeau, see

Dosse, 2002), we have tried to cherish within the *Research Community* an atmosphere of diversity and plurality. Not to withdraw oneself as philosophers or historians of

education in the ditches of a complacent discourse of one's own sub-discipline,

neither to increase the basis of power (in order to act as a syndicate), nor to seek

a new alliance (from which a 'new' sort of systematic or theoretical study could

originate), but to try as much as possible without bias or a priori *'s* to listen to each other and thus to give every opportunity to discussion, dialogue, and conversation

(see Bridges 2015). This is, we think, the mark *par excellence* of what a university should stand for.

The question in the title of this edited collection took its inspiration from a verse

by Goethe: *Wer Großes will, muss sich zusammenraffen. In der Beschränkung zeigt*

sich erst der Meister. 1 Such confinement or limitation that may show mastery does not characterize at all the present state of the educational research publication scene.

Instead, there have never been more such publications which follow each other with

an increasing speed. It may therefore be interesting to delve into the reasons for this

development that is characteristic of what has been published in this field as in many

or almost all fields of scholarly work.

Revised versions of some of the material presented during the 2017 and 2018

meetings of *The Research Community 'Philosophy and History of the Discipline of*

Education' can be found in two suites of papers published in the J *ournalof Philosophy of Education* (2020 vol. 54 issue 3 pp. 645–710 and 5 pp. 1395–1488).2 These articles as well as the papers in this collection address aspects of the (re)presentation,

dissemination, and reception, and the production and acceleration of educational

research. We will now briefly introduce the papers selected for this collection.

In 'Why Publish?', Nicholas C. Burbules explores the accelerating trends of

academic publishing, and the increasing number of academic journals, in terms of

the trade-offs and paradoxes they present to academics. As more gets published, less

gets read. Expectations for 'productivity' (defined as more publications) continue to

rise. Proxy measures of quality, like impact factors, take on greater significance. This

essay explores the consequences for authors, on the one hand, and journal editors,

on the other hand, of coping with this regime, and asks whether there is any realistic

alternative aside from continuing on the treadmill of publishing more and more. It

is followed by David F. Labaree's 'The Lust for Academic Fame: America's Engine

for Scholarly Production'. The system of higher education is, so he argues, a unique

type of organization with its own way of motivating productivity in its scholarly

workforce. It doesn't need to compel professors to produce scholarship because they

choose to do it on their own. One reason for this is that for most academics, it's

more a vocation than a job. But he focuses on an additional powerful motivation that

drives academics, one that we don't talk about very much. Once launched into an

academic career, faculty members find their scholarly efforts spurred on by more

than the love of the work. We are also motivated by a lust for glory, he claims. We

want to be recognized for our academic accomplishments by earning our own little

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pieces of fame. So we work assiduously to accumulate a set of merit badges over

the course of our careers, which we then proudly display in our CVs. This situation

is particularly pervasive in the US system of higher education, which is organized

more by the market than by the state. Market systems are especially prone to the

accumulation of invidious distinctions that define your position in the hierarchy. But

European and other scholars are also engaged in a race to pick up honours and add

lines to their CVs. It's the universal obsession of the scholarly profession.

In ' *Relations of production* and their impact on the character and pace of research

and scholarship', David Bridges and Peter Cunningham suggest that Marx's notion

of 'relations of production' provides a lens that can provide some interesting and

useful insights both into historical models of research production and to some of the

challenges of the shifting conditions of work and production in the contemporary

academy. They offer four brief accounts of sets of relations drawn from the history

of research and scholarship in the UK. Thus, they follow Marx in observing, as

in *The poverty of philosophy*, the historical and transitory nature of such relations

and the ideas and thinking they support. They start with the medieval scholar-monk

and the monastic culture of the scriptorium. This is followed by consideration of

the circumstances of the independent scholar and the celebrated Lunar Society in a

period of scientific and technological progress, and then, focusing more specifically

on educational research, the mid-twentieth century educational researcher. The paper

culminates with consideration of relations of production in which the contemporary

educational researcher is situated—the 'contract culture', the 'commodification' of

research and, as some would suggest, the 'proletarianization' of researchers. Philo-

sophically, Bridges and Cunningham are interested in exploring whether Marx's

conceptual framework—rooted of course in his own analysis of history—illuminates

the social practice of research in different conditions: historically, they are interested

in examining the way the elements of relations of production have evolved over time.

Lynn Fendler continues with 'Evaluating Productivity in Educational Research: Eval-

uation Criteria of Rigor and Ethics'. Educational researchers, she argues, have been

evaluating themselves and their colleagues' work using criteria that are based almost

exclusively on bibliometrics, which are in turn based on quantities of publications

and citations. In misguided attempts to conduct scientific and 'objective' evaluations

of research, institutions (universities, foundations, and governments) have adopted

instead populist, reductionist, and non-rigorous approaches to evaluating produc-

tivity in educational research. It is an example of governmentality operating as a

technology of normalization that oversimplified notions of productivity have been

imported uncritically to govern many research-evaluation exercises. This chapter

problematizes bibliometric criteria of evaluation, and suggests instead that we pay

attention to purposeful rigour and ethics in assessments of research productivity.

Fortuitously, research-based conceptualizations of productivity, together with literal

readings of institutional policy language, open the door for the inclusion of ethical

judgments into the process of evaluating productivity in educational research. The

chapter by Lynda Stone and Daniel P. Gibboney that follows articulates a different

formulation from current traditions of history and philosophy found elsewhere in this

volume: 'Times of Elephants: Foucault-Inspired Intervals of Production, Critique,

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and Accelerated configurings'. It is original in a specific blurring of history and

philosophy inspired by the French theorist Michel Foucault. His work broke with

traditions both inside and outside of French thought in its own time. As a blurring,

its structure plays with time and space, fiction and fact that is entirely contingent

and nominal. To take up a Foucault inspiration, it invokes an intelligible arrange-

ment of previously heterogeneous events under auspices of a unique conception of

interval. Intervals are composed of episodes and episodes of events, entailing internal

elements of both chronology and analysis. Further, episodes develop their own rela-

tionships of non-structural production and critique. The story, 'delightfully' skipping

over centuries, is 'times of elephants'.

The discussion continues with two chapters by Marc Depaepe. The original idea

of the first, i.e., 'Lost in Narcissism? An elementary quantitative, but deliberately

non-bibliometric approach to my own publication 'behaviour', was to treat the initial

questions about the acceleration of scientific publishing one by one with respect to

the international conferences in the field of history of education on the one hand, and

with regard to journal publications in the same field on the other hand. Lack of time

for such a titanic work (even considering that it was the intention to endeavour this

huge data-collection and analysis in co-authorship), he opted for a more pragmatic

approach: a more or less classic story reflection of my own career. Though this could

seem narcissistic, in this case, he claims it is not. One's publication list is after all

a closed 'sample' that can be subjected to various kinds of statistics where amongst

other elements various publication categories can be compared with each other: (co-)

authorship and (co-)editorship of books, chapters, articles, congress contributions,

book reviews, etc. Does the quantitative evolution of these components betray a

more or less implicit publication strategy? Adapted to the will to be able to publish

more and ever more quickly? And what about the languages used? How absolute

is the dominance of English? And the translations in other languages? Was that a

way to publish even faster via clustering of subjects? And what about the number

of co-authors? Has that increased over the period, possibly also the number of co-

authors per published item? Perhaps such quantitative data will reveal a number of

processes and questions about which we can think qualitatively at the same time.

For instance, in relation to the main title of this book, one can ask, in view of

future generations of historians of education: is it advisable to publish so much?

Or is it simply necessary to repeat your historical insights in various languages as

well as in diverse scientific and vulgarizing circles to get them through? Hence, the

second text on the relevance of the historiography of education, on the basis of the

content of his research, mostly resulting from real teamwork, can be considered as

a complementary piece of work, which reveals the more essential characteristics of

the collaborative work he has done in the foregoing years. In 'Lost in Enthusiasm',

he states that historical reflection remains essential in educational research. This is

not demonstrated by one or another theoretical reasoning, but by four illustrations

taken from his 44-year-old research career in the history of education. Each one of

these illustrations represents an important research line of Depaepe's career. The

first deals with the history of primary education (mainly not only in Belgium but also

elsewhere). It concentrates on the relationship between continuity and change within

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the educational practices in general and on the irony and immunization of educational

innovations in particular. The second deals with the history of educational sciences

from the point of view of the history of science. The more concrete topic here is

the importance of demythologizing the rhetoric of the well-known ideals and idols

of educational reforms. The third deals with colonial and postcolonial history of

education, by zooming in on the educational realizations and its effects in the former

Belgian Congo. Finally, the fourth deals with his position within the theoretical,

methodological, and historiographical debates of the discipline. More specifically,

it wants to show the sublime relevance of the so-called irrelevant, not only as far as

the research in the history of education is concerned but also as far as its place as a

teaching subject in the curriculum is concerned.

Next Kathleen Coessens, Karen François, and Jean Paul Van Bendegem deal with

'Understanding without words: visual representations in math, science and art'. As

knowledge can be condensed in different non-verbal ways of representation, the

integration of graphic and visual representations and design in research output helps

to expand insight and understanding. Layers of visual charts, maps, and diagrams

aim at not only synergizing the complexity of a topic with visual simplicity but also

guiding a personal search for and insights into knowledge. However, from research

over graphic representation to interpretation and understanding implies a move that is

scientific, epistemic, artistic, and, last but not the least, ethical. This article considers

these four aspects from both the sides of the researcher and the receiver/interpreter

from three different perspectives. The first perspective considers the importance of

visual representations in science and its recent developments. As a second perspec-

tive, the authors analyse the discussion concerning the use of diagrams in the philos-

ophy of mathematics. The third is from an artistic perspective on diagrams, where

the visual tells us (sometimes) more than the verbal. This is followed by Ethan Hutt's

'The State's Spectacles: Education Statistics, Representations of Schooling, and the

Federal Government's Educational Sight'. In the aftermath of the American Civil

War, the Reconstruction Congress sought to use the ascendant powers of the federal

government to expand its capacity to enforce the law and unify the country. One

small piece of that Reconstruction effort resulted in the creation of the U.S. Bureau

of Education. Typically characterized by its diminutive responsibilities and capabili-

ties relative to its European counterparts, the U.S. Bureau of Education was created to

enhance the visual capacity of the state—to help, as James Scott has put it, the federal

government "see like a state" in matters of schooling. As one advocate explained, "A

National Bureau would hold up to many school systems a mirror which would reveal

attainable results and desirable changes." While those at the time clearly considered

the power to represent the varied and idiosyncratic American school system through

statistics as directly related to the state's power and capacity for reform, little atten-

tion has been given to the character, subject, and aims of these representations. This

paper takes a step in this direction by providing an examination of the Bureau of

Education's first century of efforts to develop national representations of America's

schools. Setting aside the accuracy of the Bureau's statistical production, the paper

considers the character and form of the statistical tables included in the Bureau's

annual report. After providing a general characterization of these efforts, the paper

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considers several interpretations of these statistical representations—recognizing that

then, as now, the numbers were widely understood to be inaccurate and inadequate.

Given that the project of compiling these data was directly linked to the goal of devel-

oping the state's capacity for sight, for uniformity, and for reform, an examination of

these efforts provides an opportunity to reflect on the role of the education researcher

in developing these capacities.

Rebecca Rogers offers in 'From the global sixties to the global 2010s: commu-

nicating about research in the history of education' a perspective from France.

This essay will begin with an examination of how *Paedagogica Historica* sought

to disseminate knowledge about educational research through a complex biblio-

graphic publication associated with the journal. In this period of tremendous growth

in educational research, this bibliography represented a distinctly 'modern' approach

to making knowledge about scholarship in education available the world around. In

the years that followed, such efforts were imitated elsewhere notably in France where

the *Service d'histoire de l'éducation* did a great deal not only to structure the field but also to communicate about the results of scholarship in the history of education.

In 1978, the journal *Histoire de l'éducation* was founded and for the next 37 years

were published bibliographic issues of the journal and then was created an online

database, which represented by far the most complete entry into what was being

published on the history of education in France. Two years ago, this initiative quietly

ended signalling the end of an era. Scholars can still use the accumulated resources

available online and in the journal, but now must turn to other venues to discover new

areas of research: Google Scholar, blogs on specific topics, online scientific moni-

toring" such as that provided by the *Institut Français d'Education*, predominantly

Anglophone platforms such as research gate or academia, or the French open-access

platform HAL, and more recently the connecting histories of education initiated by

Spanish colleagues. This essay reflects on the consequences of these changes in the

way in which we learn about the field and scholarship within the field, the ways

in which this opens opportunities (or not) for more global research networks, and

offers some personal reflections on the effects of such changes on authors' strategies

to disseminate knowledge of their work.

In 'Curiosity and Acquaintance', Paul Standish deals with 'Ways of Knowing'.

Curiosity has rightly received much attention in epistemology and educational

research. Although, through the centuries, it has been regarded with a degree of

ambivalence, the trend now is towards its championing as an intellectual or epistemic

virtue. The present discussion juxtaposes it against a contrasting way of knowing,

which he refers to as knowledge by acquaintance. The notion of acquaintance pursued

here parts company with Bertrand Russell's adoption of the expression, taking up

instead a more ordinary use of the term. It is suggested that both curiosity and knowl-

edge by acquaintance can present problems. Working through an example drawn from

Stephen Poliakoff's film Close My Eyes, the paper seeks to reappraise the value of

knowing by acquaintance for epistemology and for educational practice and research.

The chapter is followed by Richard Smith's 'Education, Fast and Slow'. The demand

for ever greater speed, characteristic of our time, has swept over formal education in

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the UK and other Anglophone countries. He gives examples from schools and univer-

sities, and in particular the latter. There is a slow scholarship movement in reaction to

this, and a Slow Professor Manifesto, but there are many flaws in these including the

failure to conceive time as anything other than linear. The contrast between *chronos*

and *kairos*, linear time and time as opportunity an moment of epiphany or intensity, is

sometimes invoked in this context, but its application to institutionalized education is

not straightforward and it is notable that *kairos* is vulnerable to being commodified.

What he here calls 'an epistemology of slow', emphasizing interpretive rather than

scientific understanding, and defending the importance of the arts as the epitome

of slow knowledge, offers a potentially significant challenge and alternative to the

educational culture of speed.

The papers are followed by an Epilogue written by the Editors of the Springer

Series. Paul Smeyers and Marc Depaepe offer some final reflections after a journey

of two decades that took them and the colleagues participating in the *Research*

Community from 1999 till 2018 floating on the current of the *Zeitgeist* that carried the Discipline of Education.

Notes

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Translated by John Irons: He who'd do great things must display restraint; The

[master shows himself first in confinement (see http://johnirons.blogspot.com/](http://johnirons.blogspot.com/)

[2011/09/work-in-progress-translation-of-goethes.html](http://johnirons.blogspot.com/)

2

For an overview and brief history of the topics that were discussed, see Journal

of Philosophy of Education, 54 (2020) pp. 645-654 and 1395-1397.

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He is the Editor of the international journal *Ethics and Education*. He co-authored and co-edited a number of books in the area of philosophy of education and interpretative research. His journal articles deal with issues of philosophy of educational research, epistemology, postmodernism, and pays attention amongst others to the legacy of Wittgenstein and Winch for philosophy of education and educational research.

Marc Depaepe (1953) was deputy chancellor at the KU Leuven (2013–2017). Since 2005 co-

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Researcher at the University of Latvia, in Riga. Published abundantly on various aspects of international educational historiography and the history of education in Belgium and Congo.

Why Publish?

Nicholas C. Burbules

Abstract This essay explores the accelerating trends of academic publishing, and

the increasing number of academic journals, in terms of the trade-offs and paradoxes

they present to academics. As more gets published, less gets read. Expectations for

"productivity" (defined as more publications) continue to rise. Proxy measures of

quality, like impact factors, take on greater significance. This essay explores the

consequences for authors, on the one hand, and journal editors, on the other hand,

of coping with this regime, and asks whether there is any realistic alternative aside

from continuing on the treadmill of publishing more and more.

A Few Facts

Smeyers and Burbules (2011) have questioned the growing reliance on journal impact factors (JIFs) as a basis for academic evaluation. It turns out that even for journals

with very high impact factors, many papers are cited little if at all:

The majority of papers are not cited many times in any particular year, and so the JIF is

strongly influenced by a small percentage of published papers. Interestingly, our 2005 JIF

depends more on a few highly cited papers than our higher 2006 JIF, which is much more

influenced by papers cited a moderate number of times. This greater spread is healthier for

the journal. However, in both cases a high proportion of papers are not cited at all.[1],[2]

For the top science journal *Nature*, 90% of its impact factor was based on less

than a quarter of its publications.[3]

[1]Smeyers et al. (2011).

[2]Trevor (2008).

[3]Wikipedia: Impact factor—criticisms [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Impact_factor].

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P. Smeyers and M. Depaepe (eds.), *Production, Presentation, and Acceleration*

of Educational Research: Could Less be More? , Educational Research 11,

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Indeed, we know that the average academic paper is read only ten times. But that's

an average. In the humanities, more than 80% of published papers are never cited,

and even when they are cited, they aren't read. [4]

Half of all published papers are read by no one aside from the authors, reviewers,

and editors. [5]

And yet we also see a rapid growth in the number of journals worldwide, putting

even more published work into circulation. [6]

The Diagnosis

Putting these pieces together, we need to ask, Why is so much being published?

Several factors seem to be reinforcing each other. (1) One is the takeover of academic

journals by a handful of large global commercial publishers, subsidized by academic

libraries who are compelled to maintain their journal collection, regardless of costs.

Keeping up those markets means maintaining a steady supply of new published

content. (2) Another factor is an academic evaluation system for faculty based largely

on published journal output, in which quantity is easier to measure than quality—or

in which the proxies for quality, like impact factors, substitute quantified metrics for

the actual evaluation of content. (3) The third factor is the identity and motivations of

academics themselves who, apart from external reward systems, regard writing and

publishing to put their ideas into circulation as an indispensable part of their scholarly

role. Writing is essential to their sense of personal, intellectual, and professional

development—so much so that many faculty continue to write and publish long

after they have retired and are no longer evaluated, or rewarded, based on research

productivity. (4) New technologies for writing have accelerated the pace and volume

of publication. Things are faster to produce; easier to revise and edit; simpler to

document with citations and footnotes; quicker through the process of transmission

among authors, journals, and reviewers; and easier to turn into a publishable layout.

E-texts also encourage copying and reusing text chunks in different publications,

revising them for each new purpose rather than writing all-new material each time

from scratch. In some fields, a highly standardized format for journal articles allows

researchers to publish dozens of papers a year.

The result is that too much gets written and published, too little gets read or

cited, and even a devoted scholar will find it impossible to keep up with everything

produced and published within his or her field. Many skim abstracts as a guide to

which papers they will actually bother to read, or cite papers based on the abstract.

Remember: half of all published papers are never read at all.

4 Asit K. Biswas and Julian Kirchherr, Prof, no one is reading you, *The Straits Times*, April 11, 2015 [http://www.straitstimes.com/opinion/prof-no-one-is-reading-you].

5 Eveleth (2014).

6 Boon (2016).

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Then there is the enormous labor of editors and reviewers whose time and effort

are essential to the maintenance of journal quality. There are many benefits of these

efforts, completely apart from whether the eventually published work is ever read—

but clearly people would be less willing to do all this work if they thought it was for

naught.

So, why do we keep writing and publishing so much? Why do those of us who

serve as editors work so hard to produce journal issues in which the majority of

published articles will be read or cited little if at all? Why do we persist with academic

reward systems based on criteria of merit that may be in many cases spurious—and

which drive behaviors that are to a large degree counterproductive? All of us know

colleagues for whom the best advice would be WRITE LESS.

The Consequences, Writ Large

In the area of faculty assessment, more publications mean even less time to review

them for content; the use of quantified metrics becomes even more necessary, however

imperfect we acknowledge them to be. (As one of my administrators once told me,

"They are better than nothing." That's debatable.) But the increased numbers also

create an inflationary effect: as the norms and expectations get ratcheted upward, there

is more pressure to produce even more. This is not a vicious circle, but a vicious spiral,

pressing ever upwards. One response is to game the system of metrics: publishing

multiple variations of the same work, choosing publication outlets strategically, and

playing tricks designed to maximize "impact factors"—a tacit conspiracy in which

authors and journal editors have mutual self-interest.[7]

Because in some countries impact factors are a factor in the grant competition, the

chase after metrics is not just a matter of pride or status—it can have an actual cash

value. Add to this the pressure to get grants, and in some cases academic positions

that depend on, and are paid for, by the candidate's grant acquisitions. The means

become the ends.

The result is a perfect application of "Campbell's Law": "The more any quanti-

tative social indicator is used for social decision-making, the more subject it will be

to corruption pressures and the more apt it will be to distort and corrupt the social

processes it is intended to monitor." The more the high-stakes impact factors or other

metrics are for reviewing and rewarding scholarly work the more meaningless they

become.

For individual scholars, this can become the kind of treadmill where one has to

go faster and faster to stay in one place. Graduate school programs, hiring policies,

and (where applicable) tenure reviews are coming to reflect these upward pressures:

The likely secondary and tertiary effects of this trend are alarming. Graduate programs will

need to favor applicants who show promise of being able to publish after only a few years

of study, exacerbating the trend away from attracting undergraduates who have majored in

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other fields, especially in the humanities. Graduate students will spend time on navigating

the publication maze instead of experimenting with a variety of sub-disciplines. Philosophers

will become narrower and narrower—well qualified, perhaps, to run the narrowed publication

maze but unequipped to open up new frontiers in the subject.8

For journal editors and reviewers, as already noted, this produces its own kind

of productivity pressures. Journals are more openly commercial endeavors now;

many journals are increasing the number of issues produced each year; metrics of

assessment like impact factors affect journals too; and these comparative rankings

can produce their own kind of competition between journals—something that was

rare in the past. Publishing more *and* maintaining standards of quality seem to be on a collision course. Editors are under a growing workload; reviewers, who are typically

uncompensated, have more and more submissions to review; or, more "invited"

articles are published through attenuated or minimal review, sometimes only on the

editor's say-so:

The volume of submissions to journals has exploded. It is not uncommon for a journal to

receive 500–600 submissions per year. The amount of attention that can be paid to each

submission, the percentage of submissions that can be refereed, and the selectivity that

editors can exercise in recruiting referees—all have declined proportionately.[9]

Alongside the growth of journal publications, commercial publishers are commis-

sioning edited book collections, sometimes of voluminous size, which they assume

libraries will be compelled to purchase (they are much too expensive to be sold to

individuals). These contribute to more need for editors, contributors, and a review and

editorial and revision process than can meet the time constraints of a strict produc-

tion schedule. Fewer authors produce solo academic monographs, and the market

for their sales—unless the authors have an established reputation— does not excite

publishers.

These developments, in turn, affect the content of what and how people write.

A productivity regime rewards quick turnaround, a disregard for style and carefully

crafted language, generating multiple variations to squeeze more than one publication

out of the same basic idea (e.g., for different audiences). In general, this rewards

derivative work and what Kuhn calls "normal science":

The need for an author to make an immediate impression on over-burdened editors, and

the greatly diminished probability of success, have discouraged risk-taking in research and

encouraged the production of formulaic papers on safe topics.10

Pressures to publish have other effects as well: stress, insecurity, health problems,

and substance abuse issues. What should be a privileged life of the mind, to contem-

plate, to formulate new, original, and provocative ideas, to dwell in the enjoyment of

expression and creative writing, to try to produce work of enduring value and impact

(and not "impact") is for many scholars a fading dream. None of this is entirely

8 Velleman (2017).

9 Velleman (2017).

10 Velleman (2017). See also, Anonymous Academic (2017).

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new; the frustrated, overworked, or highly distracted scholar is a classic stereotype

because it names familiar experiences. But the pressures are accelerating, and for

many scholars the intrinsic joy of writing is being squeezed out of them.

While the ethos of publication is supposedly a pure meritocracy, and practices

such as anonymous (never say "blind") reviewing are meant to be a fair equalizer,

recent studies show that 3% of all institutions account for over half of publications

in the humanities, and the top 25% account for almost 90%. 11 While this may be a reflection of the concentration of talent in those schools, the overall pattern certainly

raises questions about the opportunities for scholars outside of those elite institutions

to build their reputations on the basis of publishing. And it also casts doubt on

assessment exercises such as the Research Excellence Framework (REF) as a basis

for comparing and evaluating institutions of higher education. Here as in other ways,

the academic rich get richer.

The Consequences, for Authors

There are different ways to respond to this regime. One is to accept it as an inevitable

series of changes over which we as authors have little control, and to play the game

within those rules with as much integrity as possible. It is legitimate, one might say,

to care about advancing a professional reputation, seeking status and influence, and

advancing one's professional career. If these benefits require an understanding of

what kinds of work get rewarded, what kinds of journals best represent one's work,

and how to get one's work noticed and read within an ocean of publications, there

are still better and worse ways of navigating that system, and it isn't automatically

incompatible with doing good, important work.

Having said that, I think the numbers that open this paper are extremely sobering.

Does how much of what we do, whatever our intentions, contribute to an academic

Gresham's Law (bad currency overcrowding and cheapening the marketplace)? Life

is full of legitimate individual decisions which, taken in the aggregate, have damaging

consequences. The publishing treadmill looks to be another case. Nor, as in the other

kinds of aggregated cases one might imagine, would the decisions of any individual

to write less diminish the overall system. So, one might say, a certain degree of

humility is called for. Apart from what might be called professional considerations,

why do we write? Do we need to focus more on those other reasons, and less on the

ways in which others evaluate or measure the value of what we do? Here are some

thoughts.

We write and publish as an expression of our identity as scholars. We would do

so even if few people ever read us. We believe that our thoughts and insights are

worthwhile, and we want them to gain circulation. We hope, of course, that people

will read and appreciate what we have done, but as we are writing such hope might

play a very small role. We write because we have something we want to say.

11 Piper (2017).

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I have taken to telling my students the following little enumeration: If you are

going into this business, you have to accept four things. First, most people won't read

you. Second, most who do read you won't understand you (At least not in the way

you want to be understood.). Third, most people who do read you and do understand

you will disagree with you. And fourth, most people who do disagree with you will

disagree for reasons that you find totally unfair. If you can't accept these things, don't

go into this line of work. If you need recognition and approval to confirm the value

of what you do, don't go into this line of work. If you can't accept people criticizing

you, don't go into this line of work. As you reach the end of your career, if you

are fortunate enough to have a long career, you will have a surprisingly short list of

memories of people praising your work and grasping what you were trying to say in

just the way you were trying to say it.

We also write as a way of working out our own ideas. The process of writing—and

a good deal of its pleasure—is in seeing the transformation of thoughts and ideas into

words that we then read, as it were, back to ourselves, often seeing in these words

a clarification of what we thought, or even sometimes a new idea that goes beyond

what we were simply trying to put on paper. This suggests that part of the purpose

of writing, even if it were never published or never read by anyone else, is our own

intellectual productivity and growth. But, of course, we usually try to publish it too.

As scholars, we tend to regard the pursuit of knowledge and understanding as an

intrinsic good, and to regard our contributions to that as part of a collective effort

within our field to enlarge such knowledge and understanding. Sometimes, this takes

the model of building a wall, brick upon brick, in a cumulative, progressive process

of knowledge growth. This relates to Kuhn's account of "normal science", mentioned

previously. Other kinds of scholarships have more to do with tearing down walls, or

beginning the foundations of new walls—a closer approximation to what Kuhn calls

"revolutionary science". Either way, however, the contributions of scholarship to the

growth (or change) of knowledge and understanding within a community of inquiry

depend on it actually being read and cited. And that is the question I am putting in

doubt here.

At the same time, because most scholars are teachers as well as writers, I think

an underexamined aspect of writing and publishing builds off our identity as peda-

gogues. We have something to teach, to explain, something that we have discovered

or figured out that we think will be beneficial to others. The form is different, but the

ethos is the same: the intellectual gift economy of giving away one's fruits—such as

they might be—to a real (or imagined) audience.

In the fields of philosophy and history of education, we often write and publish

with hope for influence over matters of educational policy and practice. In my estima-

tion, any such influence, especially in the policy arena, grows more out of a respect

for and relationship with specific individuals than with an interest in the contribu-

tions of humanistic studies in education writ large. If our status overall depended on

demonstrating any such influence on educational policy and practice, we would be,

I must say, in trouble. Nor is journal publication, per se, the best route to take if such

influence were a priority, as opposed to reports, commissioned projects, or lectures,

workshops, and professional development sessions. It is more than a bit discouraging

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to see rigorous, well-argued cases against current educational policies and practices

published by scholars in our fields, only to watch the same policies and practices

continue anyway, as if none of that research had ever existed. It has to make you

wonder.

Often, we publish as an act of collegiality with others: collaborative work in which,

sometimes, others have a bigger stake than we do; contributing chapters requested by

friends and colleagues for their collections; reciprocating a favor when others have

helped us. These interpersonal considerations become, perhaps, greater as one's

career advances and one no longer needs to seek out publishing opportunities, and

also as one's networks of connection and obligation grow. Of course, we are happy to

do it, if we agree to do it. But the motivation to do it does not usually grow primarily

out of an interest in advancing one's own line of work. Sometimes, in fact, just the

contrary.

For those of us formed out of a particular critical orientation, sometimes the

imperative to publish grows out of a felt need to challenge, correct, or criticize other

work that we think advances bad ideas or bad social and political agendas. Such

work, of course, is potentially without limit, and few want a reputation built solely

or even primarily on attacking others. But I think all of us have read something and

thought, in one way or another: This must not stand! Then it is a separate decision

whether to try to write something about it—often as a bridge toward advancing one's

own ideas on the subject.

All of these motivations, and others besides, can co-exist with each other. They

don't necessarily stand alone, and even sometimes may pose conflicts with one

another as we decide whether and what to write—and how to write it. I've explored

some of these because I think it is a mistake to think that professional and careerist

factors are always a driver. At the same time, it must be said that these motives,

often admirable in themselves, nevertheless also contribute to the overproduction of

published work, hence, the kind of humility I alluded to earlier. It is sad to consider

that much of what we write, even when we think it is very good and very important,

has a very limited shelf life, that the numbers of people reading many of our pieces,

if any, may seem hardly to justify the time and effort put into writing them. Or, I

suppose, one could look at it as a stock portfolio: you never quite know which pieces

are likely to "take off", and so you diversify in order to give yourself as many chances

as possible. But this too contributes to overproduction.

Imagine a world in which you only published one article each year; a project

that might take several years in gestation, countless drafts, extensive feedback from

colleagues, and constant refinement before it sees the light of day. What kinds of

different writing practices would this entail? How would it change your views about

the originality and importance of the subject? How would you choose and prioritize

your topics in order to highlight only the most important issues, for you, since your

publication opportunities are limited?

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The Consequences, for Journal Editors

I write this section with an awareness that many of my readers will be former and

current journal editors, as I have been myself. There is nothing I will refer to that I

have not participated in myself, nor errors that I have not made myself.

Our partnerships with commercial publishers are a mixed blessing. It is virtu-

ally a necessity now, given the need for publication cost efficiencies, marketing and

distribution (especially internationally), robust online presence, and very significant

revenue gains that benefit our publications and our professional organizations. Many

of us have worked with publishers who are principled, imaginative people who under-

stand and value the scholarly enterprise. Nevertheless, the growth and centralization

of publication, the constant creation of new journals, the temptations to publish more

issues a year, or more articles per issue, in order to enhance revenues and expand

reach, all contribute to the glut of publications. With libraries, reprint services, and

professional societies becoming, in effect, captive audiences who must pay the going

rate for journals—and this is a particular problem in scientific and medical fields—

the aggregated consequence of individually understandable decisions is to over-

supply the marketplace and drive up costs. I don't believe in demonizing publishing

corporations or reducing their motivations to simple capitalist logic. But the schol-

arly/commercial partnership, I am suggesting, poses some real contradictions and

unintended consequences for us.

If the edict for authors were to be to write less, the corresponding edict for us would

be, publish less. But that creates problems of its own. A review and selection process

that became more exclusive, and more high stakes, would engender more conflict

and dissatisfaction. Rejected authors would have even more to lose, and would react

accordingly. Given the research cited earlier, one might see an even greater concentra-

tion of publication space taken up by authors at high-status institutions. There would

probably be even greater pressure to represent big-name, big-reputation authors, and

there would be fewer opportunities to publish new, unconventional, and off-brand

work just to give someone a chance or to represent work not currently of high value

but which might portend something with growth potential. This could dispropor-

tionately disadvantage younger scholars and those working in less popular areas

of study. But it would also make journals less likely to publish work that makes

marginal contributions to standard, highly familiar lines of inquiry. Each article slot

would really have to count.

Publishing less would have benefits, for our reviewers, editors, and production

staff. The turnaround time for work might not be quite so harried. It would be a

pleasure to produce an issue, or a volume, in which every piece truly shined, and it

would be a pleasure to be able to give each and every piece sufficient attention to see

that it truly shined.

But I am engaging here in a bit of fantasy fiction, unfortunately. We are not going

back. We are not going to cut revenues. We are not going to press our publishing

partners to reduce the number of publications, cut costs, or reduce the plethora of

new journals like *The Journal of Hate Studies*. The explosive availability of online

publishing opportunities, including open access and self-publishing, only exacerbates

this problem.

The good news is that it has never been easier to get published, somewhere, in one

way or another. That is wonderful and egalitarian and lets a thousand —ten thousand,

a hundred thousand—flowers bloom. The bad news is that academic scholarship is

not and should not be in the egalitarian business, because the more that gets published,

the less that gets read.

A Glimpse into the Future

The pressure to publish, and the hope of being read, is producing a new set of strategies

for using social media and other outlets to promote one's work. Doctoral scholars are

presented workshops on such strategies, and a highly competitive job market makes

them an eager audience. Academic self-promotion is hardly a new phenomenon, but

the tools for doing it, and for pushing out one's work to others and not just waiting

for them to search and find it, is a natural outgrowth of an overcrowded academic

marketplace. While normally uncompensated, blog posts and other forms of online

publishing are one way to get one's ideas into circulation—even a modest online

presence can reach a far greater number of readers than the average journal article.

And these new dynamics of publishing and reading raise further questions about

what in fact constitutes "impact" today.

New search engines, especially Google Scholar, influence how people search for

and find research. One can imagine the use of artificial intelligence programs to

provide a similar service to Amazon: "If you liked X, here is a link to Y." Letting

automated programs do the bulk of one's work in compiling literature reviews is

another understandable response to the overwhelming glut of published work, but

depending on the algorithms used this may have little to do with actual quality.

Here, as elsewhere in this article, the result is a self-fulfilling circle: articles that (for

whatever reason) are promoted by search engines will in fact be read more, cited

more, and so appear to be more important. Frankly, it is not even unthinkable that as

with other search pages some users might pay for the privilege of having their work

featured first.

One of the many dangerous consequences of such searches is that, as with "filter

bubbles" more generally, 12 one's academic circle might become constrained by the workings of the Internet. Work of value but outside that circle might be harder to come

across through serendipity. Familiar authors, familiar journals, familiar topics, or

theoretical approaches will be privileged, and the outliers disadvantaged. Something

truly original and provocative might vault into general awareness, or languish in the

digital shadows. Imagine if Wittgenstein had not studied under Bertrand Russell, had

12 Eli Pariser, "Beware online 'filter bubbles.'" [https://www.ted.com/talks/eli_pariser_beware_onl

ine_filter_bubbles].

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not taught at Cambridge, had not worked with the colleagues and students he did. It

is not difficult to imagine, given his paucity of publication and lack of professional

ambition, that he could have remained an obscure figure of very marginal historical

interest.

As a result of the struggle to get one's work published—and noticed—and given

the way search engines work, there are further strategies one could adopt. Using social

media to push out and promote one's work, as noted earlier. Using a catchy title with

highly searchable buzz words included. In the competitive "attention economy", there

might even emerge an academic version of "clickbait": a not-always13-accurate way of titling or describing one's work to attract attention and readership. Can scholarship

avoid the kind of sensationalism that sells? It is important to remember that not all

citations are favorable, not all downloads are a sign of importance or quality—

nevertheless, these are the metrics many use.

Conclusion

What I am describing here is a series of clashes. A clash between what we reward and

what we say we want. A clash between the commercial self-interests and motivations

of publishers and the academic self-interests and motivations of scholars. A clash

between the reasons why we write and the incentive systems built into the institutions

where we work. A clash between the intellectual quality and importance of what gets

written and the practical dynamics of what actually gets noticed. These clashes aren't

irresolvable paradoxes, but they are serious tensions. And they are getting worse.14

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The Lust for Academic Fame: America's

Engine for Scholarly Production

David F. Labaree

Abstract The system of higher education is a unique type of organization with

its own way of motivating productivity in its scholarly workforce. It doesn't need

to compel professors to produce scholarship because they choose to do it on their

own. One reason for this is that for most academics it's more a vocation than a

job. But I focus on an additional powerful motivation that drives academics, one

that we don't talk about very much. Once launched into an academic career, faculty

members find their scholarly efforts spurred on by more than the love of the work.

We are also motivated by a lust for glory. We want to be recognized for our academic

accomplishments by earning our own little pieces of fame. So we work assiduously

to accumulate a set of merit badges over the course of our careers, which we then

proudly display in our CVs. This situation is particularly pervasive in the US system

of higher education, which is organized more by the market than by the state. Market

systems are especially prone to the accumulation of invidious distinctions that define

your position in the hierarchy. But European and other scholars are also engaged in

a race to pick up honors and add lines to their CVs. It's the universal obsession of

the scholarly profession.

Introduction

The system of higher education is a unique type of organization with its own way

of motivating productivity in its scholarly workforce. It doesn't need to compel

professors to produce scholarship because they choose to do it on their own.

This is in contrast to the standard structure for motivating employees in bureau-

cratic organizations, which relies on manipulating two incentives: fear and greed.

Fear works by holding the threat of firing over the heads of workers in order to

ensure that they stay in line with organization policy and keep the boss happy: Do it

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my way or you're out of here. Greed works by holding the prospect of pay increases

and promotions in front of workers in order to encourage them to exhibit the work

behaviors that will bring these rewards: Do it my way and you'll earn rewards.

Things are different for faculty members in colleges and universities. Yes, in

the U.S. contingent faculty can be fired at any time, and permanent faculty can

be fired at the point of tenure. But once tenured, there's little other than criminal

conduct or gross negligence that can threaten your job. And yes, most colleges do

have merit pay systems that reward faculty who are more productive with higher

salaries. But the differences are small—between getting the standard 3% raise and

getting a 4% merit increase. Even though gaining consistent above-average raises can

compound annually into substantial differences over time, the immediate rewards

are pretty underwhelming. Not the kind of incentive that would motivate a major

expenditure of effort in a given year—such as the kind that operate on Wall Street,

where earning a million dollar bonus is a real possibility. Academic administrators—

chairs, deans, presidents—just don't have this kind of power over faculty. It's why

we refer to academic leadership as an exercise in herding cats. Deans can ask you to

do something, but they really can't make you do it.

This situation is the norm for systems of higher education in most liberal democ-

racies around the world. In more authoritarian settings, the incentives for faculty are

skewed by particular political priorities, and in part for these reasons the institutions

in those settings tend to be consigned to the lower tiers of international rankings.

Scholarly autonomy is a defining characteristic of universities higher on the list.

If the usual extrinsic incentives of fear and greed don't apply to academics, then

what does motivate them to be productive scholars? One factor, of course, is that

this population is highly self-selected. People don't become professors in order to

gain power and money. They enter the role primarily because of a deep passion for

a particular field of study. Also, they find that scholarship is a mode of work that is

intrinsically satisfying. It's more a vocation than a job. And these elements tend to

be pervasive in most of the world's universities.

But I want to focus on an additional powerful motivation that drives academics,

one that we don't talk about very much. Once launched into an academic career,

faculty members find their scholarly efforts spurred on by more than the love of the

work. We are also motivated by a lust for glory.

We want to be recognized for our academic accomplishments by earning our own

little pieces of fame. So we work assiduously to accumulate a set of merit badges over

the course of our careers, which we then proudly display in our CVs. This situation

is particularly pervasive in the US system of higher education, which is organized

more by the market than by the state. Market systems are especially prone to the

accumulation of invidious distinctions that define your position in the hierarchy. But

European and other scholars are also engaged in a race to pick up honors and add

lines to their CVs. It's the universal obsession of the scholarly profession.

At the very pinnacle of the structure of merit badges is, of course, the Nobel Prize.

A nice thought, but what are the odds? Fortunately, other academic honors are a lot

more attainable. And attain them we do.

Take one prominent case in point: the endowed chair. A named professorship is a

very big deal in the academic status order, a (relatively) scarce honor that supposedly

demonstrates to peers that you're a scholar of high accomplishment. It does involve

money, but the chair holder often sees little of it. A donor provides an endowment

for the chair, which pays your salary and benefits, thus taking these expenses out

of the operating budget—a big plus for the department, which saves a lot of money

in the deal. And some chairs bring with them extra money that goes to the faculty

member to pay for research expenses and travel. But more often than not, the chair

brings the occupant nothing at all but an honorific title, which you can add to your

signature: the Joe Doakes Professor of Whatever. Once these chairs are in existence

as permanent endowments, they never go away; instead they circulate among senior

faculty. You hold the chair until you retire and then it goes to someone else. In my own

school, when the title passes to a new faculty member, that person receives an actual

chair—one of those uncomfortable black wooden university arm chairs bearing the

school logo. On the back is a brass plaque announcing that "[Your Name] is the

Joe Doakes Professor." When you retire, they take away the title and leave you the

physical chair. That's it. It sounds like a joke—all you get to keep is this unusable

piece of furniture—but it's not. And faculty will kill to get this kind of honor.

So you get the idea. It's the honor that counts. This being the case, the academic

profession requires a wide array of other forms of recognition that are more easily

attainable and that you can accumulate the way you can collect Faberge eggs. And

they're about as useful. Let us count the kinds of merit badges that are within the

reach of faculty.

• Publication in high impact journals and prestigious university presses

• Named fellowships

• Membership on review committees for awards and fellowships

• Membership on editorial boards of journals

• Journal editorships

• Officers in professional organizations, which conveniently rotate on an annual

basis and thus increase accessibility (in small societies, nearly everyone gets a

chance to be president)

• Administrative positions in your home institution

• Committee chairs

• A large number of awards of all kinds—for teaching, advising, public service,

professional service, and so on; the possibilities are endless

• These awards particularly proliferate in the zone of scholarly accomplishment:

best article/book of the year in a particular subfield by a senior/junior scholar;

early-career/lifetime-career achievement; and so on.

Each of these honors tells the academic world that you are the member of a

purportedly exclusive club. At annual meetings of professional organizations, you

can attached brightly colored ribbons to your name tag that tell everyone you're an

officer or fellow of that organization—much like the badges that adorn military dress

uniforms. As in the military, you can never accumulate too many of these academic

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honors. In fact success breeds more success, as your past tokens of recognition

demonstrate your fitness for future tokens of recognition.

Academics are unlike the employees of most organizations in that they fight over

symbolic rather than material objects of aspiration, but they are like other workers

in that they too are motivated by fear and greed. Instead of competing over power

and money they compete over respect. So far I've been focusing on professors'

greedy pursuit of various kinds of honors. But, if anything, fear of dishonor is an

even more powerful motive for professorial behavior. I aspire to gain the esteem

of my peers but I'm terrified of earning their scorn. Lurking in the halls of every

academic department are a few furtive figures of scholarly disrepute. They're the

professors who are no longer publishing in academic journals, who has stopped

attending academic conferences, and who teach classes that draw on the literature

of yesteryear. Colleagues quietly warn students to avoid these academic ghosts,

and administrators try to assign them courses where they will do the least harm.

As an academic, I may be eager to pursue tokens of merit, but I am desperate to

avoid being lumped together with the department's walking dead. Better to be an

academic mediocrity, publishing occasionally in second-rate journals, than to be

your colleagues' archetype of academic failure.

The result of all this pursuit of honor and retreat from dishonor is a self-generating

machine for scholarly production. No administrator needs to tell us to do it and no

one needs to dangle incentives in front of our noses as motivation. The pressure to

publish and demonstrate academic accomplishment comes from within. We do it to

ourselves. College faculties become self-sustaining engines of academic production,

in which we drive ourselves to demonstrate scholarly achievement without the admin-

istration needing to lift a finger or spend a dollar. What a great system. Would that

all organizations could be populated by self-starters like this. What could possibly

go wrong with such a system? Well, let's consider two problems.

One problem is that faculty research productivity varies significantly according to

what tier of the highly stratified structure of higher education professors find them-

selves. Compared to systems of higher education in other countries, the American

system is organized into a hierarchy of institutions that are strikingly different from

each other. The top tier is occupied by the 115 universities that Carnegie labels as

having the highest research activity, which represents only 2% of the 4,700 institu-

tions that grant college degrees. The next tier is doctoral universities with less of a

research orientation, which account for 6% of institutions. The third is an array of

master's level institutions often referred to as comprehensive universities, which

account for 16%. The fourth is baccalaureate institutions (liberal arts colleges),

which account for 21%. The fifth is two-year colleges, which account for 24%.

(The remaining 32% are small specialized institutions that enroll only 5% of total

students.)1

1 2015 Carnegie Classifications of Institutions of Higher Education. (2018). Classification Summary

Tables: Distribution of Institutions and Enrollments by Classification Category. http://carnegieclas

sifications.iu.edu/downloads.php (accessed 7–31-18).

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The number of publications by faculty members declines sharply as you move

down the tiers of the system. One study shows how this works for professors

in economics. The total number of refereed journal articles published per faculty

member over the course of a career was 18.4 at research universities, 8.1 at compre-

hensive universities, 4.9 at liberal arts colleges, and 3.1 at all other. [2] The decline in productivity is also sharply defined within the category of research universities.

Another study looked at the top 94 institutions ranked by per capita publications per

year between 1991 and 1993. At the number 1 university, average production was

4.2 per person per year; at number 20 it dropped off sharply to 1.5; at 40 it fell to

1.0; at 60 it was 0.8; at 80 it was 0.6; and at 94 it was 0.[2.3]

Only 20% of faculty serve at the most research-intensive universities (the top tier)

where scholarly productivity is the highest. [4] As we can see, the lowest end of this top sliver of American universities have faculty who are publishing *less than one article*

every five years. The other 80% are presumably publishing even more rarely than

this, if indeed they are publishing at all. As a result, it seems that the incentive system

for spurring faculty research productivity operates primarily at the very top levels

of the institutional hierarchy. So why am I making such a big deal about American

professors as self-motivated scholars?

For me, the most illuminating way to understand the faculty incentive to publish

is to look at the system from the point of view of the newly graduating PhD who

is seeking to find a faculty position. These prospective scholars face some daunting

math. As we have seen, the 115 high-research universities produce the majority

of research doctorates, but 80% of the jobs are at lower level institutions. The most

likely jobs are not at research universities but at comprehensive universities and four-

year institutions. So most doctoral graduates entering the professoriate experience

dramatic downward mobility.

It's actually even worse than that. One study of sociology graduates shows that

departments ranked in the top five select the majority of their faculty from top five

departments, but most top five graduates ended up in institutions below the rank

of 20. [5] And a lot of prospective faculty never find a position at all. A 1999 study showed that, among recent grads who sought to become professors, only two-thirds

had such a position after 10 years and only half of these had earned tenure. [6] And many of those who do find teaching positions work part time, a category that in 2005

accounted for 48% of all college faculty. [7]

The prospect of a dramatic drop in academic status and the possibility of failing

to find any academic job does a lot to concentrate the mind of the recent doctoral

2 Hartley et al. (2001).

3 Budd (1995)..

4 Carnegie Classifications of Institutions of Higher Education. (2016). Basic Classification

Description. http://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu/summary/basic.php (accessed 6–4-16).

5 Burris Val (2004).

6 Nerad Maresi et al. (1999).

7 Monks (2009).

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graduate. Fear of falling compounded by fear of total failure works wonders in moti-

vating novice scholars to become flywheels of productivity. From their experience

in grad school, they know that life at the highest level of the system is very good for

faculty, but the good times fade fast as you move to lower levels. The basic pattern is

clear. At every step down the academic ladder, faculty find that pay is less, teaching

loads are higher, graduate students are fewer, research support is less, and student

skills are lower.

In a faculty system where academic status matters more than material benefits,

the strongest signal of the status you have as a professor is the institution where you

work. Your academic identity is strongly tied to your letterhead. And in light of the

kind of institution where most new professors find themselves, they start hearing a

loud clear voice saying, "I deserve better." The voice is even louder for those working

part time, who suffer low pay, no benefits, and no security.

So the mandate is clear. As a grad student, you need to write your way to an

academic job. And when you get a job at an institution far down the hierarchy, you

need to write your way to a better job. You experience a powerful incentive to claw

your way back up the academic ladder to an institution as close as possible to the

one that recently graduated you. The incentive to publish is baked in from the very

beginning. Even though the odds are against you, you feel compelled to make a

strong effort to move on up. Only when that dream fades can you settle in and do the

job, gradually relaxing your reflex to get in print.

One result of this Darwinian struggle to regain one's rightful place at the top of

the hierarchy is that a large number of faculty fall by the wayside without attaining

their goal. Dashed dreams are the norm for large numbers of actors. This can leave

a lot of bitter people occupying the middle and lower tiers of the system, and it can

saddle students with professors who would really rather be somewhere else. That's

a high cost for the process that supports the productivity of scholars at the system's

pinnacle.

Another potential problem with my argument about the self-generating incentive

for professors to publish is that the work that scholars produce is often more distin-

guished by its quantity rather than quality. Put another way, a lot of the work that

appears in print doesn't seem worth the effort required to read it much less to produce

it. Under these circumstances, the value of the incentive structure seems lacking. It

turns out there's a lot to this argument.

Consider some of the ways in which contemporary academic production promotes

quantity over quality. One familiar technique is known as "salami slicing." [8] The idea here is simple. Take one study and divide it up into pieces that can each be published

separately, so it leads to multiple entries in your CV. The result is an accumulation

of trivial bits of a study instead of a solid contribution to the literature.

One other approach is to inflate coauthorship. Multiple authors make sense in

some ways. Large projects often involve a large number of scholars, and in the

sciences in particular, a long list of authors is de rigueur. Fine, as long as everyone

8 Editorial. (2005). The Cost of Salami Slicing. Nature Materials 4:1. https://www.nature.com/art

icles/nmat1305 (accessed 8–1-18).

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in the list made a significant contribution to research. But often coauthorship comes

for reasons of power rather than scholarly contribution. It has become normal for

anyone who compiled a dataset to demand coauthorship for any papers that draw on

the data, even if the data owner added nothing to the analysis in the paper. Likewise,

the principal investigator of a project may insist on being included in the author list

for any publications that come from this project. More lines on the CV.

Yet another way to increase the number of publications is to increase the number

of journals. By one count, as of 2014 there were 28,100 scholarly peer-reviewed

journals. 9 Consider the math. There about 1 million faculty members at American colleges and universities at the BA level and higher. So that means there are about 42

prospective authors for each of these journals. A lot of these enterprises act as club

journals. The members of a particular sub-area of a subfield set up a journal where

members of the club engage in a practice that political scientists call log-rolling. I

review your paper and you review mine, so everyone gets published. Edited volumes

work much the same way. I publish your paper in my book and you publish mine in

yours.

And there's another factor as well. A lot of journal articles are written in a highly

formulaic fashion, which makes it easy to produce lots of papers without breaking an

intellectual sweat. The standard model for this kind of writing is known as IMRaD.

This mnemonic represents the four canonical sections for every paper: Introduction

(what's it about and what's the literature behind it?), Methods (how did I do it?),

Research (what are my findings?), and Discussion (what does it mean?). All you

have to do as a writer is to write the same paper over and over, introducing bits of

new content into the tried and true formula.10

The result of all this is that the number of scholarly publications is enormous and

growing daily. One estimate shows that, since the first science papers were published

in the 1600 s, the total number of papers in science alone passed the 50 million mark

in 2009; and 2.5 million new science papers are published every year. [11] Think about it. How many of them do you think are worth reading? How many make a substantive

contribution to the field?

Ok, so I agree. A lot of scholarly publications—maybe most such publications—

are less than stellar. Does this matter? In one sense, yes. It's sad to see academic

scholarship fall into a state where the accumulation of lines on a CV matters more

than producing quality work. And think of all the time wasted reviewing papers that

should never been written, and think of how this clutters and trivializes the literature

with contributions that don't contribute.

But—hesitantly—I suggest that the incentive system for faculty publication still

provides net benefits for both academy and society. I base his hope on my own analysis

of the nature of the American academic system itself. Keep in mind that U.S. higher

education is a system without a plan. No one designed it and no one oversees its

9 Boon (2016).

10 For more on this, see https://aeon.co/essays/writing-essays-by-formula-teaches-students-how-to-

not-think.

11 Boon (2016).

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operation. It's an emergent structure that arose in the U.S. in the nineteenth century

under unique conditions—when the market was strong, the state was weak, and the

church was divided. [12]

Under these circumstances, colleges emerged as private not-for-profit enterprises

that had a state charter but little or no state funding. And for the most part they arose

for reasons that had less to do with higher learning than with the extrinsic benefits

a college could bring. One reason was sectarian—religious denominations planting

their flags on the advancing frontier so they would be represented in new communities

and could train their clergy. Another reason was land development. In a country with

too much land and not enough buyers, the presence of a college said that this dusty

agricultural town is really a cultural center whose land was worth more.

As a result, the system grew from the bottom up. By the time state governments

started putting up their own institutions and the federal government started funding

land-grant colleges, this market-based system was already firmly in place. Colleges

were relatively autonomous enterprises that had found a way to survive without

steady support from either church or state. They had to attract and retain students

in order to bring in tuition dollars, and they had to make themselves useful both to

these students and to elites in the local community, both of whom would then make

donations to continue the colleges in operation.

Even when state colleges became the growth sector of higher education, they

continued to operate in relative autonomy because they were not able to depend on

annual state appropriations. This autonomy was an accident not a plan, but by the

twentieth century it became a major source of strength. It promoted a system that was

entrepreneurial and adaptive, able to take advantage of possibilities in the environ-

ment. More responsive to consumers and community than to the state, institutions

managed to mitigate the kind of top-down governance that might have stifled the

system's creativity.

The point is this: Compared with planned organizational structures, emergent

structures are inefficient at producing socially useful results. By nature they're messy,

and they pursue their own interests rather than following directions from above

according to a plan. But as we have seen with market-based economies compared to

state-planned economies, the messy approach can be quite beneficial. Entrepreneurs

in the economy pursue their own profit rather than trying to serve the public good,

but the side effect of their activities is often to provide such benefits inadvertently,

by increasing productivity and improving the general standard of living. A similar

argument can be made about the market-based system of American higher educa-

tion. Maybe it's worth tolerating the gross inefficiency of a university system that is

charging off in all directions, with each institution trying to advance itself in compe-

tition with the others. The result is a system that is the envy of the world, a world

where higher education is normally framed as a pure state function under the direct

control of the state education ministry.

This analysis applies as well to the professoriate. The incentive structure for

American faculty encourages individual professors to be entrepreneurial in pursuing

12 For more on this, see https://aeon.co/essays/how-the-us-college-went-from-pitiful-to-powerful.

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their academic careers. The need to publish in order to win honors for themselves

and to avoid dishonor. As a result, they end up publishing a lot of work that is more

useful to their own advancement (lines on a CV) than to the larger society. Also,

following from the analysis of the first problem I introduced, an additional cost of

this system is the large number of faculty who fall by the wayside in the effort to

write their way into a better job. The success of the system of scholarly production

at the top is based on the failed dreams of most of the participants.

But maybe it's worth tolerating a high level of dross in the effort to produce schol-

arly gold, even if this is at the expense of many of the scholars themselves. Planned

research production, operating according to mandates and incentives descending

from above, are no more effective at producing the best scholarship than are five-

year plans in producing the best economic results. At its best, the university is a

place that gives maximum freedom for faculty to pursue their interests and passions

in the justified hope that they will frequently come up with something interesting and

possibly useful, even if this value is not immediately apparent. They're institutions

that provide answers to problems that haven't yet developed, storing up both the

dross and the gold until such time as we can determine which is which.

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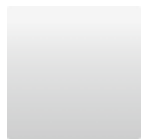
'Relations of Production' and Their

Impact on the Character and Pace

of Research and Scholarship

David Bridges and Peter Cunningham

Abstract In this contribution, Bridges and Cunningham suggest that Marx's notion

of 'relations of production' provides a lens that can provide some interesting and

useful insights both into historical models of research production and to some of the

challenges of the shifting conditions of work and production in the contemporary

academy. They offer four brief accounts of sets of relations drawn from the history

of research and scholarship in the UK. Thus they follow Marx in observing, as in

The poverty of philosophy, the historical and transitory nature of such relations and

the ideas and thinking they support (Marx, K (1847) The poverty of philosophy in

eds. J.O'Malley & R.A. Davus (1994) Marx: Early political writings. Cambridge:

Cambridge University Press.). They start with the mediaeval scholar monk and the

monastic culture of the scriptorium. This is followed by consideration of the circum-

stances of the independent scholar and the celebrated Lunar Society in a period

of scientific and technological progress, and then, focussing more specifically on

educational research, the mid-twentieth century educational researcher. The paper

culminates with consideration of relations of production in which the contemporary

educational researcher is situated—the 'contract culture', the 'commodification' of

research and, as some would suggest, the 'proletarianisation' of researchers. Philo-

sophically, Bridges and Cunningham are interested in exploring whether Marx's

conceptual framework—rooted of course in his own analysis of history—illuminates

the social practice of research in different conditions: historically they are interested

in examining the way the elements of relations of production have evolved over time.

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Introduction

In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage

in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations

of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which

arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social

consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of

social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness.

(Marx, 1859 Preface to *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*) For Marx 'relations of production' (German: *Produktionsverhältnis*) are key to an

understanding of an economy, but also much more, for they shape the social structure

and culture of the society that this economy sustains. In *Das Kapital* and elsewhere

relations of production are the relations humans enter into with each other for the

purposes of production including, for example, the relations between employer and

employee or buyer and seller, the technical division of labour in a workplace, and

property relations (the *social* relations of production) and the tools or technology

which shape production (which Marx refers to as the *technical* relations).

The relationship between economy (of which relations of production are part),

ideology and culture is not however a simple one, nor, we would argue, are the

influences all in one direction. In a sense research production is a sub-system of

a wider economy, which in many nations in the modern era has been driven by a

conceptual and ideological framing that is described as neo-liberal. In the case of

research production, it is arguable that the relations of production have themselves

been generated by this shift in the wider ideological climate which has set the tone

for cultural change in the microeconomy and society of the university. This in turn,

along with different external demands for accountability and patterns of research

funding, has re-shaped the relations of production.

The elements of our picture of 'relations of production' go beyond what Marx

directly described, and we may be accused of 'presentism' in reading into Marx an

analytic framework that might illuminate our contemporary concerns. This paper

works (fairly loosely) with his concept of relations of production to analyse some

different modes or forms of production of research and scholarship (it will not draw

a sharp distinction between these two). This is not territory to which Marx himself

applied his economic theory—and he may have felt it to be something of a conceit

to refer to university academics as 'proletarian' (Derber, 1982) or surprised to read of 'knowledge capitalism' (Burton-Jones, 1999) let alone Fendler's 'philanthrocapitalism' (2016) in the context of educational research. But we think that 'relations

of production' is a lens that can provide some interesting and useful insights both

into historical models of research production and to some of the challenges of the

shifting conditions of work and production in the contemporary academy. Certainly

the acceleration of research production, which was the central theme of the seminar

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to which this paper was a contribution, needs to be understood in the context of this

wider set of relations.

As far as research is concerned, these relations of production might include

reference to.

• Source of funding for the research and the conditions under which it is made

available

• Security and durability of the support

• Ownership of the 'intellectual property' that is the product of the research and

public and private rights of access to it (Marx distinguishes between relations of

production and relations of distribution, though he concedes that these become

blurred in some economic systems. In any case the relations of distribution are

formed by and already reflected in the relations of production (see, e.g. in his

correspondence, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, Marx, 1875)

• Status of the researcher—amateur; professional; proletarian—and the degree of

the researcher's autonomy

• Means of production—the material conditions of/or tools for research production

(from papyrus to the word processor—from manuscript to e-journal)

• Productivity—requirements for the volume of work produced and, to come closer

to one of the central themes of this seminar,

• The impact of all of this on scheduling of the work, the reporting and speed of

production.

We offer four brief accounts of sets of relations drawn from the history of research and

scholarship in the UK. Thus we follow Marx in observing, as in *The poverty of philos-*

ophy, the historical and transitory nature of such relations and the ideas and thinking they support (Marx, 1847). We start with the mediaeval scholar monk followed by the independent scholar in a period of scientific and technological progress,

and then, focussing more specifically on educational research, the mid-twentieth

century educational researcher, culminating in relations of production in which the

contemporary educational researcher is situated. Philosophically, we are interested

in exploring whether Marx's conceptual framework—rooted of course in his own

analysis of history—illuminates the social practice of research in different condi-

tions: historically we are interested in examining the way the elements of relations

of production have evolved over time.

The Scholar Monk

The third evolutionary stage in Marx and Engels' historical materialism is the

feudalism of the European 'middle ages', monarchical, aristocratic and theocratic,

indeed Christocentric. Secular power was founded on divine right and buttressed by

the Church. Within this structure, scholarship was conducted in monasteries before

gradually transitioning to universities in later centuries as research into the material

world began to accompany and even to challenge the disciplines of philosophy and

theology.

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Monastic culture originated in the Eastern Roman Empire, consolidated by Bene-

dict at Monte Cassino in 529 CE. His Rule for a regimented schedule of 'daily manual

labour' included reading (Benedict, c.550 CE). About that time Cassiodorus, Roman

statesman and writer, also founded a monastery known as the Vivarium in Calabria,

where copying books was a compulsory task. Copying biblical texts became activity

of monastic life, to spread Christianity and 'fight with pen and ink against the unlawful

snares of the devil' (Cassiodorus, c.530 CE, Chapter 30). Thus described, 'research

and scholarship' may appear to serve ideology, but Cassiodorus valued liberal studies

and secular texts to complement religious learning, so that copying of texts in scrip-

toria came to underpin intellectual enquiry of a wider scope. He recognised the

need for Latin translations of Greek authorities on exegesis, philosophy and science.

In the sixth to ninth centuries in monasteries and in newly established monastic

schools, where scholars fleeing Goths and Huns were harboured, art and literature

flourished alongside manuscript preservation. 'Christian monasteries, despite them-

selves, played a major part in preserving and transmitting what remained of pagan

antiquity' (Reynolds & Wilson, 2013, 82–3).

In northern Europe, Charlemagne, crowned Holy Roman Emperor in 800, rein-

vigorated the learning spirit, recruiting scholars and poets to his palace at Aachen,

which became a centre for scholarship with its vast library. He employed Alcuin of

York as a personal adviser and master of his Palace School. Alcuin, theologian, poet

and teacher, had headed a school at York renowned for its learning in liberal arts,

literature and science, as well as in religion, where the library included such classics

as Aristotle, Cicero, Pliny and Virgil. Charlemagne himself studied rhetoric, logic

and astronomy, and his encouragement of learning and education was a feature of his

power, greatly increasing the number of monastic schools and scriptoria. Monastic

libraries across the empire flourished once again and copying of Greek and Latin clas-

sics restarted on an unprecedented scale. Scholarly editions of manuscripts began

to appear, with commentary taking up stretches of the page longer than the actual

text itself. When Alcuin retired age 60, Charlemagne sent him to Tours where the

abbey school became a model of excellence, many manuscripts copied with beautiful

calligraphy. Scripts were developed for reading with ease and pleasure, so that ancient

classics were approached with both intellectual curiosity and aesthetic appreciation

(Reynolds and Wilson pp. 94–6).

Alcuin's work raises questions about relations of production as they might apply

to a monastic scholar, twelve centuries ago. His motivation for intellectual enquiry

may be seen as both spiritual and material. Born into a sphere of secular power, his

family was well placed in the church and in landholding. The Psalms and the Gospels

attracted him from an early age, as did the poetry of Virgil however, and though he

entered the church, he never proceeded to higher orders. He probably enjoyed the

acquisition of books, both sacred and secular, and associated attractions of foreign

travel, much as university-based scholars in the present day. His intellectual and

literary prowess brought him intimate contact with a European ruler and his court,

adopted as a trusted adviser and teacher of youth. Granted leadership of religious

houses he demonstrated managerial abilities on a scale enjoyed by ambitious profes-

sors and administrators in modern universities. Management of resources entailed

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acquisition of libraries and organisation of scriptoria on a large scale, involving

multiple relations of production. Economic as well as intellectual relations may also

be implied in the high regard that Alcuin earned from pupils. Four centuries later,

his achievements were lauded by William of Malmesbury, whose work is described

below. Alcuin's theological, exegetical and pedagogical works were reprinted many

times in the sixteenth century, and French historian and politician Guizot saw him

as his own precursor, as 'Charlemagne's Minister of Education' (Bullough, 2010).

Research and scholarship through the long middle ages comprised much textual

analysis of Greco-Roman and Christian writing, and critical interpretation to establish

the meanings of works by comparing the variety of flawed copies available. New

writing might include creative poetry, history, hagiography, theology and philosophy,

with handbooks on rhetoric, dialectic, metrics and grammar (Reynolds & Wilson,

2013, 103). Penetrating relations of production in that context presents a challenge but raises interesting questions. Enterprise and geographical mobility were significant

factors, personified by theologian Lupus, Abbot of Ferrières, identified by Reynolds

and Wilson as the most outstanding scholar of the period (Reynolds & Wilson, 2013,

105–107). Lupus perhaps asserted intellectual independence in coining the dictum

' *propter se ipsam appetenda sapientia*' ('wisdom for its own sake').

Monasteries however provided religious services to the community at a cost: many

were endowed with land that generated rental and other income, tithes were granted,

tolls were charged on local markets and monastic courts levied fines (Burton, 1994,

233–263). Individual monks owned no property and owed total obedience to the

abbot, arguably making the monastery a miniature 'centrally planned economy', and

worship induced people with 'spiritual capital' to choose monastic life and grow

their spiritual capital through 'learning-by-doing' in a commune based on consent

of the governed (Smith, 2009). Scholars depended directly on the work done by scribal monks, copying many Greek and Latin classics from original manuscripts that

have since disappeared. Significant relations of production obtained in this essential

process, with teams of assistants on a large scale. Practices varied between religious

orders and across time from the sixth to the fiveteenth centuries, but the labour

relations that prevailed between workers in the school and scriptorium are worth

considering.

Relevant aspects include the technical division of labour and the tools or tech-

nology that shape production. Historians, notably Greenblatt (2011), interpret the experience of scholars and scribes by applying inference from limited sources, and

a degree of empathy. Useful aspects to consider, highlighted by current historiog-

raphy, might be *materiality*, and *time*, as with goose quill in hand and a bell tolling the hours, monks preserved literature of the past and produced resources for research

and scholarship into the future. Transcribing books was a solemn and sacred task, for

monks in their late twenties or older, requiring a placidity of mind that younger men

were not thought to possess, according to Benedict (Benedict c.550 CE). Cassiodorus

conferred new dignity on the task of scribe (Cassiodorus, c.530, 1.30.1). But it was

laborious, copying was a mechanical task and some copyists were even illiterate.

A monastic scribe might work six hours a day, or more; Cassiodorus exempts the

very best from daily prayers to give them more time to work, providing an abun-

dance of candles (and a water clock), to work past sunset. The scriptorium was

usually isolated, mandatorily quiet, and fairly uncomfortable, and monks working

under these conditions frequently suffered from acedia, a 'foul darkness', anxiety,

apathy and hopelessness, that we might recognise as clinical depression (Greenblatt,

2011, 26). Scribes sometimes noted their anguish in the margins of a manuscript, one writing at the end of his script: 'Now I've written the whole thing. For Christ's

sake, give me a drink' (Greenblatt, 2011, 40). We might occasionally complain of tedious tasks entailed in modern research and scholarship; looking back a millennium and more, how scholars and scribes might each have experienced time, between

the eternal significance of their work and the tedium of daily labour, is almost

unimaginable.

Conditions of work and relations of production, however, varied considerably

across time and place. In twelfth-century Malmesbury, 54 scribes worked along-

side the celebrated chronicler William whose education included logic and physics,

though moral philosophy and history were his favourite subjects. William himself

started many of the books and co-ordinated their production, with most work done by

assistants whose ability varied; three were well trained, but many had limited skills,

working short stints, sometimes writing just a few lines, perhaps returning later to do

more. He called on any monks he could find willing to copy a section of text between

other duties, but few stuck at it for long. Meanwhile, at Salisbury, in one manuscript

the hands of eight different scribes can be seen working together, skilled but with

distinctive styles, sometimes taking over mid-sentence. One has been identified as

a director, starting off pages for demonstration, then correcting the work of others,

crossing out words and writing corrections between the lines. Some manuscripts show

that a monk might start to copy a manuscript but be unable to complete it, perhaps due

to other duties, or possibly boredom (Wiles, 2014). By contrast a large training centre at Worcester employed scribes not required to undertake other duties. St Albans had

a scriptorium outside the monastery, in which professional scribes worked without

disturbing the monks and earning money for their keep (Ibid.). Cathedral schools

lay the groundwork for Europe's first University at Bologna in the eleventh century,

when artisan scribes set up shop to serve scholars, forming business associations or

guilds, introducing more commercial relations between buyer and seller.

Independent Scholars of the Enlightenment Era

The eighteenth century was a heyday for independent scholarship, capitalism having

grown steadily from the late middle ages, as mercantilism disrupted feudal society.

Trade and manufacture began to supplant agriculture as the main source of wealth,

and money ruled as the medium of exchange. Banks emerged in seventeenth century

Europe to facilitate the flow of capital, including national banks in Sweden in 1668

and England in 1694. An economy more familiar to Marx was emerging, though large

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scale industrialism was yet to appear. Meanwhile in London an 'invisible college'

of natural philosophers and physicians gained royal patronage in 1662 as 'The Royal

Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge'. In the seventeenth and eigh-

teenth centuries some gentlemen of private means, and a few women of their social

circles, enjoyed the leisure to engage in research and scholarship (Schofield, 1963;

Uglow, 2002; Watts, 2005; O'Brien, 2009). Temporal power, including imperialism, underpinned the cultural order, and economic drive coloured intellectual enquiry.

Churches were not entirely absent, however, as religious dissent played an influen-

tial role. England's two universities were dominated by the established church and

paid scant attention to modern studies, while dissenters had to study in Scotland, or to

set up independent academies in England, where open inquiry in science, technology

and commerce (economics) might be encouraged.

Independent scholarship as discussed here needs differentiating from the histor-

ical trail of 'self-taught philosophers' as described by Andalusian Ibn Tufail in

twelfth-century Marrakesh, and later methods of 'intellectual emancipation' formu-

lated by Joseph Jacotot at the nineteenth-century University of Louvain (Jacotot,

1823; Rancière 1987). Yet an important thread links the working-class autodidact and the leisured scholar, the allure of knowledge 'for its own sake', unconstrained as

yet by twenty-first-century contracts and performance indicators. There may be no

'typical' independent scholar, but for some common characteristics, a useful focus

in England is the Lunar Society of Birmingham. An informal learned society and

dining club, it existed between 1765 and 1813 as a phenomenon of the so-called

'Midlands Enlightenment'. Key members were Erasmus Darwin, Matthew Boulton,

Josiah Wedgwood and Joseph Priestley, whose close involvement with the 'first

industrial revolution', a dramatic 'stage … in the material forces of production' as

Marx described, is a necessary context for understanding their intellectual pursuits.

Darwin, a Cambridge- and Edinburgh-educated physician was also a physiologist,

natural philosopher, poet and inventor. Born into a long-established professional and

propertied family, he had a successful medical practice over 50 years in the cathedral

city of Lichfield, so his economic and social status secured the means and leisure for

his intellectual pursuits. His scientific writings on botany included translations from

Linnaeus, which he also popularised in poetic form, and on medicine the substantial

Zoonomia (1794) on anatomy, pathology and psychology, including a theory of

evolution anticipating Lamarck, and later developed by his grandson Charles Darwin.

In Marxian terms, his 'social existence' no doubt played a part in 'determining his

consciousness', but specifically it was shared scientific research interests that drew

him into a network of prominent manufacturers leading the 'industrial revolution' in

Lichfield's neighbouring West Midlands.

Boulton was descended from a Lichfield family, but was born in Birmingham

where his father manufactured metal buckles. He left school at age 15 and two

years later invented a commercially successful technique for enamel inlay on the

buckles. His father made him a partner and in early adulthood he was effectively

running the business. By 1765 he invested in his new Soho Manufactory, housing the

most advanced metalworking equipment, admired as a modern industrial marvel and

employing around 600 workers. Isaac Newton's *Optics* (1704) had set an agenda for

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experiment philosophy, with its insistence on method and inductive reasoning from

observations. Boulton loved electrical experiments 'and should have great pleasure in

contributing my mite to the science but am an absolute sceptic in it'. His biographer,

Uglow, glosses this confession: 'His technical interest arose from his trade, while

his curiosity made him determined to understand every advance, even if he could

not exploit it directly—and especially if he could.' (Uglow, 2002, p.16), confirming a concrete relationship between his research and his

economic interest.

Wedgwood, like Boulton, was a capitalist entrepreneur taking economic risks

and employing labour on a large scale. He was related to Darwin but was born into

the pottery business, and his extended family also included many dissenting minis-

ters. Boulton and Wedgwood both combined science and art, conducting experi-

mental investigation into technical processing of metals and clays, whilst studying

and applying both classical art and evolving fashion in their designs, and as manu-

facturers of luxury goods they were alternately cooperating and competing. Their

principal roles were as producers, so Marxian relations of production most immedi-

ately 'determining their consciousness' were those of employment and marketing, but

as highly innovative entrepreneurs, the researches they undertook were underpinned

by a profit motive.

Priestley, on the other hand was a nonconformist minister, theologian, natural

philosopher, and taught at a dissenting academy. Though preaching and teaching in

growing industrial cities such as Leeds and Birmingham, his research on electricity,

magnetism and chemistry was driven not by the commercial production interests of

Boulton or Wedgwood, rather seeking to fuse Enlightenment rationalism with Chris-

tian theism, revealing the workings of Providence in Nature. Marx might however

have approved Priestley's political sympathies with the French and American revo-

lutions, his *Lectures on History and General Policy* supporting a doctrine of progress

and recommending research into social, economic, and cultural as well as political

and diplomatic history. Alert to 'relations of production' on the domestic front, he

credited his wife Mary, who 'entirely relieved me of all concern [for household

affairs] which allowed me to give all my time to the prosecution of my studies, and

the other duties of my station' (Lindsay, *Priestley*, 87).

Mary Priestley's situation begs a wider question of gender relations, more recently

recognised than Marx, but one perfectly consistent with his approach to material

forces and social consciousness. Ruth Watts has shown how, alongside the exclu-

sively male Royal Society, a privileged few women were able to publish and promote

their scientific and educational ideas. Exclusion from the mainstream afforded oppor-

tunities and reveals conflicting modern principles that underlay science for centuries

to come. Specifically, Watts argues, these gendered contradictions of the scientific

revolution in England show the need to understand large areas of learning outside

formal education, in networks that facilitated different forms of knowledge (Watts,

2005). A correspondent with the Lunar Society was Susanna Wright (1697–1784), Lancashire born but followed her family to Pennsylvania where she remained as a

botanist, business owner and legal scholar, with wide-ranging scientific, agricultural,

and literary interests. She raised hops, hemp, flax, indigo, and silkworms, wrote an

essay on silkworm culture, studied medicinal uses of herbs and formulated medicines

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for her neighbours. Anna Seward (1742–1809) was involved with the Lunar Society

that sometimes met at her father's home, and she corresponded with Wedgwood. Poet

and botanist, she published anonymously under the name of the Lichfield Botanical

Society along with Erasmus Darwin, and encouraged by him she rejected the conser-

vative backlash to Linnaeus' sexual system of plant classification. In north American

pioneering society, Wright's activity was related to the public sphere, like the Lunar

Society men, where Seward's life, like other notable female intellectuals in England,

was rooted more in the domestic sphere.

How these independent scholars might have experienced pressures of *time* is

almost unimaginable for historians 250 years later, accounting for change in transport

and communications from their time to ours; the Lunar Society was so-called as

their meetings were fixed by the full moon for safety and ease of travel. Commercial

pressures on Boulton and Wedgwood complemented their research but must also have

competed for time, while Darwin's mind-boggling but self-imposed agenda must

never have left sufficient time for all his investigations. Consideration of *materiality*

must include the domestic environment for some experiments and the industrial

context of others; vital relations were no doubt maintained with instrument makers,

essential to support their investigations, while industrial employees on the other hand

were not integral to their research production.

All four men were actively engaged in various ways with economic and polit-

ical structures as they pursued their independent research. As independent scholars

each eventually gained recognition from the Royal Society, gaining legitimacy for

their 'new science', both as 'gentlemanly scholarship' and in its association with

mercantile and manufacturing activity (Shapin, 1991, 299, 313).[1]They benefited from growth of trade at home and in the colonies, that implicated their intellectual and moral concerns, rational enquiry alongside religious dissent, opposition to

slavery and advocacy of liberal politics. They provide a complex case for studying

how relations of production impinged on scholarship. Elements of 'knowledge capi-

talism', perhaps even 'philanthrocapitalism', can be identified. A further valuable

focus for twenty-first-century historians and philosophers of education is Etienne

Wenger's concept of communities of learning, in the Lunar Society, with innovation

depending on exchange and sharing knowledge and ideas (Wenger, 1998).

From 'Universitification' to Practitioner Research

in the Mid Twentieth Century

Our perceptions of life—and relations of research production—in the years after

the second world war are coloured, first, by nostalgia for a 'golden age' (Annan,

1991: 377 and Halsey, 1992: 177 both refer to it in these terms) by contrast with the conditions of recent decades (pressures of research assessment and 'productivity'

elaborated in the following section), and, secondly, by fictional representation in

'campus novels' from C.P. Snow to Malcolm Bradbury and David Lodge, describing

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an academic life dominated by internecine politics and sexual adventure rather than

a competitive market-place for research. But how might historians more objectively

describe relations of production in research of that period?

For this discussion, we focus on the *UK* and on *educational* research in a period when the narrative of educational research and consequent relations of production

took a quite dramatic turn. Three routes into teaching prevailed in the middle of

the twentieth century: a 2 year (from 1959, 3 year) Certificate of Education course

in municipal or denominational training colleges (from 1964 designated 'Colleges

of Education'), predominantly for primary teaching; via a university degree in any

subject (with no professional training); or a degree followed by the one-year Post-

graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE), the mainstay of University Departments of

Education. Within universities Education Departments were regarded as 'Cinderella'

departments, with small higher degree programmes and very modest contributions to

research. The Parliamentary and Scientific Committee (PSC) 1961 observed that the

total number of staff employed by university departments of education was 500 at

most and that 'few, if any, are engaged on full-time research and their total empirical

research effort would not be equivalent to a hundred full-time workers'. The PSC

recommended a national Educational Research Council, comparable to medical and

agricultural research councils, reporting to Parliament (McCulloch & Cowan, 2017,

51). In the teacher education colleges, active research was almost entirely absent.

Change in the late sixties accelerated following an extensive government enquiry

into higher education, the Robbins Report of 1963, and a further report in 1972 on

teacher education and training, by Lord James. Robbins initiated the Bachelor of

Education (B.Ed) degree, and James recommended teaching as an exclusively grad-

uate profession. These developments required more serious academic content for

the study of education, typically framed by four emerging disciplines of philosophy,

history, psychology and sociology of education. Lecturers were required to teach

these subjects at degree level, so university departments expanded their postgrad-

uate programmes with Diploma and Masters level courses to prepare the teachers

of teachers, and expanded their own staff to provide these programmes. Teacher

educators thus prepared then continued, in steadily increasing numbers, to doctoral

level, creating a new cohort of educational scholars and researchers. Thus the new

B.Ed degrees, Masters level programmes and doctoral study, stimulated demand

for an appropriate body of scholarly and research-based literature and a workforce

increasingly capable of supplying it.

Meanwhile rapid expansion in the school system through increased birth rates,

immigration, and raising of the school leaving age (ROSLA), together with

curriculum implications of technological change and demand for an educated work-

force, created a need for more educational research to inform policy-making. Beyond

but not entirely detached from academia, a National Foundation for Educational

Research (NFER) had operated since 1946. The 1960s saw some growth of invest-

ment in educational research (from a very modest base). The Department for Educa-

tion and Science (former Ministry of Education) began to commission research in

1962, and by 1969 was contributing £500,000 to support 109 projects. In 1965 a Social

Sciences Research Council (distributing government funds for research, advised by

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academic experts in the field) included an Educational Research Board (McCulloch &

Cowan, 2017, 53). This was part of a wider picture in which, as Halsey has described it 'higher education developed into an avid consumer of the financial patronage of the

state (Halsey, 1992: i)—a development with, unsurprisingly, significant implications for relations of production, especially as the state sought increasingly to exercise

control over the research that it was funding.

Inside the universities, major contributors to educational research were often

drawn from outside departments of education, though history of education was more

firmly rooted in the departments of education themselves (Depaepe, 1993). A major source for sociology of education, *Education, economy and society: a reader in*

the sociology of education was edited in 1965 by notable sociologists from Oxford,

A.H. Halsey and Jean Floud. The leading figure in Philosophy of Education, Richard

Peters, came from the philosophy department of Birkbeck College, London, and

many of those he attracted to seminars and conferences of the Philosophy of Educa-

tion Society—Oakeshott, R.M. Hare, Alan Montefiore, Bernard Williams, Mary

Warnock, Douglas Hamlyn—likewise taught in mainstream philosophy departments.

Not surprisingly, growing cohorts of lecturers in colleges of education and univer-

sity departments shared an increasingly tribal identity as philosophers, sociologists,

psychologists or historians; a 1964 conference convened by the Department of Educa-

tion and Science thus demarcated the field, subsequently embodied in Tibble's influ-

ential book on *The Study of Education* 1966. (This reflected a wider adherence of

academic to disciplinary identity across the university, see Becher (1989) and Silver 1992, 222). The 1970s saw the establishment of new learned societies that institutionalised these identities and to some extent defined their boundaries, for example, the

Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain (founded in 1964) and the History

of Education Society (1967). These disciplinary societies had been anticipated by

a Standing Conference for Studies in Education (SCSE) founded in 1951, with its

British Journal of Educational Studies (1952) initially dominated by historical and

philosophical content. The *British Journal of Educational Psychology* from 1932 had

a more complex evolution through academic and medical psychology in the British

Psychological Society (BPS), and sociology of education was also closely integrated

into its parent discipline, the British Sociological Foundation (BSA) established in

1951. There followed a whole new suite of both discipline specific and generic educa-

tional journals, such as The *Proceedings of the Philosophy of Education Society*

of Great Britain (1966 — later relaunched as the *Journal of Philosophy of Education*), and *History of Education* from 1972. Many more generic titles originated in this period including *Journal of Curriculum Studies* (1968) Manchester University's

Research in Education (1969), *Cambridge Journal of Education* (1971), *Education 3–13* (1973), *Oxford Review of Education* (1975), while sociologists of education, served through the 1970s by the

BSA's *Sociology*, initiated their own *British Journal of Educational Sociology* in 1980. Publication in these journals became an aspiration

for at least the more ambitious new lecturers, though without the institutionalised

pressure to publish that came later.

So part of the story of educational research in this period is one of expansion,

of academicisation, of differentiation (by discipline) and of institutionalisation. The

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expanding business of educational publishing provided both a resource for and an

invitation to the production of educational research (and ultimately data-driven cita-

tion indexes like those generated by Thomson Reuters and used as a metric for quality

assessment—see below). To a significant extent control over this whole network of

activity (including research) shifted from longstanding professional teacher educa-

tors to a new generation of academically qualified and orientated educationists

marching to the call of universities, into which most of the traditional colleges were

absorbed either directly, or indirectly as the polytechnics that initially hosted some

of these colleges themselves became fully integrated into the university sector in the

1990s—a process which became familiar in many parts of the world as the 'univer-

sitification' of teacher education. From the schools' perspective, admittedly, these

trends were often seen as neglecting their professional needs and taking the teacher

education establishment a further remove from practice, and this was later to threaten

the hegemony of the universities in this field.

There is, however, a parallel narrative with different and challenging implications

for relations of production in educational research. The 1960s had seen huge invest-

ment by the UK government (and independent foundations like Nuffield and Ford)

in curriculum development in schools, much of it overseen by the Schools Council

to meet the needs of ROSLA to the age of 16 in 1972. One of the most innovative of

these developments was the Humanities Curriculum Project from 1968, directed by

Lawrence Stenhouse (Stenhouse, 1968; Schools Council/Nuffield Foundation 1970).

Though the project itself (and its central ideas of learning by classroom discussion of

controversial social issues, chaired by a neutral teacher) turned out to be too radical

for most teachers to embrace, it spawned some of the most seminal developments in

educational thought and practice. Stenhouse saw a curriculum as a hypothesis that

had to be tested by a teacher with his or her own classes (Stenhouse, 1975: 142): teachers, therefore, had to be researchers in their own classrooms. Such 'classroom

action research' was taken up by Stenhouse's colleague, John Elliott (among others),

and formulated as a radical challenge to traditional conceptions of the nature of

educational knowledge, its sources and ownership. The relationship between theory

and practice was turned upside down. No longer was it a matter of learning theory

(generated by academic researchers and scholars), then trying to apply it to practice;

nor would the academy be the pre-eminent source of this professional knowledge.

Rather, theory was to be generated out of practice, reflection upon that practice, and

inquiry into practice, generated not by academicians but by teachers. As Elliott put it:

The rationale for involving teachers as researchers of their own practice is connected with an

aspiration to give them control over what is to count as knowledge about practice. As action

researchers, teachers are knowledge generators rather than appliers of knowledge generated

by outsiders (Elliott, 1994, 133).

The mid-twentieth century was, then, a fertile and exciting period for educational

research in the UK (though not only there), offering many different and creative

possibilities. Control over production was to be pretty much in the hands of those

directly engaged—partly because there was low accountability for how they spent

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their time or for what they produced. There was scope for radical experimenta-

tion with research methods and scope for radical ideas (neo-Marxist critique of

the educational reproduction of social inequality, feminism, 'de-schooling society',

democratic evaluation, ' the science of the singular', pupil voice, etc.). Any urgency

for publication of research was as much self-imposed by scholars or researchers

eager to contribute to the ongoing debates, as a response to any external pressures.

For research professionals—and in particular those in the academic community—

what Marx referred to as the *social* relations of production were on the whole fairly

benign, even if accountability in the form of relations between these and a wider

society was weak.

Lurking on the edges of this stage, however, were 'Black Paper' critiques from the

right of British politics (from 1969), threats to dissolution of local democratic control

in favour of a more centralised system and a tightly specified national curriculum, an

oppressive regime of inspection for schools—elements of policy that would increas-

ingly dominate the educational landscape. For universities this new regime, and in

particular the demand for greater and more bureaucratic accountability, found expres-

sion in the measurement of research outcomes from 1986 onwards, but for a while

researchers could enjoy a measure of sweet (and not entirely irresponsible) anarchy!

Growth in the number of journals and the readiness of publishers to take advantage

of a growing market for educational writing meant that there was growing opportunity

for researchers to make their voices heard, at least within their own communities.

Even practitioner research found its way into mainstream journals (the *Cambridge*

Journal of Education published reports of action research as early as 1974—see

Cooper & Ebbutt, [1974)](#) as well as in specialist platforms like the *Classroom Action Research Journal* springing up as a forum for such voices. Worth remembering,

however is that this era pre-dates for most purposes development of the worldwide

web as both resource and outlet for research. Much of our own work in this period

was initially hand written, and if lucky enough to have secretarial assistance we

were uncomfortably aware that questionnaires needed processing by hand, that late

changes of text might require the painstaking correction (aided by correction fluid) of

top copy and carbon copies, one at a time. Material conditions of production—what

Marx identified as the *technical* relations of production—did not support the scale

or speed that a later generation was to enjoy and exploit.

Relations of Production in the Contemporary World

of Educational Research

The theme of the seminar to which this paper was originally a contribution, signalled

concerns about a number of features of the contemporary relations of production of

educational research:

Acceleration … institutional policies and incentive systems [that] promote greater produc-

tivity in educational research, both in terms of volume and speed … research as a product

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… expectations of research productivity … competitive ranking systems, like impact factors

… the ability of scholars to keep up with the literature in their fields … problematization?

The wider research literature abounds with reference to what are clearly seen as

in some sense changing relations of production for research—changes viewed by

the research community as giving cause for concern. In this section, we focus on

three sets of changes that we suggest have continuing significance for these rela-

tions of production. These have bearing on both the social and technical relations

of research production. They are (i) the development of quite sophisticated systems

of accountability, quality assessment and research selectivity, (ii) the commodifica-

tion of research and the contract culture and (iii) the digitalisation of the means of

production of research. We shall be looking at these through a UK perspective, but

all three are to one extent or another a feature of research internationally, the last of

these playing a significant role in the globalisation of research—an example of the

way in which changes in the technical relations of production underpin changes in

the social relations of production.

We should acknowledge, however, that—even within the UK, let alone across

the continents—not all sections of the academic research community are subject to

the same regimes or pressures. 'Big science' requires an infrastructure, a scale of

funding and security of commitment that puts it in a very different set of relations

to, for example, scholars working in philosophy or history where the major require-

ment is for individual scholars to have time to read and think, converse and write.

The eighteenth-century independent scholar survives today in the form of retired

academics, financially secured by a comfortable pension, undistracted by a heavy

schedule of departmental meetings or impatient students, with a prospect of twenty

years or more of scholarly work ahead. In the social sciences Lyotard, Sen, and,

most notably, Ricoeur are among those who have continued to produce distinguished

contributions to their fields long into technical 'retirement'.

Even for educational researchers, the picture of their relations of production is not

homogeneous, as closer examination will indicate. We suggest, however, that, in the

UK at least, these three sets of changes have had far-reaching effects on production

relations within the research community and thence on the research culture as a

whole.

(i) Accountability, quality assessment and research selectivity

In a country which does not on the whole separate higher education teaching institu-

tions from research institutions, one of the most significant contributions to research

funding is via lecturers' salaries, or that proportion of the salary notionally allocated

to support research. When we described academic research in the mid-twentieth

century, this allocation of time came with little accountability: by no means all

academics felt the need to produce research publications on a regular basis, nor was

there much in the way of quality control of what was produced, save in the exer-

cise of perhaps rather jealous and self-protective peer response. (It was much more

common in those days for journals like the *Journal of Philosophy of Education* to

publish responses to papers from previous issues).

This funding for university staff research was not however provided to other parts

of the higher education system, so the expansion in and after 1992 of the *university*

sector in the UK to include former polytechnics (and other HE institutions like teacher

education colleges) meant that either the current level of funding was to be distributed

much more thinly across the expanded sector, or the Higher Education Funding

Council (HEFC) would need to provide a lot more money, or the funds already

allocated would have to be distributed on a selective basis. The third course of action

was chosen. This, along with a mounting political demand for greater accountability

for research expenditure, drove the introduction of a national system of research

quality assessment, built upon attempts by the former Universities Funding Council

(UFC) of the 1980s to assess quality of research, a methodology that continued

under different names to function about every six years. The last was in 2014 and

the next is scheduled for 2020. These assessments served to shape an increasingly

selective distribution of research funding for the period until the next assessment.

Financial benefits of success in these assessments are not confined to distribution

of research funding. The allocation of research students within the UK (and the

funding that accompanies them) has been limited to high-performing institutions,

and many overseas governments will now send students for research degrees—a

lucrative source of income for UK universities—only to these same institutions.

This system, currently titled 'Research Excellence Framework' (REF) has had

far-reaching consequences for production of research in UK universities. First, it

has meant that academics are accountable (at least within their own institutions) for

the research they produce. Only four research publications are required of individual

lecturers in the (roughly) six-year period, but these must be of 'international' standard

to bring any credit or funding to the university (see Bridges, [2009](#) and, for current requirements, [www.hefce.ac.uk/rsrch/ref2021](#)). This has brought enormous pressure on academics to get papers published in 'international' journals and, given the length

of time it can take between first submitting a paper and having it published, to get

the process moving quickly.

Secondly, it has the effect of creating major divisions within departments and

universities, between the researcher sheep and the 'teaching only' goats, with most

of the career rewards going to researchers (and especially to 'research stars'). Depart-

mental leaders typically conduct an internal assessment to decide whose work might

be submitted for evaluation under the national system. There is a lot of game playing

about whether to go for a smaller number of top-quality research 'outputs' or risk a

lower quality grade on a larger volume (where both quality and volume contribute

to the eventual allocation but on an algorithm not disclosed in advance!). So internal

resources, exemptions from teaching loads, and promotions have increasingly been

focussed on staff deemed 'REF-able', at the expense of those who fail to reach the

bar. Thus the REF created differential privilege and standing not only between insti-

tutions but also between staff in those universities, and as success was rewarded with

selective investment, these were divisions that became increasingly entrenched in

the system.

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Third, REF-able staff and their publications become attractive prospects for

transfer to institutions keen to grab research stars, though the funding councils have

struggled to mitigate this effect. Research and researchers become commodities in a

highly competitive market.

Finally, the 2014 REF added another dimension with significant implications for

research production relations. A new element focussed on evidence of the *impact*

of research, which in the field of Education meant for the most part that researchers

needed to evidence the impact of their work on policy or practice. This of course

favoured more applied research over the more theoretical and also pushed academics

into what is in effect a greater dependency on those in the spheres of policy and

practice, their requirements, their agenda and their timetables—because they are the

ones who can both determine and testify to which research has what kind of impact.

It is not difficult to see how these developments in systems of accountability and

quality assessment resulted in a number of shifts in the relations of production:

• Reduction in the level of autonomy of researchers in favour of a more managerial

and managed research environment

• Requirement for greater research productivity in the form of regular submissions

to international journals

• More hierarchical and 'class ridden' research community with reduced opportu-

nity for mobility within it

• More instrumental approach to research (in order to satisfy the impact require-

ment)

• Greater external influence on research agenda and the timetable for its production

(as one international sponsor explained to us—quoting an old Kazakh saying—

'yesterday was too early: tomorrow is too late').

(ii) Commodification of research and the contract culture

The 'impact' requirement in research assessment is only one factor contributing

to what is commonly described as the 'commodification' of research —a notion

that indicates a changed relationship between researcher and funder ('purchaser'),

a changed legal and moral framing of the ownership of 'intellectual property', a

different view of what might be considered the ontological status of the outcomes

of research, the purpose it serves ('knowledge capital') and a changed view of the

researcher's status—as a service provider.

Commodification of research is discussed more fully in a paper contributed to an

earlier seminar/publication in this series (Bridges, 2018), so we content ourselves here with highlighting some key features of the relations of production that are part

of this development.

First, we probably should acknowledge that research contributes different kinds

of benefit: It both awakens and satisfies curiosity; it provides opportunities for human

creativity; it contributes to our understanding of ourselves, our world and our place

in it—sufficient motivation for most researchers, and in particular for what is often

labelled 'curiosity driven research'. Such research may produce insights that have

application in spheres of policy or practice, but it is not driven by this requirement.

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Other research, in, for example, pharmaceuticals, engineering or information tech-

nology, may in addition offer very different kinds of value including commercial

benefit. Whoever owns this may have the beginnings of a new product or be able

to give competitive advantage to an old one. The research may attract investors and

provide a financial return. Unsurprisingly, then, the knowledge becomes designated

as 'intellectual property', as 'knowledge capital' protected by patents and reserved

for the exclusive use of its owners. It is commodified.

Such developments have provoked passionate responses from within the research

community. For Brown:

The commodification of academic research violates the distinctive ideals, habits of mind

and institutional purposes traditionally associated with science. Commodification corrupts

science … because exchanging scientific knowledge for money threatens the moral integrity,

social purpose, and/or epistemic quality of science. Just as prostitution denigrates sex and

bribery denigrates government, commercialised research denigrates science (Brown, 2010:

263).

It is, however, not only research with commercial value that is treated in this way. It

was drawn to the attention of the British Educational Research Association (BERA)

circa 2011 that there was an increasing tendency by both local and national govern-

ment departments involved in commissioning/contracting for research and evalua-

tion in the field of education to make similar claims to ownership and to control

over almost every aspect of research that had little or no commercial value, and

that one would normally expect to be properly available in the public domain—

available to inform a democratic citizenship and not just a self-protecting political

bureaucracy. However, as one local authority officer put it rather graphically, when

challenged about his right to suppress an unfavourable evaluation of a local educa-

tional programme: 'I buy research like I buy a sack of coal and when I have bought

it, I expect to be able to do what the hell I like with it' (Bridges, 1998: 317). Such perspectives on research provoke equally passionate responses.

In this context, the relations of production are quite dramatically changed.

The researcher is de-professionalised—some would say 'proletarianised' (Derber,

1982)—when he or she works under contracts that lay down what will be researched and what methods will be employed, and when the sponsors of the research retain

control over what if anything is published, where, and when. Such developments also

break two key relationships—between the researcher and his or her peers, who may

not now have the opportunity to scrutinise the research, and between the researcher

and the general public who, arguably have the right to know. BERA Ethics Committee

was prompted by these developments to reaffirm such obligations in its code of

conduct, requiring for example that.

Researchers have a responsibility to seek to make public the results of their research for

the benefit of educational professionals, policy makers and a wider public understanding of

educational policy and practice (BERA 2011: 10).

Secondly, the very language of 'product' and hence'production' takes us into a manu-

facturing discourse alien to many traditional academics. For some this extends into

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measures of 'productivity' of the higher education system. In 2016 the Asian Produc-

tivity Organization (APO) organised a Conference on Raising Productivity in Higher

Education. The foreword to a book that issued from the conference proceedings

explains that:

The conference sessions covered topics such as concepts of and approaches to measuring

productivity in higher education, innovations to improve productivity in higher education,

models of and approaches to improving productivity in higher education, higher educational

systems and their performance in APO member countries, the productivity impact of digital

and distance-learning systems, and the way forward to enhancing productivity in higher

education (Asian Productivity Organisation 2017).

Such orientation of higher education towards 'productivity' is not lost on research

students who find themselves victims of this culture. As one academic recorded on

The Guardian's Anonymous Academic blog:

When I was considering whether to study for a doctorate, I heard my chosen university

disparaged as a PhD factory. At the time, I took this to be a sign of efficiency. Now I

understand. PhDs are manufactured; they drop off the end of a conveyer belt, but no one

cares what happens to graduates after that. All universities care about are the fees paid by

students and the cheap labour they provide. This is the opposite of efficiency: no factory

would mindlessly churn out goods that no one wants. (Anonymous Academic, 2018)

Though much reported discussion at the APO conference focuses on teaching and

learning, research productivity does not escape attention, with the suggestion in a

chapter by Moore et al. (2017) that five potential outputs might be measured as indicators of productivity: publications, citations, patents, research completions, and

research funds—all familiar to those working in many higher education settings.

And of course, if 'productivity' becomes the criterion of success and productivity

is measured in purely quantitative terms, then pressures of volume and speed of

'delivery' become critical in this as in any other manufacturing system.

All this also impacts on the nature of employment—and hence relations of produc-

tion in an environment in which speed, flexibility and responsiveness to customer

demand are key elements of 'business' success. It requires a malleable and flexible

workforce which can be grown or shrunk in response to demand—requirements that

prompt analysis in terms suggested by the Anonymous Researcher above, and of

the 'proletarianisation' of workers in higher education, which Halsey defines as: 'A

threefold reduction in the power and advantage in the work and market position of

a class or occupational group: in autonomy of working activity, security of employ-

ment and chances of promotion' (Halsey, 1992: 125)—all conditions, we suggest, that characterise contemporary academic employment and the relations of research

production.

(iii) Research in the digital age

Marx's own analysis of relations of production illustrates some of the ways in which

major historical shifts in the technology of production (the development of the steam-

driven cotton mill for example) also changed the social relations of production. In

our own age, the digital revolution has perhaps at least as dramatic consequences.

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The impact of digitalisation on research is a huge topic that we shall not attempt

to deal with fully, but we observe three features especially relevant to relations of

production.

First, it is interesting to reflect on changes in the technical relations of production

that have taken place over the historical accounts of research production presented in

this paper: from the quill pen and arduous labour of the *scriptorium*; via the printing

press and in the twentieth century the ubiquitous typewriter; to the electronic

keyboard with its ease of modification and editing and automated systems of

type setting, proof reading, correction, publication and distribution. Each of these

changes over history has brought with it acceleration in the speed of production

and reproduction of research and scholarly work, and concurrently an increase in

volume of what is produced. Journals compete with each other to offer speed of

publication. One journal, for example, seeks to attract contributors by declaring

that 'The *Chemistry Research Journal* has the basic objective of rapid broadcasting

of knowledge' (http://chemrj.org/). By contrast, Barry MacDonald's paper on democratic programme evaluation was already making a big impact on the field

circulating from 1974 as a typescript (honed on MacDonald's own portable) for

several years before it was formally published (MacDonald, 1974/1987).

The sheer volume of publications rapidly becomes self-defeating, however. No

one has time to read them. One study of publishing in the field of higher education

alone calculated that there are now 86 English language journals focussed on higher

education (a 40% increase since 2000) that published in 2016 more than 40,000 pages

of text—an annual output of some 16 million words and growing! (Tight, 2017, Times Higher Education 2017). Indications are that much of this material is actually read

by only a handful of people. There are repeated claims (on a somewhat obscure

evidential base) that some 50% of journal articles are read by only the editors and the

reviewers and that the average readership of research in the arts is 7, though evidence

from downloads (perhaps not an entirely reliable proxy for reading) suggests that

things are not quite as bad as this (Ware & Mabe, 2012: par 2.7). There are some companies—working in particular in the field of medical research—who think that

computers will be able to solve the problem they have created, with software that

will inwardly digest this volume of research and advise us rather more briefly what

it has to contribute to a particular field, but we are probably not alone in being

deeply sceptical of such claims. What is more convincing, however, because already

observable, is a prediction that the machine or artificial intelligence will increasingly

replace the academic worker in collection and analysis of research data as well as its

publication—pushing relations of production into a new space.

Development of the digital research space has another impact on research produc-

tion relations that we see as largely benign. It offers quite new opportunities

for *collaborative* research across institutional and geographical boundaries than

have been available hitherto: it facilitates online conferencing, joint authoring and

even translation (and all at speed). 'The material production of knowledge' writes

Caffentzis, ' now depends on a vast worldwide network of information, material and

knowers' (Caffentzis, 2008: 9). With this, of course, to return to a perspective from political economy, it supports the *globalisation* of educational thought and practice

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and, since this is pre-eminently the language of the worldwide web, the hegemony of

the English language in the service of this globalisation. The publishing house Taylor

and Francis captures something of what is on offer in a recent invitation encouraging

authors to publish through its journal Cogent Arts and Humanities: 'Publishing with

us' it promises, 'means you will receive *fast* and reliable publishing and a *global* platform for your research' (widely distributed email 2 May 2018—our italics).

Conclusion

We have found the notion of relations of production a helpful conceptual tool in

thinking about the conditions under which research has been produced over the

centuries—useful in particular because it draws attention to a network of conditions

that interact to create researchers' experience of a life in research and the research

culture in which this experience is embedded. It helps us, for example, to understand

our sense of the 'acceleration' of research when we consider the combination of

changes in the tools of research production (Marx's 'technical relations'), pressures

imposed by research sponsors and changing funding mechanisms, extended forms

of accountability and competitiveness, proliferation of research publications and

the pressures to 'publish or perish' (Marx's 'social relations'). Our picture of these

relations of production extends beyond what Marx sets out in *A contribution to*

a critique of political economy (1859) or *Das Kapital* (1867), but it is, we think, consistent with his approach.

We described in the final section on relations of production in the contemporary

research environment a variety of disruptions to these relations, which possibly dwarf

anything that had gone before. Certainly, the regularity with which these disrup-

tions are complained of in the contemporary literature on higher education suggests

something novel. We need, however, to recover our historical perspective. Halsey

describes these developments as part of 'the adaptation of corporate structures of

feudal origin to the economy of modern countries' (Halsey, 1992: (vii), and he cites a 1918 speech by Max Weber (Gerth & Mills, 1947) and a publication of the same year by Norwegian American sociologist Thorstein Veblen of a protest against 'the

conduct of universities by business men' (Veblen, 1918) as early analyses of what we might otherwise regard as very contemporary issues—even if these sources found

few echoes at the time in the still rather gentlemanly precincts of British univer-

sities. Halsey points out the very contemporary tenor of Weber's observations of

'the demand set up by a modern economy for highly trained specialist manpower,

the advance of bureaucracy in all forms of social organisation, and the "proletari-

anisation" of the university research worker and teacher' (Halsey, 1992: vii)—and we have already noted the revival of this notion of 'proletarianisation' in Derber

(1982). Nor have such analyses remained dormant: roughly fifty years after Weber and Veblen's analyses (and fifty years ago) Roszak launched a scathing attack on the

modern 'service university' as little different from the brothel portrayed in Genet's

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The Balcony! (Roszak, [1967](#)). So in our analysis, as in all histories, we need to be alert to precedents, antecedents and the residues of past eras and cautious about the

facile allocation of developments to periods.

We also have to acknowledge that the sort of developments we have described

have affected different areas of research in different national and institutional settings

in different ways. Some scholars manage to escape almost any of their impact. When

John Walsh, a historian of Methodism, was asked at a party to celebrate his fifty

years as a Fellow of Jesus College Oxford what he was doing these days, he looked

surprised. 'Well I cycle in to the Bodleian [Library] and get on with my work as I have

always done', he replied. But then he had no ambition at that stage in his academic

career for a secure job or a promotion, no requirement to show his research produc-

tivity or impact, no need for external funding, no need to contribute to departmental

or university overheads, no anxious post-doc researchers desperate for an extension

of their short term contracts. He felt none of the constraints shaping the relations

of production that construct the working lives of most in the academic research

community—just, like Alcuin and Lupus a millennium and more earlier, an intellec-

tual curiosity, a desire to understand, to synthesise that understanding perhaps, and

in due course to share this with anyone who might be interested.

Note

1.

Election as Fellows of the Royal Society (FRS): Darwin 1761 (age 30), Priestley

1766 (age 33), Wedgwood 1783 (age 53), Boulton 1785 (age 57).

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Legacy of Sir Alec Clegg, co-edited with Catherine Burke and Lottie Hoare (Routledge 2021);

Molly Brearley (1905-1994): Educating Teachers and Popularising Developmental Approaches

in the Post-War Era, in British Froebelian Women from the Mid-Nineteenth to the Twenty-First

Century (Routledge 2020); and Dewey In Our Time, co-edited with Ruth Heilbronn (2016).

Evaluating Productivity in Educational Research: Evaluation Criteria of Rigor and Ethics

Lynn Fendler

Abstract Educational researchers have been evaluating ourselves and our

colleagues' work using criteria that are based almost exclusively on bibliometrics,

which are in turn based on quantities of publications and citations. In misguided

attempts to conduct scientific and 'objective', evaluations of research, institu-

tions (universities, foundations, and governments) have adopted instead populist,

reductionist, and non-rigorous approaches to evaluating productivity in educational

research. It is an example of governmentality operating as a technology of normal-

ization that oversimplified notions of productivity have been imported uncritically

to govern many research-evaluation exercises. This chapter problematizes biblio-

metric criteria of evaluation, and suggests instead that we pay attention to purposeful

rigor and ethics in assessments of research productivity. Fortuitously, research-based

conceptualizations of productivity, together with literal readings of institutional

policy language open the door for the inclusion of ethical judgments into the process

of evaluating productivity in educational research.

Productivity is generally understood in terms of economics and efficiency to mean

more is better. Productivity has attained such a high degree of prominence as an

indicator of success and excellence that productivity itself has become an object

of scientific study and expertise. The purpose of this paper is to examine various

conceptualizations of productivity with the aim of clarifying options for evaluating

productivity for educational researchers. Toward that end I first summarize popular

notions of productivity, and contrast those with research-based conceptualizations of

productivity. In the process, I ground the analysis in some institutional practices by

citing some explicit language that governs the evaluation of productivity in educa-

tional research. In conclusion, I suggest that educational research evaluation exer-

cises would be well served to attend to the explicit language of institutional policies,

and to use research-based conceptualizations of productivity for evaluation, which

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prompt us to ask, "What kind of world are we creating with our research-productivity

evaluation practices?"

Some researchers have pointed out various detrimental effects of the intensifica-

tion of academic expectations to become "more productive" (see, e.g., Shahjahan,

2015). Critiques of such trends toward accelerated productivity point to the damaging effects on researchers' health, well-being, and family life as well as the sacrifice

of creativity and artistic qualities in educational research. These lines of critique

are apropos and important. To those critiques, I would like to add another line of

argument, namely that we turn to scientific conceptualizations of productivity and

literal readings of policy language whenever we participate in productivity exer-

cises in order to bolster considerations of quality when we evaluate productivity of

educational research. Fortuitously, scientific studies of productivity per se provide

us with frameworks for including questions of value and purpose as indispensable

components for the evaluation of productivity in educational research.

The scientific study of productivity in educational research is not new. Scientific

approaches to the study and evaluation of productivity were offered in the 1970s, for

example, by Hatry and Fisk (1971) and Boulding (1972). Hatry and Fisk (1971) were primarily concerned with productivity in local public sectors. They endorsed inter-agency cooperation to expedite efforts toward better measurements of productivity.

Their work also recognized the complexity of measuring quality as a component of

productivity: "Productivity should not be estimated in such a way as to ignore the

'quality' of the product or service, particularly in relation to the effects or impacts

on the citizens and the community" (Hatry and Fisk, 1971, p. 3). Boulding's (1972)

work on productivity focuses directly on education. He began his analysis by pointing

out that productivity is particularly complex in educational settings: "[Schooling] is

producing … a set of products that are hard to define, measure, and even to identify"

(Boulding, 1972, p. 130). Since the 1970s, scientific studies of productivity have continued to explicate the complexities of the

construct of productivity, and the

concomitant complexities of any attempt to measure productivity.

This paper is organized into five sections: a brief historical summary of produc-

tivity as a historical phenomenon, a description of popular notions of productivity,

summaries of current research-based conceptualizations of productivity, examples

of institutional language governing research productivity, and implications for future

evaluation of productivity in educational research.

Productivity in Historical Contexts

Productivity is a term from economics that originally referred to the output of agri-

cultural goods. Most histories of productivity locate a change in the meaning of the

term beginning in the late 19th-century industrial revolution (see, e.g., Greiner 2014).

Historical accounts such as these assert that machinery and assembly lines added a

dimension of efficiency to definitions of productivity to mean not only more output,

but also more output in less time. Economic journalist Zantal-Wiener (2017) includes

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a wide array of historical factors that may have contributed to the rising importance

of efficiency, including daily planners, fast food, and women's postwar entry into

the workforce. From its original meaning of output, to cost-effective output, to faster

and more efficient output, productivity per se has become regarded as a movement

(Bouckaert, 1990) or an industry unto itself (Zantal-Weiner, 2017).

Bouckaert1 (1990) compiled a history of the "productivity movement," that traces connections between efficiency and effectiveness in public and private sectors. He

notes that some advocates in the productivity movement deemed it necessary to sepa-

rate policy and administration in order to clarify which sector had jurisdiction over

policy relating to productivity: "The treatment of the administrative service as polit-

ical patronage renders administration inefficient and legislation corrupt" (Goodnow,

1900 quoted in Bouckaert, 1990, p. 54). For these proponents, public administration was regarded as an efficient "value free science" (Bouckaert, 1990, p. 54). Other public administrators criticized this technical efficiency view of public administration

and preferred effectiveness (i.e., in safeguarding human welfare):

The position of the political managers and their perception of their role determined the

productivity improvement policy. The search for productivity was now motivated not by

better government, as it had been in the first stage, or by expense control, as it had been in

the second stage, but by the desire to get more yield out of the taxpayer's money: more bang

for the public buck. (Bouckaert, 1990, p. 59)

Bouckaert (1990) summarized key moments in the history of the productivity

movement in the US public sector as follows:

1970

Creation of National Commission on Productivity

1974

Name changed to National Commission on Productivity and Work Quality

1975

Name changed to National Center for Productivity and Quality of Working

Life

1975

National Productivity and Quality of Working Life Act: "there is a national

need to identify and encourage the development of social economic, scien-

tific, business, labor, and governmental contributions to improve produc-

tivity growth and increased economic effectiveness in the public and private

sectors of the United States" (quoted in Bouckaert, 1990, p. 60).

1978

National Center for Productivity and Quality of Working Life was elim-

inated. Functions assumed by Center for Productive Public Management,

which later changed its name to National Center for Public Productivity

1978

Founding of National Productivity Council

1979

Founding of Productivity Resource Center (in Office of Personnel Manage-

ment)

1980s

President's Private Sector Survey on Cost Control

(from Bouckaert, 1990, pp. 54–60)

It becomes apparent from Bouckaert's historical research that not only has the

meaning of productivity changed over time, but also the history of productivity has

entailed fundamental debates about the role and purpose of research in government

1 Geert Bouckaert is a KU-Leuven professor of Public Administration.

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and administration. Within these debates are also differences between populist under-

standings and expert understandings of productivity, which are described in the next

sections.

Popular Measures of Productivity

Current popular versions of productivity have been reiterated in self-help books, TED

talks, and professional development workshops. Popular versions of productivity are

based on assumptions that increased speed and higher output numbers are the most

desirable goals. Popular versions of productivity are often justified by characterizing

the endeavor as a move toward value-free efficiency. Even when the advice is "work

smarter, not harder," the ultimate goal is usually higher output numbers in less time.

One indicator that speed and volume have become synonymous with productivity

is that most popular self-help books are not subject-specific; they claim to help

people become more productive whether they are working in educational, business,

medical, governmental, manufacturing, or service sectors. Widespread applicability

is possible only when it is assumed that faster output is better regardless of product,

and it does not matter who is being served or what kind of effects are being produced.

Across the board, populist approaches to increasing productivity fail to ask ques-

tions about who benefits from all this production, in other words, what exactly is

production for? In popular treatments, the purpose and effects of research (or any

other product) are not addressed or problematized; efficiency is regarded as an end

unto itself. This populist version has been taken up by academia (and other social

settings) as the assumed meaning of the term. The following section summarizes three

representative approaches that promote populist versions of productivity, strategies

that are purported to increase efficiency in productivity for educational research.

Smarter, Faster, Better

Duhigg (2016) defines productivity as "making certain choices in certain ways"

that moves us from being "merely busy" to "genuinely productive." Duhigg's

approach resembles most self-help books; it combines common sense, psychology,

and management strategies. Motivation is a central theme for Duhigg's approach

to productivity, and he posits that motivation is contingent on the degree to which

we feel in control: "Motivation is triggered by making choices that demonstrate to

ourselves that we are in control. The specific choice we make matters less than the

assertion of control." In Duhigg's approach, decisions ought to be driven by the

degree to which the options lead us to feel more in control: "If you give people an

opportunity to feel a sense of control and let them practice making choices, they can

learn to exert willpower. Once people know how to make self-directed choices into

a habit, motivation becomes more automatic."

Among its various guidelines and systems, the book does not address the purpose,

value, or effects of production beyond the purpose of creating a greater sense of

control in our lives.

Getting Things Done

Allen (2002) has become famous for his books, blogs, podcasts, and training institutes for *Getting Things Done* ("GTD" as devotees say). His GTD industry was

derived from his previous experiences improving the efficiency of productivity with

aerospace, financial, and pharmaceutical industries. Allen's GTD method is manage-

rial: productivity is said to improve when we write things down immediately, and

prioritize them into daily, weekly, and monthly schedules (Fallows, 2004). Allen's

(2002) GTD method consists of five steps:

1.

Capture: Collect what has your attention. Use an in-basket, notepad, or voice

recorder to capture 100% of everything that has your attention. Little, big,

personal, and professional—all your to-do's, projects, things to handle or finish.

2.

Clarify: Process what it means. Take everything that you capture and ask: Is it

actionable? If no, then trash it, incubate it, or file it as reference. If yes, decide

the very next action required. If it will take less than two minutes, do it now. If

not, delegate it if you can; or put it on a list to do when you can.

3.

Organize: Put it where it belongs. Put action reminders on the right lists. For

example, create lists for the appropriate categories—calls to make, errands to

run, emails to send, etc.

4.

Reflect: Review frequently. Look over your lists as often as necessary to deter-

mine what to do next. Do a weekly review to clean up, update your lists, and

clear your mind.

5.

Engage: Simply Do. Use your system to take appropriate actions with confi-

dence.

[(https://gettingthingsdone.com/five-steps/)](https://gettingthingsdone.com/five-steps/)

Allen's approach has been compared to the assembly-line implementations of

Henry Ford, that is, the system is based on efficiency (volume and speed). None of

the steps addresses effectiveness, content, purpose, quality, or value of any action or

decision.

Bibliometrics: Another Popular Approach for Evaluating

Research Productivity

Bibliometrics, including impact factors (for journals) and h-index (for authors), have

become perhaps the most common instruments for evaluating educational research

productivity in universities, which also affects funding and personnel decisions such

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as promotion and tenure. Bibliometrics are being used to evaluate institutions, units,

teams and individuals on the basis of numbers of publications in "high impact"

journals. "High impact" in turn, is usually measured on the basis of numbers of

citations, so at root, bibliometrics rely on quantitative citation data.

At the same time, bibliometrics have become the target of criticism from different

directions. Critical researchers in education have attributed the increased emphasis

on productivity ("performativity") in educational research in relation to the intensi-

fication of neoliberalist values that have spread from the corporate world into other

social sectors (see, e.g. Ball, 2010). Social justice researchers point out that bibliometrics are inherently conservative mechanisms that serve to maintain hierarchies

of racial and gender privilege (Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, 2015). Scientists have argued that bibliometrics thwart scientific inquiry and discovery. Business

management scholars argue that bibliometrics are meaningless when they are not tied

to specific purposes and stakeholders. Economists found that study results "reveal

a strikingly large discrepancy between perceptions of impact and the metric we

currently use to measure it" (Borchardt and Hartings, 2019). Even though bibliometrics are used almost exclusively by universities and

publishing houses, bibliometric

evaluation practices are based on reductionist notions of productivity, and not on

actual research about productivity.

Bibliometrics are calculated using quantitative citation algorithms that limit cita-

tions by date and venue; bibliometrics are conceptualized in a quantitative sense,

namely that more citations are better than fewer, and higher impact factors are better

than lower. As several critics have pointed out, bibliometrics (including so-called

impact factors) are based on quantities of citations in specified publications, and

they fail to account for the wide range of citational practices, the qualitative dimen-

sions of any impact, or the ethics of any impact. Smeyers and Burbules (2011), for example, provided a comprehensive summary of problematic issues involved with

using bibliometrics to evaluate educational research, including self-citation, diverse

purposes for citations in different fields, narrow scope of Web of Science. Their

research explains how impact factors are calculated, how bibliometrics are used in

high stakes decision-making, and some of the implications of impact factors when

they are used to evaluate educational research. Smeyers and Burbules agree that

research must be evaluated, and sometimes by using quantitative measures. At the

same time, they raise cautions about the use of bibliometrics to evaluate research:

The legitimate search for more objective judgments and comparisons in a complex and

eclectic institution like the university results instead in mechanistic procedures that avoid

substantive discussions of content and elide deeper (and more difficult) debates about what

constitutes academic quality and importance. (Smeyers & Burbules, 2011, p. 12) In the prestigious journal *Nature*, economics researchers Stephan et al. , (2017)

concur with the themes articulated by Smeyers and Burbules that bibliometrics are

flawed proxies for the evaluation of research productivity, and moreover, that the use

of bibliometrics for evaluation of research stifles innovation:

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[O]ur findings suggest that the more we bind ourselves to quantitative short-term measures,

the less likely we are to reward research with a high potential to shift the frontier…. If we

are to truly create more 'objective' assessments, all of us…need to use quantitative and

qualitative tools responsibly. (Stephan et al., 2017, p. 412)

I was somewhat surprised to learn that scientific researchers all over the world have

been speaking out publicly against the use of bibliometrics. Scientists have argued

that bibliometrics are oversimplified and misleading proxies for impact or excel-

lence of research. For example, in 2012, a multinational, multidisciplinary Decla-

ration on Research Assessment (DORA) (known as the San Francisco Declaration

on Research Assessment) articulated the views of more than 500 institutions and

12,000 individuals (primarily scientists) who object to the use of bibliometrics for

evaluating research. The Declaration notes that journal impact factors were never

meant to assess the quality of research: "The Journal Impact Factor, as calculated by

Thomson Reuters, was originally created as a tool to help librarians identify journals

to purchase, not as a measure of the scientific quality of research in an article" (San

Francisco, 2012).

After summarizing the major problems with using bibliometrics to evaluate

research, the San Francisco Declaration highlights three broad recommendations:

• Eliminate the use of journal-based metrics, such as Journal Impact Factors, in

funding, appointment, and promotion considerations

• Assess research on its own merits rather than on the basis of the journal in which

the research is published

• Capitalize on the opportunities provided by online publication

The overriding assertion of the Declaration is unequivocal: "Do not use journal-

based metrics, such as Journal Impact Factors, as a surrogate measure of the quality

of individual research articles, to assess an individual scientist's contributions, or in

hiring, promotion, or funding decisions" (San Francisco, 2012).

Researchers from a wide array of disciplines (e.g., sciences, engineering, busi-

ness, education, philosophy) agree that bibliometrics are poor proxies for evaluating

research productivity or quality. I found no arguments in favor of using bibliomet-

rics; it is generally recognized that bibliometrics are flawed mechanisms, but they

are expedient because they provide a quick and dirty metric for ranking a wide array

of research products. There seem to be no scientific, logical, or ethical justifica-

tions in favor of using bibliometrics to evaluate research productivity. As possible

alternatives to popular treatments of productivity, the next section summarizes some

research-based conceptualizations of productivity that go beyond bibliometrics.

Research-Based Conceptualizations of Productivity

In contrast to popular notions, scholarly research from a range of disciplines has

provided thorough analyses of the complexities involved in measuring and eval-

uating productivity. For the most part, productivity research has been conducted

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in disciplines of scientometrics, economics, business, and organizational manage-

ment. Research in these fields has provided us with more rigorous conceptualiza-

tions than popular treatments have done. Just as statisticians are almost always more

nuanced and cautious about the uses of statistics than are researchers from other disci-

plines, productivity researchers (e.g., from scientometrics) provide more nuanced and

cautious conceptualizations of productivity than do academic researchers from other

disciplines. In this section, I summarize three representative research-based theo-

rizations of productivity that are available as models for a more robust and rigorous

approach to evaluating productivity in educational research.

From within the disciplines of the natural sciences, Lindner et al. (2018) celebrate the importance of scientific breakthroughs, for example, the importance of Kuhnian

"revolutionary science." They argue that it is scientifically counterproductive to

define productivity according to bibliometric citation numbers:

There is little reward for ensuring that new findings are valid or for conducting critical studies to filter out results that cannot be reliably reproduced. Instead, there is tremendous competitive pressure to claim primacy of discovery and to maximize the numbers of publications

and citations. (Lindner et al. 2018)

Lindner et al. studied publication successes by comparing studies with posi-

tive results (i.e., something is true) versus studies with negative results (i.e., some-

thing is not true). For Lindner et al., the current incentive structure of quantitative

bibliometrics functions in a way that is actually anti-scientific:

The consequence is that many invalid and nonreproducible findings are produced and

published and not efficiently eliminated with rigorous replication studies which results in

the publication of large numbers of nonreproducible false positives…, leading to what is

now recognized as a "reproducibility crisis." (Lindner et al. 2018)

Lindner et al. (2018) problematize oversimplified conceptualizations of productivity and argue that assessments of productivity should pay attention to qualita-

tive aspects of research: "scientific progress and productivity is dependent on the

exploration of diverse, innovative hypotheses to advance the frontiers of knowledge,

combined with critical replication/confirmation studies to eliminate results that are

not reproducible" (Lindner et al. 2018). Overall, Lindner et al. conclude that scientific research is thwarted when it is evaluated on the basis of bibliometrics, and scientific research would be more innovative and contribute more to the advancement of

knowledge if research were evaluated on the basis of qualitative aspects instead.

Similarly, scientometric researchers Abramo and D'Angelo (2014) describe their research as microeconomic theory of productivity. They characterize all research

activities as complex and multidimensional:

Research activity is a production process in which the inputs consist of human, tangible

(scientific instruments, materials, etc.) and intangible (accumulated knowledge, social

networks, economic rents, etc.) resources, and where output, the new knowledge has a

complex character of both tangible nature (tacit knowledge, consulting activity, etc.). The

new-knowledge production function has therefore a multi-input and multi-output character.

(Abramo & D'Angelo, 2014, p. 1131)

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In this analysis, Abramo and D'Angelo point out that productivity cannot be

evaluated on the basis of an algorithm or simple set of bibliometric criteria because

there are too many kinds of inputs and too many kinds of outputs. They note that any

assessment of productivity is dependent on qualitative features including analyses

of the purposes and effects of the product. Again, a scientific study of productivity

points out that simple increases in output numbers is a misguided way to understand

productivity.

A third research-based approach comes from a business perspective. Schierenbeck

(2013) argues that productivity should be specified in relation to various stakeholders.

He asks, "Productive for whom and toward what end?" Focusing directly on educa-

tional research, Schierenbeck argues that research productivity ought to be based

on the degree to which it enhances the core purpose of the university, which (he

asserts) is to educate students. Schierenbeck argues that educational research could

be improved if universities applied a business-manager's approach to the evaluation

of productivity. 2 Schierenbeck concludes that productivity in educational research must be analyzed in relation to three different (and sometimes competing) stakeholders: the students, the university institution itself, and the general public. For

purposes of his analysis, Schierenbeck acknowledges that any analysis of produc-

tivity must first identify and specify which particular "business" of the university is

being evaluated:

While it may not be possible to devise a useful productivity metric that reflects the perfor-

mance of an institution across all these different businesses [education, research, publishing, retailing, hospitality, and entertainment], it should be feasible to define and measure productivity in the core business of many institutions of higher education–that of educating their

students. (Schierenbeck, 2013, p. 10)

Schierenbeck (2013) writes, "the productivity of an institution of higher education is defined as *the extent to which its educational impact exceeds educational costs*"

(p. 12; italics in original). However, educational impact is a complex construct, and

Schierenbeck suggests at least three separate stakeholders that must be differentiated

before we have any starting point for assessing educational impact in terms of values:

The conduct of research…might add value to the education of students by improving the

quality of teaching and by potentially providing the institution with patent income or extra-

mural research funds, but it might also detract from the core business of educating students

by reducing the amount of time faculty can spend in the classroom and by consuming

financial resources that could otherwise be applied directly for educational purposes. Thus,

viewed from the perspective of educating students, the net effect of research on productivity

is ambiguous–it could be either negative or positive, depending on the specific situation.

(Schierenbeck, 2013, p. 10)

In this analysis, Schierenbeck clarifies that even when the purpose of an institu-

tion of higher learning is narrowed down to the single aim of "educate students,"

that limited purpose still implies three different value stakeholders: the students, the

2 This may appear to be somewhat ironic since most academic governance policies claim to be

adhering to a business-model approach for evaluating educational research.

institution, and the general public. Schierenbeck's analysis of productivity in educa-

tional sectors provides a greater degree of specificity and rigor to be considered

for evaluating productivity in educational research: all evaluations of productivity

would need first to clarify qualitatively which educational values are salient, and

which stakeholders were being served by any given product.

Robust scientific analyses of productivity have been widely available to

researchers for at least 50 years. These scientific treatments unanimously claim

that evaluations of productivity are very complicated, they cannot be conducted

using all-purpose algorithms, and they must consider qualitative features—including

stakeholders, impact, and relevance—as indispensable criteria of evaluation.

Practical Professional Considerations: Reading Institutional

Research-Evaluation Guidelines Literally

Research-based conceptualizations of productivity may be desirable for scientific and

rigorous evaluations of educational research, but professional institutional settings

may use bibliometrics to expedite the process of evaluation. When faced with these

practical and professional contingencies, it can be useful to pay close attention to

the explicit language used in institutional research-evaluation exercises. Popular

opinion holds that productivity means higher numbers; however, research evalua-

tion frameworks rarely specify quantitative measurement criteria. For example, the

UK Research Excellence Framework specifies an evaluation framework in language

that emphasizes quality and impact, not quantity of research: "the quality of outputs

(e.g., publications, performances, and exhibitions), their impact beyond academia,

and the environment that supports research" (REF, 2018). Notably, the REF explicitly does not use journal impact factors to determine funding allocations (Stephan

et al., 2017). Instead, the REF asks institutions to attest to a particular kind of impact, namely to specify the ways any research product has led to changes in the practices

of some sector in the wider social community. The REF definition of impact looks

to the effects of research on the wider community, which does not align with the

definition of journal-bound impact measured by bibliometric calculations.

At Stanford University, the criteria for promotion and tenure do not include

language about quantities or bibliometrics; rather they emphasize innovation,

distinction, and impact on "the field":

For recommendations of reappointment or promotion of a member of the Stanford faculty

to tenure status, the department or school is required to present evidence that the candidate's overall performance justifies the award of tenure, including evidence that the candidate has

achieved true distinction in scholarship. The scholarship must clearly reveal that the person

being proposed for tenure is not only among the best in his/her experience cohort in a broadly

defined field, but is also likely to become one of the very best in the field. … The judgment

is both comparative and predictive. It focuses on issues such as whether the candidate is

performing the kind of innovative, cutting-edge research on important questions in the field

that breaks new ground, changes the way the field is viewed, broadens our understanding of

the field, or opens up new methods or new areas of investigation, and thereby has (or is likely Licensed to LUCENA ANTIPALA (library@csr-scc.edu.ph)

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to have) the fundamental impact on the field that is expected from the very best scholars

in the field. Factors considered in assessing research performance or promise include (but

are not limited to) the following: scholarly activity and productivity; impact, innovation and

creativity; recognition in the field; ability to work effectively as part of a research team (if relevant); effective communication with colleagues, staff and students; and professionalism,

institutional compliance and ethics. (Stanford, 2015)

Similarly, the tenure and promotion guidelines at the University of Illinois Urbana-

Champaign emphasize qualities, not quantities of research production:

The department evaluation should articulate the standards and criteria used to judge the

candidate's research performance and assess how the candidate's accomplishments meet

those criteria….The emphasis should be placed on at least two publications or creative

works. Of particular concern are the quality of execution, the significance of the topics, the

impact on the field, and the sustainability of the research endeavor. It is recommended that

the departmental evaluation should be independent of the evaluations of external reviewers.

(University of Illinois, 2017, p. 11)

Michigan State University tenure and promotion policies also do not explicitly

mention quantities; moreover, the policies use the term *achievements* (instead of

research or *publications*):

1.

Reappointment with award of tenure: Each tenure recommendation should be

based on a clear record of sustained, outstanding achievements in education and

scholarship across the mission, consistent with performance levels expected at

peer universities.

2.

A recommendation for promotion from assistant professor to associate professor

in the tenure system should be based on several years of sustained, outstanding

achievements in education and scholarship across the mission, consistent with

performance levels expected for promotion to associate professor at peer univer-

sities. A reasonably long period in rank before promotion is usually necessary

to provide a basis in actual performance for predicting capacity to become

an expert of national and/or international stature and long-term, high-quality

professional achievement. (Michigan State University, 2017)

The explicit language of university policies regarding productivity considerations

in faculty evaluation may provide a great deal of wiggle room for exercising value

judgments, especially when those value judgments are based on rigorous, research-

based conceptualizations of productivity for evaluating research.

Implications for Educational Research: What Kind of World Are We Creating?

For educational research to sustain its ongoing commitments to quality and rigor,

it makes sense to pay close attention to institutional language of evaluation, and

also to employ rigorous and nuanced conceptualizations in the process of evaluating

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research productivity. That implies educational researchers would reject undertheo-

rized and reductionist notions of productivity, and instead embrace research-based

conceptualizations, while confronting governmentality by attending carefully to the

language of policies governing research productivity in any given institution.

In some institutions, faculty researchers have considerable influence on the stan-

dards and guidelines by which research productivity ought to be evaluated. In other

places, faculty members have little say, and these personnel decisions are made

at administrative levels (university system; state; national) quite distant from most

faculty work. In any case, research-based conceptualizations of productivity and

literal readings of policy language may be used to support, and even invite the

inclusion of value judgments as indispensable components of evaluation exercises.

From Ranking to Relevance

Bibliometrics have been used primarily for ranking; it is easy to count citations in

articles and arrange them in order from most to least. However, bibliometrics tell us

nothing about effects or relevance. Douglass (2016) argues in favor of a new model for understanding productivity at universities, which he calls "The New Flagship

University." For Douglas, relevance is more important than ranking for evaluating

productivity:

The New Flagship University provides an expansive vision for leading national universities

and a needed alternative narrative to global rankings and World Class Universities. The

Flagship model explores pathways for universities to re-shape their missions and operational

features to meaningfully expand their relevancy [sic] in the societies that gave them life and

purpose. (Douglass, 2016 online)

Similarly, geosciences scholar Kirchherr (2018) condemns the entire Ph.D.

endeavor as being irrelevant to the practical world:

Many academics enter science to change the world for the better. Yet it can often feel like

contemporary academia is more about chasing citations. Most academic work is shared only

with a particular scientific community, rather than policymakers or businesses, which makes

it entirely disconnected from practice. (Kirchherr, 2018)

Kirchherr advocates an educationalization approach that would convert all univer-

sity research into efforts to solve social problems. For example, recent trends

governing "impact" in the UK Research Excellence Framework have been revised to

embrace application to practice as the most important criterion. In order to qualify as

having impact, the REF now requires documentation about how research publications

have actually affected social practices (policies; procedures; structures).

Different research projects have different intended beneficiaries, whether those

beneficiaries are listed explicitly or not. At the same time, research projects also enact

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various relationships between research and practice regardless of who the beneficia-

ries are. Boyer (1990), for example, differentiated four different functions of scholarship, not necessarily according to beneficiaries, but according to the relationship

of research to practice:

1.

Scholarship of discovery (aka "basic research" that initiates new paths for

research)

2.

Scholarship of integration (e.g., interdisciplinary; cross-cultural; ethical

reframing; critique)

3.

Scholarship of application (clinical trials; problem-solving studies)

4.

Scholarship of teaching

Boyer's work provides one possible framework for identifying and classifying

four different kinds of educational research that may serve diverse constituencies

associated with universities.

From an institutional standpoint, questions of productivity in our respective insti-

tutional settings call for explicit statements of intended beneficiaries and the purpose

and relevance of any given research project: Is the research meant to change schools?

To inform policy makers? To synthesize research findings? To improve university

rankings? To support teachers? To reframe an intractable problem? To call attention

to unethical practices? To inspire more just and inclusive perspectives? To explore

uncharted conceptual territory?

The criteria of relevance begin to address issues of quality by raising the question

of who benefits. It is helpful to ask for whom any research is relevant as a way of

specifying one aspect of impact, which is one step better than bibliometrics for evalu-

ating research productivity. Scientific conceptualizations of productivity specify that

any evaluation of research ought to include analyses of purpose, competing stake-

holders, and the impact of productivity on quality of life for researchers and the

general public.

Beyond ranking, relevance is a key element for the evaluation of research; it may

also be strategic and liberating to read the language of research evaluation literally.

At the same time, even when specific questions of relevance and literal readings are

included in evaluation exercises, there is still no explicit provision for addressing

questions of ethics as a crucial component for evaluating productivity.

From Relevance to Ethics

Research-based conceptualizations of productivity make it clear that there is a

great deal more to evaluation than increased output numbers, efficiency, or impact

factors. When evaluating research productivity, scientific conceptualizations ask us

to consider a range of possible stakeholders, and professional ethical commitments

ask us to take values into account when evaluating productivity. As one possible

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direction (adopted by the UK REF), Douglass (2016) and Kirchherr (2018) argue that research be appraised on the basis of its relevance to society, specifically its

contributions to solving social problems. Schierenbeck (2013) notes that there are several different potential sites of impact for university research. However, these

questions of relevance still do not account for questions about values or ethical

impacts of educational research.

Questions about the ethical implications of research are too complicated and

value-laden to be outsourced to algorithms or statistical models. Ethical evaluations

of research productivity entail civic debate at local and societal levels, attention to

legal provisions and organizational mechanisms, and wrangling with fundamental

questions such as: What kind of world are we creating with our research? These

issues lie within the purview of the humanities, philosophy, and social theory. No

less than the prestigious and high-powered journal *Science* advocates the inclusion

of courses in the humanities for preparing scientists:

The study of literature, history, and philosophy shed light on the influence science has had

on the quality of people's lives and on the shaping of society, both positively and negatively.

These studies also inform us of society's needs and are important considerations for the

concerned scientist to appreciate and learn from, including the consideration in where he or

she chooses to work and what projects they undertake. (Dalbert, 2011)

In recognition of the importance of values and ethics as components of research

evaluations, some institutions have taken steps to include philosophers, historians,

and social theorists as members of research teams and for designing criteria for

evaluating research productivity. One recent response to addressing questions of

value in educational research is the HuMetricsHSS Initiative (Konkiel, 2017). The HuMetricsHSS program advances five core values as necessary criteria for evaluating

research productivity:

• Collegiality (professional practices of kindness, generosity, and empathy)

• Quality (demonstrations of originality, pushing boundaries, methodological

soundness, advancement of knowledge both in the academy and in the general

public)

• Equity (social justice, equitable access, public good)

• Openness (transparency, candor, accountability)

• Community (engagement and leadership)

These HuMetrics provide a model for the inclusion of ethics into evaluations of

research productivity.

My own department advanced another example of ethical considerations by

including values as necessary criteria for the evaluation of research. After a year of

formal and informal discussions, the department formally adopted (by a vote of the

faculty) a set of Core Principles that made explicit our values of diversity, inclusion,

and public engagement. This statement of Core Principles was then incorporated into

the process of promotion and tenure evaluations.

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Michigan State University Teacher Education Department Core
Principles Statement

We are scholars, researchers, and teacher educators committed to practices

of equity and social justice in education. As an intellectual community, we

aspire to prepare students who have the strong disciplinary content knowledge,

the skills and the dispositions to be effective educators and agents of equity-

oriented change.

Our work is guided by the following core principles:

Humanizing Interactions, Practices, and Scholarship: We recognize the

importance of attending to the humanizing aspects of our work and that building

relationships of dignity and care is ethically necessary across our teaching,

research and service.

Linking Theory, Action, and Practice: We seek to challenge the status quo

of educational scholarship by reflexively engaging practice and theory for the

purpose of advancing a graduate and undergraduate teacher education that

produces excellence among future teachers and teacher educators.

Amplifying Voices: We value multiple conceptual, theoretical, methodolog-

ical, and translational perspectives paying close attention to diverse and varied

voices from communities that are often marginalized in education, including

in our own work.

Transforming Relationships: We seek to create trust and reciprocity to

both nurture and challenge relationships with communities, students, and other

partners for the purpose of elevating the profession of teaching.

Participating in Public Discourse: We proactively engage in public

discourse with educational leaders, policy makers, and others concerned with

education and teacher education.

Engaging in Ongoing Critical Self - reflection: We study, question, debate, and revise these dynamic and robust areas of investigation in order to improve

our practice.

Our stance is that these functions should not be seen as separate, but interde-

pendent in the sense that strength in any one area depends upon strength in the

others. We see the articulation of these principles as ongoing and continuously

evolving.

To go along with the Statement of Core Principles, the department-level faculty

Retention, Promotion, and Tenure Committee included a value-based approach to

the evaluation of faculty productivity. The committee included the following memo

with all of its RPT evaluation letters.

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Bibliometrics are problematic proxies of impact for much research

and scholarship in the Department of Teacher Education for the following

reasons

• Bibliometrics fails to account for our departmental values as expressed in

the formally adopted TE Core Principles and in MSU President Simon's

Statement on our University's Core Values of Quality, Inclusion, and

Connectivity.

• 90 percent of a journal's bibliometric impact factor is based on 25 percent of

its articles. It is an ecological fallacy to judge the quality of any individual

article based on a journal's aggregate bibliometric numbers (Smeyers &

Burbules, 2011).

• Bibliometrics function differently across different academic fields (Cross

nd).

• SJR and TR calculate two- or three-year impact factors primarily from

English-language journals. Some excellent educational research, however,

cites work that is centuries old, in languages other than English, and/or from

books (not journals).

• Not all journals are indexed in Web of Science; innovative and humanities-

oriented journals are more likely to be omitted (Smeyers & Burbules,

2011); bibliometrics favor conventional scientific research approaches over

"democratizing cutting edge knowledge" (President Simon's Statement on

Core Values).

• Bibliometrics favor mainstream and majority research. Excellent and inno-

vative work by scholars of color and theoretically cutting edge research is

not always fairly represented by bibliometrics (Long, 2017; "Inclusion" in

President Simon's Statement on Core Values).

• Citation is a confounded construct (self-citation, etc.) (Smeyers & Burbules,

2011).

Professional judgment of excellence by acknowledged leaders in the field is a

more relevant indicator of research impact than quantity of citations (Konkiel,

2016).

We can evaluate research excellence by operationalizing impact in ways

that are more inclusive and connective than bibliometrics (Konkiel, 2016).

Research excellence in TE includes the following:

• Methodological and theoretical critique and innovation.

• Originality in framing, analysis, synthesis, and reasoning about contentious

issues.

• Relevance to local communities (see "Connectivity" in President Simon's

Statement on Core Values and public scholarship in TE Core Principles).

• Extended parameters of inclusiveness in intellectual discourse.

• Breadth of reception and engagement (e.g., international; multilingual).

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• Contributions to educational access, equity, and ethics (Long, 2017).

• Sensitivity to epistemological and political differences across academic

fields, including sciences, arts, and humanities (e.g. Zuccala, 2012; Humet-

rics).

I do not mean to suggest that educational researchers adopt the specific sets of

ethical priorities outlined in the examples above. Rather, I am pointing out that

any research evaluation exercise presents opportunities to discuss and articulate the

precise ethical values that might constitute "impact," "excellence," or "quality" for

that particular unit.

Conclusion

Power resides where people believe it resides.

Lord Varys

In many cases, we educational researchers have been evaluating ourselves and our

colleagues' work using criteria that are based almost exclusively on bibliometrics,

which are in turn based on quantities of publications and citations. In misguided

attempts to conduct scientific and "objective," evaluations of research, institu-

tions (universities, foundations, and governments) have adopted instead populist,

reductionist, and non-rigorous approaches to evaluating productivity in educational

research. We have also not always paid close attention to the explicit institutional

language of research-evaluation guidelines. This is not very smart. It is an example

of governmentality operating as a technology of normalization that oversimplified

notions of productivity have been imported uncritically to govern many research-

evaluation exercises. Fortuitously, research-based conceptualizations of productivity,

together with literal readings of institutional policy language open the door for

the inclusion of ethical judgments into the process of evaluating productivity in

educational research.

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Times of Elephants: Foucault-Inspired

Intervals of Production, Critique,

and Accelerated Configurings

Lynda Stone and Daniel P. Gibboney

[Foucault's] thought comes clothed in a rhetoric … designed to

frustrate summary, paraphrase, economical quotation… or

translation into traditional… terminology. It looks like history,

like philosophy, like criticism, but it stands over against these

discourses as ironic antithesis.

White (1979 104, 115)

Abstract The chapter articulates a different formulation from current traditions of

history and philosophy found elsewhere in this volume. It is original in a specific

blurring of history and philosophy inspired by the French theorist Michel Foucault.

His work broke with traditions both inside and outside of French thought in its own

time. As a blurring, its structure plays with time and space, fiction and fact that is

entirely contingent and nominal. To take up a Foucault inspiration, it invokes an

intelligible arrangement of previously heterogeneous events under an auspices of a

unique conception of interval. Intervals are composed of episodes and episodes of

events, entailing internal elements of both chronology and analysis. Further, episodes

develop their own relationships of non-structural production and critique. The story,

'delightfully' skipping over centuries, is "times of elephants".

Introduction

Introduction to the chapter begins with an elephant event that is memorialized today

in a small university town, Bressanone-Brixen, in the historically shifting border area

where Austria, Germany, and Italy meet. The lowest route through the Alps, Brenner

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Pass, is nearby. Today the Elephant Hotel, the oldest single family-owned hotel

In Italy, stands as 'proud' reminder of a historical occurrence involving an Indian

elephant. Three-times named by different owners, this elephant is Raja, Solomon,

Suleiman. In addition to being celebrated in the hotel's name and an outside wall-

sized mural, and undoubtedly by many inns along the travel route, the elephant's story

is commemorated in a film, a children's book, and a famous novel, *The Elephant's*

Journey, written by the Portuguese Nobel Prize winner for literature, Jos ̄e Saramago

(2008). From these sources, here are the 'facts' of the event.

Although Suleiman's journey starts in India, the pertinent travel is from Portugal

via Spain to Austria. As a gift from the King of Portugal, Suleiman is named for

the Turk enemy besieging Vienna and as a reminder of relations among these 'early'

modern nations and rulers. Know at the outset, the procession of the Austrian Prince

Maximilian and his Spanish bride Princess Maria made an unusual stop for two

weeks at Bressanone-Brixen. German children's author Margret Rettich explains in

her text, *Suleiman The Elephant*, that after an accident in a mountain pass, the prince

and the elephant both were taken ill and the princess sent for the doctor.

Although he knew nothing at all about elephants, he prescribed two weeks of rest, hot

compresses, and lots of hot tea for the patients…. [During this time people from all over the

region] were allowed to peek at the elephant secretly, and the clever innkeeper made them

pay for the privilege. (Rettich, 1986/1984, n.p.)

This stay happily sealed a marriage betrothed in childhood. Later when the

entourage had left the town, in order for visitors to believe that the elephant actually

had been there, the innkeeper "had a painter paint a life-sized elephant on the inn

wall…. Ever since, that inn in Brixen has been called The Elephant" (n.p.). Vienna

was reached and the newlyweds along with their elephant were celebrated. Unfortu-

nately, Suleiman never recovered from the journey and died. The historic notes at the

end of the children's book state that the elephant was ultimately stuffed and remained

in a moldy cellar until 1941. A chair still exists, in the mid-nineteen eighties, made

from his leg bone.

Across millennia, the elephant's times are 1551, with surrounding years related in

the novel, the 1984 children's book, a 2007 film, and the 2008 novel. The film, *Raja's*

Journey, is a documentary from Swiss director of fiction and documentary films, Karl

Saurer. The journey records south Indian activist P. V. Rajagopal as he travels the

route of Raja over 450 years after its afters its happening. With graphic depiction

of the training and treatment of elephants, Rajagopal mirrors in part the Ghandian

protest practice of 'foot-march.' In the film, one is struck by continual coverage of

elephant feet as the film's viewer experiences as much as possible, and in present

day, the original route. Indian religious views and rituals surrounding elephants are

also documented.

Finally, in this introduction: The chapter is organized around a Foucauldian-

inspired configuring. Its central concept is *interval*, a unit of meaning whose contin-

gent elements are episodes. Its episodes are relations among cultural icons, elephants,

their internal relations within each interval, and between intervals. The paper is

divided into two parts. The first half establishes a conceptual-philosophical basis in

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sections on need for time, Foucault' inspiration, and interval. The second part of

the chapter is comprised of two intervals, containing three episodes each, Topsy,

Babar, and Dumbo. Through this treatment of interval, the paper develops two ideas:

Modernity's post-script as a form of *belatedness*, and time's length as something

distinct from a composite of years. It is in the latter that the *acceleration* of time is central and will be taken up in the conclusion.

Need for Time

Today time orders lives. Nano-seconds are common; indeed, physicists have iden-

tified a Planck, the time light takes to travel one Planck length is the smallest time

measure theoretically possible. Humankind has had a need for tracking time since the

species existed. Animal and plant kingdoms have internal 'clocks' in tune with natural

environments. Across millennia civilizations have recorded cycles of nature, for

instance seasons with present remnants in planting schedules and school calendars.

Time moves inexorably onward. With some differences in origin, specific chronology

and teleology, at least worldwide, traditional religions exist within linear time. In a

fascinating book for a popular audience, *In Search of Time: The History, Physics,*

and Philosophy of Time, science writer Dan Falk asserts, "The idea of linear time,

historians have argued, became a cornerstone of the Western worldview. It may have

paved the way for the Scientific Revolution and the Industrial Revolution… [with

affinities] for reason and a sense of progress" (Falk, 2008, 5).

While ordinary lives typically revolve around watches, smart phones and other

internet devices in which every minute—and seconds too—is typically displayed, a

brief journey through examples of other forms of times' representation are useful.

Past temporal configurings open up discursive possibilities. Fascinating examples

now abound thanks to scientific discoveries that are prior to language and history:

One dating from 3100 B. C. is the "Cave of the Sun", in today's Ireland in which

sunlight reflects through the tomb's entrance each year on the back of the chamber

at the 'exact' time of the winter solstice. More familiar formulations are large stone

monuments, cave paintings, and field furrows.

Leaving time itself behind, temporality takes on different trajectories: myth,

drama, fiction, and history. For present purposes, a brilliant paper from the late,

literary historian Hayden White, "*The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of*

Reality" (White, [1980, 1987),](#) illustrates early development of historical narrative.

One central point is to demonstrate recording of events, dating, and brief annotation

that obviously carried meaning in their own time. Several interpretative meanings

might be the time of the events, the time of their recording, the time of their subse-

quent reading. The other point is adapted from White's move from fiction to history:

narrativity becomes a kind of broader processes of interpretation. While chronology

as basic to history becomes assumed, White's contribution is to question the treatment

of the standard modern *doxa* that is 'history'. He treats a basic element of annals

coming before chronology "not as the imperfect histories they are conventionally

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conceived to be, but rather as particular products of possible conceptions of histor-

ical reality, conceptions that are alternatives to rather than failed anticipations of, the

fully realized historical discourse that the modern history is supposed to embody"

(pp. 5–6).

Here is a text fragment taken from the *Annals of Saint Gaul*, lists of events

occurring in Gaul during the 8th, 9th, and 10th centuries (see pp. 6–7).

709. Hard winter. Duke Gottfried died.

710. Hard year and deficient in crops.

711.

712. Flood everywhere.

713.

714. Pippin, mayor of the palace died.

The entry continues in like fashion to 734. White explains that nothing in the text

connects the elements in the annals: much can be assumed and much cannot. There is

no text explaining why events take place, no distinction of importance among them,

and no indication of who recorded them. Interestingly the text takes up again in 1045

with each year recorded with only one entry until 1072 when it just ends. Time and

history do not.

Foucault Inspiration

Hayden White has a second role to play in this chapter as he introduced English-

speaking audiences to French philosopher-historian Michel Foucault in a 1973 essay,

"Foucault Decoded: Notes from Underground". This introduction began the influence

of Foucault on Whites's work as well as a tradition of reading Foucault as a significant

departure and critique of, frankly, western thought *writ large*. Each text, each study

from Foucault offers a distinct approach to language. Each entails its own emergence

of particular, nominalist concepts.

White's essay, "Decoded" focuses in part on *The Order of Things* (Foucault,

[1973, 1970/1966),](#) on the study in French and then in translation that actually began Foucault's international reputation. He locates Foucault thusly:

[What makes Foucault] a post-structuralist, not to say anti-structuralist thinker is… that he

turns his interpretative strategy upon the human sciences in general and on Structuralism

itself in particular. He insists that… [key disciplines] remain captive of [their linguistic

protocols] …. [This is] evidence of the human sciences' coming to consciousness of their

own imprisonment within their characteristic modes of discourse. (White, [1973,](#) p. 24) What results in *Order* and in Foucault's idiom is the "dissolution of belief in the

'positivity' of such Modern concepts as 'man,' 'society,' and 'culture' (Ibid.). This

takes place across disciplines and reinterpreted time periods between the 16th and

20th centuries and from the concept of *episteme*. Prior to turning to this concept two

understandings are important as background. Both are found in the book Foucault

writes after *Order, The Archaeology of Knowledge* (Foucault, 1972/1969). The first is Foucault's conception of discourse and the second of history.

Another writing from White, "Foucault's Discourse: The Historiography of Anti-

Humanism", characterizes Foucault's discursive approach as itself a "discourse about

discourse" (White, 1979, 1987, p. 105). He elaborates, "Discourse is the term under which… [Foucault] gathers all of the forms and categories of cultural life, including… his own efforts to submit this life to criticism" (p. 105). Further it is all surface,

movement back and forth whose purpose is to make differences. Importantly as indi-

cated in the epigraph of this essay, this conception rejects the authority of traditional

philosophical logic as well as conventional narrative. Its form is to invoke a style in

which its saying and how it is said is its content. Every discursive utterance in this

manner of elaboration is unique; there is no other ground. Its style is all there is.

A foreshadowing of nominalist intervals to follow, White clarifies that rather than

ground, Foucault "[seeks] 'space' within which… [the authority of a basic western

distinction between coherence/incoherence is denied] (p. 108). Thus, there is also a

denial of a unitary 'oeuvre' of Foucault's own.

The second understanding, of history, connects to the chief inspiration of this

chapter, *episteme*. In *Archaeology*, Foucault offers this background statement of his view of history:

Beneath the great continuities of thought, beneath the solid, homogeneous manifestations

of a single mind or of a collective mentality, beneath the stubborn development of a science

striving to exist… beneath the persistence of a particular genre, form, discipline, or theoretical activity, one is now trying to detect the incidence of interruptions… [of *epistemological*

thresholds and *conceptual displacements* and *transformations*]. (Foucault, 1972/1969, p. 4, paraphrase and emphasis in original)

Adopted and adapted by Foucault, the first of these ideas comes from Gaston

Bachelard and Georges Canguilhem respectively. Both play out in the unique

Foucauldian idea of episteme, to aid how history is not itself a unity. To clarify,

in *Order* a general purpose is to 'reorder' the human sciences:

[These sciences] is not that privileged and singularly blurred object which is man…. It is

not man who constitutes them and provides them with a specific domain; it is the general

arrangement of the *episteme* that provides them with a site, summons them, and establishes them—thus enabling them to constitute man as their object. (Foucault, 1970/1966, p. 364, *italics in original*)

Human sciences, it is important to understand, are not identical with Anglo-

American natural or social sciences but range from mathematics and literature to

psychoanalysis and ethnology.

From Canguilhem, discussion of the somewhat elusive concept, episteme, is trans-

lated for the first time in an excellent volume, edited by Gary Gutting, *The Cambridge*

Companion to Foucault. The introduction is helpful because of what a concept of

interval to follow purports to do. Gutting locates Foucault's writings within the

tradition of 'history of concepts' of his two mentors above. Incorporating history,

Canguilhem's entry is 'science' in which the traditional Anglo-American relation-

ship of scientific data, theory, and concept is turned on its head. No longer is there

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a distinction between concepts that interpret data and theories that explain them.

Instead as Gutting explains, "concepts… [give a] preliminary understanding of data

that allows… [formulation of] scientifically fruitful questions about how to explain

the data as conceptualized. Theories then provide different—and often conflicting—

answers to these questions" (Gutting, 1994, p. 7). As Gutting continues, possibilities for histories as sciences that differ from conventional interpretations are opened up.

For Foucault these interpretative disruptions are his discursive 'structures', distinct

epistemes.

Canguilhem's essay, translated as "The Death of Man, or Exhaustion of the

Cogito?," a review of *Order*, was first published in French in 1967, the year after the

book appeared. Working from Gutting's introduction, Canguilhem begins with the

idea that "a culture is a code that orders human experience" (Canguilhem, 1967/1994,

p. 76) in what might be understood as commonsense productions— linguistic, prac-

tical among them. Science and philosophy as theories are interpretations of culture

but importantly are not from direct application to experience. Cultural productions,

Canguilhem emphasizes,

[are] forms… [that] already constitute… *knowledge* different from the knowledge constituted by sciences and philosophies. This network is invariant in a given epoch, and thus identifiable through reference to it. (p. 76)

In this phase of Foucault's work, still very structural, each epoch is an episteme,

and is distinguished from others past and to come and thus is contingent. For Foucault

a conjoining of discursive and non-discursive 'events' are repeated and become

'regularized'. What is also significant is this: while implicit if not explicit, Foucault

acknowledges a traditional historical-philosophical chronology. His epistemes pose

difference and thus are disruptive. Interval follows; it is inspired by Foucault but

perhaps is more Foucauldian than his own concept of episteme.

Interval

One additional comment about Foucault begins a turn in this chapter to interval.

Canguilhem writes, "It is difficult to be the first to give a name to a thing, or at

the very least, to list the distinctive features of the thing one is proposing to name"

(p. 76). In this discursive space, a conception of interval is to function, to do something

through invoking. It is employed as a difference, a quasi-neologism. This is because

the term seems familiar, and interestingly so does episteme relative to epistemology,

the theory of knowledge. Each concept functions in a unique way.

Interval is an adaptation of a relatively common term but one without many

contemporary uses. Dictionary meanings include an intervening period of time

or space, a pause or break in an activity, a space between things, points, limits.

Today intervals are 'identified' as between numbers mathematically, musically

between endpoints, even 'pauses' for betting on cards. Its origins, in French and

then in English, not only concerned a period between two events—and from its

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prefix 'inter,'—is related to rampart, a structure enclosing and protecting a town or

establishing a division within a building.

Inspiration from Foucault ought to be apparent in the creation of interval. It is

discursive and applied to discursive and non-discursive events. It is all surface, a

unique style in its invoking. An interval builds from historical events that are trans-

formed in a set of contingent configurings coherence comes in relations between

intervals and their content and the function of sub-concepts that give them form

within and across each other. Interval assumes a function like Foucault's episteme

but without any claim to knowledge. As a temporary unit of meaning, it does 'estab-

lish' boundings, demarcations that are always open to conceptual re-interruption.

Unlike Foucault's early structural units that became regimes of truth within western

temporal epochs—sciences, philosophies, disciplines and the like, intervals in this

chapter make no such claim.

Intervals are comprised of episodes—events transformed into configurings which

comprise relational constitutions of an interval. An episode has no inherent connec-

tion with other episodes except in the context of an interval. An episode is itself

comprised of events, some of which may be actual or not. In this chapter, two

broad intervals frame the episodes of elephants. Modernity and after-modernity are

employed as cultural boundings that themselves blur demarcations of actual and

imaginary. The 'isms' of trends in the sciences and humanities are beside this paper

as is the debate over whether modernity has a 'post.' In this schema, modernity exists

across millennia, multiple centuries, and after-modernity is existing within its first

100 years including backlash for what is 'lost'.

The concept of modern has assumed a general connotation of 'the new' and 'the

better.' The late philosopher Stephen Toulmin writes that

people in Western Europe and North America were content to believe that theirs was the

modern age: that their way of farming and manufacturing was the 'modern' one along with

their medical skills, that they had 'modern' scientific and philosophical ideas, and lived in the relative security of 'modern' nation states….

[in] a dozen fields, their life embodied rational ways of testing… procedures and institutions… not available to people in the tyrannous

societies and superstitious cultures that existed before the age of modernity. (Toulmin, 1990,

p. 3)

Suleiman's journey entails many elements of early modernity: monarchies,

arranged marriages, establishment of nation states and enduringly war, politics, and

love. The texts about it illustrate modern consciousness, humans' relations with

nature and god. There is also a strong anthropomorphism, humans attributing feelings

and emotions to the elephant. Here is Rettich again (Rettich, 1986/1984, n.p.): In Vienna, Suleiman was cherished and looked after and received the very best fodder. But

despite all that anyone could do, he never recovered. He remained weak and ailing. Perhaps

he was pining with loneliness for this warm homeland far away.

In two intervals of near-contemporary elephants, 'modern' treatments are re-

conceptualized in a different cultural era.

Interval I—Cultural Production as Coming Discontent

Influenced by Foucault and foreshadowing Toulmin's return, Gilles Deleuze, in the

Logic of Sense, writes that "Modernity is defined by the power of the simulacra"

(Deleuze, [1990/1969,](#) 265). In other words, the modern project is demarcated by the discursive copy of a copy—a constellation of internalized dissimilarity. This

internalized dissimilarity becomes ever more apparent in Modernity's afterward.

Nevertheless, questions over what constitutes Modernity's concerns have been at

its forefront since the inception of the modern project. While dating is a matter of

dispute, Modernity's consideration of progress, governance, and self are relatively

indisputable. In this interval, these themes are taken up episodically.

Moreover, much of this interval's attention is on the production of children's

literature and culture, objects of evident relevance to educational research. This focus

shifts the attention of educational researchers away from merely focusing on schools

to much broader considerations of youth and the production of children's culture.

Episode: Circuits and Progress

On January 4, 1903 Topsy, a thirty-six-year-old "killer", was executed. This elephant,

resident of Luna Park, Coney Island and popular attraction for the Forepaugh Circus,

died by means of strangulation, poisoning, and electrocution for murder. A news-

paper recorded that Topsy killed "J. Fielding Blunt…in the show tent in Brooklyn,

presumably because he had fed her a lighted cigarette" (*New York Times*, 1903, np).

This was not Topsy's first, or even second, capital offence, having killed her two

previous keepers on separate occasions in 1900. According to a newspaper account,

Topsy, despite having fallen under the influence of her wayward trainer, was not only

responsible but also accountable for murder. In the words of the *Buffalo Courier*,

"Topsy was executed for at least three murders—and the promise of more if she got

the chance" (*Buffalo Courier*, 1903, np).

Topsy's execution was popularized by *Electrocution of an Elephant*, Edwin S.

Porter's silent, seventy-four second documentary produced by Edison Productions.

It was part of a larger public relations campaign by Edison Electric against the use of

alternate current and in advocacy of the electric chair as means of humane punishment

(Vanderbilt, 2003, n.p.). The latter campaign is a nod to the simultaneous 'humanism'

and experimental progress dominating conversations around capital punishment in

the period. Early twentieth century death penalty advocates, Thomas Edison chief

among them, promoted the electric chair on grounds of decency. It was the least

painful instrument of execution; ropes and poisons caused pain. Electricity was fast

and efficient.

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Episode: Civilizing the Jungle

Babar, the namesake and protagonist of both book series (1931) and cartoon (Cana-

dian Broadcasting Company (1989)) was initially conceived by French artist Jean de

Brunhoff. The series was based on a story his wife had made up for their children

(Pierpont, 2005, 48). Babar, the green three-piece suit clad elephant, is the benevolent sovereign of Celesteville, the city he founded for and named after his beloved wife-cousin. Babar's life was not always regal. His birth was marked with equal measures

of peril and promise. However, from a young age, Babar was slated for greatness,

evidenced as an exceptional calf by naming himself shortly after birth. Even as

an adolescent Babar, despite being born into nudity and quadrupedal movement,

evidenced many of the traits of a compassionate despot. These include determina-

tion (i.e., refusing to give up before successfully uprooting a tree stump), forgiveness

(i.e., not retaliating in kind to friends' waterhole shenanigans), courage (i.e., encour-

aging the pack to not be runoff by the "hunter"), and rationality (i.e., learning from

Cornelius a wise elephant elder who provides counsel throughout Babar's life).

In the tale, the pack's future is forever altered when Babar's mother is killed

by a human hunter. In the immediately ensuing chaos, Babar is separated from the

pack, and lost, until he finds himself in 'the City'—a relatively non-descript human

settlement complete with cars, clothiers, tea, and other trappings of 'civilized' living.

After only a short time in the City, Babar is befriended, patroned, and tutored by

an elderly white woman, 'madame' as she is called in the television cartoon, who

introduces him to the customs of city life. Over time and under the elderly matron's

tutelage, Babar begins to regularly wear clothes, walk uprightly, and keep polite

company with the city's socialites, learning even the proper way to pour tea.

Eventually, Babar's city life ends when his cousins, Celeste and Arthur, find him

and return him to his pack and to his destiny. Upon his return and the death of the

pack's monarch, Babar is made king. Babar's coronation is due in large measure

to dispositions, skills, and experiences he acquired while living in 'the City'. In

other words, he was civilized. In the course of Babar's altruistic rule, he introduces

upright walking, technological advance, imperial peace, and cultivated entertain-

ment. Moreover, his reign is complete with federated external geo-political relations,

space program, and opera house. In the end, Babar's story is one of the promises and

privileges of modern governance.

Episode: Individual Development and the Self

Dumbo, first described in 1941 by *The New York Times* as both "the most genial, the most endearing, the most completely precious cartoon feature film ever to emerge

from the magical brush of Walt Disney's wonder-working artists" and "certainly…the

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most winsome" (New York Times, 1941, n.p.) tells the story of an elephant with oversized ears. *Dumbo* narrates how one elephant overcomes social and professional

isolation in the process of realizing his potential and actualizing his 'true' self.

The movie begins with Dumbo, ridiculed, and ostracized from his species and

separated from his mother. Following professional degradation when he was forced

to perform as a clown, Dumbo befriends a mouse, Timothy makes it his personal

mission to redeem Dumbo professionally and socially. The film progresses through

a series of mishaps, including Dumbo literally bringing down the tent.

Dumbo's fortunes, however, turn after an episode of accidental drunkenness,

following a particularly embarrassing performance and waking up high in the

branches of a tree, surrounded by a cloud of blackbirds. In the course of falling

out of the tree and working "off" his hangover, Timothy and Dumbo discover that

they had flown into the tree. Consequently, Dumbo realizes that flight is an ability

he always possessed because of his ears. With his newly discovered talent, Dumbo,

with the chorus of birds, hones his flying abilities with help of a "magic feather," only

later to discover that it was mere placebo. In the end, Dumbo, both biographically

and cinematically, evidences the stability of the modern self.

Interval II—Belations/Critique

Returning to Toulmin, he begins *Cosmopolis*' first chapter by noting that "statements

like 'the modern age has come to an end' are easier to resonate than to understand…

[because] in one sense, the idea of modernity 'coming to an end' is paradoxical."

(Toulmin, 1990, 5). Agreeing with Toulmin, Modernity's afterlife is characterized by measures of *belatedness*. If Modernity is an

"inexhaustible cornucopia of novelty"

(Ibid, 5); its postscript is an exhaustible dearth of staleness. In other words, nothing

is new in Modernity's afterward. Whereas modern questions centered the self and

promoted progress, Modernity's corpse has disputed claims to coherence.

In this paper, belatedness means both coming after anticipated time and a delay.

Within this schema, the belatedness of after Modernity references the manner in

which modern concerns, concepts, and references are understood post-facto. More-

over, the belatedness of this interval is further evinced in the treatment of chil-

dren's literature and cultural production. Whereas the first interval was signified by

production, this subsequent interval is characterized by critique of the previously

produced.

Episode: Re-Writing Progress

Although killed in 1903, consideration of Topsy was not, similarly, laid to rest. Rather

Topsy has been given a new life, this time as martyr and augur.

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W.S. Merwin, the United States of America's seventeenth poet laureate, published

an elegy for Topsy in the December 13, 2010, issue of *The New Yorker* magazine.

In *The Chain to Her Leg*, Merwin, alluding to an elephant's exceptional memo-

ries, begins "If we forget Topsy, Topsy remembers" followed with a verse account

(Merwin, 2010, n.p.):

when we forget how

wires fastened on her

for the experiment

the first time

and how she smoldered and

shuddered there with them all watching

In the lines that follow, Merwin redirects Topsy's death away from the electric

chair's decency and toward the hazards of technological advance:

when we forget the circus

the tickets to see her die

in the name of progress

and Edison and the electric chair

the mushroom cloud will go up

over the desert

where the West was won

the Enola Gay will take off

after the chaplain's blessing

the smoke from the Black Mesa's

power plants will be

visible from the moon

the forests will be gone

the extinctions will accelerate

the polar bears will float

farther and farther away

and off the edge of the world

that Topsy remembers

Rather than merely being an affair of punishment and progress where the circus is

peripheral, Merwin suggests that admission to the big tent is akin to tickets purchased

for public punishment. In Merwin's schema, progress is anything but an advance:

Topsy is both martyr and portend, foretelling humanity's demise.

Episode: Post-colonial Criticism

While DeBrunhoff's children's classic, *Babar*, was initially conceived as a capri-

cious children's tale it's reception history has been anything but. A most striking

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example of this discord occurred when "librarians in East Sussex removed copies of

Babar's Travels, in which one of the cartoon elephant's adventures finds him faced

with 'savage cannibals'" (Brenner, 2012, n.p). Moreover, strongly critical receptions of Babar have not been relegated to episodes of activist librarians, evidenced

most clearly by educator Herbert Kohl's post-colonial critique in "Should We Burn

Babar?" (1995).

For this interval, Kohl's consideration of the 'charming Babar' focuses on repre-

sentations of gender, class, race, coloniality, and authoritarianism; the latter two

of interest herein. In addition to functioning ideologically, Kohl suggests that colo-

niality and authoritarianism in *Babar* is a matter of DeBrunhoff's narrative structure.

Kohl claims that DeBrunhoff's "text ignores transitions. One event happens after

another with no explanations…events are just told. The reader is swept along with

unquestioning any of the premises of the story" (Kohl, 1995, 5).

Kohl observes that *Babar* is a story where "the power is with the people and not

the animals" (Ibid, 5), despite the namesake's absolute sovereignty clear evidence

is Babar's relationship with Madame, a woman who utterly transforms Babar life's

away from naked barbarism and toward clothed civility. Moreover, Madame, via

Babar as a proxy of sorts, indirectly transformed the lives of a pack elephants. This

alternative reading suggests that "this is one form of colonization: seducing some

members of the group into letting them proselytize for you" (Ibid, 9). In this sense,

when "the Rich Lady stands on the balcony of her house and sadly wonders," as Babar

returns to the jungle, "'when shall I see *my* little Babar again?' She has it right: by the time she is done civilizing him, she owns him" (Ibid, 10, *italics in original*).

In addition to promoting colonization, Kohl argues that "*Babar*… makes a thor-

oughly undemocratic way of governance seem natural and unquestioned" (Ibid, 21).

The legitimacy of an absolute sovereign is not only unquestioned, it is valorized and

idealized as the proper ordering of collective life both inside and outside the jungle.

After all, Babar is generous, kind, and dresses well, who would not want to be subject

to that!

Episode: Institutions–Critique in Lieu of Opportunity

If the original *Dumbo* was a whimsical cartoon, the trailers for Tim Burton's 2019

rendition are decidedly not. The film's story centers on "a young elephant, whose

oversize ears enable him to fly and he helps save a struggling circus. But when the

circus plans a new venture, Dumbo and his friends discover dark secrets beneath

its shiny veneer" (IMDB, 2018, n.p). The live action *Dumbo* is decidedly dissimilar in its primary focus away from the fulfillment of self, instead moving toward a

critique of institutions in which the individual is active. In this case, these are the

unjust conspiracies of the circus itself. The problem central to Burton's *Dumbo* is

not developmental, rather the 2019 rendering identifies an institution as its central

concern. Moreover, whereas the first rendering was bright in its presentation, its later

self is decidedly dark and shadow, perhaps reflecting the dominant understanding

of the circus elephants then and now. The focus is not on the self as in Modernity,

rather the film critiques the self as being constituted by institutions.

Conclusion

A question raised by interval, both philosophically and historiographically, is the

matter of time's length. Through the development of interval this paper has argued that

both Modernity and its afterlife are equal in expanse when considered as configured

units of cultural meaning.

If our age of elephants began with Suleiman's journey, it has ended with the

closing of the greatest show on earth. Moreover, the American circus, its biography,

heyday, and accelerated demise provides a clear example of bounded equality, despite

temporal unevenness.

Circuses have, historically, been discussed largely in terms of their relationship

with children. Nevertheless, beginning with the founding of the first American Circus

(1806) and its purchase of their first elephant (1808 (Old Bet)), big tent entertainment

and elephants have been almost synonymous. Arguably the most famous pachyderm

in this association was Jumbo (b. 1860). Originally born in London (with the explicitly

expressed permission of the Queen), P.T. Barnum purchased Jumbo in 1881/2 for

$10,000—even paying an additional $20,000 to bring his purchase to New York by

boat. As famous as the elephant was in life, Jumbo became even more famous in

death. Following Jumbo's 1885 train accident death, P.T. Barnum taxidermed the

body and displayed it for over three years. In total nearly 9 million patrons came to

see the lifeless animal. After its time on the road, Jumbo's corpse was donated to

Tufts University, serving as their mascot. Jumbo is not entirely unique; recall that

Suleiman has also been stuffed. Additionally, other circus elephants have also been as

beloved post-mortem as they had in life. Tillie's 1932 funeral being a prime example.

Tillie, claimed to be 120 years old by the circus at the time of her death, was given

a city-wide holiday. This day off of work and school allowed children and business

people to attend the funeral/parade. Ultimately, over 2,000 paid their respects.

However, much circus elephants were adored by children and adults alike, they

were also feared. For example, Mary (aka Mighty Mary or Murderous Mary) was

executed in the only documented elephant hanging in United States history for her

role in the death of her trainer. Like Topsy, Mary's execution was seen as just punish-

ment for her volitional role in the death of her human trainer. In1966 the American

Congress passed the Animal Welfare Act. This legislation remains to date the only

federal law regulating the treatment of animals in research and exhibition. Despite

fear that animals were being mistreated in other venues, the discourses around circus

elephants remained one of fascination, love, and attraction.

In 1978 Congress listed African Elephants as a threatened species, and in 1989

the same governing body passed the African Elephant Conservation Act. In 1998 the

United States Department of Agriculture fined Ringling Brothers circus $20,000 for

mistreatment of elephants. This shifted government focus from protecting elephants

abroad to being a domestic affair. Critical investigations of the circus continued in

2001 when Ringling Bros. were sued by the Humane Society of North America

and others. In 2011 the Department of Agriculture again fined the circus, this time

$270,000. As can be seen in this cursory outline, elephants were becoming more

liability than attraction. Ultimately, despite announcing in 2015 that all elephants

would be phased out of performances by 2018. The circus fulfilled this promise in

2016 and closed its tent flaps in 2017.

While historical discourses over the circus can be debated, the timelines cannot.

The circus and its elephants solicited nearly two-hundred years of wonder, awe,

and amusement. These sentiments, goodwill, and cheer were all but erased in two

decades. Public conversations around the circus were relatively the same in 1820 and

1980. However, public considerations of the circus, its merits, and defensibility were

not the same in 1990 as in 2000, or 1995 and 2015. The concept of interval posits that

number of years do not have any inherently explicative meaning. Rather, intervals

suggest another framing of time's length. This paper proposes turning away from

revolutions around the sun or seconds on a stopwatch as chief characteristics of time

and toward the construction and exhaustion of cultural meaning. Within an interval

the circus' last 20 years cannot be said to be shorter than its first 200. In other words,

this story of the circus' demise picks up the theme of acceleration in this volume.

Cultural acceptance for the circus became 'exhausted' in a shorter expanse, than the

time it took to win the public's favor.

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philosophy of education.

Lost in Narcissism? An Elementary Quantitative, but Deliberately Non-bibliometric Approach to My Own Publication Behaviour

Marc Depaepe

um sich falschen Maßstäben zu widersetzen, müssen die

Geisteswissenschaften ihren Wert aus sich heraus behaupten

*(**Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung**, Wednesday 23 May 2018,*

no. 117, p. 4)

Abstract Instead of treating the initial questions about the acceleration of scientific

publishing one by one with respect to the international conferences in the field of

history of education on the one hand, and with regard to journal publications in the

same field on the other hand, he opted for a more pragmatic approach: a more or less

classic story reflection my own career. That may seem narcissistic, but, for once, it is

not! Our publication list is after all a closed 'sample' of publication, within which all

kinds of elementary statistics can be done and various publication categories can be

compared with each other: (co-)authorship and (co-)editorship of books, chapters,

articles, congress contributions, book reviews, etc. Does the quantitative evolution

of these components betray a more or less implicit publication strategy? Adapted

to the will to be able to publish more and ever more quickly? And what about the

languages used? How absolute is the dominance of English? And the translations in

other languages? Was that a way to publish even faster via clustering of subjects? And

what about the number of co-authors? Has that increased over the period, possibly

also the number of co-authors per published item? Perhaps such quantitative data

will reveal a number of processes about which we can think qualitatively at the same

time. Hence, a second text (see next chapter) on the relevance of the historiography

of education, on the basis of the content of my research, can be considered as a

complementary piece of work, which reveals the more essential characteristics of

the collaborative work I have done in the forgoing years.

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M. Depaepe

By Way of Introduction

Never before have I begun an article with such trepidation. After all, educational

historians are supposed to research the pedagogical past and not to be idly occupied

with an analysis of their own work. It inevitably gives the impression of navel-

gazing—in all likelihood something of which we have already been guilty in the

past, despite the fact that self-reflection at the time was purely concerned with a

desire to shed light on the substantive and/or methodological aspects of our research.

For instance, this brings to mind the continual need to demythologize educational

heritage on the one hand (Depaepe, 1997; Depaepe & Hulstaert, 2015) and the quest for adequate sources in our field on the other (Depaepe & Simon, 2009). To avoid filling the bibliography at the end with all kinds of our own contributions once again—

an ill-mannered habit indubitably prompted by the desire to bring about continuity

and coherence to our studies—I hardly dare make any further explicit reference to

it here. As extenuation, however, I can add, as will be evidenced further on, that the

majority of the contributions are the product of teamwork. It is from this perspective

that I prefer to use the first person plural when it comes to indicating "our" research

results. Perhaps that can serve as an initial apology for the undisguised narcissism

expressed in this report.

However, there is more to it. I absolutely wanted to write a paper before what

will likely be our research community's last meeting, a community to which, by

the way, I also owe a tremendous debt of gratitude in relation to the output of my

own research. That will also come to the fore later on in this text. During last year's

meeting, in Bressanone, we were initially considering—again as a team—a quan-

titative study of a collection both well-delineated and easily accessible to us (from

which a representative sample could be derived if necessary). This would include

the annual conferences of the *International Standing Conference for the History of*

Education (ISCHE) and/or the volumes of *Paedagogica Historica*. In our opinion, the *International Journal of the History of Education* seemed a manifestly obvious

choice for testing certain hypotheses concerning the widely recognized acceleration

of scientific production within our field. However, upon further consideration, the

analysis of that material was so time consuming that we were forced to opt for a

more "economic" solution. This solution was found in the study of my own scien-

tific production (often in collaboration with people from "our" research group), as

I have been maintaining since the beginning of my career, now over 40 years ago.

The advantage of that of course is that I know this collection more intimate than

anyone else and am therefore very well acquainted with what the statistics related

to this closed population may or may not represent. This seems to me to be the

perfect point of departure for a descriptive statistical "analysis"; although very basic

regarding technical standards, it may, however, be somewhat fleet and occasionally

endowed with a touch of understated humour. At the same time it possesses the

necessary self-deprecation in every respect because personally I have never held to

the conviction of a single, all-encompassing bibliometric code for the assessment of

individual scientific achievements. This presumably stems from an abiding aversion

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to the alleged supremacy of a quantitative and empirical approach, which has in any

case formed itself into a growing preponderance over the field of psychology and

the educational sciences. However, this is also certainly due to the quasi-exclusive

focus within bibliometrics on articles published in so-called top journals, usually in

the incredibly restricted time window of five years or less (see for example Diem &

Winter, 2013). I do not master that method well enough to be able to work with it—a

thing, by the way, which I have deliberately refrained from doing here. Within the

classical humanities, books (which from the advent of my career I have constantly

listed first, therefore prioritizing them, in my list of publications) still play a decisive

role (in this connection, please see the telling title of the article authored by Teixeira

(2015) on the unfathomability of psycho-analytical research). In any event, this admiration for books is also mirrored in the tone of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*

article which provided me with this contribution's motto (Berthold & Bieber, 2018).

The title is: *Es gibt kein besseres Argument als ein gutes Buch*, which for the authors

immediately entails a direct appeal to push personal evaluation standards to the fore

based on the social power of the critical mindset and the historical depth of certain

human sciences approaches. If I had published just a few of those inspirational works

during my lifetime, I would have been highly satisfied with them. For, as has become

apparent within the scope of our Research Community (Burbulus, 2017), scientific publications are scarcely read, despite the intense labour that usually precedes them.

And this will apply a fortiori to a modest research discipline such as the history of

education, which plays no significant role whatsoever in determining the impact of

Flemish research (see Debackere et al., 2013 with regard to life, natural and technical sciences, and Ossenblok et al. (2013) concerning the social and human sciences).

As far as I am concerned, we need not even share the bibliometrics on our publica-

tion behaviour to see its relative value. This can just as well be done using very basic

quantitative data, which we will present below, at least should sufficient attention

be paid to the interpretation of these. Not only have I published significant volumes

in a team context—history and comparative historical research have never been an

individual affair for me—but I have, in addition, deliberately attempted to present the

knowledge we have gained to a wide audience to the greatest extent possible. This

is something that in no way excludes the potential overlap of publications. Rather,

quite the opposite is true. These days there is a danger that this type of behaviour

will be labelled "self-plagiarism"—a category my own professors would have met

with derision rather than approval, but this aside. One might, however, wonder how

the music world would respond—should a composer be reprimanded for recycling

one of his or her own melodies in a later composition. And obviously the same issue

of overlap holds true as regards translations. Here too, however, I do not believe

that we have erred. For example, I have always been of the opinion that tax-paying

Flemings are entitled to Dutch-language versions of our work. What is more, I have

held to the understanding that partnering in the drive towards internationalization

and globalization also entails publication in languages other than English. For that

matter, why would we—should it have been requested of us—have refused a trans-

lation, even if we did not personally speak the language in question? As a result,

it ought to be clear that a great many of our publications fall beyond the purview

of the *"web of science"* (and the *Social Science Citation Index* included therein).

Incidentally, the number of history of education journals (with very limited citation

indices and which furthermore are almost exclusively in English) included in this

index can be counted on the fingers of one hand. For example, the *Paedagogica*

[*Historica* website (https://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?show=](https://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?show=aimsScope&journalCode=cpdh20)

[aimsScope&journalCode=cpdh20) reports a modest 0.381 for 2016 and 0.439 for](https://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?show=aimsScope&journalCode=cpdh20)

the past five years. Therefore the data collected by *Thomson Reuters Web of Knowl-*

edge is not a terribly useful method for mapping out the research potential of our

field, a fact that appears to apply mutatis mutandis to *Google Scholar* data and the

h-index derived from them, if anything because confusion of author names (and insti-

tutions) is far from ruled out in this regard (our h-index is reported to be 25 and 14

since 2013: https://scholar.google.be/scholar?hl=nl&as_sdt=0%2C5&q=marc+dep

aepe&oq=). Other catalogues also suffer from these imperfections. Despite having

consistently submitted our publications, *Lirias*, the KU Leuven's bibliographic digital

repository (which underwent a major overhaul in March), appear far from complete.

This is not only to be attributed to missing older publications but also due to the fact

that the categorization occasionally operates according to a logic that is unclear to us.

The same applies to the research gate database. On this basis Ian Grosvenor (2018)

counted only 159 publications authored by Marc Depaepe: http://www.ische.org/wp-

content/uploads/2018/08/Documents-for-General-Assembly-Berlin-2018.pdf.

Whether this relativizing attitude towards personal achievements is of a nature

sufficient to justify the present article is something that I asked myself more than

once during the data processing stage (in the month of June 2018). It would not be

of benefit to the world, which certainly has no need whatsoever for it either. And

how it could be used in terms of verifying or falsifying this meeting of the Scientific

Research Community's starting conclusions also fails to impress. However, once

the game with the data has begun, it is hard to stop it. To allude to Huizinga, among

[others, my own city is at this very moment occupied with an exhibition (https://www.](https://www.)

[playkortrijk.be/nl/over/waarom-play) that reminds me how playing is and remains a](https://www.playkortrijk.be/nl/over/waarom-play)

basic human need whatever the circumstances may be. And who are we to contra-

dict this exemplary cultural historian, who even lumped philosophy, the "frivolous

rationalism" of the 18th century, in with the wigs, music, the elegance of Rococo and

the charm of the salons, characterizing it as a kind of amusing diversion (Huizinga,

[1974,](#) 149 &154 [originally in 1938])? It was based on the inherent pleasure of it (to include the creation of tables, charts and diagrams, among others) that I eventually

went ahead with it, heedless of whether something relevant could be gained from

it and without concerning myself further with the "impact" of my work. It simply

plays for the sake of play, just as if all the publications I have maintained (each with

an individual identification number) were the bottle caps I used to make believe were

cycling races way back when as a little boy, playing with my twin brother. In that

game I could classify and rank riders to my heart's content (based on their country

of origin, their team, their actual or fictional scores in our game, and so on).

Just to indicate that intrinsic motivation might have been a driving force in our

constant quest for publications; the desire to do a job well for its own sake as Sennett

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(2008: 9) calls it. Craftsmanship is indeed an enduring basic human impulse which is certainly able to transcend the extrinsic "lust for glory" and/or the "lust for academic

fame" (Labaree, 2018) that might have been present in our career…

My Data Files

As has already been mentioned, the basis of this "study" is my own list of publica-

tions (available at: https://www.kuleuven-kulak.be/nl/Bestuur/vicerectoren/MarcDe

2018. This list of publications has developed over time. It dates back from a time in

which the "publish or perish" motto was in fact already in force; however, the biblio-

metrics craze had not yet taken up its current tyrannical role. This is why the distinc-

tion between, for example, "international" publications of a "national character" was

only introduced over time and why there is also an undeniable difference between

the interpretation of this distinction at the beginning and end of my career. What

appeared abroad at the time we invariably perceived as international, while towards

the end the circumstances had altered beyond recognition. Hardly any "national"

(i.e., Belgian or Flemish) publication channels remained for our research. That is

also how foreign language articles in, for example, a Brazilian or Czech journal

came to be labelled as "national" as well. When times past this was most assuredly

not the case. In short, this categorization—which will be addressed further in just

a moment—is therefore not always equally watertight. For that matter, what is a

scientific publication? At what time is it recognized as such? I have kept pretty much

everything that has been published as the output of my daily work since my appoint-

ment as a scientific researcher. Both by category and cumulatively, the overview of

this appears as follows (see Table 1).

The first question which will be asked by our readers is, "Is that a lot"? And natu-

rally, there is the expectation that the answer will be based on a peer-based compar-

ison, while it is precisely this competition with others—for better or worse—that

increases the pressure on individual researchers. Rather, the reinvention of assess-

ment criteria for the human sciences (see the motto) should, in my opinion, take

place just as it does in the writing of history, much more as a matter for ideographic

approach rather than for peer comparison. Only this type of approach has the capacity

to grant the recognition due the specificity of individual merits. However, given that

this assessment concerns my own publications, I prefer to put significant distance

between myself and this type of assessment. Anyhow, and this must in any event be

one of the few conclusions to be drawn from this article, an assessment seeking to do

justice to an individual's finished work cannot take place without due consideration

for its content. Hopefully, the era of a rector's (here at the KU Leuven) ability to say

that publications serve only to be counted is finally over. Certainly in literature and

in the historical sciences, which have as it were, a narrative character, the content

must also form the principal part of any valuation. In a recent dissertation (Annegarn-

Gläß, 2018, 17) with reference to Genette (2010)3 it is expressed thus: "*Im Zuge des*

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M. Depaepe

Table 1 Number of publications by category and cumulative

1.

Books

1.1. As author or co-author

27

27

1.2. As editor or co-editor

25

52

1.3. Book chapters

175

227

2.

Journal articles

2.1. Internationally oriented

131

358

2.2. Nationally oriented

28

386

3.

Proceedings (papers & abstracts)

3.1. Internationally oriented

112

498

3.2. Nationally oriented

12

510

4.

Research Reports

4.1. Published

2

512

4.2. Non-published (often on the internet)

63

575

5.

Edition of special issues

28

603

6.

Book reviews and review articles

60

663

7.

Chronicle, documentation, editorial work

73

736

8.

Texts of courses and other didactic instruments

19

755

9.

Varia (endorsments)

1

756

Narrative Turn *fand die Erzähltheorie Eingang in die verschiedensten Disziplinen,*

was zu einer Pluralisierung der verschiedenen Erzähltheoretischen Ansätze führte

und unter den Begriff Narratologie subsummiert werden kann".

What constitutes "a lot" or "little" may moreover only be discerned against the

backdrop of the opportunities an individual has been afforded to carry out his or her

research. Someone saddled with a laborious teaching assignment can hardly achieve

the same output as someone who spends nearly all of his or her time as a researcher—

a status in which I have been able to work for many years since my appointment in

1977. This was only overcome by policy positions such as Department Chairman

(of Educational Sciences) in Leuven (2001–2004), Campus Dean (of Education) in

Kortrijk (2004–2009), Vice Rector in Leuven (as Rector of the Kulak Campus in

Kortrijk) and Academic Director in Bruges/Ostend (2013–2017). This is what led

to the need for a chronological overview for further analysis, rather than a general

overview based on total amounts. Before contemplating the developments from one

year to the next, a few technical considerations still ought to be addressed.

In the score listed above, the output within the different categories was considered

to be a single unit in each case. Obviously writing a book is not the same, as regards

time investment, as for instance writing a review of a book written by someone else.

And yet we have failed to use a different system of weights to adjust our picture

of production. However, this does not detract from the enduring wisdom of not just

including every category in the further analysis. Self-evidently, Categories 1 (books)

and 2 (scholarly journals) take pride of place. It is against this backdrop (the sum

of 386 output units) that the demand for "a plentiful supply" of completed works

is already an entirely different piece of business. Over a period of 43 years—I was

recruited as a researcher in 1977 and publications for 2019 have already been made—

this means that numerically speaking I averaged nine publications a year, which apart

from the above-mentioned teamwork with co-authors and co-editors, still entails

considerable overlap, among others including translations, popularisation among

the general public and attempts at conceptual synthesis. I will come back to this later

in more detail. However, what is not included in this estimate are the reprints (at any

rate where it does not concern a rewrite published under a new title with a new ISBN

number). And yet these are significant because they not only indicate that these books

are used by a wider public, but that at the same time they also serve as an indicator

of the scientific endeavours of their author(s) or editor(s). In the end we identified

11, which brings the interim total for Categories 1 and two to 398 (and therefore the

average production just over 40 years averages ten per year, which, taking holidays

into account in particular, might amount to around one book or journal contribution

per month). However, that has been calculated without the "proceedings" (what I

mean here is our contributions published in conference collections), which of course

also include authentic documents. However, the problem is that this category (number

3.1 along with 3.2) errs on the heterogeneous side. In addition to "full papers" that

have not been published elsewhere (A), it also contains preliminary publications of

articles that were adapted retrospectively in books or scholarly journals (B) as well

as conference presentation abstracts (C), whether or not having been augmented,

along with conference collections co-published by us (D). To determine the correct

annual volume of publications, I have already taken subsets A and B into account

(see Table 2, printed in bold).

In a way the first three categories of my database, the third having been purged

of C and D, form the "core" with which I will continue to work. So all told the total

of the "core file" amounts therefore to 55 (36 + 19) + 386 = 441, possibly to be

increased by 11 hardcopy reprints, which bring the total to 452. To draw attention

to the intensity of publication behaviour, it goes without saying that one may still

add the other categories as well to the calculation: critiques and reviews in scientific

journals (6), published reports (4.1), editing or co-editing of themed issues (5) and

a selection from the course material (from Category 8 to the extent that this had

actually been published by a scientific publisher). A chronological summary of all

these data can be found in Table 3, provided with the necessary interim totals.

Table 2 Details for Category

3.1

3.2

Total

3 "Proceedings"

A

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M. Depaepe

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Graph 1 General overview of the total number of selected publications by year

The overall total, presented in the graph below (see Graph 1), gives a clearer picture of the intensity of publication behaviour over the years.

However, this image does not correspond with the hypothesis postulated with

regard to the evolution of publications. A good example of this is the scientific

output prediction made by the Taylor and Francis group in Graph 2.

It is clear, however, that this prediction refers to the entire research population

(across all fields), not concerning itself with the publication profile of individuals

and/or research groups (whether or not centred on a single individual). Nevertheless, I

have opted to include this graph because in my opinion it does a good job illustrating,

through the linear course of quasi-exponential growth, the belief in progress to which

"modern" science has fallen prey since the "Modern Era". I have discussed this

process and its ramifications on a possible "Whiggish" interpretation of modern

science's historiography in detail in my course on the history of the behavioural

sciences (Depaepe, 2018), which was the only course I continued to give during my last directorship and the subsequent sabbatical of 2017–2018.

The publication behaviour of individuals—and this strikes me as an important

observation on the start of my retirement as professor emeritus— seems more like

the stages of life dating back to time immemorial (which is also mentioned in my

course on the history of the behavioural sciences, Depaepe, 2018, 31–32) that not only ascends but also makes its inevitable descent, as is illustrated in Fig. 1. There is no denying that this descent has already begun for me, even though the relative

decline in publications in recent years is also undeniably attributable to the weight

of the policy position occupied to which I referred earlier on. Incidentally, the year-

to-year overview does not genuinely represent the energy invested each year in the

writing of manuscripts because, as we already know, there is often a relatively long

stretch of time between writing and the time of publication.

AUTHORSERVICES
Supporting Taylor & Francis authors

Too much information?

In the world today, there are **50 million**

published research articles and that number is *doubling* every twenty years.

Taylor & Francis Group
an **informa** business

Das Stufenalter des Menschen.

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M. Depaepe

Graph 2 Predicted number of publications by Taylor & Francis

Fig. 1 Traditional portrayal of the stages of life. (*Source* http://webdoc.sub.gwdg.de/ebook/ga/

2003/papier/html/bilder/gr09.jpg)
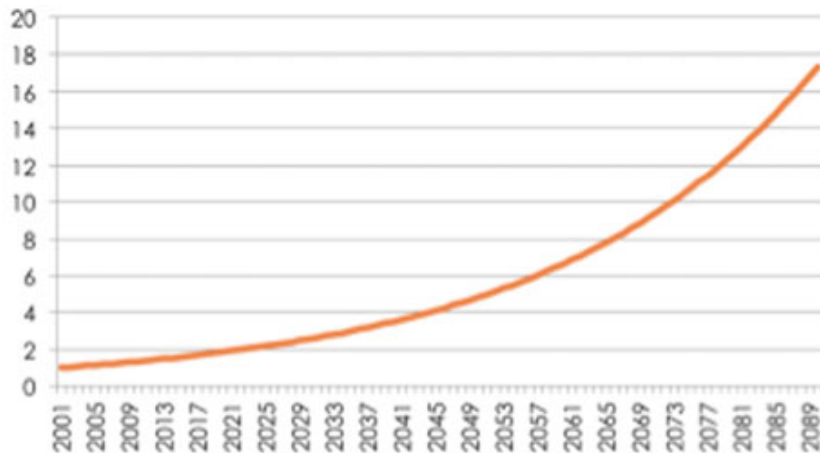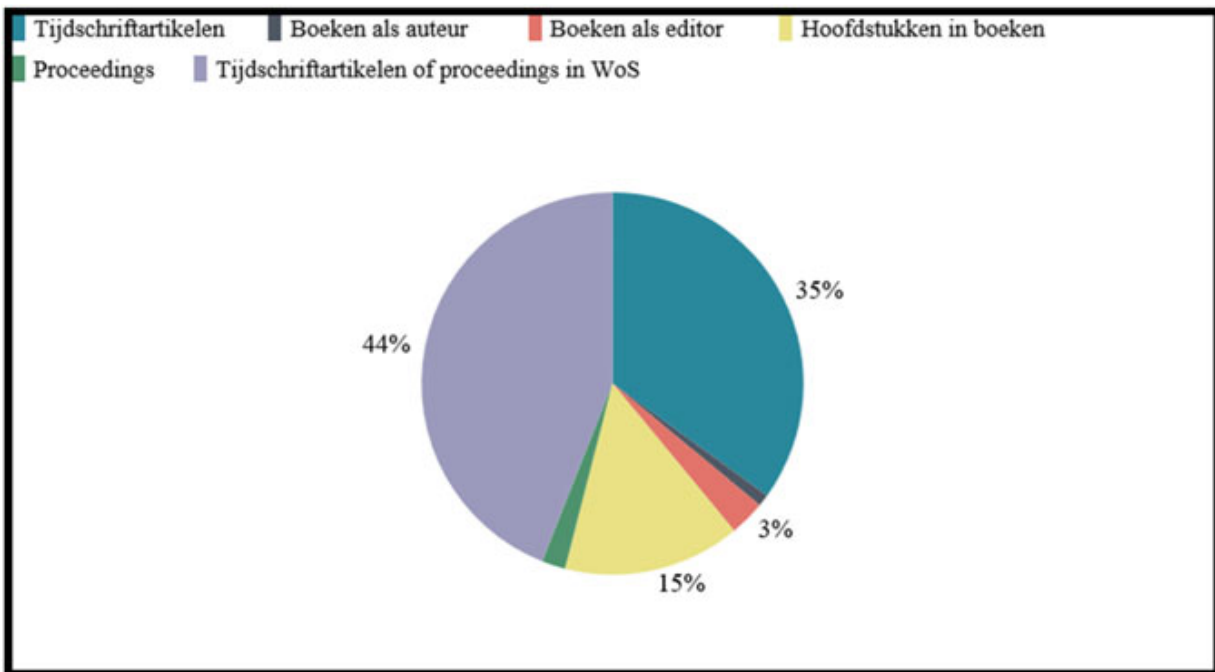
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Of Books and Journals

From the general overview (Table 1) it is possible to deduce that the production of contributions in books exceeds the production of contributions in journals. This is

certainly attributable to the paradigm of historical research and contrasts sharply with

empirically-oriented "educational research", which, partly in light of the contempo-

rary concern for citation indexes, must chiefly be predicated on publications in "top

journals". According to the *Vlaams indicatorenboek* (2017, 4.2.1.) [The Flemish Record of Indicators], published "in coordination with the Centre for Research and

Development Monitoring (ECOOM)", publications (regardless of inclusion on *Web*

of Science) based on, in addition to other criteria, the distribution of research funds for the social and human sciences divided among the Flemish universities, can be

classified as follows (Graph [3).

PS. translation of the legend taken from a Dutch source: journal articles; books

as author; books as editor; chapters in books, proceedings, journal articles or

proceedings in WoS

From here it appears that the main share (nearly 79%) is attributable to the "jour-

nals" heading (albeit removed from the share of *Web of Science* proceedings, for

which we have no data, but which in view of the very scant share of proceedings

recorded outside the *Web of Science*, here 2%, cannot in any case be terribly large).

Graph 3 The nature and type of social and human sciences publications included in the data files of the "Official Ruling Panel" of the Flemish Government not included (56%) and included (44%)

on the WoS. *Source* https://www.vlaamsindicatorenboek.be/4.2.1/publicatietypes

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It seems worth looking into whether or not the "fashionable" preference for jour-

nals over the years was actually discernible in the publication behaviour studied

here.

At first glance, not much can be inferred from the detailed overview of publications

by year and category (see Graph 4). The number of articles in books (grey line) is, in any event, also the prevalent line of development.

And if one looks at the specific ratio of the number of contributions in books

in comparison to journals (national and international combined), a nearly identical

prevalence can be ascertained (see Graph 5).

Additionally, the question of whether the writing (blue line in Graph 6) and/or co-editing of books (orange line in graph 6) in our publication behaviour has been on a systematic decline must be rejected. Generally speaking, the publication pattern

of books in their entirety (orange and blue combined generates the grey line) reflects

that of all the other categories combined.

However, what is true is that the number of book reviews (Category 6 in the general

overview) has significantly declined over the years (see Graph 7). In fact, after 2010

not a single one can be found. In any event, this can be attributed to new-fangled

trends in the science sector. On the one hand, by default reviews do not yield all that

much in the contemporary system of honoraria, and on the other, there is also less

space for these than there previously was in some leading journals.

Output

14

12

10

8

6

4

2

0

77

79

81

83

85

87

89

91

93

95

97

99

01

03

05

07

09

11

13

15

17

19

19

19

19

19

19

19

19

19

19

19

19

19

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

BooksA

BooksE

ArtB

ArtJI

ArtJN

ProcA

ProcB

Repr

ProcC

ProcD

BRev

Rep

EdSI

SelCM

Graph 4 Detailed overview of publications by year and category

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Articles in Books vs. Articles in Journals

14

12

10

8

6

4

2

0

1970

1980

1990

2000

2010

2020

2030

ArtB

ArtJI&N

Graph 5 Evolution of the number of contributions in books (Category 1.3) versus journal articles (Category 2.1 and 2.2)

Books

4.5

4

3.5

3

2.5

2

1.5

1

0.5

0

77

79

81

83

85

87

89

91

93

95

97

99

01

03

05

07

09

11

13

15

17

19

19

19

19

19

19

19

19

19

19

19

19

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

BooksA

BooksE

Total

Graph 6 Overview of book production by year (Categories 1.1 and 1.2 with total)

A Matter of Language

It is well known that the growing preference for the use of English also forms a part

of the developments within the globalized scientific community. This penchant had

already clearly been set in motion during the last quarter of the 20th century. For

example, in the journal *Paedagogica Historica* which we analysed, the percentage of

English-language articles was no less than 79.8% for the period ranging from 1996

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Book Reviews

10

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

1

0

1970

1980

1990

2000

2010

2020

2030

Graph 7 Overview of the number of critiques and reviews by year (Category 6)

to 2004, while with regard to the previous journal series (the period dating prior

to 1960) that percentage bumps down to 53.7% (Depaepe & Simon, 2005). And as far as the database of the social and human sciences in Flanders is concerned, the

competent authority has found that the percentage of English-language publications

between 2000 and 2015 trumped all other publication types, having increased from

61% to 79%, while Dutch-language publications fell in that same period from 29%

to 17% (*The Flemish Record of Indicators,* 2017, 4.2.3). The question, therefore, is

whether traces of this trend can be found in the databases studied here (in which

only subcategories A and B of the proceedings (Category 3) were taken into account

and bilingual publications were counted as double, i.e., as a provisional publication

within each language, see Table 4).

What is striking in this respect is the finding that English has supplanted native

languages in our publication behaviour, which becomes all the more evident on

converting the absolute figures in Table 4 into percentages (see Graph 8). 40% of our publications are in English, while only a third of publications are now in Dutch.

Considering the language situation in Belgium, it seems more than plausible too

that nearly 10% of our publications were in French. And as regards German, this is

explicable from the perspective of history, given the knowledge that the "science" of

education (*Pädagogik*) was born in that language area. Moreover, from an interna-

tional perspective my book *Zum Wohl des Kindes?* obtained a certain status within

the standard literature there concerning the development of empirical educational

science. It goes without saying that this can hardly be inferred from a quantitative

explanation, despite *Google Scholar* having linked 173 citations from this book out of

a total of 2,271 (https://scholar.google.be/scholar?hl=nl&as_sdt=0%2C5&q=marc+

depaepe&oq=) coupled to my "user profile". I have already indicated above that these

types of figures are very relative because they are connected to the composition of
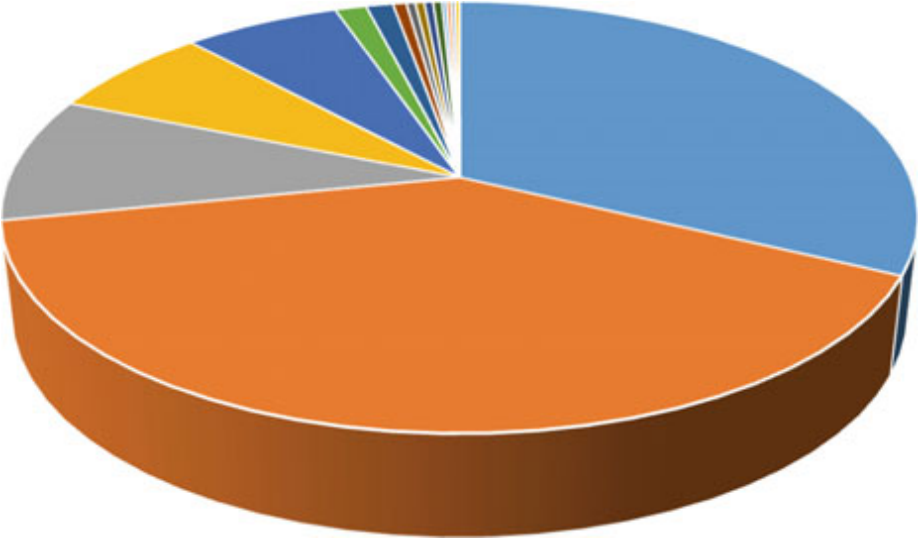
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Table 4 Publications by category according to the language of publication used

Language;

BookA

BookE

ArtB

ArtII

ArtJN

Proc

Rep

EdSI

Brev

TOT

Dutch

12

8

57

22

25

7

1

10

29

171

English

5

14

60

62

1

31

17

21

211

French

10

1

20

12

1

2

4

50

German

1

1

15

13

1

6

37

Spanish

2

1

12

9

11

35

Portuguese

1

2

2

1

1

7

Polish

6

6

Russian

3

3

Italian

2

2

Chinese

2

2

Latvian

1

1

2

Hungarian

1

1

2

Greek

1

1

Swedish

1

1

Catalan

1

1

Se rvian

1

1

TOT

30

26

175

131

28

54

1

27

60

532

Languages

Spanish

7%

German

Dutch

7%

32%

French

9%

English

40%

Graph 8 Proportional distribution of the languages used in the sample from Table [4](#) having been researched

the population from which they were drawn. Finally, there is the presence of Spanish,

which at 7% is equal to the German percentage. This is indubitably due to the rapid

rise of this language within the field of the history of education. Certainly South

Americans, for whom the constitution of a historical identity still remains a matter of

significance, have established a solid relationship in recent decades with international

organizations practising in the field. Simultaneously, important steps were also taken

in Europe's Iberian peninsula towards a higher awareness of theory on approaches to

the educational past. This was a methodological trend that could only be celebrated

from among our research group. The remaining eleven languages in which we have

published (and which, unlike those listed previously, I cannot read at all, let alone

speak) are more or less negligible with regard to percentage (5%); however, they do

point to a relatively extensive network. Obviously, this almost exclusively involves

translation work, which I have already addressed in the text above. Moreover, we

have also published in a seventeenth language (i.e., Czech), which is not listed here

as such due to the publication concerned (an assessment of the Comenius study in the

Czech Republic) having been classified as Category 7, which was not included in this

sample. This suggests that all of the translations did not necessarily take place based

on pieces published elsewhere, but rather under certain exceptional circumstances

were also based on texts that had been originally written for this purpose.

The data above relate to the sampled categories' overall total. It is only possible to

determine whether the predominance of English over Dutch ought to be considered

an actual trend by means of a chronological overview. To this end, we charted the

evolution of Dutch versus English publications over time in Graph <u>9</u>, albeit solely based on Categories 1, 2, and 3 (A and B) categorized above. This was because the

Evolution Dutch vs. English

16

14

12

10

8

6

4

2

0

77

79

81

83

85

87

89

91

93

95

97

99

01

03

05

07

09

11

13

15

17

19

19

19

19

19

19

19

19

19

19

19

19

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

DUTCH

ENG

Graph 9 Chronological evolution of Dutch versus English publications in categories 1–3 (A-B)

expectation was that the categories considered most significant (i.e., books, journals

and proceedings) would also be the most sensitive to this potential trend. And indeed,

this turns out to be the case.

Co-authorships and Co-editorships

As I have already said many times: I love teamwork. From my perspective, historiog-

raphy need not be an individual, isolated act at all. Two always know more than one,

and by combining knowledge and expertise via teamwork, better research results can

be achieved. While that may seem fairly obvious, in our field it is in fact anything but.

Our analysis of *Paedagogica Historica* in the mid-1990s (Depaepe & Simon, 1996),

demonstrated that only a minority of the articles (approx. 16%, or 21 out of 130 to be

precise) had been penned by more than one author. That share is a good deal higher

in my case. The core file that we extracted from categories 1, 2 and 3 contains a total

of 441 items. 256 thereof (see Table 5), which is nearly 60%, are the outcome of co-authorship or co-editorship, which is an additional reason for significant caution

however much I might like to pat myself on the back. However, on pain of repeating

myself, this is not the intent of this article.

It can be surmised from the overview above that the majority of this teamwork

(approx. 45%) was the effort of a two-person team. However, 3-person teams are also

well represented at approx. 34% (see Graph 10), and there are even teams comprised **Table 5** Items in the core file having more than a single co-author or co-editor are arranged according to the number of co-authors or co-editors of each publication

Co-aut

BookA

BookE

ArtB

ArtII&N

Proc.I&N

TOT

2

2

14

45

38

16

115

3

3

4

40

32

8

87

4

2

4

14

5

2

27

5

2

1

2

4

4

13

6

2

1

3

7

3

2

1

1

7

8

2

2

9

10

11

12

1

1

13

14

15

1

1

TOT

18

25

103

80

30

256
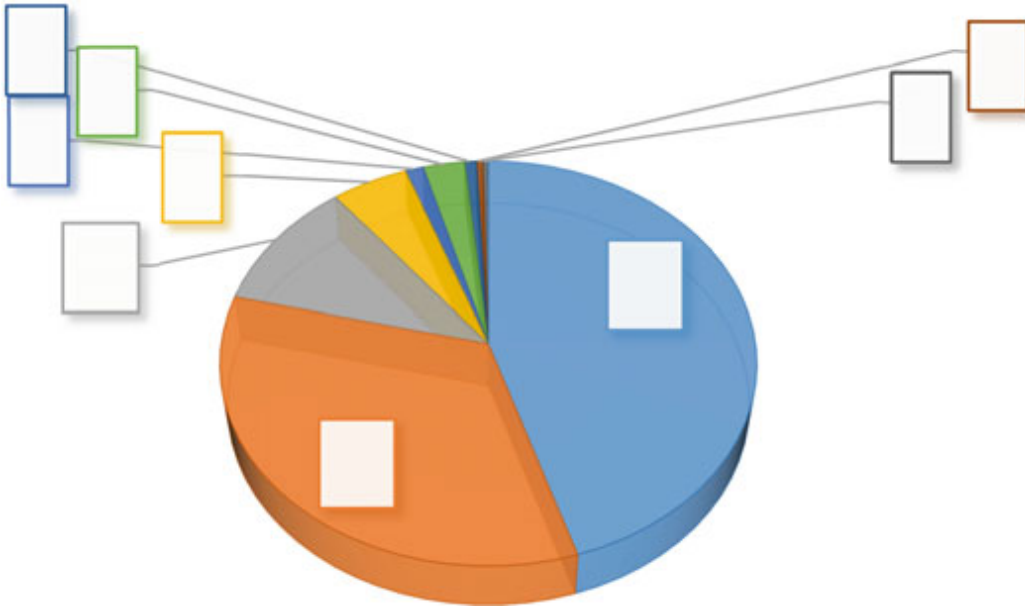
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NUMBER OF CO-AUTHORS

8

15

1%

7

0%

12

6

3%

0%

1%

5

5%

4

2

11%

45%

3

34%

Graph 10 The number of items in the core file having more than a single co-author or co-editor, arranged according to the number of co-authors or co-editors of each publication

of 12 and 15 people. The latter obviously deals with the composition of research

groups of which I was a member and which I was able to head at a later date, usually

with my good friend and colleague, Frank Simon. In terms of a variety of content-

related, but also theoretical-methodological aspects of this teamwork, we have shed

light on more than one "qualitative" contribution (Depaepe & Simon, 2009). Here it suffices to draw attention to the tremendous heterogeneity in the backgrounds of

employees recruited by us for our projects: pedagogues (including sociologists of

education, educationalists, remedial teachers and special educators, and so-called

social pedagogues, i.e. from the sector of youth and adult education) and historians

(including cultural historians, art historians, archaeologists, and even Egyptologists),

but also theologians, anthropologists and even more besides. It goes without saying

that in doing so, this has all been in the hope that we would be able to promote the

interdisciplinarity of what we have termed the "educational historiography" (previ-

ously the "history of pedagogy", and even "historical pedagogy"), which is already

a field that hovers between two main disciplines.

In some data files—such as the annual reporting of publications to VEWA (The

Flemish "Association of Educational and Scientific Authors")—the individual share

for each employee was requested. That is, without doubt, a precarious undertaking.

I have never recorded what efforts I or others have made on behalf of a certain

book or article. After all, teamwork is a matter of trust, which is why, as a matter of

course and in response to this type of inquiry, we have said that everyone pulled an

equal load. This is, of course, not true. However, in a well-functioning team, where

competences are complementary—and there is no doubt that this was the case for

the co-authorship with Frank Simon (compare the recent interview with him, Braster

et al., 2018)—the efforts made are not the object of focus. Each person alternates in carrying the load. To put it in cycling terms again: how many six-day cycling races

have we ridden together? How many places have we attended conferences together,

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where we did not just present together, taking turns in giving the other the lead, but

where we were already working on the paper for the next conference too?

There are no fewer than 364 authors on my complete publication list (as co-

author, but also as editor and/or co-editor). It is not possible to discuss all of them

here, of course. To give an impression of those appearing most frequently, I have

listed those "employees" occurring at least ten times in our data, in Table 6. Following what has been said above, it should come as no surprise that Frank Simon ranks as

the undisputed first among equals in this group. Angelo Van Gorp follows, and he,

in concert with Frank and me, form the cornerstone of the still ongoing research

project on Ovide Decroly. And then we have Paul Smeyers—also by no means an

unknown in the company of our research community—attending this symposium,

in all likelihood for the last time. The fact that Smeyers is the sole person on the list

who cannot be labelled a "historical" researcher provides evidence of the *Research*

Community (set up at the time by us to close the gap between educational historians

and philosophers) having been immensely productive, and by virtue of this alone,

that it was already possessed of both merit and meaning.

In actual fact, the overwhelming presence of history of education researchers on

the list does not necessarily mean that our efforts towards interdisciplinary work

failed to deliver results. Given that it is invariably occupied with colleagues (to my

delight, my doctoral supervisor or *Doktervater* as the Germans so nicely put it,—a

"real" historian moreover—even comes in at fourth place), employees and/or former

Ph.D. students, there is, either way, a technical bias. In the myriad publications by our

research group, we have always held to the policy of listing anyone having made even

the slightest contribution as an author or editor. In the quest for actual "blind" spots,

we could be reproached for the fact that among the thirteen "elite", only two women

can be found, and that they are far down in the list. Were we, therefore, "gender-

biased"? It is a possibility, even though we have data that do point to somewhat more

gender neutrality of the 24 Ph.D. students having graduated under my supervision

Table 6 People who appear

Frank Simon

246

most frequently in my

database

Angelo Van Gorp

94

Paul Smeyers

86

Maurits De Vroede

40

Mark D'hoker

31

Frederik Herman

20

Karl Catteeuw

17

Kristof Dams

13

Hans Van Crombrugge

13

Lies Van Rompaey

13

Jan Briffaerts

10

Pieter Dhondt

(either as supervisor or co-supervisor), nine have been women. Obviously, however,

this near 38% remains an underrepresentation, certainly considering that the extent

of the study programme's feminization has made tremendous leaps forward, even

going beyond 90 or 95% at the bachelor and master levels. In contrast, however,

this feminization of care sector jobs in education and schooling is also coupled with

a relative "masculinization" of the top jobs (in regard of which we might also take

Ph.D. and even employee status at the university over time into account) (see Depaepe

et al. 2006).

Further analysis of the figures in Table 5 infers that it is primarily book editing that has given rise to occasion for teamwork (25/25 or 100%), followed by the authoring of

books (18/27 or 67%), the publishing of book articles (103/175 or 59%), publication

of articles in proceedings (30/54 or 56%) and article publication in journals (80/159

or 50%). Nowadays, the author listed first or last also receives significant attention.

For this too I am prepared to provide figures (Table 7), in which the "last" author column only refers to those where I was not listed as first author (it is namely not

possible to be both first and last author simultaneously) and where work in a two-

person team has also been disregarded (figure behind the arrow). Totalling the

latter has little point because the author not listed first is automatically listed as last

in such a case (therefore making any distinction impossible, let alone a hierarchical

ranking with regard to the other author).

All in all, this means that our name appeared first among teams comprised of

at least two authors or editors in 55% of the cases (139/256) and that in a not too

shabby 45% of the rest of the cases with at least three researchers (42/94) was listed

as last author. This could serve to indicate a key role in the publication policy of

the historical-educational research group to which I belonged. And still, it should

again be put back into perspective that, certainly at the dawn of my career, it was

usually also the alphabet that determined the ranking of authors (and the use of the

last author as a possible indicator of the identity of the group's leader or sponsor had

not come into fashion at all yet).

Table 7 First and/or last in

Category	First author/editor of co-publications and the remaining co-editions	Last author/editor of
Co-Author of Books	8/18	3/15
Co-Editor of Books	6/25	12/19

Articles in

56/103

28/47 13/32

Books

Articles in

42/80

26/38 14/26

Journals

Articles in

27/30

1/3 0/2

Proceedings

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Finally, What Shall We Say About Content?

I do not wish to conclude this brief quantitative assessment without having said

something about the content of our research. There are at least three reasons for this.

Firstly, as I have already pointed out in the above: if the paradigm characteristic

of the humanities, a humanities-based and/or a hermeneutic approach, which we as

historical researchers, along with philosophers, have consistently defended in the

educational sciences, wishes to retain its well-earned place in academia, then it will

be imperative to assess its merits based on qualitative-content criteria. It goes without

saying that these cannot be developed within the confines of this article, and I will

refrain entirely from any value judgements since the data studied here derive from our

own research. Secondly, even at the most elementary of levels, descriptive statistics

can still provide clarification for categorization of content, something we have proven

twice already in the above-mentioned analysis of the *Paedagogica Historica* journal.

It is for this reason that I would also like to devote some attention to it. Moreover,

content-related descriptors such as these are not at all foreign to bibliometrics (see

for example Åström, 2010). Thirdly, in doing so this will provide the best possible assistance for a follow-up article—based on my lecture at the emeritus retirement

ceremony (see my other chapter in this book)—in which I can use the content of our

research to ponder not so much the "lessons" drawn from educational history (do

these exist?) but rather the issue of whether this near lifelong focus on what at first

glance appears to be a very old-fashioned field of study has indeed paid off.

Based on the titles, I have taken the 441 contributions from my publication list's

core file and subdivided them into 21 categories (see Table 8 and Graph 11).

Naturally this is random, but there is no alternative method. Furthermore, it did

ensure that each item—those most relevant in my opinion—was only filed under

a single category. Finally, this categorization makes it possible to look for larger

wholes. It comes as no surprise then that these ultimately represent the lines of

research that we, in concert with our colleagues and employees, have developed over

the course of our careers.

With this in mind, I discern six. First and foremost are the contributions related to

the "theory, methodology and historiography" of the field. All totalled that comes to

66. If one considers that 40 deal with "sources" and 11 with "tools" that we devel-

oped for this purpose, then the general category of theory and methodology can be

estimated at over a quarter of our production (117/441 = 26.5%). In this connection,

there is a second occurrence of the category "history of science" (mainly empir-

ical, but also including normative approaches in the educational and psychological

sciences) which represent 39 items. It can easily be expanded by the historical study

of leading figures in the first and second rows of educational history (24 items),

and in each instance, by those of Ovide Decroly (21 items), bringing the "history

of science" total to 84 (84/441 = 19%). Thirdly, the category "scientific organiza-

tion" (12 items) exists, which can be merged with the publications on the WOG (=

Scientific Research Community) (or Research Community with Smeyers) (30 items)

and with those concerning the ISCHE (4 items), totalling 46 (46/441 = 10.5%). It is
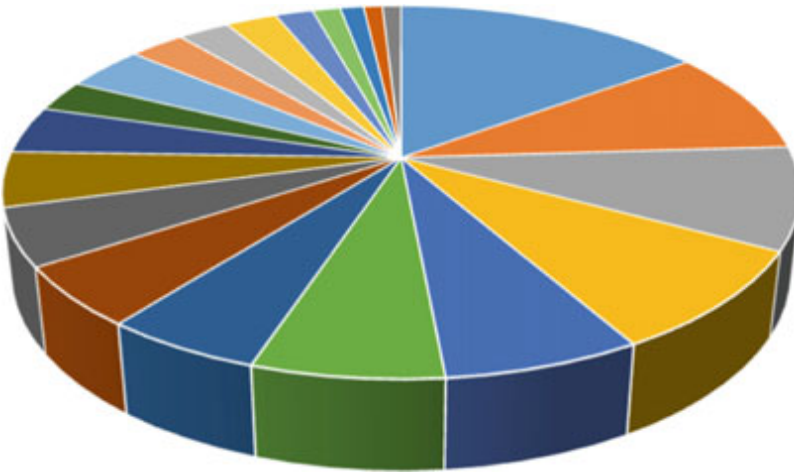
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Table 8 Number of items

Theory & meth.

66

grouped into content

categories from the core file

Sources

40

Congo

39

Hist. of. Science

39

RC

30

Synthesis

29

Leading figures

24

Child hist. et al.

23

Prim. Education

22

Ovide Decroly

21

Ed. Innovation

18

Education (general)

12

Teachers

17

Research Organization

12

Preschool

11

Research Instruments

11

Ed. Policy

8

Feminization

6

Varia

5

War

4

Ische

4

TOTAL

441

Content

Theory

Sources

Congo

Hist o Sc

RC

Synthesis

Leading F

Child Hist

Prim Ed

Ovide

Ed. Inn.

Ed (gen)

Teachers

Res Org

Preschool

Res Instr

Ed Pol

Fem.

Varia

War

Ische

Graph 11 Proportional distribution of categories which I categorized in the core file

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already clear that this massive focus on anything related to science is further indica-

tion that our intent has indeed been to raise the theoretical consciousness of our field

through our efforts.

In line with my predecessor(s), educational history as such represents a significant

proportion of publication behaviour. Focus on the development of primary education

in Belgium, among others (22 items), can be attributed to this fourth group, as well as

the focus on pre-school education (11 items), teachers (17 items), feminization of the

profession (6 items), educational innovation (18 items), education policy (8 items)

and education in general (12 items). Therefore this group's total can be estimated

at 21% (94/441). If really pushed to do so, one could also add our exercises in

synthesis based on conceptual keys, such as "educationalization" (29 items), given

that these are usually done based on educational history. Still, I prefer to keep these

separate, also due to the theoretical content, which once again is slightly higher here.

If there is something that ought to be added here, then it should preferably be the

category on the history of the child and extracurricular initiatives (23 items), because

these publications are also sometimes related to theoretical concepts. With a little

imagination, this fifth group (52/441 = nearly 12% combined) then also forms a

kind of interim link between the more theoretical and purely educational-historical

work. Certainly our production related to Congo (39/441 items, nearly 9% of the

total) could also be included in the educational history group. However, I prefer to

keep this more recent line of development separate, among other things because it is

something I currently really cherish. I am also very much looking forward to possibly

exploring it further during my position as emeritus.

In the meantime I have to admit that the lessons that I have learned during my career

are from another level than just blaming bad educators, wrong behaviour, abuses

in colonial or missionary education, or whatever. Our research certainly contains

substantive aspects that can shed new light on the educational past. To name but a

few: the irony of the immunization of countless educational innovations announced

with much fanfare; the demythologization of idols and ideals of the so-called "new"

education and the importance of figures in the second row of this "reform pedagogy";

the structural inadequacy of colonial education that put a mortgage on the postcolonial

(as a result of which it was doomed to failure) and finally the glorious relevance of

what is generally considered as irrelevant research (such as the history of education).

But even more important, in my view, are the methodological issues that we—as a

team—have discovered in the course of our research: the need for multiple storylines,

the plurality of viewpoints, the changing of perspectives, just to say something, and

in addition, the necessary diversity from sources and literature. And furthermore, as

I already have indicated in this paper, the importance of teamwork, and the added

value of an interdisciplinary approach (which, first and foremost, must be based on

well-founded research) and finally the concern for scientific integrity towards clients

as well as consumers of history. Rather than on quantitative data, it is precisely on

these substantive and methodological components that I want to be settled in the

future.

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Is There Anything then to Be Concluded from This?

If there is anything that I would have liked to demonstrate in this essay, then it is

that purely quantitative, let alone bibliometric "quality indicators" add little to the

"assessment" of historical educational research. To express this using a common

metaphor: it is barking up the wrong tree. In my opinion, this sort of thing also

applies to the possibly often exaggerated debates on the adverse effects of a purely

quantitative assessment (Gingras, 2015). Take now, for example, the issue of "fake"

data, which seems to be endemic in terms of the empirical approach. However, is

it possible to just extrapolate these issues to historiography? How then, in heaven's

name, should a person commit fraud in history without being unmasked? By spinning

"data" out of thin air? Or by citing sources that haven't been seen? Or, worse still,

by copying the work of others without referencing them, or by tacitly co-opting their

line of reasoning? Should I be pleased that our research group has never been found

guilty of such blatant violations? Or should I rather be upset by the fact that there still

appear to be certain researchers who spin their data in such a way that they fit into a

discourse which works more to their advantage? I really do not know, but what I do

know is that scientific integrity for historians of education comes down to dare to be

critical rather than looking for success by just telling what the audience, the heirs of

the subjects treated, the clients and/or the funders of the research want to hear.

There have always been researchers who are good and researchers who are less

good, be it by lack of courage or by lack of intelligence. Many of the "errors" listed

here are either due to lack of knowledge with regard to the historical craft or are the

result of deliberate deployment of this craft within the framework of one ideology

or another. That the ethical code of conduct among historians in these types of

circumstances can easily be watered down is obvious. It is for this reason that our

research group has always argued for a theoretical and methodological awareness

that is sustained among others by the history of science, a history of science that is

not only understood as the rational reconstruction of paradigms, but that also delves

into why these paradigms succeed or fail in the surrounding social context as well

as in the lives of individual researchers. This kind of historical wisdom can probably

help the researcher not fall prey to the grand expectations of the public, and on the

contrary assist him or her in garnering the courage to avoid the temptation of currying

the public's favour.

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Marc Depaepe (1953) was deputy chancellor at the *KU Leuven* (2013–2017). Since 2005 co-editor-in-chief of *Paedagogica Historica*. Former president of the *International Standing Conference for the History of Education* (1991–1994) and member of the *International Academy of Education* (2012). In 2015 he was awarded an honorary doctorate at the University of Latvia.

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Lost in Enthusiasm? An Elementary Qualitative Analysis of 44 Years of Research in Order to Show Why Even Today Educational Historiography is Not an Unnecessary Luxury

Marc Depaepe

Abstract The statement from this article that historical reflection remains essen-

tial in educational research will not be demonstrated by one or another theoretical

reasoning, but by four illustrations taken from my 44-year-old research career in the

history of education. Each one of these illustrations represents an important research

line of my career. The first deals with the history of primary education (mainly in

Belgium, but also elsewhere). It concentrates on the relationship between continuity

and change within the educational practices, in general, and on the irony and immu-

nisation of educational innovations, in particular. The second deals with the history

of educational sciences from the point of view of the history of science. The more

concrete topic here is the importance of demythologising the rhetoric of the well-

known ideals and idols of educational reforms. The third deals with colonial and

post-colonial history of education, by zooming in on the educational realisations and

its effects in the former Belgian Congo. Finally, the fourth deals with our position

within the theoretical, methodological and historiographical debates of the discipline.

More specifically, it wants to show the sublime relevance of the so-called irrelevant,

not only as far as the research in the history of education is concerned, but also as

far as its place as a teaching subject in the curriculum is concerned.

In the discussion of my paper "lost in narcissism" during the 2018 Seminar of our

Research Community, David Bridges asked me to complete the "quantitative" anal-

ysis of my publication behaviour by a qualitative one. Therefore, I devoted my

farewell lecture, which was held at the Campus in Kortrijk, some months after our

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Leuven seminar, [1] to this aspect, first and foremost to show the importance of a historical reflection in educational research. [2] Ultimately, this is not a new theme by any means, because it is related to the issue of the relevance of the history of education

assigned to me as the subject of a Ph.D. by the late Professor Maurits De Vroede

in 1977. After all, even then our discipline, the history of education, invariably

referred to in Dutch using the term "*historische pedagogiek*" (literally: "historical

pedagogy"), was under pressure. Apparently, Professor De Vroede, being a pure-

bred historian (Depaepe & D'hoker, 1987), did not have an easy time continuing to convince his colleagues at the faculty of psychology and educational sciences of the

need for a historical approach with regard to those educational sciences. After closer

examination—I expanded the initial question, which in my view was too limited,

to include a more historiographical overview of the theoretical and methodolog-

ical debates within the historical "sub-discipline" of education from an international

perspective—it appeared that the criticism of the unhelpful character of history with

regard to more future-oriented fields, such as the educational sciences, has been

more of a constant than a temporary issue. The criticism was undeniably related to

the emergence of "efficiency thinking" in the "modern" social sciences, related to

the preference for empirical, evidence-based knowledge, experimentally verified if

possible.

Since the dominance of empirical-analytical thinking subsequently persisted (and

intensified, partly due to the decline in normative, ideologically influenced educa-

tional sciences, see, among others, Masschelein et al., 2019) I deliberately added

"even today" to the title. Furthermore, the fact that I consciously replaced "history

of education" with "educational historography"3 in my research is precisely due to the methodological developments I studied, which I will briefly address at the end

of this essay. However, I have avoided opening with them. Not only because enough

has already been written about the nature and identity of the history of education in

the past (recently, e.g. Moreno Martinez, 2018), but also and above all because the proof of the pudding is still in the eating… Therefore, let us start with a number of

cases from my 44 years of research—four cases to be exact—taking into account the

theoretical-methodological positioning about which I would just like to say a few

words in conclusion.

I will successively discuss: (1) continuity and change in education; (2) the

demythologisation of the idols and ideals of New Education (in German *Reformpäd-*

agogik); (3) the discourse of the colonial educational initiative and (4) the sublime

relevance of the irrelevant. Each of these four specifically chosen themes is consistent

with one of the research lines to which I adhered during my career, i.e. (1) the history

1 9 November 2018, KU Leuven, Kortrijk, Campus Kulak. A preliminary version of this was

presented as a keynote lecture at the Conference "History of Education as a Scientific Pedagog-

ical Discipline and a Teaching Subject—Past, Present and Perspectives", held at the University of Montenegro, Faculty of Philosophy, Department of Pedagogy, in Nikšić, on 25 and 26 June 2019.

2 Which has been published in English (Depaepe, 2020a), and afterwards also in Dutch (Depaepe,

2020b).

3 M. De Vroede (1979) did also use the term, but this was really exceptional and in German. For him the field was "history", and thus "history of education".

of education (including Belgian education) in the strict sense (and with a focus on

the internal organisation of primary education, the subject of my licentiate thesis,

submitted in 1977); (2) the history of educational sciences (the subject of my second,

special Ph.D., completed in 1989); (3) colonial and post-colonial educational history

in the former Belgian Congo (the theme of one of our first books, published in 1995)

and lastly (4) the theory, methodology and history of educational historiography (the

subject of my first Ph.D. defended in 1982, as mentioned above). 4

Theme 1: On continuity and change in education

On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the teachers' trade union, the COV

(which stands for Christelijk Onderwijzersverbond), we5 were asked whether the social position of primary school teachers had improved in the past century. From

the trade union's point of view, this naturally constitutes a legitimate, understandable

and simple question, but one that is by no means easy to answer. This is because social

status or position is obviously a complex given, in which highly diverse variables

play a part. While one factor may result in greater appreciation, another could cause

teachers' prestige to decrease. Let us take, for example, the quality of flows entering

teacher training programmes—a subject of frequent complaints today. In contrast to

the rather stereotypical image of the teachers' college from the interwar period as

the "university" for intelligent children of the ordinary people, except in a few very

exceptional cases, the teaching profession no longer seems to attract the bright minds

it once did. Therefore, in our study (see, in this respect, Depaepe, De Vroede & Simon,

1993; and also Depaepe & Simon, 1997) besides the level of education, we attempted to include many other operational aspects of the phenomenon, such as employment

and career prospects, legal status and employment conditions, social characteristics

and the composition of the profession, income and living standards, and—naturally,

given the origin of the question—trade union protection. Moreover these factors and

their specific historical development do not reveal much on their own, since they

would de facto need to be compared with analogous historical developments in other

professions and at the end of the day, as far as Belgium is concerned, not much

research was or is available.

One of the cases we explored in more detail in an international context (Depaepe,

Lauwers & Simon, 2006) concerns the degree of feminisation in the body of teaching staff. Despite the (relative?) emancipation of women, their predominance in diverse

care professions is hard to ignore. The fact that these professions in the "soft" sectors

are generally less well paid than those in the "hard" sectors, which traditionally attract

more men, is also acknowledged. This inevitably leads to the conclusion that the old

stereotypical gender role distribution between men and women has continued to

4 In this essay, I have included as few literature references as possible, in order to limit the number of footnotes. More information about our work can be found in the detailed bibliography on our

personal website.

5 Since, as will be discussed later, a lot of the research I engaged in was conducted as part of a team, I prefer to use the plural in those cases.
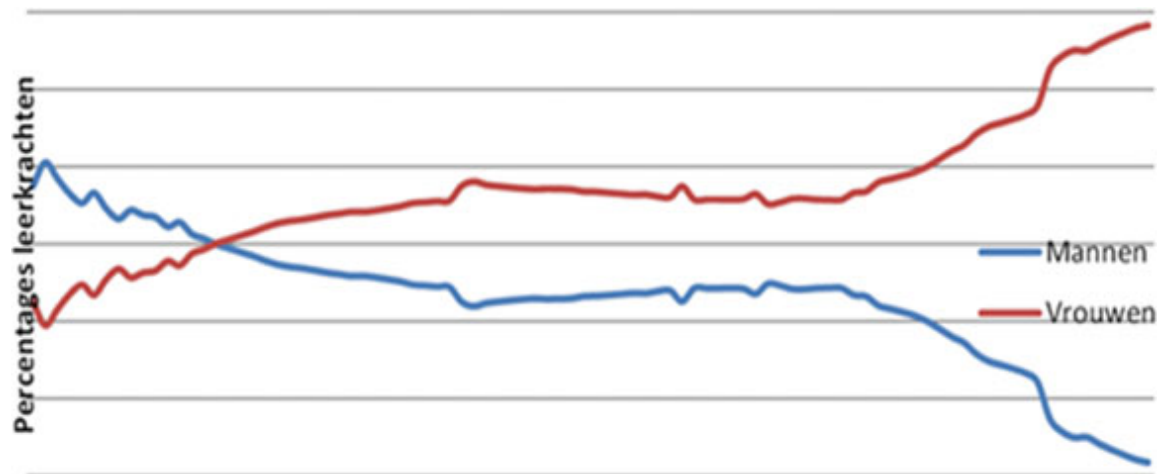
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play a role on the labour market. Men seemingly still mirror the so-called "bread-

winner model" while women continue to be associated with care and the education

of children. In any case—and we possess the relevant figures—men are increasingly

less involved in the education of primary school children. In Belgium, the number

of female teachers first exceeded the number of male teachers at the end of the

nineteenth century. If we compare the respective proportions of male versus female

primary school teachers in percentages, we obtain the following graph (Illustration 1):

Illustration 1: development of male (blue line) and female teachers (red line) in

Belgian primary education between 1845 and 2011.

80%

20%

1845

2011

The extent to which this progressive feminisation provides an indication of the

profession's social status is another matter. Nevertheless, the fact is that this trend will

clearly not end, since flows entering the various teacher training programmes (and

by extension studies in psychology and educational sciences) are highly feminised.

One of the most crucial aspects in the context of job satisfaction is undoubtedly

control of the profession. As far as primary school teachers are concerned, this factor

does not seem to have increased over the years, perhaps also because the study

programme, in contrast to many other intellectual professions, has not yet acquired

a university or academic status. In the actual teaching practice, teachers must deal

with extremely articulate parents (and grandparents) who often believe they know

better than the teaching staff. This contrasts sharply with the situation of say 60 years

ago, when parental authority regarding order and discipline was usually in line with

that of teachers. Partly due to refined, but also far more complex diagnostics, it is

now more common for school problems to be the subject of discussions within the

family circle, posing a challenge, if not a constant threat, to the competences of newly

qualified male and female teachers. In addition, the intellectual level of the flow of

students entering teacher training programmes has not increased. On the contrary,

teacher trainers and others involved now bemoan the basic knowledge of the current

generation of teachers-to-be (even though for historical researchers of education this

type of complaint appears to be a continuity rather than a discontinuity).

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Therefore, all in all, continuity and change already seem to adopt a relatively para-

doxical relationship in the history of education. Where feminisation of the teaching

profession has continued fairly consistently as a result of tough social perceptions,

its appeal has decreased. *Mutatis mutandis* this also applies to attempts at renewal

in primary education itself. After all, it looks as though the pursuit of more child-

oriented approaches in the classroom—the *nec plus ultra* of any progressive educa-

tional legacy (De Coster et al., 2009)—has led throughout the twentieth century to the appropriation of a "modern" (rather than "new") school, which in terms of

its internal organisation and school life or schooling, looked even more school-like

than before. Not only did the year group system curriculum take shape that century

(Depaepe, 1983), the disciplinary method applied to the children also became increasingly sophisticated and, whether or not consciously, was based on a more psycho-

logical approach. This can be deduced from, among other things, our analyses of

the educational methods (treatment of the curriculum and course materials) as well

as from pedagogical methods (such as punishments and rewards) in the classroom

(Depaepe et al., 2000; Herman et al., 2007). A close comparison of three periods, which appeared very different in terms of the "context": the foundations of the liberal

Belgian nation state in the 1880s; the economically depressed and simultaneously

fascistic 1930s and the "golden" meritocratic 1960s, leads us to conclude that the

"text" of school life and/or schooling has not fundamentally changed in all these

years. The experienced expert patterns of an intuitively constructed school culture

apparently served to immunise the *"vom Kinde aus"* of the German "reform peda-

gogy" (the educational reform of the Reformpädagogik) and the "new school move-

ment" elsewhere. Whereby one could also question whether ultimately this often

unexplained school teacher wisdom, which was poorly substantiated in scientific

terms, was not equally in the best interests of the child, by protecting that child from

any kind of educational adventure. Examples that spring to mind include certain

anti-authoritarian educational methods of the 1970s. It is clear that in Flanders, after

the Second World War, a compromise of sorts had developed between the *"führen"*

and the *"wachsenlassen"* , in which there was no way for the latter to compromise the

former (Depaepe & Laevers, 1992). Order and discipline continued to be vital and the teacher had to maintain leadership and authority, but had to appeal to the pupils'

hearts in order to obtain their cooperation. Not even emotional blackmail was ruled

out in this endeavour.

A prime example of the immunisation and consequently also the "ironisation"

of educational renewal is provided by the case of the Belgian curriculum of 1936,

which was praised in the international press due to its progressive educational char-

acter (Depaepe et al., 1991). However, all this was not particularly straightforward.

Implementing the great principles of the New Education ideas—pupils' capacity, a

child-oriented approach and specifically cross-curricular knowledge acquisition in

"centres of interest" (designated by adults) (after the idea of the then already deceased

Ovide Decroly, more on him later)—boiled down to an entire series of admissions

related to the traditional educational character of the school. Not much remained of

the "environmental study", a term the Catholics also despised because it left hardly

any room for the transcendent character of religion, intended to address the themes
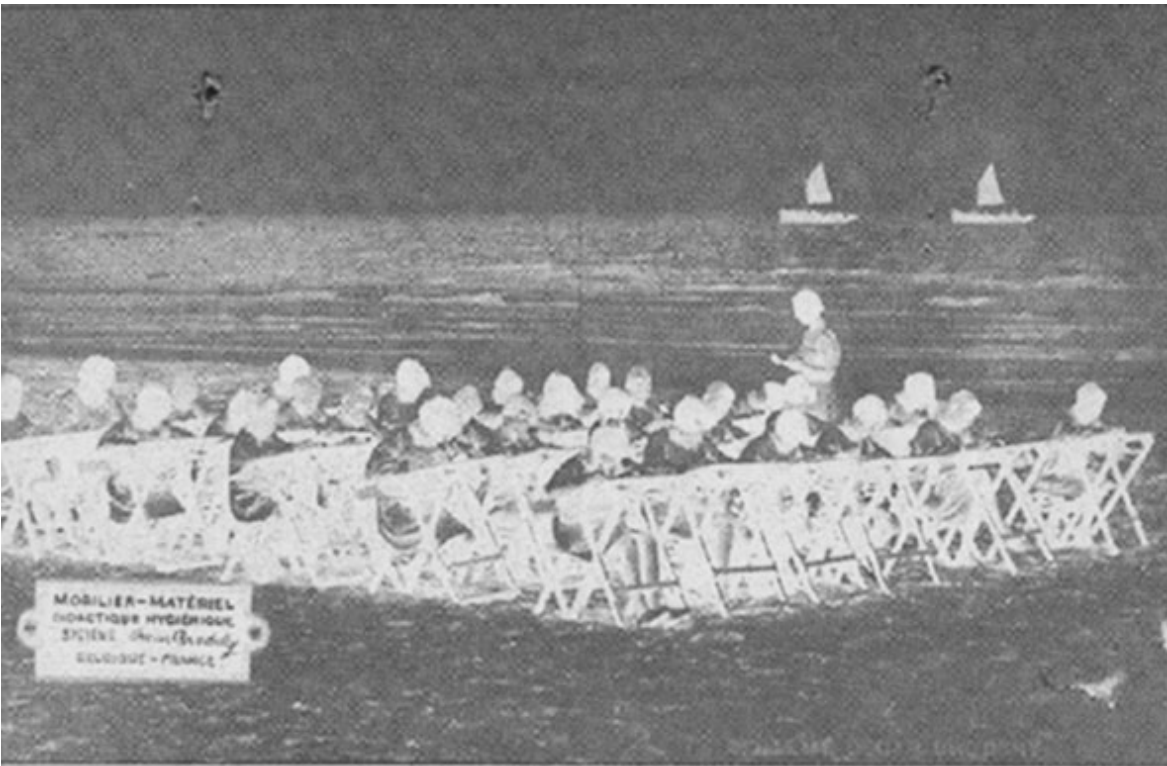
of these "centres of interest", apart from a separate school subject, on the margins of

the curriculum, something that we have been able to establish in our primary school

education.

Many other examples can be provided, more technical as well as process-based, of

failed or not particularly successful educational innovations, whether or not accom-

panied by reverse effects. To cite just two here (discussed in more detail in our work):

the introduction of a folding, flexible school desk, designed by Oscar Brodsky, and

the preference for so-called open air schools, whether or not orchestrated from above.

As far as the former is concerned, the undertaking as a whole ran out of steam. We

believe that the design by Brodsky, who hoped that pupils could use his individual

desk to learn anywhere, indoors as well as outdoors, was far too revolutionary for the

school and much too "academic" for society beyond it (Depaepe, Simon, Herman &

Van Gorp, 2012). It was difficult for the man in the street to envisage education that ventured outside the lines of the classical order. Collective desks organised in rows

facing the front where the teacher taught lessons at the blackboard was the concept

that was deeply engraved in the collective memory. Moreover, the same applied to

outdoor schools. On the rare occasion when the latter was achieved (see Illustra-

tion 2), we obtained a classroom with no confining, external walls. That's the whole

extent of it, something that prompted an equally rare cartoonist to portray the idea

that the innovation of the open air schools consisted of bringing (hot?) "air" inside the

classroom (see Illustration 3; Depaepe & Simon, 2003; see also Thyssen & Depaepe,

2010).

Illustration 2: An open air school at the Belgian coast, presumably in the 1920s.

Illustration 3: French cartoon on the open air schools (published in: Müller &

Schneider, 1998, p. 50; the cartoon was originally made by Marcel Lods in the late 1940s).

Les écoles en plein air...

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How should we interpret this as a whole? Along with Frank Ankersmitt I am

of the opinion that the educational life is, no more than the political, not in and of

itself ironic or tragicomic, but that it could become so, thanks to historical insight

(Depaepe, 2008). A second important insight, which brings me neatly to the next chapter, is the conviction that the idea, the theory or the scientific research, as is so

often wrongly assumed, does not precede the practice, but usually has a converse

relationship: it is evoked a posteriori, to legitimise what actually happens in practice.

Where is the theory or scientific research prior to the year class system? Who or

what says that primary school (as well as secondary school) has to consist of 6 years?

Does it originate from Comenius or empirical (rooted in experience) schoolteacher

wisdom? Idem with regard to the duration of a lesson, et cetera, et cetera. Rather than

actually applying the results of scientific research or theoretical reflection, it mainly

seems to concern the appropriation of certain aspects of a potentially appealing

ideology (among other things as a result of the implementation by interest groups),

which means that the relationship of the practice with the theory and vice versa is

ultimately rather more circular than linear.

Theme 2: The demythologisation of the idols and ideals of the New Education

Take the above-mentioned influence of Ovide Decroly on the 1936 curriculum. Apart

from the fact that "influence" in history is an extremely difficult category to trace

(Depaepe, 2007a), in Decroly's case one cannot ignore the interference of his immediate environment. During his life, as well as following his death, in 1932, his wife

and employees (also mostly women) endeavoured to pass on Decroly's "legacy"

as effectively as possible. To this end, in their "master's" work, the "Decrolyens"

not only sought substantive cohesion and coherent applications in education, but

primarily strived to afford their work a touch of authenticity and greatness. They

placed Decroly on a pedestal in the gallery of the great that had contributed to the

progress of humanity (Depaepe et al., 2003). This almost irrepressible enthusiasm and polished respect for the "leader" was undoubtedly partly due to the charm, charisma

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and empathy with which he engaged with his people. While, in addition, the self-

interest of employees and/or followers was never really far off. As they allowed the

star of the master to shine, it naturally shone on them too, and thus improved their

chance of increasing their prestige and social relevance.

As agents of dissemination and, even more, of the appropriation of the master's

ideology, these figures of the second row are of particular interest to historical

research. As we were able to determine, among other things, from the study of

the influence of John Dewey in Flanders (De Coster et al., 2005), there was a widespread focus on what these experts had written about their idols in educational textbooks and encyclopaedias. Often, there proved to be few opportunities

to consult the genuine work of the great thinkers. Even university libraries did not

always include their writings in their collections. And when it came to examining the

subject matter,—both Decroly[aut]Decroly, O. and Dewey[aut]Dewey, J., the latter

a not-insignificant source of inspiration for the former—were invariably part of any

educational curriculum (teacher training, as well as entrance exams for inspectors,

basically the only real promotion available in the flat career of the teaching corps)

these brief overviews were obviously much easier to study than the authors' orig-

inal works. What's more, Decroly had never actually written a synthesising book,

but usually, whether or not with his initial employees, published in highly specialist

scientific journals, as a result of which he was at the time, as it were, a prototype for

contemporary researchers (Depaepe & Simon, 2018a).

We will attempt to further ascertain the extent to which the distortions and bias of,

for example, the Decrolyens with regard to their star—the ultimate icon of educational

renewal in Belgium (to whom two postal stamps were dedicated, see Illustrations

4 and 5) took on legendary and mythological proportions, in the coming period,

together with Frank Simon and Angelo Van Gorp through biographical research

(Depaepe & Simon, 2018b). After all, the fact is that existing biographies about Decroly are still imbued with a certain innovation idealism: the belief in a better

future resulting from an education better adapted to the child; the old adage of a

"new" school (i.e. a "new" education) in a "new" society (see, e.g. Wagnon, 2018),

in which "*Wahrheit und Dichtung*" are still at risk of becoming intermingled. How

far could one go with this renewal, in educational as well as societal terms? To

Decroly this was extremely relative (see, e.g. Depaepe, 1990), in the sense that renewal was virtually always conceived as "adapting" to the existing bourgeois, late-capitalist society of the "vertigo" years prior to the First World War (after Blom,

2008). As a biomedical scientist, he was not directly involved in developing social innovations, and the pedagogical-didactic innovations that are generally attributed

to his work did not appear at the forefront of his publications. A more detailed

biography could demonstrate that his scientific expertise was predominantly of a

clinical nature (Depaepe, Simon & Van Gorp, 2011), and that the actual implications for education were often left to the above-mentioned employees. Ultimately, this

even applies to Decroly's psychological testing, in which, for example, someone

like Raymond Buyse, a highly promising inspector who set out to the US with him

in 1922 (Depaepe & D'hulst, 2011, Depaepe, D'hulst & Simon, 2013) played an important statistical role. For the sake of presumably ideological differences—Buyse

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was Catholic—the latter never totally belonged to the core of the Brussels Decrolyens.

Better biographical research is also urgently needed in this regard: which networks

did Decroly actually frequent, and how did he engage with them beyond the obvious

sphere of Brussels liberalism and paedology (Van Gorp, Depaepe & Simon, 2003)?

Who were his sponsors? And how did he deploy his employees? Which part did they

play in the scientific work, as well as beyond it? And to what extent were traditional

gender patterns decisive in this respect? In which it is naturally not our intention to

pursue cheap success with sensational discoveries or allegations, but to place matters

in a more accurate context. As we already explained at the beginning of our Decroly

study, this can only increase respect for Decroly the "man" (Depaepe & Simon,

1999). In the end, the history of education constitutes much more than the internal reconstruction of leading paradigms, let alone a triumphalist tale of progress of "the

longer, the more (is achieved)" and "the longer, the better". By demanding attention

for external scientific factors, such as the social, as well as individual processes of

academisation, professionalisation and careerism, we have tried to show that the

development of the educational sciences also involved man's handiwork, the driving

forces of which do not only, or not in the first instance, need to be sought in the

idealism for a better world (see also Depaepe, 1993a).

Illustration 4: Belgian postage stamp featuring the image of Ovide Decroly (1).

Illustration 5: Belgian postage stamp featuring the image of Ovide Decroly (2).

Pédagogie/Pédagogie Ovide Decroly

BELGIQUE
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Theme 3: Doomed to failure? Discourse on the colonial and post-colonial

educational initiative in the Belgian Congo and the DR Congo

The educational initiative in the former Belgian Congo was in any case man's hand-

iwork, to which we made diverse contributions as of the mid-1990s. The most

recent synthesis dates from 2017 (Depaepe, 2017). As a result, the demythologisation of the common discourse is also appropriate here. After all, the (principally

missionary) educational initiative was not only viewed as part of the evangelisa-

tion of Central Africa, but at the same time formed the final humanitarian element

in economic exploitation, and thus justified the presence of whites on the Dark

Continent. They brought "light" to the darkness of an indigenous culture labelled

as heathen and, in accordance with the triumphalist success story that was also

recounted in the mother country, had finally liberated the Congolese from slavery

under the yoke of the Arabs… This metaphor of "light-bringers" was presented to

the indigenous population almost literally. Not only the "White Fathers" formed an

important mission congregation from the beginning of missionary evangelisation,

other Catholic missionaries, both female and male, also adopted the white habit (see

Illustration 6). This vestimentary code denoted the implicit hierarchy in the intercul-

tural relationship. The Western, let's say Eurocentric, culture was considered to be

superior, and demonstrated the path to progress in a virtually exclusive manner. With

regard to "development"—a category that coincided with "modernisation" according

to the Western idea of progress—the prevailing opinion was that Africa was clearly

lagging behind.

However, this did not yet mean the shortcoming had to be remedied in the shortest

possible term through education. On the contrary, during the heyday of colonisation,

the intention was in any case never to assimilate the Congolese into equals. What

the Belgians envisaged was an adapted introduction to elementary cultural skills

(reading, writing and arithmetic), in which—as had been the case for a long time

in the mother country itself—moralising took precedence over the acquisition of

knowledge. Therefore, during the interwar period, the educational offensive focussed

almost exclusively on basic primary education. It wasn't until 1948 that the focus

fully shifted to the bifurcation between education for the masses and the selection

of a possible elite—and even then not an intellectual elite, but more an artisanal

elite. What people above all needed under the colonial regime were helpers, with the

emphasis on helping, which means on their cooperation for achieving the "gradual"

development of the "*évolué*". Since for the time being all the key posts still remained

in Belgian hands. At most, the Congolese had to be "slowly" but surely prepared

for independence. And the best way to do this was to keep him at a "not so distant

distance", or if you like, a "distant proximity". From a colonial perspective, education

still implied "caring for"; taking decisions for those who were still not yet expected

to do so themselves.

Perhaps all of this came to the fore most clearly in the context of the so-called peda-

gogical "indigenism", of which, among others, Father Gustaaf Hulstaert (Illustration

6) was a great proponent (Vinck, Simon & Depaepe, 2016). According to Hulstaert, the educational initiative in the colony could only be justified if the colonised people

could be elevated from their culture to a higher spiritual (in this case religious) level.

Europeanising utilitarianism and instrumentalism (among other things by studying

French) was not at all necessary to achieve this. The native had to be able to function

independently in his/her own culture. At first glance, this "*Pädagogik vom Schwarzen*

aus", as we called it, revealed an analogy with the educational modernism "*vom*

Kinde aus" (Depaepe et al., 2019). However, the question remains to what extent this pursuit of emancipation was able to gain the upper hand with regard to supervision. Indigenists, perhaps even more so than ordinary missionaries, were inherently

paternalistic. Affected by ultramontane, authoritarian and even fascistic ideas, they

believed it was the duty of the Congolese to continue the local, traditional culture. The

motto of the Flemish poet "*wees Vlaming die God Vlaming schiep*" (Be a Fleming,

that God hath created a Fleming), according to Hulstaert, could reasonably also be

applied to the Mongo, the African people whose language and culture he studied.

Nevertheless, as a result, dialogue with the "metropolitan" culture of the coloniser

(and to a limited extent of the *évolués* who were sneered at by indigenism) was ruled

out in advance.

Illustration 6: Gustaaf Hulstaert, missionary of the H. Hart priests, proponent of

indigenism.

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It is obvious that this kind of patronising educational behaviour was doomed to

fail in the long term. The mental space the educational system allotted to the devel-

opment of the native population was of meagre significance, both quantitatively and

qualitatively speaking, despite the successes in the dissemination of primary educa-

tion. If this was the case for colonial education, in general, it was even more explicitly

the case when it came to the education of girls (Depaepe & Lembagusala, 2018). Not only were there fewer initiatives undertaken for girls than for boys, but, in addition,

they were limited to the curriculum of a parallel learning path, that in conforming

to the metropolitan perspectives on gender prevalent at the time, restricted access

solely to specific care-oriented professions, such as nun, schoolteacher, *monitrice*

(i.e. teaching assistant), nurse/nursing assistant and midwife/midwife's assistant.

The emphasis on the assisting role of these helpers once again betrayed the colonial

mindset. In some ways, the girls were twice the victim of the limitations imposed on

them: as a person of colour and as a woman.

The question very much remains to what extent the post-colonial era changed

this. To this day, girls dropping out of secondary education continues to be a major

problem, the origin of which is partly found in the historical mentality regarding

women—an issue that we want to continue to study in association with our PhD

students in the future. 6 Moreover, the alternatives to an "African" inspired education did not prove to be particularly successful either. This was certainly the case with

regard to the Mulele-inspired education, not only for boys but also for girls, that was

provided in camps and set up in the early 1960s (Lembagusala & Depaepe, 2018).

They preached the revolution in a Communist-Maoist sense, but once Mobutu was

firmly in the saddle, had to give way to his dictatorship. However, this attempt at

greater authenticity in education ultimately came to an end (Depaepe, 1998). Implicitly and explicitly—the use of French springs to mind as an overarching, national

language—Zairisation could never escape the grip of a Western neo-colonialism. It

6 For example, the project of Denise ANGOTAKO, Etude historique du décrochage et de la

réinsertion scolaire des filles en République Démocratique du Congo de 1960 à 2010.

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is obvious that this created diverse forms of cultural hybridity, especially for the elite

(Depaepe & Hulstaert, 2013).

Clearly, we will not resolve the major problems of the present with a historical

study of education in the Congo. Nonetheless, this does not stop them, also with

regard to the colonial and neo-colonial perspective, resulting in a better "understand-

ing" of the historical situation (see the old dichotomy between the *Verstehen* and the

Erklären). The accelerated embedding of an education system based on a Eurocen-

tric approach was also seriously underfunded because its cost had to be modest, and

was a lot like "cooking under pressure". Consequently, the fundamental characteris-

tics and system errors of imperialist educational thinking and actions became more

apparent. Education in the colony, even more so than in the mother country, was an

ode to "paternalism". Out of fear of disturbing the educational order and authority,

a brake was put on developing the autonomy of the indigenous people. How far we

may, can and should go with education, was the key question that dominated the

colonial educational issue for a long time…

Theme 4: The history of education: the sublime relevance of the irrelevant?

For the time being, I will not offer an opinion on whether such statements could

ultimately sate the appetite of pedagogues for "lessons" from the history of educa-

tion. However, the fact is this appetite goes hand in hand with what we consider

to be an outdated view of the discipline. This is precisely why, over the years, we

have replaced the old-fashioned, Dutch term "historische pedagogiek" (historical

pedagogy, i.e. history of education) with "pedagogische historiografie" (educational

historiography) (see, e.g. Depaepe, 2004).

Even though this history of education, as the term may lead one to believe, did not

always signify the construction of an educational system or theory based on history,

it can be said that the approach to the educational past during the emergence of the

discipline in the second half of the nineteenth century was primarily "educational"

and, according to our view and terminology, also "educationalising".
In the university

teacher training course that started in Leuven, with François Collard,
in circa 1890, the

subject *histoire de la pédagogie*, as a journey through the legacy of
great thinkers and actors, formed the core of the curriculum.
Following in the footsteps of, among others,

Gabriel Compayré in France who, being a republican, wanted to
emphasise through

history the capital role of the (primary) school in nation formation,
pedagogues *avant*

la lettre were consulted to boost the professional ethos of future
teachers.

Jan Amos Komenský, or Comenius, who became a national hero of
the Czech

Republic (as can be seen from his image on every 200 Czech koruna
banknote, see

Illustration 7) and the museum dedicated to whom in Prague I had the
pleasure of

visiting last year, is undoubtedly one of the idols of the educational
sciences who

crops up in almost every textbook. His *Didactica Magna*, on which he
worked from

1633 to 1638, also bears the subtitle: "*Allgemeingültige Kunst, alle
alles zu lehren,*

[… and I will skip a couple of sentences for the sake of simplicity…]
was für Zeit und

Ewigkeit von Wert ist"—a message that must still be music to the ears of traditional

teacher trainers.

Illustration 7: 200 Czech koruna banknote featuring the image of Comenius.

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Despite the greatest sympathy for this peace-loving and extremely tolerant

figure—a Moravian bishop who died in exile in Naarden, near Amsterdam, the quest

for "what is of value for time and eternity" is difficult to use as a contemporary

advertisement for educational historiography. Without going into it in too much

detail, there was *grosso modo* a paradigm shift in historical writing about education,

from a conceptual historical approach to an analysis, more grounded in reality, of

the educational practice of the past and the complex way in which educational ideas,

theories, mentalities, as well as results of scientific research were employed therein.

During the 1960s and 1970s, which, incidentally, were characterised by the increasing

institutionalisation of the discipline through the creation of national and international

associations and publications, this shift initially amounted to a rapprochement with

social history, while in the subsequent phase, particularly between 1980 and 1990,

the link with cultural history was paramount.

It goes without saying that these are far-reaching generalisations that desecrate

the richly coloured palette of specific research in which I have had the opportunity

to be involved as co-publisher of leading journals in this field. Not only because in

the humanities such paradigm shifts are far less radical than in the natural sciences,

but also because they mask a deeper problem about the relationship between theory

and history. The socio-historical approach of Marxism (with which, for example, I

became acquainted via the study of educational historiography in the former GDR,

see Depaepe, 1982) naturally differs fundamentally from that of the empiricists. And with regard to the cultural-historical input, of which we are great fans in our research

group, in contrast to many other cultural-historically oriented researchers, we have

always wanted to keep our distance from potential applications and/or the *grand*

theory à la Foucault (Depaepe & Simon, 2018).

But let's not overcomplicate matters. Therefore, in general, a shift took place from

a rather educationalising, and de facto also often didactic, approach —for example,

consider the very selective manner in which, during the interwar period, Flanders

traditionally sought to construct a Catholic *pedagogia perennis*—to a more "historis-

ing" approach to the educational past. This was even more so in the case of the study

of educational history than in its teaching. Nevertheless, the subject of the history

of education in virtually all teaching courses, national and international alike, had a

tough time. The subject, if indeed not already abolished, was gradually moved from

the core of the curriculum to the periphery. After all, what "lessons" can ultimately

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still be drawn from the educational past using such a historising approach for future

teachers and pedagogues, let alone psychologists?

In my view, this question goes to the heart of the methodological problem that has

faced our discipline for many years, especially the extremely utilitarian use of history

at times, which could encourage misuse of the past. Even though the discipline is still

the subject of much debate, our position on the matter is fairly simple. When history

is hitched to one extrinsic goal or another, political, ideological, as well as theoretical

and/or programmatic (such as the systems of a Freinet or a Steiner, which to this day

are invoked to justify certain, sometimes far removed, educational practices), then

it ceases to be history. This is because the specific and complex historical reality

to which ideas (also educational ideas) owe their origin and development is simply

disregarded in such a general "presentist" perspective. It is in this sense I understand

the witticism of Lucien Febvre: "If History teaches any lesson at all, it is that there

are no historical lessons" (which, in the end, is relatively syllogistic, because that

too, of course, a lesson; see, in this respect, Depaepe, 2010). Historical texts and materials—and this applies a fortiori to used quotations and slogans—must always

be read and interpreted in their context. And what remains of non-contemporary,

universal (i.e. applicable always and everywhere) educational wisdom, is of such

a general and high level of abstraction (human rights or charity, for example) that

it must always be translated back to reality, albeit preferably without the adjective

historical.

However, this historical-educational interpretation and ditto contextualisation, as

the attentive reader will rightly notice, is always provided in the present, and is thus

inevitably "presentist" to a certain extent, and in any case "contemporary". That's

right! Therefore, we must continue to question our research results with the necessary

criticism, and be prepared to review and/or adjust their substance if required, over

time. To quote Foucault, who was without a doubt, a genius scholar who frequently

provided the direction for, not only philosophy, but also historical writing, writing

history is a "discourse" about "discourses" (the latter in plural) (see Depaepe, 2007b).

And it is precisely in unmasking the backgrounds usually outside science (in this

case, social) that have led to a particular interpretation of the past, which provides

the key to critical thinking and self-reflection.

As I have tried to set out in the above paragraphs, over the course of the past

four decades, together with our diverse research groups, we have strived to make

such a demythologising approach, which aims to expose the underlying patterns of

standards, values and structures and thus break through any form of self-interest, ideo-

logical and/or programmatic advantage, our trademark. It is obvious that such a self-

critical approach is difficult without any disarming self-mockery and post-modern

irony. Indeed for an intellectual there is little else to do than respond in that manner,

prompted by the way in which educational museums are treated (Depaepe & Simon,

2016). Especially in times when commemoration and remembrance, primarily used to convey politico-ideological messages and/or pursue economic advantages, threaten

to suppress scientific research in history, demythologisation is far from unnecessary.

Apart from the above-mentioned contextualisation, qualification and relativisation

of one's own claims, demythologisation undeniably leads to a certain modesty and

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humility, as my other Leuven teacher in the history of education, Canon Nauwe-

laerts (1953–1954), wrote in the year I was born. In the end, our attempts to understand history, especially in the field of education, constitute little more than foolishly

fighting with shadows on the (Shakespearian) stage of the quick passing of time

(Depaepe, 1983). Or as I have read so often in the former railway station café in Ghent (which in the meantime has also disappeared), during a stopover between

Kortrijk and Leuven (or vice versa): *irreparabile fugit tempus…*

The lessons I have gradually learned from history are not necessarily based on the

substantive, but more on the methodological level. First and foremost, I do not think

that the history of education can be summarised in a single, flat developmental line.

In our work as well as our courses, I have always strived to be mindful of multiple

developmental lines (with their specific pace and own dynamics) and of the way in

which they interact. Above, we provided the example of educational theory, practice

and mentality. Secondly, the critical distance we demanded calls for a plurality of

standpoints. And a change of perspectives is essential in this regard. Dialogue is not

a question of entrenching oneself in the conviction that one is right. But of listening

attentively to possible new insights from a different point of view. This naturally

implies sufficient diversity of sources (not only written, but also visual and verbal),

likewise in the literature used. Above all—and in my opinion it cannot be emphasised

enough—historical research benefits greatly in terms of quality when it is performed

in a team context. This is because the more diverse the research group's composition,

the greater the chance of success for the desired change in perspectives. Nevertheless,

a certain common ground related to theory and methodology is required. And this

brings me seamlessly to the third and fourth lessons. Interdisciplinarity—often more

a buzzword than actual added value—could be interesting, on condition that first

and foremost it respects the "disciplinarity" of the distinctive disciplines. This is

demonstrated by the collaboration we set up with the philosophers of education in

the context of our scientific research community (Smeyers & Depaepe, 2015). In this sense, as far as we are concerned, it is still important to seek the disciplinary

identity of educational historiography. And in our opinion this lies much more in the

interpretation rather than the description. Therefore, in our work, we have tried to

increase awareness of theory, including through the introduction of the concept of

"pedagogisation". We are thrilled that this conceptual key to a better understanding

of the history of education has been taken up, as a result of the actions of among

others David Labaree (2008) in the United States—all the more so since it was initially intended to complement the notion of the *grammar of schooling* of his

Stanford colleagues Larry Cuban, William Tobin, David Tyack and others. However,

it is evident that such container concepts need to be further refined in the future

(Depaepe et al., 2008).

I will leave it up to the reader to decide whether I have offered convincing argu-

ments to support the statement made in the title. The fact is—to repeat one of my

beloved quotes—that we will not escape history (or the history of education) simply

by ignoring it. And together with Tom Popkewitz (1984: 200) whose promoter I was during his Leuven honorary doctorate in Kortrijk in 2004, I like to reverse the eternal

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question of the relevance of educational history: not knowing the intellectual, social

and historical roots of the educational sciences is undoubtedly the best breeding

ground for professional incompetence…

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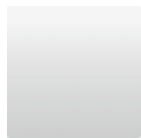
Understanding Without Words: Visual

Representations in Math, Science and Art

Kathleen Coessens, Karen François, and Jean Paul Van Bendegem

Abstract As knowledge can be condensed in different non-verbal ways of represen-

tation, the integration of graphic and visual representations and design in research

output helps to expand insight and understanding. Layers of visual charts, maps,

diagrams not only aim at synergizing the complexity of a topic with visual simplicity,

but also to guide a personal search for and insights into knowledge. However, from

research over graphic representation to interpretation and understanding implies

a move that is scientific, epistemic, artistic and, last but not least, ethical. This

article will consider these four aspects from both the side of the researcher and

the receiver/interpreter from three different perspectives. The first perspective will

consider the importance of visual representations in science and its recent develop-

ments. As a second perspective, we will analyse the discussion concerning the use

of diagrams in the philosophy of mathematics. A third perspective will be from an

artistic perspective on diagrams, where the visual tells us (sometimes) more than the

verbal.

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Introduction

As knowledge can be condensed in different non-verbal ways of representation, the

integration of graphic and visual representations and design in research output helps

to expand insight and understanding. Central questions are how knowledge is (re-)

presented in graphic formats and how we are to understand (carto-) graphic, non-

verbal representations. Layers of visual charts, maps and diagrams not only aim

at synergizing the complexity of a topic with visual simplicity, but also to guide a

personal search for and insights into knowledge.

However, from research over graphic representation to interpretation and under-

standing implies a move that is scientific, epistemic, artistic and, last but not least,

ethical. This article will consider these four aspects from both sides of the researcher

and the receiver/interpreter from three different perspectives.

The first perspective will consider the historical backgrounds of visual repre-

sentations in science and how it serves for societal and educational matters. (e.g.

Neurath & Cohen, 1973; Alsina & Nelsen, 2006).

As a second perspective, we will analyse the discussion concerning the use of

diagrams in the philosophy of mathematics (e.g. Giardino, 2010; Manders, 2008).

A third perspective will be from an artistic perspective on diagrams, where the

visual tells us (sometimes) more than the verbal (e.g. Jones, 2012).

These three perspectives will offer material to investigate more deeply the inter-

pretative potential of visual representations concerning ethical issues: at one side

offering a potential of diversity of understanding and approaches, at the other side a

problem of scientific integrity. The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity

defines a list of principles to promote and ensure a prevailing culture of research

integrity. One of these principles is 'honesty in communication' and 'reliability in

performing research'. In academic communication but also in the communication

with the general public, the same standards of honesty and accuracy should be main-

tained. Any attempt to exaggerate the importance and practical applicability of the

findings should be resisted (ESF, 2011). With the work of Huff (1954) 'How to lie with statistics' or Tufte (1983, 1990) 'Envisioning information' we already are

informed about the traps of misrepresentation, misuse and exaggeration when using

statistical representation. These works offer contemporary recommendations on data

representation that are in line with the principles of research integrity. By analysing

the three cases of science, philosophy of mathematics and artistic research, this article

will investigate their recommendations in these different fields of research.

The Importance of Visual Representations in Science

The emphasis on the importance of visual representation and the ethical concern

about the dissemination of knowledge goes back to the early twentieth century.

Although the philosophy of The Vienna Circle and its logical empiricism is often

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stereotyped as being primarily focussed on logic, mathematics, physics, the *unity of*

science idea and reductionism, some members of the project were also involved with

societal, political and ethical matters (François & van Bendegem, 2010). The manifest *Wissenschaftliche Weltauffassung—Der Wiener Kreis* written in 1929 includes

a clear ethical–political commitment. 'We witness the spirit of the scientific world-

conception penetrating in growing measure the forms of personal and public life,

in education, upbringing, architecture, and the shaping of economic and social life

according to rational principles. The scientific world-conception serves life, and life

receives it' (Neurath & Cohen, 1973, p. 318). The manifest was written by Rudolf Carnap, Otto Neurath and Hans Hahn, and it is Otto Neurath who came up with the

idea to emancipate citizens by producing accessible information for all. Neurath can

be considered as an enlightenment thinker and a 'social engineer'—as he himself

designated. Furthermore, there was a close connection between the Vienna Circle and

the adult education movement in Vienna. This movement was party-polity unaffili-

ated and placed a premium 'on providing students with tools for self-directed study

and participation in the polity (Uebel, 2010, pp. 216–217). The claim that a form of political philosophy of science can be attributed to the Vienna Circle is largely

debated by historians of science (Uebel, 2010). The main confusion is based on the interpretation of the concept of *politics*. If the term is narrowed down to *party*-politics, then one can argue that indeed there was no connection between the Vienna Circle

and the political. If, however, the concept political is used in a broader meaning as

the engagement and the promotion of the socialization of society and of economy

then at least some members of the Vienna Circle were engaged in a political way. The

engagement of the so-called 'left Vienna Circle'—the name was already employed

by Neurath—was developed in the context of the 'Red Vienna' socialist enlight-

enment ambitions after World War I. It is not the case that the left Vienna Circle

issued political prescriptions but they celebrated the compatibility of philosophy of

science and the political goal of the rational reshaping of forms of socio-economic

organization and of society in general. In this sense, scientific reason was not abso-

lutized but regarded as placed within the horizon of humanity's practical projects

of material survival and social progress (Uebel, 2005). In collaboration with his wife Maria Neurath, he developed the so-called ISOTYPE which is the acronym of

'International System Of TYpographic Picture Education'. ISOTYPE is a universal

pictorial language and one of the most innovative approaches to the representation of

statistics to better succeed in transmitting information (François & van Bendegem,

2010). The universal pictorial language was mainly to be used for societal matters; it was specialized in providing information about social and economic matters that

required onlookers to draw their *own* conclusions from the information provided. In

this sense, Neurath did not share the party-politically (SDAP) paternalistic attitude

to socialist education. It was his hope to provide information for all citizens and to

enable them to make well-founded and critical decisions.

Latour and Weibel (2005) refer in *Making Things Public. Atmospheres of Democracy* to Neurath's ISOTYPE as an example of accessible ways of communicating

scientific, societal and economical information. This picture language has made its

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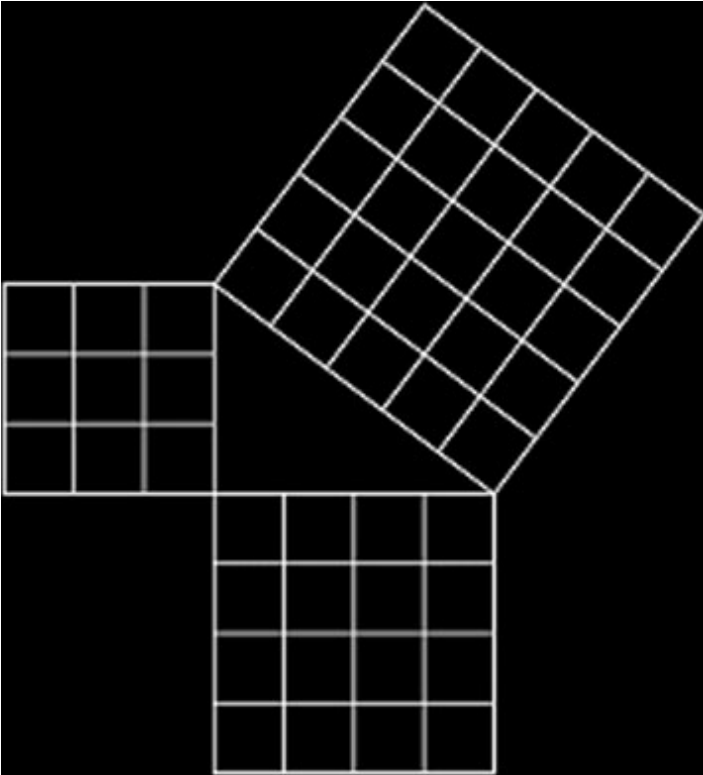
mark on universal communication on a world scale and it is precisely the ethical–

political part of Neurath's project that in the late 90s became a topic of interest within

the research field of statistics education. It is remarkable to see the deep connection

between the contemporary notion of statistical literacy and the spirit of Neurath's

ISOTYPE. The meaning of statistical literacy shifted over the years. In the late 70s,

only the technical dimension of the concept was emphasized. It was in the early 90 s

that the concept was connected to some ethical and political aspects. Wallman (1993,

p. 1) states in her Presidential Address to the American Statistical Association that

'statistical literacy is the ability to understand and critically evaluate statistical results

that permeate our daily lives–coupled with the ability to appreciate the contributions

that statistical thinking can make in public and private, professional and personal

decisions'. Until the present day, teachers in mathematics, in statistics and broader,

in the field of STEM education, are concerned about our communication in class-

rooms and they suggest that there is still 'an over-reliance upon linguistic and textual

modes at the expense of visual and spatial modes of communication' (Gates, 2018,

p. 169). Gates (2018) makes an argument for the importance of visuospatial forms and regrets that schools fail to grasp the significance of it. Although we have no empirical

evidence that visual representation enhances students' learning process, researchers

from philosophy of mathematical practices (Giaquinto, 2007; Nelsen, 1993, 2000)

started to argue for the facilitating role of diagrams and other visual representations

in understanding mathematical proofs (Frans, 2017). It can be a starting point in the construction of a mathematical proof, it can be a fundamental part of the proof

itself or it can be the proof as such (more on this item in the next paragraph). Nice

examples of the later are the demonstration of the Pythagorean theorem (Fig. 1), the theorem $(1 + 2 + \dots + n = n(n + 1)/2)$ of the sum of the first n natural numbers

as demonstrated in Fig. 2 or the special product $(a + b)2$ and $(n + 1)2$ in Fig. 3.

Fig. 1 The Pythagorean

theorem
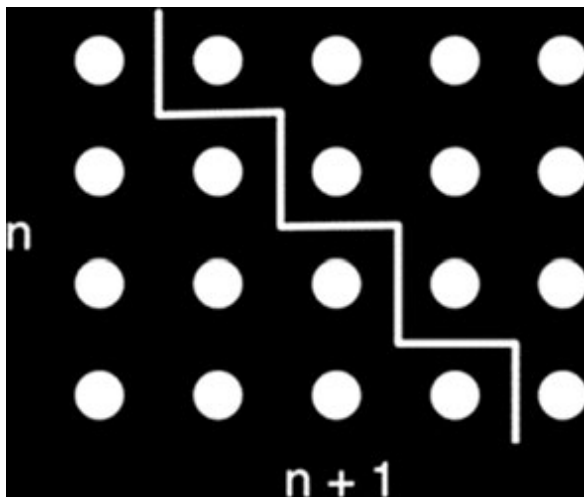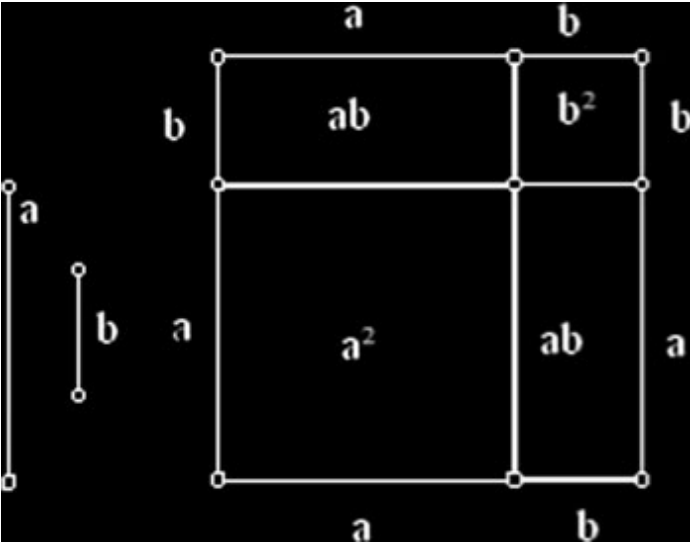
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Fig. 2 The theorem of the sum of the first n natural numbers (1 + 2 + … + n = n(n + 1)/2) **Fig. 3** The theorem of the special product (a + b)2 and (n + 1)2

Note that these demonstrations are called 'proof by looking' as a certain variety of

mathematical proof.

In collaboration with Alsina, Nelsen started to focus his research on mathematics

education and the development of hands on classroom materials, because they were

convinced that visual representations of mathematics help students to better under-

stand mathematics (Alsina & Nelsen, 2006). They argue that these visualizations can help to make a mathematical concept come to live or to involve students in mathematical activities. We can hope that mathematics teachers are using these materials

(e.g. the publication series Classroom Resource Materials); they are nice and they

are available in many different publications (for different levels, different topics,

including readymade tasks, exercises and unusual approaches to present mathemat-

ical ideas, concepts and proofs). They are no part of the curriculum but intended to

provide supplementary classroom materials. One is wondering why the curriculum

sticks to the linguistic and textual modes, largely to the exclusion of visual and spatial

modes of teaching and learning (Gates, 2018). In the following paragraph, we will

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see that in the philosophy of mathematics, the connection between visualization and

mathematics is complex and contested. It might be the case that mainstream perspec-

tives on mathematics education (as presented in math curricula) reject visualization

in math teaching and learning because of its highly subjective nature.

The Use of Diagrams in the Philosophy of Mathematics

In this section of the paper, an attempt will be made to understand the sources that have

led to the complexities and contestations that were referred to in the last sentences

of the previous sections. Let us start with an at first sight elementary observation

(though it will prove not to be so). Draw a triangle on a blackboard. If in ordinary

conversation someone is asked what drawing is on the blackboard, the answer will

be that it is a triangle. Perhaps some qualifying statements will be added such as that

the triangle has been well drawn and that the lines really look straight. If, however,

you ask a mathematician, the answer will be that it is *obviously* not a triangle but

rather something else. When questioned what that something else might be, answers

can differ: it is a representation of a triangle, it is a rough sketch of a triangle, it is

a drawing that evokes the idea of a triangle, it is a stimulus to think of a triangle,

… In all those answers, it is obvious that the drawing is *not* the triangle. Why not?

Because the mathematical description of a triangle is not a description of the drawing.

Taking things literally—and that is precisely what mathematicians do—we cannot

see a triangle (and other geometrical figures for that matter) because surface have

no thickness, lines have no width and points lack dimensions altogether. Even this

elementary analysis already makes clear that the original observation is indeed not

so elementary after all. We only needed a few lines to end up in an ontological

and epistemological debate that has been present in mathematics and even more, of

course, in the philosophy of mathematics almost from the start of the development

of mathematics. Where are these mathematical objects located—if not here in this

world, the road is open to all forms of platonism and neo-platonism—and how can

we reason about them and gain knowledge of them, if we do not even know what

they look like?

It is not our aim to present an overview of the many answers that have been given

over the past centuries for that would amount to a presentation of a long history both of

mathematics and philosophy (including theology). What is however crucial is the fact

that the above shows that the relation between a drawing or a figure and whatever it is

referring to is indeed complex. One simply cannot use phrases such as 'The drawing

on the blackboard is a drawing of a triangle' or 'The figure on the blackboard is a

token of the triangle type' (to use some fancy philosophical language). At the same

time, it is not the case that the connections are arbitrary. If they are not arbitrary then

some structure must be present. A useful first-order contrast is to ask the question

whether the drawings or figures serve as additions to other mathematical processes

or whether they deliver work on their own. The former attitude has been the basic
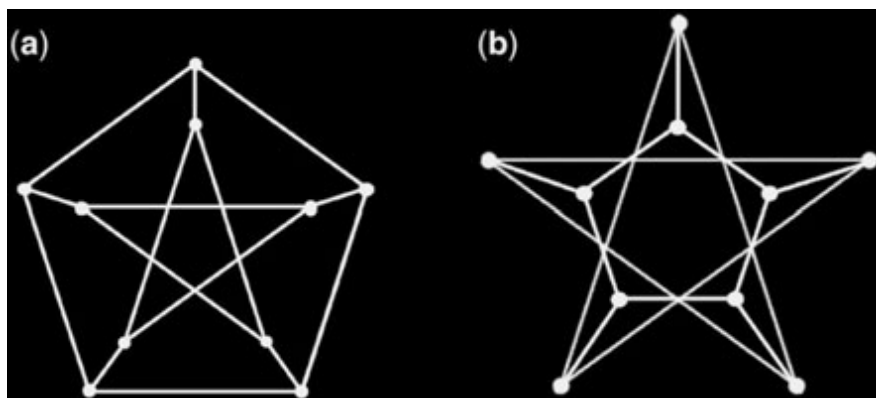
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Fig. 4 The Petersen graph

position of the formalist school[1] where drawings could assist the mathematician in the construction phase of a proof but, once the proof was found, all references to

these additional tools had to be eliminated. The latter attitude is the one favoured by

the already mentioned researchers who are interested in all aspects of mathematical

practice. There is a straightforward argument to support the use of diagrams and the

like. If we assume that the reading process is just as complicated as the construction

process, is it then not justified to assume that the reader will likewise be helped by

the figures or drawings? There is, however, the stronger claim, namely, as stated

above, that the drawings really do work on their own. It is perhaps safe at this stage

of the argument to present a specific simple example to illustrate what it is we are

trying to express. It is taken from a beautiful paper on mathematical beauty, namely,

(Starikova, 2017).

The mathematical background theory is graph theory and the two drawings repre-

sent the same mathematical graph, namely, the Petersen graph. [2]
The point here is not to discuss the specific properties of that graph but perhaps to have a closer look at the

two drawings and note that they represent the same graph. To 'see' that it is indeed

the same graph one has to perform a few mental operations directly on Fig. 4a. More specifically, imagine that the outside pentagon is shrunk in such a way that it fits

within the five-pointed star. Alternatively, one can let the star 'grow' and stop when

the pentagon is in the position of Fig. 4b.

To express the visual manipulation we have now performed in a formal math-

ematical language would be quite complex and would quite simply add nothing

worthwhile. If one judges this to be all rather elementary then the following set of

1 This is the school typically associated with the mathematician David Hilbert. Although he himself saw formalism as a particular strategy to solve certain specific mathematical questions such as the consistency of arithmetic, nevertheless in the hands mainly of the French Bourbaki group it became an overall philosophy and the famous expression that mathematics is a game of meaningless signs was born. See (Detlefsen, 2005).

2 This seemingly simple graph consisting of 10 vertices and 15 edges is nevertheless of supreme importance in graph theory because of the impressive list of properties it possesses. Starikova (2017)

presents a nice and thorough analysis of the graph (in order to discuss its aesthetic qualities). We just mention that the graph has

120 symmetries.
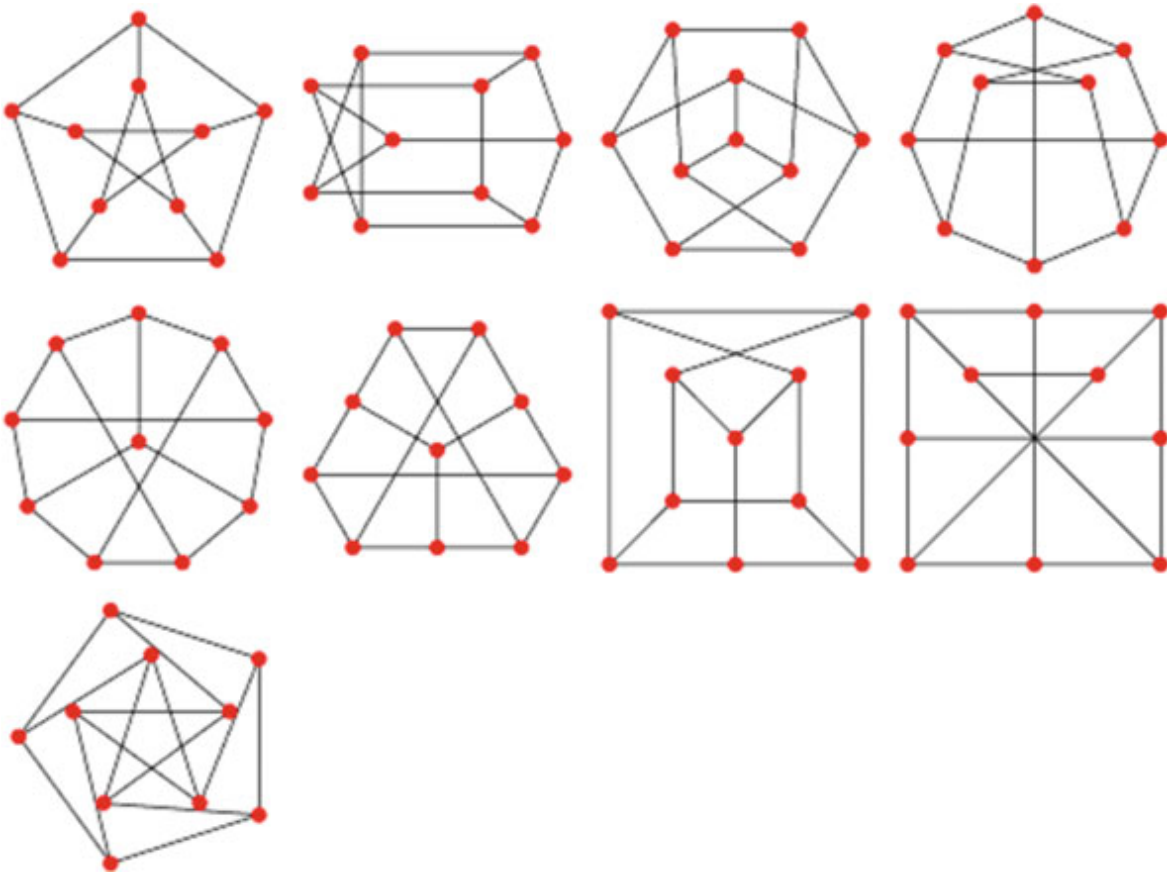
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Fig. 5 Visual manipulation with Petersen graph

drawings3 surely require a bit more mental exercise to see that they are all equivalent (see Fig. 5).

There is something quite interesting to note here: no specific properties are used

apart from dots and connecting lines between dots. Let us elaborate a bit further

on that observation. It is well known that in many cases figures can be misleading

because a 'bad' drawing will not get the details right and thus wrong conclusions

will be drawn and hence drawings should not be relied upon. The first remark to

make is that the same holds for formal proofs. If they are not written out in full detail

then mistakes do occur that invalidate the proof. Usually, the examples are on a quite

elementary level—start with $a = b$, hence $a2 = ab$ hence $a2 - b2 = ab - b2$, hence

$(a - b)(a + b) = b(a - b)$, hence $a + b = b$, hence $2b = b$, hence $2 = 1$ (as shown

in Fig. 6)—but they are fine historical examples of famous mathematicians making mistakes in their proofs. 4

That, however, is not the deepest observation to make. More interesting is the fact

that it is possible for drawings and diagrams to make a distinction between relevant

properties and accidental properties. A simple example may illustrate what we mean.

3 To be found at http://mathworld.wolfram.com/PetersenGraph.html, consulted Sunday, 17

September 2017.

4 A famous example is a proof of Augustin Cauchy wherein he made the mistake of inverting the

quantifiers. A statement of the form 'For all x, there is a y such that …' was interpreted as 'There is a y, such that for all x …', which is a stronger statement. It is interesting to mention that this case was already (partially) studied by Imre Lakatos, see (Lakatos, 1976, Appendix 1), who is often seen as the founding father of the study of mathematical practices.
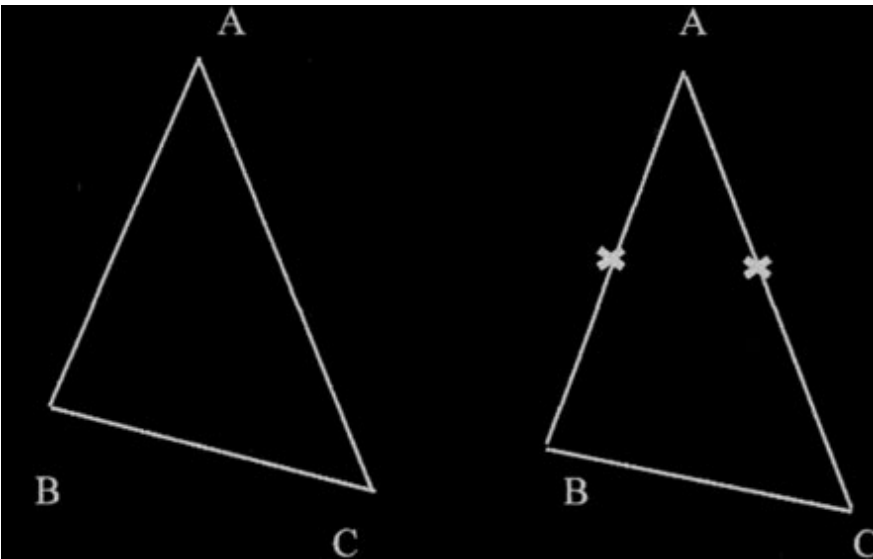
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$a = b$

$a = b$

$a^2 = ab$

$a^2 = ab$

$a^2 - b^2 = ab - b^2$

a² – b² = ab – b²

(a – b)(a + b) = b(a – b)

(a – b)(a + b) = b(a – b) (condition if a-b ≠ 0)

a + b = b

a + b = b

2b = b

2b = b

2 = 1

2 = 1

Fig. 6 Invalid proof (left) and explanation why (right)

Fig. 7 Representation of an

isosceles triangle

If the property is expressed by the statement 'The point p lies inside the circle C'

then it is of no matter where precisely p is to be found inside the circle. If however

the statement is 'The point p lies on a diameter of C', then the diameter that will be

drawn must go through the centre O of the circle. But note that it is not necessary

that O is 'really' in the centre of C. This is the subtle game that we play: by adding

the letter O to the drawing, we have specified that that point is now the origin of the

circle. The two triangle illustration in Fig. 7 may help to understand the distinction.

Given the drawing on the left, we will conclude that the triangle is not isosceles

because AB is shorter than AC but by adding the symbol '**x**' it has now 'become'

isosceles.

It is clear, we hope, that the use of diagrams, drawings, pictures and similar tools

not only are fruitful in the educational context, as was concluded at the end of the

previous section, but are also present in academic mathematical research itself. Due

to the formalist tendency that was so prominent in the second half of the twentieth

century, the epistemology of such tools is not yet well understood. 5 It is as if we are once again in the process of learning how to draw after it has been ignored for

such a long period. And is it not typical for such a phase that mistakes are plentiful

5 That being said, the interest in the topic is growing. We just mention (Giaquinto,), (Manders,), (Giardino,) and (Carter, 2010) as initiators. Of special interest is the connection that is being made between the philosophical approach and the opportunities offered by cognitive science to study the multiple ways that diagrams can be used an interpreted, see (Mumma & Hamami, 2013).

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as it is part of the learning process? Finally, all practices involving such tools have

the potentiality to connect more easily with artistic practices, the topic of the next

section.

The Receptive Potential of Artistic Diagrams

Artistic knowing can be heuristic, phenomenological, hermeneutic, imaginal, archetypal,

empirical, statistical, and more. McNiff (2008), p.39

Research in and explanation of artistic processes remain dubious on many sides.

They offer at one side a diversity of understanding and approaches, at the other

side a problem of scientific integrity. 6 Both sides have to do with the enormous complexity embedded in the arts and artistic processes—implicit and explicit as

well as embodied and reflective knowledge—and with the double role of the artist-

researcher as research subject and research object. While the written verbal language

may be the usual way of expressing and exposing research and knowledge in

academia, in artistic languages it is but a secondary means of expression. Artistic

inquiry and knowing have ways of expressing research that offer alternatives for

verbal description. The addition of other artistic formats of expression to scientific

and verbal communication can thus lead to new insights in the ethic and epistemic

reception of visual material. Artistic thinking and creation intersect with cognitive

abilities and understanding: they generate 'original ideas, find new associations, and

build innovative, unconventional connections among concepts' (Eisner & Day, 2004,

p. 245).

While most of the descriptions and analyses of artistic or art-related diagrams

focus on the input side—the world or idea the artist wants to reveal with a diagram—

the output side, especially the reception of artistic and art-based diagrams, offers

new opportunities for active processes of knowing and understanding. The first—

input side—is mainly called diagrammatics or diagrammatic praxis (Doruff, 2011),

the second—output side—is called diagrammatic reception or 'the diagrammatic

spectator' (Rodda, 2014).

6 It is interesting that, under the same topic, David Bridges (this volume) develops a similar point of view on arts-based research for education. While Bridges questions the ambiguity of the potential and use of artistic means and expressions as research, we rather consider artistic expressions as enriching methods for knowledge construction, opening new insights by their complexity and

layeredness.

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Heuristic, Phenomenological, Hermeneutic, Imaginal

and Archetypal Aspects of Art Diagrams

Edward Tufte started his fascination for visual representation in science as a mathe-

matician and statistician (1983). His aim was mainly the communication of research

findings by way of visual data. In diverse books and articles, he traces the biases of

visual representations. But his passion for diagrams and statistic visual material led

him also towards the artistic use of diagrams as aesthetic, ethic and still scientific

tools of expression. An example is his 2014 series of wall-mounted sculptures *All*

Possible Photons, which represent a true aesthetic image of all possible space-time

paths of six-photon scattering, as depicted by Feynman. The scientific and empirical

value of the artistic diagram remembers us of the complex and detailed diagrams of

Leonardo da Vinci concerning the human body or architectural analyses. Both Tufte

and da Vinci offer the spectator a heuristic component; they force the viewer to ask

for explanation, for understanding and for searching behind the complexity of the

diagram, into its (potentially hidden) knowledge. Such diagrams are situated on the

overlap between science and art, and merge discovery and beauty.

A second aspect that art-based or art–related diagrams can offer is a phenomeno-

logical or experiential dimension. In the first part of Paul Klee's *Pedagogical Sketch-*

book (1972), a dot evolves dynamically into a line that walks, circumscribes, creates

planes and surfaces. The line becomes a measure and a basis for the dynamics in the

world. The evolution of a line towards some expression, some form is pure move-

ment. In the second part of the pedagogical sketchbook, the line creates the object,

because of the position of the human being in the world and because of the subjective

power of the human's eye. Human's power is twice creative and twice constrained,

once by its productive actions, once by its receptive actions:

The work as human action (genesis) is productive as well as receptive. It is continuity.

Productively it is limited by the manual limitation of the creator (who has only two hands).

Receptively it is limited by the limitations of the perceiving eye. (…) The eye must "graze"

over the surface, grasping sharply portion after portion, to convey them to the brain which

collects and stores the impressions. (Klee, 1972, p. 33).

The third part of his book concentrates on the limitations of this position, on the

constraints imposed by the human body and its way of perceiving and moving, and its

being in the world. We are physiologically upright poles with eyes at the top. Being

constrained to specific human-based movement and position, humans are constantly

adjusting what they see to be able to keep their balance and perceive the world in

some kind of acceptable proportion (Coessens, 2010):

The contrast between man's ideological capacity to move at random through material and

metaphysical spaces and his physical limitations, is the origin of all human tragedy. It is

this contrast between power and prostration that implies the duality of human existence.

Half winged-half imprisoned, this is man! Thought is the medially between earth and world.

(Klee, 1972, p. 54).

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Experiential aspects are at the heart of these diagrams that inquire into our human-

based and human-biased perspectives upon the world. They accentuate the rela-

tive and perspectival position of the human being: all human knowledge has an

anthropocentric bias.

Thirdly, we can also point to the hermeneutic relationships and layeredness of

diagrams. Hermeneutic refers to ways of understanding and interpreting by moving

forward and backward from specific to general and over timeframes. The focus on

meaning and interpretation is an important aspect of diagrams, certainly in the arts.

The work Atlas of Gerhard Richter offers such assemblages of photographs

that form different diagrams based on a theme. From the 60s onwards, Richter

started to collect all possible pictures and photographs of journals and magazines

and those ended up in the creation of photographic maps in the *atlas*. Each assem-

blage of photographs refers to some private or public event in which the juxtaposi-

tion of pictures forces the spectator to question, interpret and search for meaning.

The photographs are mostly real documentary pictures; the assemblages are rather

personal, even fictional, some seem to be private, the combination relative. Some

of the photographs are altered, 'whitened', such as the collection Richter made of

'Holocaust' pictures. These series question the objective relevance and the public

aspect of such constructions. At the same time, they open human curiosity and inter-

pretational capacities: why is the diagram constructed as it is, what are the Wittgen-

steinian 'family resemblances'? This kind of assemblages resembles older and for

scientific and societal purposes made diagrams, like the diagram of photographs of

criminal types made by Francis Galton in 1882, producing 'scientific' compositions

of criminal and ethnic types. Strangely enough, the 'scientific' images of Galton

seem to have become 'artistic', while ethically incorrect. While the 'Holocaust'

series of Gerhard Richter render an objective, raw view on history and disturb our—

European—memory. Through the construction of such visually based diagrams in

real time, but also through sensorial remembrance of our experiences and history,

humanity builds up and contributes to, or sometimes even disturbs, the archetypes

of our worldview.

This brings us to the imaginal and the archetypal components of knowledge

construction. While for Kant imagination was part of the realm of aesthetic judg-

ments and had no relation with cognition, Susan Langer and Hannah Arendt reintro-

duced the imaginal in knowledge and understanding. Arendt brought the imaginal

towards politics, as a potentially disruptive force and as a crucial aspect towards

action (Bottici, 2014, p. 99). The imaginal became a force, a potential action that stretches from past to future. What life should be, what experience can continue,

every idea of the future and every remembrance of the past, is often condensed into

an image, a series of images. **A lot of images exist below the surface of ordi-**

nary life, while they remain invisible, they still exert direct influence on daily

activities. The imaginal and the archetypal are part of such implicit components of

knowledge of which we are most of the time unaware. They are the perspectives that

are constructed through our education based on tradition and culture. Utopian maps

and diagrams refer in an extreme way to our imaginal and archetypal possibilities and

references. Historical diagrams of the earth show a more 'realistic' but still imaginal

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perspective, imprisoned in our cultural biases. Artistic diagrams can ignore both in

the redistribution of the gaze from another perspective.

Artistic Input for Empirical, Statistical and Scientific Diagrams

If we consider that a researcher's thought and explanation process is a human meta-

quality, overarching specific research disciplines and having its ground in experience

and the need for understanding, the making, doing and communicating of art should

be integral part of research methodologies and research communication.

An increasing number of researchers and scholars turn to alternative forms of

data representation which are rather symbolic and interpretative, as in narrative and

visual data (Suppes et al., 1998, p. 34). Tensions still exist between the usual verbal and written formats of expression, and the more open-ended and inviting aesthetic

diagrams that allow for associative and multiple interpretations—with the danger of

mis-interpretation.

This brings us back to Rodda's article on the 'diagram spectator': how can the

actor and more importantly the spectator consume and communicate information

diagrammatically (2014: 223). Actors and spectators are active semiotic subjects,

searching for interpretation, trying to find meaning, in whatever pattern that presents

itself. A diagram can offer an aesthetic tool that attracts, expands possibilities and asks

for action: action of creation, interpretation, meaning and understanding. Diagrams

are in that sense thinking experiments that enhance intellectual activity. Following

Rodda (2014) and Ranciere (2009), diagrams as such can have an emancipatory force: the diagrammatic spectator is also an emancipated spectator. He or she observes and

compares ' *one thing with another, a sign with a fact, a sign with another sign'*

(Ranciere, 2009, p.10). In that sense, diagrams need not be necessarily linking lines of knowledge between the creator and the spectator, but each diagram can also be a

starting point for developing insights, relational associations and creative thinking,

for mapping the own reference points against new givens:

Like researchers, artists construct the stages where the manifestation and effect of their skills are exhibited, rendered uncertain in the terms of the new idiom that conveys a new intellectual adventure. The effect of the idiom cannot be anticipated. It requires spectators who play the

role of active interpreters, who develop their own translation in order to appropriate the

'story' and make it their own story. (Ranciere, 2009, p. 22)

Interestingly, Rancière sees the need of a third agent or element to come in the

space—or should we say gap—between the creator of the diagram and the reader

of the diagram; he calls this space the 'spectacle', a kind of mediating element. The

question remains if this mediating 'spectacle' finds its support by way of the political,

cultural or educational?

Artistic or art-related diagrams are complex: they are data driven and culturally

dependent but can contain also emotional or personal content; they express a specific

idea in a spatially organized framework, reduce complexity in a visual way without

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losing all layeredness while they can be read in different ways and developed and

interpreted through time and remembrance. They open more than they close, and ask

for emancipated action.

Conclusion

In this paper, we discussed visual representations from three different perspectives.

The first one considered the importance of visual representations in science and its

recent debate in education. It was already shown by philosophers of the Wiener Kreis

that visual representation could serve for a better understanding and dissemination of

knowledge to the broader public. As knowledge can be condensed in different non-

verbal ways of representation, the integration of graphic and visual representations

and design in research output helps to expand insight and understanding. This idea

became important in educational science and in educational practices. Although we

have evidence that visual representation can serve for social and educational matter,

its value is still discussed in philosophy of mathematics.

This led us to the second perspective offering an insight in the discussion

concerning the use of diagrams in the philosophy of mathematics. No doubt the

most striking feature of mathematical thinking throughout history, as practiced by

mathematicians and reflected about by philosophers, is the gradual elimination of

the material and the concrete. Marks on paper were tolerated as symbolic elements

only and hence their specific representation was of no importance. With the devel-

opment of the philosophy and the study of mathematical practices, it became clear

that the material and the concrete were of tremendous importance in the creation

of mathematical knowledge and diagrams are paradigm examples. Seen thus, it is

only recently that we started to understand the multiple roles diagrams can play, both

inside and outside of mathematics as, e.g. in the arts.

Finally, in a third perspective, visual representation and diagrammatic informa-

tion were discussed from an artistic point of view. Visual assemblages and repre-

sentations in art open up emancipation and reflection: as thinking experiments they

invite towards intellectual activity, interpretation and comparison with archetypal

and imaginal constructions of how to understand the world. In the layeredness of art

and the cultural context in which they are shaped, visual (re-)presentations tell us

(sometimes) more and different than the verbal. Scientific, epistemic, artistic and,

last but not least, ethical intentions and interpretations should always be part of all

spectacles of visual representations.

The resonance of this threefold short reflection upon visual representation and

its epistemic, ethic and emancipatory openness can be resumed in the words of

Kostelanetz:

charts must be read around and about, indeterminately, much like geography maps which

are, after all, visual essays of a different sort; for a rich chart offers many levels of

meaning, generalization and relatedness…

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The State's Spectacles: Education

Statistics, Representations of Schooling,

and the Federal Government's

Educational Sight

Ethan Hutt

Abstract In the aftermath of the American Civil War, the Reconstruction Congress

sought to use the ascendant powers of the federal government to expand its capacity to

enforce the law and unify the country. One small piece of that Reconstruction effort

resulted in the creation of the U.S. Bureau of Education. Typically characterized

by its diminutive responsibilities and capabilities relative to its European counter

parts, the U.S. Bureau of Education was created to enhance the visual capacity of the

state—to help, as James Scott has put it, the federal government "see like a state" in

matters of schooling. As one advocate explained "A National Bureau would hold up

to many school systems a mirror which would reveal attainable results and desirable

changes." While those at the time clearly considered the power to represent the varied

and idiosyncratic American school system through statistics as directly related to the

state's power and capacity for reform, little attention has been given to the character,

subject, and aims of these representations. This paper takes a step in this direction

by providing an examination of the Bureau of Education's first century of efforts to

develop national representations of America's schools. Setting aside the accuracy of

the Bureau's statistical production, the paper considers the character and form of the

statistical tables included in the Bureau's annual report. After providing a general

characterization of these efforts, the paper considers several interpretations of these

statistical representations—recognizing that then, as now, the numbers were widely

understood to be inaccurate and inadequate. Given that the project of compiling these

data were directly linked to the goal of developing the state's capacity for sight, for

uniformity, and for reform, an examination of these efforts provides an opportunity

to reflect on the role of the education researcher in developing these capacities.

It too often happens when the thought of keeping records occurs, the workers in a given field

adopt methods so diverse and incomplete that they form but the records of so many single

experiences, incapable of being aggregated or contrasted with each other, and so their chief

value is lost; especially is this true of educational statistics in this country.

—Commissioner John Eaton Educational Lessons of Statistics (1872).

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It is worthy of remark that the countries in which the administration of public instruction

is centralized have not been the first to organize a regular and permanent system of school

statistics. The United States, which seems to have achieved this end the first, is precisely

the one which it would seem would be delayed the longest by difficulties apparently insur-

mountable…These obstacles, however, have not prevented the organization, development,

and continuous improvement of a system of comparative school statistics which may now

be considered in many respects a model.

—Ferdinand Buisson French Commission on American Education (1875).

The other day the House Committee on Printing reported to authorize the publishing of

5,000 additional copies of General Eaton's report for 1876, and in the debate it was stated

that this document has spread itself over 1,100 pages. It was admitted by the committee that

420 of these pages are packed with figures which will never be read, and which can be of

no use to any inhabitant of this planet at least…If Congress would sit down very hard on

General Eaton's inflated volume, and squeeze out of it all that is useless and worse than

useless, there would be nothing left besides this abstract, which is issued months before the

[report] is prepared.

—More Educational Reports New York Times (1878).

Introduction

The epigraphs above—ranging in opinion from inscrutable to praiseworthy to exas-

perated—offer a reasonable glimpse of the opinions that marked the first decade

of the American Bureau of Education's inclusion in the growing machinery of the

American federal government. Created in the aftermath of the American Civil War,

the Bureau of Education (downgraded in its very first year from a Department) repre-

sented a compromise approach to educational federalism. While many Republicans

in Congress hoped a National Bureau of Education would create a national system of

schools or at least erect and directly operate some number of schools (especially in the

newly liberated South), the bill that ultimately made it through Congress called for

an institution for "collecting such statistics and facts as shall show the condition and

progress of education…and of diffusing such information…as shall aid the people of

the United States in the establishment and maintenance of efficient school systems,

and otherwise promote the cause of education throughout the country." While some

in Congress likened the ability to present statistics on the state of American educa-

tional affairs to God's pronouncement in Genesis to "Let there be light," [1] others, like Chicago Republican John Farnsworth, asked incredulously, "What freedman was

ever educated by the report of the Commissioner of Education?" [2]

1 Quoting Senator James Garfield from Michael Steudeman, "From Civic Imperative to Bird's-Eye

View: Renegotiating the Idioms of Education Governance during the Reconstruction Era," *History of Education Quarterly* (forthcoming). Steudeman provides a valuable overview of the Congressional debates that produced the final, compromised, vision for the federal bureau as primarily a collector of statistics.

2 Quoted in Warren (1974).

Scholars examining the early work of the Bureau have largely echoed these skep-

tical contemporary assessments noting the Bureau's low budget, small staff, and lack

of direct authority. Unlike the Census Bureau, the Bureau of Education would have

no field agents and no power to compel to state or local officials to comply with

requests for information—non-response carried no penalty. [3] Scholars examining the early history of the Bureau's tend to highlight this circumscribed mission for the

sake of either contrasting it with the bolder—failed—Congressional proposals of the

time or with the more muscular, self-assured Department of Education that emerged

during the Cold War when education became a central plank of both social policy

and national [defense.4](#)

In this traditional telling, the original limited federalism of the nineteenth century

gives way to a more, at least technically, capable and involved federalism of the

twentieth century. [5](#) As assessments of character of the American state have shifted from efforts to categorize it as "weak"—especially as compared to the contemporaneous development of European states—to efforts to describe the specific character

of the American state, [6](#) scholars of the late nineteenth century have drawn attention to the importance of the increasing information gathering capacities of federal and

state government. These capacities, in turn, shaped Congressional policy debates,

captured the public imagination, nurtured a maturing social science, and helped

curb the excesses of the laissez-faire capitalism. [7](#) In light of this shift in scholarly thinking, and the opportunity presented by this conference to think about representation in educational research, it seems like a useful time to reconsider the early

efforts of the Bureau of Education. If the work of the Bureau of Education, in line

with developments in Justice, Commerce, Agriculture, was an effort to enhance the

state's capacity to "see, "8 then it is worth considering how the Bureau of Education approached this task.

While acknowledging the objections of some Bureau contemporaries and modern

scholars over the accuracy of the collected statistics, I seek to ask a slightly different

set of questions. Not "was the information collected accurate?" (the information

3 Warren (1996).

4 Beadie (2016), Williamjames (2007), Warren, *To Enforce Education*; Steudeman, "From Civic Imperative to Bird's-Eye View." Nancy Beadie has recently made an important intervention in field by stressing the extent to which we should consider federal education policy beyond the work of the Bureau, noting that federal education policy became an important, if indirect, vector of influence on state formation in the western territories. Beadie (2016), *Paedagogica Historica*.

5 In some cases, scholars reduce the federal role in education prior to the twentieth century to the endowment of schools via carve outs in the Northwest Ordinance and Morrill Acts. See, for

example: Kaestle (1982).

6 For example, Balogh (2009), Morgan and Orloff (2017), Novak (2008).

7 Brock (1984), Hoffer (2012). Scholarship on the history of statistics has always drawn a tight link between the state administrative capacity and statistical work: Hacking (1990), University Desrosières (2002), Porter (1986).

8 This is not just a reference to James Scott but, as Steudeman notes, Congressional debates over the Bureau of Education in the nineteenth century were replete with ocular metaphors. See: Steudeman,

"From Civic Imperative to Bird's-Eye View."

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reported was at best incomplete and at worst totally suspect), but rather "what infor-

mation did Bureau officials seek to collect? How was it presented to the public? Why,

given the well-recognized inaccuracies in the statistical data, did the Bureau persist

in collecting and publishing hundreds of pages of statistical tables annually (And in

doing so, incur the annual scorn of national publications like the *New York Times,* as

in the epigraph above)?

Answering these questions offers an opportunity not only to understand the poten-

tial influence of early federal data collection efforts on later, more famous and histo-

riographically prominent, Progressive Era quantification efforts like the City Survey

Movement or rationalizing quest for the "one best system, "9 but also for thinking about the multiple roles and purposes of statistical

representations of schooling.

Though we have come to consider accuracy—truth-telling—and rationalization to

be the primary aim of school statistics, how should we understand the simultaneous

acknowledgment from Bureau leader John Eaton that record keeping methods are "so

diverse and incomplete that they form but the records of so many single experiences,

incapable of being aggregated or contrasted with each other, and so their chief value

is lost" with their inclusion and aggregation in the bureau's annual report the very

same year?

In examining these questions, I rely on public documents, annual reports, and

bulletins created and distributed by the Bureau of Education as well as the public

response to them. There is no question that this analysis could be further enhanced

by an examination of internal records of the Bureau of Education and its clerks but

such an effort was beyond the scope of this initial effort. Though incomplete, this

view still offers a new and important consideration of the *public facing* work of the

Bureau. The resulting descriptive account provided here will hopefully still offer a

useful jumping off point for future work in this area. In what follows, I present first

a description of an analysis of the statistical representations of American schools

published by the Bureau of Education in its annual report. I then consider some

working hypotheses aimed at trying to understand the meaning and significance of

the Bureau's work.

Charts About Tables10

As a form of presenting information about the operation of schools, the annual report

has a very long history. The practice appears to have started in Connecticut in the

1820s when the state produced a school fund and passed a law allowing cities and

9 Tracy Steffes discusses the City Survey Movement in the context of developing a new statistical language for discussing schools but makes no mention of earlier efforts. See: Steffes (2012),

Lagemann (2002).

10 The information on Bureau of Education statistical tables presented in this section would not have been possible without the hard work of Jason Saltmarsh, a doctoral student at the University

of Maryland.

towns to gain access to the funds in exchange for creating local schools. Since the

funds were to be disbursed on the basis of a variety of numerical factors such as

the number of students in the town, the number enrolled (and regularly attending),

it became necessary for towns to submit statistical accounts of schooling activities.

This practice was extended in Massachusetts in the following decade when the state

created a school fund and introduced the legal requirement that towns report on their

use of funds. These reports, delivered to state officials, were then published as the

"statistical returns" of the school committees. These practices were elaborated further

when, a few years later, Horace Mann submitted his first annual report (1837). Beyond

the traditional statistical account provided by the state, Mann also provided a narrative

account without any statistical tables but published the two reports concurrently. Due

in no small part to the prominence of Massachusetts and Mann in American public

education, this two-part account—one narrative, one statistical—became a standard

form of city and state annual reports. [11]

The early annual reports from the Federal Bureau of Education would maintain this

general format, offering both narrative accounts—a combination of Commissioner's

remarks, reprinted sections of annual reports, and commissioned essays—and statis-

tical tables. From 1870 until 1897, the two parts occupied a single volume—the

statistics coming after the narrative account, though sometimes condensed versions

of the table would be interspersed within the Commissioner's annual statement. After

1898, the statistical tables were given their own, second, volume of the report.

In an effort to try and describe the number and character of the tables contained

in the annual reports, I created the charts below. For each numbered table in the

annual report, I recorded along with the help of a doctoral student the title of the

chart, the reporting unit/level of aggregation (e.g., institution, city, state, etc.), and

whether the table contained longitudinal information (i.e., presents more than one

year of information). Analysis of the topics of the reports is still on-going but the

below chart presents the number of tables by reporting level/unit per year (Chart 1)

and the percentage of each type in a given year (Chart 2). Chart 3 shows the number of tables containing longitudinal information by type for a given year. Our test for

whether a chart contains "longitudinal information" was whether the chart produced

multiple years of data on the same topic in the same chart so as to allow for a "change

over time" interpretation of the information presented. The reason for coding tables

presenting longitudinal information stems from an interest in identifying the different

use of statistical tables. Though all tables imply arguments and comparisons, the

inclusion of more than one year of data in a table offers a specific kind of argument—

progressive, or lack thereof—that was of great interest to Americans in general and

American educators in particular. The presence of longitudinal information also

implies a shift from statistical information conceived as snapshots of the current

system to one conceived as one moving in a progressive arc.

The years covered in the charts show a clear trend away from presenting informa-

tion at the individual and institutional level and towards higher levels of aggregation.

For instance, many early reports contain many charts listing the name of all education

11 Philbrick (1886).

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Number and Type of Tables by Year

250

200

150

100

50

0

1870

1872

1874

1876

1878

1880

1882

1884

1886

1888

1890

1892

1894

1896

1898

1900

1902

1904

1906

1908

1910

individual

insΘtuΘon

city

state

region

country

Chart 1 Number and type of tables by year

Percent of Tables by Type

100%

90%

80%

70%

60%

50%

40%

30%

20%

10%

0%

1870

1872

1874

1876

1878

1880

1882

1884

1886

1888

1890

1892

1894

1896

1898

1900

1902

1904

1906

1908

1910

individual

insƟtuƟon

city

state

region

country

Chart 2 Percent of tables by type

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Number of Longitudinal Tables by Type

60

50

40

30

20

10

0

1870

1872

1874

1876

1878

1880

1882

1884

1886

1887

1889

1892

1894

1896

1898

1899

1902

1904

1906

1908

1909

individual

insΘtuΘon

city

state

region

country

Chart 3 Number of longitudinal tables by type

benefactors (along with the nature of the gift and the recipient) or name and location

of all institutions of a certain type (law schools; museums, etc.). These institutional

level tables are either supplemented or replaced in later year by tables indicating the

total number of particular kinds of institutions or total number of enrolled students

at the state or national level. 12 Though there is some suggestion in the existing scholarly literature suggesting an effort to deal with the tensions of federalism by

attempting to "nationalize" conversations about poverty, illiteracy, and other social

ills after the Civil War, these trends are difficult to spot in the charts. 13 The strong shift towards state level reporting is also somewhat surprising given the lack of state

level educational personnel given that in 1900 the median number of state depart-

ment of education officials in 1900 was two. 14 But this may reflect the availability of state level reports or the constitutional view of states as ultimately responsible

for fulfilling citizen's rights to educational access. Whatever the cause of the shift,

it is clear that over time the tables of the annual report move away from presenting

directory-style information (e.g., a list of every college in the country along with the

number in its graduating class by degree and total number of alumni; the location

12 For instance, compare the charts presented in the annual report of 1870 with those reported in 1899–1900. By 1899–1900, the Bureau was producing counts of the number of students (men and

women) pursuing various courses of study in college and universities. Note that because this chart aggregates the total numbers by state (rather than by individual institution or city), we code this chart as a state level chart. See: U.S. Commissioner's Annual Report 1899–1900, Volume 2 (Washington, D.C. Government Printing Office, 1901), 1885.

13 See for instance, Beadie "Federal Role in Education"; Schulten, *Mapping the Nation.*

14 *Report of the Commissioner of Education, 1901–1902* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1903).

and number of volumes possessed by every library in the country) to efforts to speak

generally about the state of education at the city, state, and national level. The data

we collected do not allow for a generalization about trends in the presentation of

longitudinal information beyond the general observation that early reports contained

no such information while later reports did. This seems hardly surprising given that

the first reports necessarily contained fewer years of data that could be presented

for comparison. The release of the information from the 1900 census seems to have

driven particular interest in longitudinal and comparative information in the 1904

annual report.

Value of False Numbers?

Despite the changing number and character of the statistical tables, one thing

remained constant: the lack of standardized definitions for basic concepts represented

in them. To take one notorious example, in 1881 the Bureau's Annual Report noted

that the 38 states, 6 territories, 3 Indian Reservations, and the District of Columbia

managed to produce between them 17 different definitions of "legal school age." This

number was used, along with the count of total enrolled students, to calculate the

average school attendance rate and the total number of truants. The multitude of defi-

nitions, when combined in a single table could produce hilariously, or, if you prefer,

maddeningly unhelpful comparisons. For instance, in 1881, Massachusetts reported a

school aged population of 312,680 and total enrollment count of 325,239. Enrolling

more students than there was school aged population was a heroic achievement

indeed. New York by contrast reported a school aged population of 1,662,122 and an

enrollment rate of 1,021,282—implying more than 600,000 truant youth. 15 Someone consulting the 1880 census results would be surprised to learn that, contrary to the

reported results, New York's school attendance rate was higher than Massachusetts.

The source of the contradiction being the two state's divergent definitions of "legal

school age": Massachusetts defined it as youth aged 5–15 while New York reported

the number aged 5–21.

The lack of uniform definitions and the challenge they posed to those interested in

using the information published in the Bureau's annual report was widely known and

actively discussed. Indeed, by 1897, the issue of creating uniform definitions of key

ideas as a means to securing comparable statistics was raised at annual meetings of the

National Education Association in 1859, 1860, 1872, 1874, 1877, 1881, 1885, 1886,

1887, 1890, 1891, 1892, and 1895. 16 Despite these issues, the Bureau consistently 15 U.S. Commissioner's Annual Report 1881 (Washington, D.C. Government Printing Office, 1882),

320–321.

16 Woods (1905). Lest anyone think the issue was solved at the turn of the century 1912 brought a final report of the Committee on Uniform Records but that did not solve the matter either National Education Association. Committee on uniform records and reports, *Final Report of the Committee on Uniform Records and Reports to the National Council at the St. Louis Meeting,* (Washington,:

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framed its value in terms of providing comparative statistics. In one early pamphlet

entitled "Answers to inquiries about the U.S. Bureau of Education," the response to

the question "Why should there be a national bureau?" came in part, "To aid the States

in providing themselves with the best systems of public instruction… by awakening,

through the publication of comparative statistics, a spirit of laudable rivalry." 17

While the Bureau would certainly not be the first governmental department to

promise more than it could deliver, it does seem curious that it would define its value

in these terms—especially given its perennially precarious position in the federal

budget. [18] One possible explanation comes from what Martha Lampland has called

"false numbers," by which she means not numbers that are false in the sense of

being wrong but false in the sense of not being numbers as we normally consider

them: as "referents to stable entities that carry the same meaning no matter their

context." [19] Lampland argues that false numbers are prevalent when the primary goal is to demonstrate *how* to use numbers. That is, when the goal is to *formalize*

the practice of collecting and offering up numerical accounts. In these instances,

Lampland argues, the *presence* of numbers becomes more important than their *value*

as numbers. [20] This view is generally consistent with Drew Gillpan Faust's account of the contemporaneous significance of counting Civil War casualties at the conclusion

of the war. She notes both the requirements on both sides that commanders produce

lists of casualties following a battle but also the general inaccuracy of these numbers

gathered in the immediate fog of war. Faust likewise notes that following the war,

the significance of *counting* Civil War casualties—or rather, the show of effort to

produce a count—took on a significance and meaning that extended far beyond the

accuracy of the count itself.21

It is certainly plausible that a version of this attitude towards numbers motivated

early efforts to persist in the collection, aggregation, and presentation of tabular

statistics whose interpretability and use value was limited. Whether this position

was arrived at because of the lack of authority possessed by the Bureau of Education

or because of a broader view of statistical possibility, is hard to disentangle. That

said, one can hear tones of this less rigid approach to statistical practice in a speech

to the National Education Association given by Bureau Commissioner John Eaton

in 1972, "Shall I try to win your favor and secure a fair attention to these educational

lessons of statistics in spite of the proverbial dryness of figures, by reminding you that

National education Association, 1912). See also Arch Oliver Heck, *A Study of Child-Accounting Records*, 2 (Columbus: Ohio State University, 1925) complaining about vague statistical definitions.

17 Warren (1883).

18 Warren, *To Enforce Education*.

19 Lampland (2010).

20 While clearly related to efforts to use numbers as a rhetorical and legitimating device, the distinction here is on the use of numbers as a way of formalizing the practice of quantification. Lampland also emphasizes the use of false numbers as a temporary state. The goal is, eventually, to train people to use "real" numbers. See: Carruthers and Espeland (1991); Michael Power, *The Audit Society: Rituals of Verification* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Marilyn Strathern, *Audit Cultures: Anthropological Studies in Accountability, Ethics, and the Academy* (New York: Routledge, 2000).

21 Faust (2006).

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Lowell tells us 'The real does not clip the poet's wings': that statistics are only the

abbreviated formal records of realities—facts brought into shape for philosophical

inquiry, and possibly constituting the Mount Helicon in the midst of whose beautiful

groves the thread of some Pegasus shall open the fountain of the Muses?" 22 In other words, the goal of statistics was to inspire thought—poetic and philosophical—as

much as to report "truth." To the extent that the crude inadequacy of early Bureau

statistics spurred some of the more famous Progressive Era statistical inquiries—

Leonard Ayers and Edward Thorndike on "school laggards," for instance—Eaton

may not have been wholly wrong. [23]

There is the additional possibility that the literal accuracy of the numbers was

less important because the numbers reported were understood and intended to be

conveyed not as a continuous variable but as essentially ordinal. That is, the numbers

were presented not for their literal truth but as general points of comparison. This

was perhaps especially useful and germane for longitudinal tables: the point of the

table was to indicate that the numbers (enrollments, degrees granted, expenditures)

were going up. Such is the clear message of a Table 12 of the 1910 Annual Report,

entitled "Progress of school expenditures." [24] The interpretation—progress—having been helpfully included in the chart's title, invites the reader to consider the upward

trajectory of the numbers rather than specific values.

Numbers as Myth and Ceremony[25]

An equally plausible explanation for the statistical work of the Bureau stems from an

interest in system-building and a concern for legitimacy for the Bureau and America's

nascent system of schools. There is no question that the use of social statistics as a tool

of state craft and social reform was a major development of the nineteenth century.

The challenge of social change and upheaval could be managed by using social

statistics to discern the laws that animated society. 26 As early as 1840s, Americans began using the decennial census to investigate not only matters of the geographical

distribution of the population but also of the social and industrial condition of the

22 John Eaton (1872).

23 Leonard Porter Ayres, *Laggards in Our Schools: A Study of Retardation and Elimination in City School Systems* (Survey Associates, 1913); Edward L. Thorndike, *The Elimination of Pupils from Schools*, U.S. Bureau of Education. Bulletin 1907,4; United States 1907,4. Bureau of Education Bulletin (Washington, DC, 1907).

24 U.S. Commissioner's Annual Report 1909–10, Volume 2 (Washington, D.C. Government Printing

Office, 1911), 680.

25 Here I am using "myth" and "ceremony" in the sense of Meyer et al. (1977). See also, for example: Carruthers and Espeland (1991).

26 Alain Desrosieres, "How to Make Things Which Hold Together: Social Science, Statistics and

the State," in *Discourses and Society*, vol. XV (Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1990), 195–218; Hacking, *Taming Chance*; Porter, *Rise of Statistical Thinking*.

country—"all such information in relation to mines, agriculture, commerce, manu-

factures, and schools as will exhibit a full view of the pursuits, industry, education,

and resources of the country." 27 Beyond state legislation requiring school annual reports, it was clear that American schoolmen believed in the importance of school

statistics both for the management of school systems and for adjudicating arguments

over their development. As a report of the National Council on Education observed,

"In the attention directed by public discussions to the operation of systems of educa-

tion for a period of years, the value of tabular statistics has been apparent" especially,

when included in the context of an annual report to "expose fallacies, to check extrav-

agant speculations, and to indicate the essential conditions of economy and efficiency

in the conduct of popular education."28

In this context, it is difficult to imagine the Bureau of Education not producing

statistical accounts of the public schools of the country. One open question is how

much of the statistical work within the Bureau of Education was informed by the

work of other departments within the federal government. The legislation that created

the Bureau was expressly modeled after the legislation that five years earlier created

the Department of Agriculture. 29 Though modern statistical accounts of schools owe a great deal to the application of statistics to agriculture—most notably value-added

models—it is unclear how much of the early statistical tabulations were informed

by the work in the Department of Agriculture. That said, it is clear that the general

orientation of the federal government was towards efforts aimed at greater quan-

tification and standardization. 30 In carrying out this task, the Bureau at least by its second decade, opted for quantity over quality in its production of statistical tables.

Though standards of table making have no doubt evolved overtime, in examining the

tables presented in the pages of the annual reports, one cannot help but be struck by

how difficult it is to use the tables provided. To take but one example, a recurring

annual table presents school statistics for cities with populations larger than 7500

inhabitants. In 1878, this one table included listings for 218 cities and contained 121

discrete variables. The limitations of bound volume printing meant that the contents

of the table were spread across 41 pages (the table presented ten or so variables at a

time for all 218 cities before moving on to the next set of variables). [31]

The potential excesses and questionable value of such tables did not escape

contemporary notice: the "spacious tables…demonstrate the expansive powers of

the statistical mind. One of these is carried out under 121 headings and it has been

remarked by a 'discreet person' at the head of the educational system of a neighboring

State, that school officers who conscientiously furnished all the items would have

27 Census Act of 1839, quoted in Carroll Davidson Wright, *The History and Growth of the United States Census*, vol. 194 (US Government Printing Office, 1900), 33; Margo J. Anderson, *The American Census: A Social History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015); Patricia Cline Cohen, *A Calculating People: The Spread of Numeracy in Early America* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

28 Philbrick, "State Reports on Education."

29 Warren, *To Enforce Education*.

30 Hoffer, "To Enlarge the Machinery of Government."

31 Commissioner's Report of the U.S. Bureau Report, 1878 (Washington, DC: Government Printing

Office), 312–353.

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little time remaining to devote to the education of the young." [32] It was not just the unwieldy size of individual tables but the sheer number of tables posed a challenge:

as noted above, by 1888 the number of statistical published by the Bureau required

that the annual report be split into two volumes.

Even those sympathetic to the work expressed confusion about the unwieldy statis-

tical accounts provided by the Bureau. In the context of motivating a summarized

"retrospective view of educational statistics," one author explained "these reports are

bulky and copious…and to extract the essential data and discuss them liberally is

to perform a service for those whose interest is great but whose time is limited." [33]

Whatever the Bureau's view of these criticisms, it did nothing to stem the number or

size of the tables included in the reports—lending credence to the view that "bulky

and copious" was precisely the point.

Beyond domestic perceptions of its work, it is clear there was also self-conscious

attention paid by leading American educators and members of the Bureau to the work

of the national and city school bureaus of Europe. 34 The praise and attention offered by European educators to statistical reports was a frequent point of discussion. The

Bureau of Education reports repeatedly cited its exchanges with foreign governments

and noted with pride the superlative praise (quoted in the epigraph) given to the

Bureau's statistical reports by a commission of French educators. 35 Whether this praise was offered on account of the *ambition* of the American statistical enterprise

rather than the execution or precision of the endeavor is unclear. Whatever the case,

it was a clear source of pride.

If the Bureau's statistical reports were a useful strategy for projecting institutional

legitimacy abroad, they were also a useful strategy for building institutional coher-

ence at home. It appears the early focus on institutional level tables in the Bureau's

reports were conceived at least in part as an effort to solidify organizational cate-

gories. As a letter from Commissioner John Eaton to all colleges and universities

requesting information to be included in the annual report explains, "It has been

thought desirable that some record more permanent, or at least, more available, than

that of the daily papers, should be kept of the statements made by the different colleges

to their graduates…and that such a statement, combining the results of the activity

32 "Our Bureau of Education," *New York Tribune*, April 26, 1878.

33 Addis (1893).

34 Even discussions of the Bureau in the popular press were inflected with the concerns of international comparison. As one New York Times article on the work of Bureau observed, "Such was

the condition of educational statistics at the inception of this too long-neglected work, that it may safely be asserted that there was not one of the prominent nations of Europe which did not possess more complete statistics than we had in our possession, and more exact information in regard to its educational condition and wants. "Bureau of Education: Preliminary Steps and Organization of the National Bureau—Its Objects and Achievements, at Home and Abroad," *New York Times*, January 2, 1873.

35 Ferdinand Buisson *"French Commission on American Education"* in United States Office of Education, *Circular of Information of the Bureau of Education, For* (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1877). This praise was called out and repeated in Philbrick "State Reports on Education"

and also the discussion following Andrew McMillan, "Uniformity of School Statistics," in *Addresses and Journal of Proceedings of the National Education Association*, 1881.

of all the colleges of the country, would not only be of general interest but would be

of service to the colleges themselves, by giving, as is shown in no other way, a view

of the influence upon the community of the colleges as a class; whereas now each

college is looked upon measurably as an institution standing by itself alone."36 That this was both the intent and publicly perceived meaning of the tables is most evident

in the public push-back they sometimes engendered in the popular press, "the wild

statistics of 356 colleges and universities which, if correct, would yet be valueless for

all purposes of inference and comparison, where institutions like Yale and Harvard

are classified with the mushroom 'universities' which are sprouting up all over the

country."37 The bureau's non-existent capacity to audit the information provided by colleges was irrelevant to the bureau's larger aims of raising the collective visibility

"of the colleges *as a class"* of institutions. 38

Conclusion: Toward an Understanding of Statistical

Repertoires

In this short paper, I have tried to make a start at understanding the statistical

work of the American Bureau of Education. Once we accept the general inaccu-

racy or non-comparability of these statistical presentations of American schools,

there remain additional questions of whether the copious statistical tables appearing

in ever growing numbers in the annual reports were intended to serve some purpose

other than to present an accurate account of various aspects of schooling in America.

Though I explored two reasonable hypotheses concerning the value of numbers as

signifiers of the *practice* of counting and the value of the outward projection of

rationality, these are by no means intended to be exhaustive nor are they intended

to suggest that the only explanations concern the value of statistics themselves. [39]

These competing, but hardly mutually exclusive, explanations for the statistical

work of the Bureau point to a broader a set of broader questions that I hoped to

raise concerning the nascent and evolving statistical repertoires of American educa-

tors." Though the Progressive Era rationalization of school systems and production

of a common "statistical language" of educational professionals, it is important to

understand these later developments in the context of decades of earlier statistical

practices. [40] Exploring the efforts of the Bureau expressly assigned to develop and 36 "Colleges in the United States," *New York Times*, December 8, 1873.

37 "Our Bureau of Education."

38 A similar argument could be made for the Bureau's compilation and printing of the list of libraries in communities throughout the country. A list that garnered a fair amount of attention in the press.

39 One alternative explanation concerns a, perhaps, basic truism of organizational work: money

appropriated will be money spent. As the saying goes, the tables were clearly good enough for

government work.

40 Nancy Beadie, in particular, has noted the way that early failures to secure greater federal involvement in education informed subsequent efforts to produce social science research in education. See:

"The Federal Role in Education and the Rise of Social Science Research."

carry out these statistical tasks, then, seems key to our understanding of how these

practices developed and how they shaped the evolving few of the state of education

in the United States.

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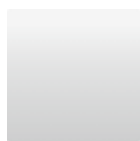
From the Global Sixties to the Global

2010s: Communicating About Research

in the History of Education

(A Perspective from France)

Rebecca Rogers

Abstract This essay will begin with an examination of how Paedagogica Historica

sought to disseminate knowledge about educational research through a complex

bibliographic publication associated with the journal. In this period of tremendous

growth in educational research, this bibliography represented a distinctly "modern"

approach to making knowledge about scholarship in education available the world

around. In the years that followed, such efforts were imitated elsewhere notably

in France where the Service d'histoire de l'éducation did a great deal not only to

structure the field but also to communicate about the results of scholarship in the

history of education. In 1978, the journal Histoire de l'éducation was founded and for

the next 37 years published bibliographic issues of the journal and then created an on-

line database, which represented by far the most complete entry into what was being

published on the history of education in France. Two years ago this initiative quietly

ended signalling the end of an era. Scholars can still use the accumulated resources

available on-line and in the journal but now must turn to other venues to discover

new areas of research: google scholar, blogs on specific topics, on-line scientific

monitoring" like that provided by the Institut Français d'Education, predominantly

Anglophone platforms such as research gate or academia, or the French open-access

platform HAL, and more recently the connecting histories of education initiated by

Spanish colleagues. This essay reflects on the consequences of these changes in the

way in which we learn about the field and scholarship within the field, the ways in

which this opens opportunities (or not) for more global research networks and offers

some personal reflections on the effects of such changes on authors' strategies to

disseminate knowledge of their work.

In 1958, Victor Noll, professor of education at the University of Michigan, East

Lansing, published a stirring call for international cooperation in educational

research:

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P. Smeyers and M. Depaepe (eds.), *Production, Presentation, and Acceleration*

of Educational Research: Could Less be More? , Educational Research 11,

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The world stands today on the threshold of a new era in material progress…The world thus

also stands on the threshold of a new era in education. Nations that have never provided

education for the masses are determined now to do so. Illiteracy and ignorance are being

vigorously attacked on many fronts. With this awakening come new challenges to educators

everywhere…With the increasing acceptance of research as the only sure foundation for

educational progress great strides are being made in developing methods appropriate to the

solution of educational problems and the use of statistical techniques in analyzing educational data (Noll, 1958, p.77).

Describing the results of the First International Conference on Educational

Research, jointly organized by the American Educational Research Association and

UNESCO in Atlantic City in 1956, Noll emphasized the importance of communica-

tion for international cooperation and he described a wide variety of initiatives that

he believed educational scientists should be aware of. Among these initiatives was

an international survey of the nature of educational research in 18 countries, which

appeared in the *Review of Educational Research* in February 1957 (Hotyat, [1957]).

Such a call for cooperation and shared knowledge was a sign of the times on both

sides of the Atlantic.

In 1961, Belgian scholars in the field of education responded to this call when they

launched the trilingual international journal *Paedagogica Historica* (PH). The initial

editorial explained this new journal had emerged: "in consequence of a resolution

adopted in 1956 in Florence by the 8th Congress of the History of Sciences, which

insisted upon the necessity of 'composing a Universal History of Education with the

co-operation of experts belonging to the whole world', and in consequence of an

inquiry made in 1959 and answered by several university professors, which made

apparent the necessity of an international review devoted especially to the history of

education." Under the editorship of Robert L. Plancke and then Karel de Clerck, and

with the indispensible energy of Jacques Souvage, *Paedagogica Historica* set about

becoming the worldwide authority in the history of education.

The initial so-called white series published under the aegis of the Centre for the

Study of the History of Education at Ghent University bears little relationship to the

journal edited by Taylor and Francis since 2003. To begin with, it was published in

two large tomes per year (rather than six slim volumes), and from the outset, informa-

tion about the field and especially bibliographic lists juxtaposed academic articles.

A section entitled "Chronica" summarized information from scholars around the

world, while a section "Index Gandensis"—which became the "Index Bibliograph-

icus Ganensis" in 1963—contained references to the Centre's acquisitions (Dekker &

Simon, [2014]). The same year a section "Rencesio" appeared followed in 1964 by a section "Dissertationes . " For the contemporary scholar, the contrast between the

two incarnations of the journal are food for thought about how the dissemination of

research has changed in the past half century.

This essay begins then in the early 1960s and considers the role that extensive bibli-

ographies played in the efforts to construct an international community of historians

of education. It then turns to the way the French academic community responded to

these incentives, taking inspiration from *Paedagogica Historica*, while at the same

time responding to the challenges of the electronic age. Finally, I conclude with more

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personal reflections on how our present digital age has brought a new set of chal-

lenges to the researcher seeking both to keep abreast of scholarship in her field but

also hoping to render visible her own work both nationally and internationally. Dare

I suggest that publishing this essay in an expensive Springer series ($100 a volume)

may not be the most effective way to make an impact. [1]

The Global Sixties in Educational Research

Scholarship that addresses the development of the history of education all point to the

1960s as a moment of critical change that mirrored changes in the field of history more

generally. Marie-Madeleine Compère's essay on the field notes in particular the emer-

gence of revisionist approaches in the United States, the role of the *British Journal*

of Educational Studies in Britain, and the impact of Ariés's *Centuries of Childhood* in France (Compère, [1995,](#) pp. 18–20). [2] Critical new approaches within the social sciences and particularly sociology and historical demography introduced new orientations in the history of education, less centered on the school than on the history

of attitudes toward childhood or the history of literacy, for example (Savoie, [2008).](#)

The rise of social historical approaches, however, were not particularly apparent

within *Paedegogica Historica*, despite its avowed aim to become "the forum where

historians of education in the various regions of the world will be able to publish the

results of their researches and to discuss with each other their common problems." [3]

As Jeroen Dekker and Frank Simon have recently argued, during the first 30 years of

its existence it "served as a model for a thorough, primarily continental and German-

inspired approach, consisting of the history of thought, of ideas on education, and of

educational systems, institutions and legislation" (Dekker & Simon, 2014, p.709). In many respects, the determined effort to spread news about publications and research

in all areas of the history of education was part and parcel of this approach, although

it was unquestionably anchored in a bibliographic moment in the 1960s.

Jacques Souvage was the leading force behind the different efforts to collect, orga-

nize, and disseminate information within *Paedagogica Historica*, and he relied on

information that his international board of editors relayed, notably within *Chronica*.

This section reveals the extent to which colleagues outside of Belgium participated

in similar bibliographic efforts in the 1960s. In 1964, for example, the French sent

in a list of doctoral dissertations on the topic of the history of pedagogy, completed

1 True, the individual chapters are available on-line for sale at a mere $29.95, and the « book metrics on the Springer website indicate there

have been 3674 downloads of the volume *Discourses of Change. Changes of Discourses*. Still the same metrics indicate a grand total of two citations which is nothing to boast about on one's CV. http://www.springer.com/la/book/9783319304557

(consulted 22 September 2017).

2 Pierre Caspard has published numerous historiographic essays that also point to the important changes of the 1960s and 1970s. See, his list of historiographic essays on his publication website:

http://www.archeophone.org/she/caspard.htm.

3 PH 1961, I, Editorial.

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at the Sorbonne between 1956 and 1963; the Italians signaled an issue of *Revisita*

di Pedagogia e Scienze Religios with a bibliographic list of recent articles on the

history of pedagogy and education; the Canadians also sent lists of graduate theses

in the history of education, defended in 1962, while the USA. provided a list of 24

doctoral dissertations pertaining to the history of African American Education. 4

What can one say about the effects of these bibliographies or even of the journal

itself in terms of shaping the reception of scholarship in these years? 5 Although it's difficult to estimate the actual readership of the journal,

it undoubtedly served to

create a sense of community among scholars in Europe and North America, perhaps

most notably through the work of the international editors who relayed information

about what was happening in the field. The bibliographies, in general, gave everyone

a sense of the diversity of contemporary production even if the history of pedagogy

and the history of pedagogical ideas had pride of place. Perhaps most importantly

the journal testified in the Chronica section to an important moment in educational

research; a moment of consolidation within national communities—with the creation

of associations and journals—that was carried by the spirit of the global sixties.

Scholars in the field sought to communicate across national borders, share national

news, and participate in international gatherings. This, of course, was the spirit that

led to the founding of ISCHE (International Standing Conference for the History of

Education) in 1978 (Fuchs, 2014). Still, it would be mistaken to wax nostalgic about these golden years of intellectual collaboration. Underlying the internationalization

underway were personal and political tensions as associations and journals jockeyed

for influence in an increasingly competitive academic market. And indeed, from the

outset, the relation between PH and ISCHE was a conflictual one, as the editors at

PH viewed ISCHE as a competitor, particularly when ISCHE's executive committee

first suggested in 1979 that they write an international newsletter in place of PH's

Chronica section. For years, the two co-existed in an adversarial relationship. [6] The decision to publish volumes from the annual ISCHE conference was similarly a

source of tension between PH and ISCHE that was only resolved once a contract

was signed in the 1990s to have PH take over the publication of selected articles from

the conference in a supplementary series to the so-called "new series." [7]

Still, despite rivalries at the level of international cooperation, both PH and ISCHE

acted as an important stimulus within national communities to disseminate informa-

tion about the history of education. Within France, connecting with the international

journal was similarly a source of some rivalry amongst a group of scholars who had

no journal or association of their own from which to project intellectual authority.

4 PH 1964, I, pp.228–229; pp.232–233.

5 A number of articles in the 2014 issue of PH address this issue, including Rogers (2014).

6 ISCHE archives, Louvain, 1979, Ische EC minutes from Warsaw, 5–7 May 1979. Heinemann

compiled 20 issues of *The International Newsletter for the History of Education* between 1980 and 1940.

7 Signs of these tensions can be read between the lines in Herbst, (1990). My thanks to Frank Simon and Marc Depaepe for their insights on these issues.

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The French Rise to the Challenge

French scholarship in the history of education did not coalesce quickly into a distinct

sub-field in France in part because history was not one of the foundational fields in

educational research as it was in other national settings such as England or the United

States (Lagemann, 2000; McCulloch & Cowan, 2017). As a result, scholars working in the history of education were scattered in a variety of institutional settings in the

1960s—within history departments, in secondary schools and normal schools, and

in philosophy or psychology departments. The French scholars who were active in

Paedagogica Historica in the 1960s reflected this diversity. They would take an early

lead in disseminating information about the history of education both within France

and to an international community before the emergence of the Service d'histoire de

l'éducation took over this task in the late 1970s.

Maurice Debesse was one of the original four editors of PH from 1961 to 1976.

Trained in philosophy and psychology, he was appointed to the chair of pedagogy

at the Sorbonne in 1957. From this position of considerable institutional influence,

Debesse went on to find the Laboratoire de pédagogie of the Faculté des Lettres et

Sciences Humaines de Paris in 1962 and to become the first head of the University

Department of Educational Sciences in Paris in 1968 (Guey & Rogers, 2015). 8 The wider PH board included a second French scholar, the historian of Christianity,

Henri-Iréné Marrou (from 1961 to 1976 as well). Thus, the French were represented

by one of the dominant figures in the field of education, Debesse, in addition to

the well-respected specialist of Saint Augustine who held the chair in the history of

Christianity at the Sorbonne from 1945 to 1975. In 1961, the two men were Professors

at the Sorbonne and at the height of their careers (Riché, 2003). While the archives of the journal do not clearly indicate the role played by board members beyond

reviewing articles or encouraging colleagues to send in articles, it is clear Debesse

and Marrou collaborated in providing the material for *Chronica,* which acted as a

form of newsletter concerning the national happenings in the history of education,

be they conferences, publications, or dissertation defenses.

For the non-French readers of the journal, the French *Chronica* of the 1960s

describes a very eclectic field where traditional histories of pedagogy and pedagog-

ical figures appear alongside social histories of the school or sectors of education.

The portrait of the field that emerges in the 1960s is relatively dynamic but neces-

sarily piecemeal and probably revealing of underlying dynamics within the French

community of scholars working in the field. It is difficult to discern in the bi-annual

reports signs of the scholarship that would later define "French" history of education

as it emerged from the Annales-inspired new social history or from the path-breaking

work of Philippe Ariès on the history of childhood. Perhaps most strikingly, Antoine

Prost's important *Histoire de l'enseignement en France, 1800–1867* (Armand Colin,

1968) is not mentioned, no doubt because its date of publication coincided with

8 The archives of Maurice Debesse are held at the Musée National de Rouen. These merit closer

examination to determine the variety of Debesse's international contacts and activities.

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considerable university turmoil: from 1968 through 1970, French historians failed

to send in any information about the field to the journal.

Within France, research in the history of education was not clearly visible as a

sub-field within the field of education or within history departments. The *Bulletin*

du Laboratoire de Pédagogie of the Sorbonne did publish information about schol-

arship and research in education, but no special issues were devoted to the history of

education in the 1960s, which remained under-represented within the emerging field

of education (Guey & Rogers, 2015, p.157). In 1967, the first degrees in educational sciences were created in France; at the same time, a group of scholars, including

Debesse, were instrumental in founding the *Revue française de pédagogie (* RFP *)*

(Bouthors, 2005; Robert, 2001). The first editorial situated the journal with respect to the massive changes occurring within the educational system. It described its task

as one of providing documentation, information, critical reflection on issues of educa-

tion to teachers and a broader public; like *Paedagogica Historica,* it announced a

commitment to publishing "abundant bibliographies" allowing its readers to pursue

their critical and comparative study of education. 9 A section entitled "A travers l'actualité pédagogique" resembled to some extent the *Chronica* of PH, except

that the references all concerned studies on contemporary education. Although the

journal's board represented a range of disciplinary perspectives, the history of educa-

tion was not well represented in these early years, although there were scholars who

published on historical topics: the sociologist Viviane Isambert-Jamati and the educa-

tionist Jean Vial, who would replace Debesse on the board of *Paedagogica Historica*

in 1976. Despite this presence on the RFP's board of scholars who published histor-

ical articles and books, they did little to promote historical perspectives in the early

years of the journal when the field of educational sciences was taking shape.10 Even the extensive book review section paid scant attention to the field of history with a

few exceptions. 11 In 1970, the historian Antoine Prost joined the board as well as the educationist Georges Snyders who had written his dissertation on the history of

pedagogy in France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Their presence did

relatively little to change the orientations of the journal, however, which remained

very focused on contemporary pedagogical issues. When historical articles were

published, they tended to be concentrated in thematic issues, thus contributing to the

impression that historians of education constituted a marginal sub-field.

In 1972, for example, the historian Maurice Gontard thanked the journal for

accepting the publication of four articles on the history of education written by him

and a group of his students at the University of Provence. In 1974, a second special

issue gave pride of place to historical articles with a presentation of the issue by

9 La rédaction, "Présentation", *RFP* 1 (1967): 5–7.

10 M.-M. Compère notes the *RFP* published far fewer articles in the history of education than its'

sister educational journals in Europe. She calculates that between 1967 and 1985, only 22 articles focused on history, out of a total of 384 articles: 5.7% (Compère, 1995, p. 69).

11 In 1969, Antoine Prost provided a detailed review of a special issue of the *Journal of Contemporary History* on "Education and Social Structure," describing the approaches of Fritz Ringer, Theodore Zeldin, and others. In the same issue, Jean Vial offered a very positive review of Antoine Prost's book, *Histoire de l'enseignement en France* (*RFP* 7, avril-juin 1969).

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Maurice Bayen. He wrote that he regretted that "research on the history of education

was so little present" in France, particularly with respect to the situation elsewhere

(Bayen, [1974]). [12] He emphasized in particular, the existence of foreign journals where historical approaches either dominated or were prevalent: the *History of Education*

Quarterly (US), the *History of Education*, *Minerva: A Review of Science, Learning and Policy*, or the *British Journal of Educational Studies* (Great Britain), *Paedagogica Historica*, etc. He went on to note that history's absence of visibility was all the more regrettable in that many French scholars were interested in the topic. A survey in 1972

had revealed the presence of 70 people who published in the history of education,

but their work was little known, often published in an artisanal fashion, he wrote,

and distributed in minute quantities.

Bayen's presentation was clearly a call for greater visibility and greater institu-

tionalization, as he also announced the project he was working on: the creation of a

French journal in the history of education. The articles he presented in this 1974 issue

illustrated on a small scale the diversity of the field. Two archivists published the

first article about the archives available on medieval universities; historian Dominique

Julia[13] was the author of an article about the sources and uses of these sources in the history of education, while Jean Vial published on the history of pedagogical

objects. The first two articles were heavily focused on the tools of the trade, archives,

and sources, and they both included bibliographies, which was not common practice

in the journal. Vial's article however, remained more faithful to the standards of the

RFP, footnotes were few and far between, and no bibliography offered a way for

scholars to pursue more closely the history he proposed. Retrospectively, the issue

highlights the affirmation of different professional standards among the scholars in

this field that would in the years to come contribute to its fragmentation.

In the early 1970s, the State took action to give the history of education greater

visibility within France, creating within the Institution National de Recherche Péda-

gogique a service devoted to the subject. This top-down approach resulted in an

institution—the Service d'histoire de l'éducation (SHE)—which became singularly

well-placed to determine the contours of the field both within France and with respect

to an international community. Situated in Paris on the rue d'Ulm, next to the presti-

gious École Normale Supérieure, the SHE welcomed international scholars, carried

out ambitious research projects oriented toward the preservation of archives or the

rendering visible of primary sources in education, and, beginning in 1978, published

a journal, *Histoire de l'éducation*, which became the flagship French journal in the

field. The director of the SHE from its creation until his retirement in 2010, Pierre

Caspard, regularly published articles about the state of the field, as well as about the

initiatives the SHE undertook. He also regularly commissioned articles that presented

syntheses of dynamic or innovative areas of research. And from the beginning, he

12 The Minister of Education Olivier Guichard appointed Bayen "Haut fonctionnaire chargé de

l'histoire de l'éducation" in 1970. One of his goals was to promote the history of education within universities (Caplat, 1978, p.4).

13 Dominique Julia was a maître de recherche at the CNRS in 1974 specialized in early modern

history.

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insisted that the SHE aimed to help scholars in the field through the centralization

and the dissemination of information (Caplat, 1978; Caspard, 1978, 2014).First, the SHE sought to "map" the field, creating a directory of scholars publishing in the

field (printed in numbers n°s 2-3 and then in n°10 in 1981). Quickly, however, the

journal focused more specifically on providing bibliographic references rather than

names and addresses of scholars in the field. Compared to *Paedagogica Historica*,

bibliography took up far more space in *Histoire de l'éducation*, as a large double

volume of such references constituted easily half of the journal's written output every

year. And compared to PH as well, the SHE devoted more man (or woman) hours to

the task, as a team of scholars spent hours and hours at the Bibliothèque nationale

de France tracking down references in the history of education.

When I began my doctoral studies in the 1980s, it went without saying that I too

would spend long hours looking through volumes of bibliographic references in the

Bibliographie annuelle de l'histoire de France, and then in *Histoire de l'éducation*.

And my archives are full of note cards testifying to my illusory attempt to read

everything published on nineteenth-century girls' education in France.

Scholarship back in those "good old days" was very much buoyed by a form

of bibliographic positivism. I recognized I would never have exhaustive knowledge

of the archives but I did think I could achieve exhaustive knowledge of the field,

thanks to the existence of such bibliographies. And, like Pierre Caspard, I began

using this knowledge to write "state-of-the-field" essays about the history of girls'

education that drew heavily on my investment in the bibliographic searches that

had so determined my early years as a scholar (Rogers, 2007; van Essen & Rogers,

2003). *Histoire de l'éducation's* double volume bibliography continued from 1978

to 2006. In 2007, the SHE rose to the digital challenge creating an on-line database

that replaced the paper bibliographies. Together, these two formats represented by far

the most complete entry into what was being published on the history of education

in France (but one needed to consult both). [14]

When I began teaching as a Professor at the Université Paris Descartes in 2006, I

endlessly directed students to the website of the SHE and its bibliographic database,

telling them their research should start there. By 2006, however, my students in an

education department were less interested and less convinced about the importance

of bibliography. And it was not just that they had not been trained as historians; rather

they were students of their time, not exactly digital natives, but certainly their first

reflex in thinking about a topic was to turn to google or Wikipedia. Scouring biblio-

graphic references did not make sense to them. When they learned that the reference

on the screen from the SHE database was only a reference with no connection to the

article or book itself, I could read the skepticism on their faces. Not to mention their

failure to appreciate the coding process that one had to master to some extent if one

wanted to find the references that might interest them.

14 Annually, around 1200 references were collected from the consultation of *the Bibliographie annuelle de l'histoire de France* and 360 other journals (Service d'histoire de l'éducation, 2009, pp.101–102).

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Teaching this course on bibliographic research in education gradually made me

feel old and out of touch, as I tried for several years to buck the trend. I gave classes that

introduced students to the SHE database, historical abstracts, and the French effort to

make available on-line references in the social sciences—Francis. When a younger

historian was hired, he took over the class, and the era of bibliographic positivism

passed away. In 2015, the bibliographic database of the SHE similarly passed away,

with no fanfare and indeed no on-line indication that the age of collecting references

had come to an end. Knowledge about publications increasingly takes other forms

in our digital age and access to the publications themselves no longer occurs almost

exclusively in libraries. What then does this change in our scholarly practices?

The Digital Era: Access and Illusions

From the standpoint of 2017, things have indeed changed since PH first announced

its concern to assemble a community of scholars, and Jacques Souvage began his

efforts to disseminate knowledge of the scholarship through extensive thematic bibli-

ographies in the history of education, following the Dewey decimal system. Students

no longer need to spend hours in the libraries pouring over volumes of references, nor

for the most part do they need to master complicated search engines within available

on-line bibliographic tools. Instead the World Wide Web is at their disposition with

a bewildering array of resources to seek information about who is working on what,

but also to disseminate information about one's own scholarly production. In what

follows, I will offer a brief survey of what is available specifically in France before

turning to how our global age encourages new forms of exchange and the illusion of

having a global reach.

Digital France

Much of the French effort to enter the digital era is framed by the State and its finan-

cial resources, unlike the situation in the United States. The Bibliothèque Nationale

de France has an ambitious program, known as Gallica, to digitalize its patrimonial

collections making available vast resources on-line and free-of-charge. A similar

State-sponsored initiative, named Persée, makes available on-line "historic" collec-

tions of major journals in the social sciences and humanities. This, however, does

not affect access to our contemporary scholarly production although arguably it has

contributed to the expectation among students that books and journals are available

on-line. This is where the Centre National de Recherche Scientifique (the CNRS)

has played an important role in promoting the idea of open access. The CNRS

funds research groups in France, and has attempted for years to make scholarship–

–produced within public universities with public funding—available for all. The

open-access platform HAL (Hyperarticles en ligne) was established in 2001 with the

goal of serving as a platform where scholars would deposit their conference papers,

articles, and at the least, references to their books. In the fall of 2017, for the first

time, the head of my research lab insisted we all deposit references to our publica-

tions from the past 5 years, although for the most part scruples about copyright, not

to mention the complexity of the procedure, prevented most of us from including

links to the actual articles. I attended a 2-h training session in order to learn how to

do this and then spent about 6 h accomplishing my duty which was useful for the

lab technicians since it allows them to extract all of our bibliographic references.

As a scholar, however, it is not apparent that this has had even the smallest impact,

since a more up-to-date and easier to access bibliography of my publications is avail-

able on the web page of the research lab.[15] Certainly, I have seen no sign that this (confidential?) French platform has any sort of national, not to say global, impact.

Most French scholars would be far more aware of efforts to provide open-access

to scholarship within the world of academic journals. In the social sciences, two

competing principles have structured much of the debate in the past 10 to 15 years with

the creation first of a free open-access platform for journals—Revues.org—(in 1999)

and then a for-profit open-access platform sponsored by commercial publishers—

Cairn (created in 2006). Cairn is a collaborative platform that provides digital access

to a wide range of journals in the social sciences, and generates income both for the

platform, the publishers, and the journals through the sale of individual articles at

a very modest cost. Libraries, of course, subscribe to Cairn (for a higher cost) and

provide free access to journals for students and scholars within universities. Many

journals are on both Cairn and revues.org, with an embargo of 2–3 years before

the articles become available for free on Revues.org. In 2013, a range of on-line

publications incorporated Cairn into an initiative known as OpenEdition freemium

which makes books available on-line as well. Within this new digital economy, access

to articles is vastly simplified and offers the potential for scholars to reach far larger

audiences, although one cannot help suspecting that these audiences remain very

French and francophone. [16]

Finally, if one turns more specifically to the history of education, a host of new

initiatives testify to changes in the ways information about scholarship now circulate.

The Service d'histoire de l'éducation, which for decades provided the entry point

for scholars looking for resources and information in the field, disappeared in 2011,

when the team of scholars and technicians was absorbed into the École Normale

Supérieure de Lyon. The scholars acquired teaching duties, the notion of "service"

disappeared as the individuals were integrated into a larger research group, and

the Institut Français d'Education (IFÉ) replaced the Institut National de Recherche

Pédagogique (which had been founded in the 1950s). IFÉ continues to publish the

journal *Histoire de l'éducation* (which is available on Cairn), as well as other journals 15 For my regularly updated publication list, see http://www.cerlis.eu/team-view/rogers-rebecca/.

16 For a recent attempt to evaluate the consequences of these changes in France, since the special issue "Économie et politique de l' 'accès ouvert': les revues à l'âge numérique," *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 62/4 bis, 2015 and especially Claire Lemercier's article (Lemercier,

2015).

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in education and it also provides an on-line scientific monitoring about publications,

events, and topics of interest to the educational community, including a useful access

to the table of contents of foreign journals in the history of education. 17 But the history of education is swamped in this monitoring with information on contemporary issues

in education.

In response to this loss of visibility, the colleagues in Lyon have sought other

ways to keep the field in the public eye, although for the moment these have not

attained the same kind of recognition as the Service d'histoire de l'éducation with its

journal and bibliography. They took the lead with colleagues from Geneva to sponsor

a Standing working group within ISCHE entitled "Mapping the discipline" which,

among other activities, has sponsored workshops and on-line databases on doctoral

dissertations within the field of the history of education. 18 A very recent initiative—

the Bibliothèque Historique de l'Education—in coordination with Persee, the State-

sponsored patrimonial platform for scientific journals, pursues efforts to digitalize

significant journals for the history of education. In particular, it has made available

the *Bulletin administratif de l'Instruction publique*. 19 And alongside these initiatives, a new association to promote the history of education has emerged—the Association

Transdisciplinaire pour la Recherche en Histoire de l'éducation (ATRHE). Founded

in 2011, this Association had 80 due-paying members in November 2017, holds an

annual general assembly associated with a half-day conference, and has organized

three larger conferences since its creation. Although the Association is gradually

acquiring visibility after the tensions of its creation, its significance bears no rela-

tionship to the associations founded in the United States, in Britain, or in Canada to

promote the history of education and its website does not serve as an entry point into

a world of information (Caspard & Condette, 2014; Le Cam, 2013).What advice then should one give scholars in France, seeking to add their publications to conversations

in the history of education?

Publishing Strategies in the Digital World: The Perspective

From France

In France, university life continues to be largely determined by the State despite

the so-called autonomy of universities which went into effect in 2013 following the

Loi relative aux libertés et responsabilités des universités of 2007. Our pay scales

and promotions are all tightly regulated by the Government or national committees

with only minimal influence of our local institutions. But hopes for obtaining a

position or a promotion do depend on a scholarly record. And while new scholars

17 Most of the international journals are in English but one does find some Spanish journals such as *Historia y Memoria de la Educación*.

18 See the explanation of the project (http://rhe.ish-lyon.cnrs.fr/?q=mapping) and the listing of doctoral dissertations in France:

http://rhe.ish-lyon.cnrs.fr/?q=carto-theses-list.

19 For a presentation of the project, see https://www.persee.fr/collection/bhe.

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may indeed feel that they must publish or perish, in general this ethos appears far

less prevalent than in other university settings, notably Great Britain and the United

States. Laboratories are assessed every 5 years now, but not individual scholars. And

in our current assessment period, it is quite striking to me that the lists of A-ranked

journals was never mentioned at all. Five years ago, there was an effort to establish

such rankings—most of my own publications in international journals had no ranking

at all, because they were not in French, a clear sign that the global ambitions of the

French university had a severe case of linguistic blinkers. The notion of assessing an

impact factor does not exist in the social sciences nor do either Cairn or Revues.org

publicize "the most-viewed article" on their websites. Clearly in France, most social

scientists view these indicators with a great deal of skepticism, but this does not

mean that we don't think carefully about where we send our articles or our books

for publication. And of course, there is increasing pressure for French scholars to

demonstrate evidence of their global impact through publication in "international

journals," which really means journals publishing in English. How then do French

journals rise to this challenge and how do scholars adapt to the realities of a publishing

world, which has become increasingly more difficult to understand or master as the

rules seem to change all the time?

It is easier to speak with a modicum of authority about journal strategies. *Histoire*

de l'éducation has successfully entered both French and American on-line digital

platforms: Cairn and JSTOR. Board meetings now involve the presentation of tables

and graphs about most consulted articles, most consulted abstracts, most downloaded

articles, etc. (but only from Cairn). These are rarely analyzed in any detail and they

remain more a matter of curiosity than a guideline for publishing strategies in the

future. The journal editors spend time editing titles and résumés to make them more

attractive, and abstracts are available in French and English but only articles in French

are published. It is not apparent, however, that the authors themselves are particularly

concerned about "marketing" their article to a more global audience. Almost the

contrary. Résumés are rarely well-crafted pieces of prose and the journal provides no

guidelines (as some Anglosaxon journals do) on how to "optimize" consultations.

In reality, I do not think most French scholars in the history of education think very

seriously about making an impact beyond France or the Francophone world and

indeed books more than articles remain the focus of most efforts.

An avatar of this interest in producing books is the booming production of edited

volumes in the history of education, the result of conferences, or research projects.

Despite the great likelihood that a chapter in such a volume will vanish almost imme-

diately from any scholarly attention at all, such volumes are easier to get published in

France (if your lab or research council is prepared to kick in 3000e for the publica-

tion), than putting together an edited issue of a journal where peer-review slows down

the process in addition to eliminating premature publications. It goes without saying

that these collected volumes are harder to sell, harder to get reviewed and rarely

the object of much attention in our global communities. My own collected volume

in French on co-education (*La mixité dans l'éducation. Enjeux passés et presents,*

ENS Editions, 2004) that included chapters on Belgium, Scotland, and Germany was

never reviewed in a non-French language journal although it has recently become

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available on-line thanks to OpenEdition freemium. Now would be the time for me

to seek a broader readership for this book but, of course, my energies lie elsewhere

and the French publishing house, ENS Editions, does not have the means to pursue

an aggressive strategy outside France. Given free on-line access it's difficult to see

their interest in such a strategy.

And what about scholars? Does this vast on-line environment modify how we

write and how we publish? I'm not convinced most of us have risen to the challenge.

In France, at least, I haven't seen evidence that scholars of any generation have

significantly changed their publishing strategies in an attempt to achieve a more

global audience. Indeed, the turn to collective volumes, which are not well ranked

in promotion committees, signals almost a contrary development. I am on the board

of the French women's history journal, *Clio. Femmes, Genre, Histoire*. We received

support from the CNRS 4 years ago to translate each of our issues into English,

these are then made available on-line via Cairn international (in January 2018, the

journal integrated JSTOR with the avowed, and probably illusory, objective of having

article sales pay for translation costs). There has been little sign that this almost

unheard opportunity to get a publication in both French and English has generated

any interest at all among prospective scholars. It has of course increased our workload

on the board, creating fears that we cannot possibly continue to produce two paper

volumes and four on-line versions without more administrative help. The prospects

for obtaining such help, however, are slim indeed. And for the moment, we have no

feedback on the "success" of our on-line English version, nor the means to measure

such success.

A Few Desultory Conclusive Remarks

I would be the first to acknowledge that I no longer feel I have the skills to master

the production in my field. Nor do my colleagues, nor indeed do the library staff to

whom I turn to periodically. Things are changing too quickly. I could, perhaps, retool

as an information specialist, but something tells me that my interests remain more

prosaically in communicating with those I have identified as like-minded scholars.

As a result, I attempt to keep abreast of my field in the publishing venues that have

passed the test of time, journals that for the most part have existed for decades,

learning about scholarship through on-line searches, but reading on paper, without

exception. This undoubtedly positions me as a digital conservative. I think this also

raises questions about how we read in our digital age and here I think we await the

scholarship that will trace the effects of this fundamental shift in how we access

information. I do think, however, that the knowledge my scholarship might travel

electronically to communities I do not suspect has increasingly had an impact on how

I choose to write and on my research interests. With respect to the latter, my interest

in the transnational or the global is obviously a response to our global communities in

the 2010s. Perhaps this more than anything is the lesson I retain from the changes in

the bibliographic model that guided my entry into the profession. I will never become

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a specialist of the history of girls' education in the world, but I have the means now

to acquire passing knowledge on the subject on all continents and the means to share

my own knowledge as well. And those two goals seem worth pursuing, albeit far

less ambitious than the goal of the late 1950s to compose a "Universal History of

Education."

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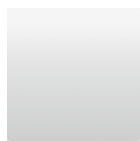
Curiosity and Acquaintance: Ways

of Knowing

Paul Standish

Abstract Curiosity has rightly received much attention in epistemology and educa-

tional research. Although, through the centuries, it has been regarded with a degree of

ambivalence, the trend now is towards its championing as an intellectual or epistemic

virtue. The present discussion juxtaposes it against a contrasting way of knowing,

which I refer to as knowledge by acquaintance. The notion of acquaintance pursued

here parts company with Bertrand Russell's adoption of the expression, taking up

instead a more ordinary use of the term. It is suggested that both curiosity and knowl-

edge by acquaintance can present problems. Working through an example drawn

from Stephen Poliakoff's film Close My Eyes, the paper seeks to reappraise the

value of knowing by an acquaintance for epistemology and for educational practice

and research.

Searching for Curiosity

I googled for CURIOSITY. This is what I found:

From the Harvard Business School:

that new research into curiosity reveals a wide range of benefits for organizations, leaders,

and employees. Fewer decision-making errors. More innovation and positive changes in both

creative and non-creative jobs. Reduced group conflict. A less defensive reaction to stress

and less aggressive reactions to provocation.1

From Robert Aymar, former director of CERN:

that 'The Large Hadron Collider is a discovery machine. Its research program has the potential

to change our view of the universe profoundly, continuing a tradition of human curiosity

that's as old as mankind itself.'2

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From Contemporary Clinical Dentistry *:*

that the 'Human brain by virtue of its natural inclination is always curious to discover the

answers to curiosities to mitigate its craze and internal struggle. Human mind is a multi-

faceted gadget very hard to master and decipher. It is the most complex and struggling

appendage of the human body.'3

And, somewhere off at a tangent, from Alexander Pope:

that *'*(after providence had permitted the Invention of Printing as a scourge for the Sins of the learned) Paper also became so cheap, and printers so numerous, that the deluge of authors

cover'd the land'.4

The search led me to ponder, and I began to dwell on what I had achieved...

I remembered reading, more than 20 years ago, Bertram Bruce's pedagogically

creative discussion of how search exercises could be made to work in the class-

room. Bruce was thinking about the ways that searches could go beyond 'looking

up' and become something more like enquiry, where 'searching is the journey, not

just the arrival' (Bruce, 2000, p. 108), and he wrote:

This suggests an alternative to the common practice of asking students to cite one library

source and one online source for an essay. Activities such as that presuppose an order to the

Web that simultaneously over- and under-states its value. Instead, we could turn the Web's

unruliness into a virtue. We might say: 'Use the Web to find the answer to such-and-such a

question. Now, report on three things you learned that you had never imagined before you

did that search'. (*Ibid.*)

This is an expansion of knowledge through links and connections, laterally as

it were. Knowledge increases—information assimilated, new things discovered—

though not along a straight path, not in the way suggested by the idea that the Hadron

Collider is the latest development in an unbroken history of knowledge about nature.

But how far does the expansion of knowledge coincide with increased publica-

tion? If the invention of the printing press led to the deluge of authors covering the

land that Pope feared, more recent changes in technology are causing globally rising

tides of publication in which we could well drown. Our theme in this suite of papers is

acceleration, and its presence in publishing has been spectacular. Moreover, however,

one construes the relationship between publication and the advancement of learning,

technological change has undoubtedly expanded knowledge itself: the growth of

computing and the internet *has* meant that, for good or ill, we are inundated with

information, but it has also massively increased the speed at which science makes

progress. Furthermore, the extension of education, formally and informally, through

longer periods of people's lives, the expansion of teacher education, and increasingly

technicised conceptions of teaching and learning have coincided with these changes

in publishing and contributed to the acceleration in the growth of specifically educa-

tional research. Acceleration all round, so it seems, and although one may at times

worry about both the flood and the speed, there is much that has been achieved.

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Yet I find myself remembering also another paper that was published in the same

special issue as Bruce's, and I mention it here as an indicator of the contrasts in ways

of knowing with which this paper is concerned. Almost at the start of his discussion,

David Kolb makes the following claim:

A serious enemy of education is a life of quick immediate intensities. Little intense bits of

information delivered by sincere talking heads. Isolated serial intensities, one show or one

song after another, one simplified role after another. Moments of intense experience branded

and labelled (Kolb, 2000, p. 121).

Such information is abstracted, 'pulled out of its constitutive relations and

contexts, and so is not encountered in its full reality. Education should restore those

relations and contexts. It should dispel that illusory immediacy and completeness'

(*ibid.*). But Kolb is well aware that complaints of this kind can seem as nothing more

than reiterations of a familiar liberal arts rant, and he is keen not to say that learners

simply need to slow down. Younger people ride the waves of the web with speed, but

sophisticated readers of print can scan the pages of articles in their field with remark-

able alacrity too. Rather than seeking quick bits of information, the expert has a

built-in structure of categories and priorities, an evaluative background within which

to discern what is pertinent and what is not. The worry is that the student without

this is at the mercy of providers of the information and vulnerable to the impression

that links are somehow natural rather than calculated, sometimes for commercial or

political purposes. But Kolb is not talking about abstract thinking skills: crucially

what is involved is a matter of familiarity with a terrain, perhaps a section of a disci-

plinary field, and herein lies a worry too. 'If the media glut is online, education ought

to be there too', Kolb writes, and the words that follow sound upbeat, but there is a

sting in the tail. 'The learners have to spend aware time there, and try new concepts,

make mistakes and get feedback. They have to stay there for a while. But is there

any "there" there?'.

Kolb's title is 'Learning Places', and this can be taken to refer both to the places

where learning takes place, whether as classrooms, lecture halls, or websites, etc.,

and to what it is to come to know a place—that is, not just to learn about the place

but to become familiar or acquainted with it. His subtitle is 'Building Dwelling

Thinking Online', artfully appropriating the title of Heidegger 1951 lecture, 'Building

Dwelling Thinking', in which the lack of punctuation or conjunction is intended to

suggest the internal connection in these aspects of our lives. Place, in Heidegger's

discussion, is not the same as space. A place may be coextensive with the space

identified by the grid-lines on a map, but a place is not determined or understood in

this way: it is, say, the place where the bridge crosses the river, where the villagers pass

one another by, where perhaps we arrange to meet... Heidegger's evocation of place,

as of building and dwelling, *is* nostalgic, but it is richly meaningful nonetheless. It evokes the way in which, before they are spaces identified by coordinates on a map,

places have already come into being through their significance in human lives. And

their connection with dwelling is found in the fact that they are where we spend

time: they can come to be familiar aspects of our lives. Kolb's guiding question in

'Learning Places' is whether anything on the internet can become a place in the way

that Heidegger seeks to describe.

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Becoming familiar with a place may involve gathering new information about it,

but it cannot be reduced to this. To be familiar or acquainted with a place is to have

had direct experience of it and to have stayed a while, probably to have come back to

it. You can be familiar with and come back to a classroom or school, to your home or

homeland, to somewhere that perhaps you have just stayed a while, to a topic and an

argument, to a teacher and a writer, and—pending the answer to Kolb's question—to

a website, a virtual place. In epistemology, this tends not to be addressed well. What

is fairly clear as a starting point, however, is that this familiarity or acquaintance

involves something other than curiosity, something other than novelty too, and a

different way of knowing. It is this that needs to be accounted for.

Curiosity has had its strong champions and undoubtedly has an allure: it has been

celebrated in recent years as one of the epistemic or intellectual virtues. But it has

had its critics too, and it remains a troubled concept. Let us try to see why.

Lust of the Mind?

Desire, to know why, and how, curiosity; such as is in no living creature but man: so that man

is distinguished, not only by his reason; but also by this singular passion, . . . which is a lust of the mind, that by a perseverance of delight in the continual and indefatigable generation

of knowledge, exceedeth the short vehemence of any carnal pleasure. (Hobbes, Leviathan,

1651, p. 35)

Thomas Hobbes associates curiosity with a seeking after causes, which in human

beings combine creatively through the imagination to enable the projection of

possible effects and new inventions. Retrospectively, however, it leads to a reflection

on causes of causes and ultimately to the thought 'at last, that there is some cause

whereof there is no former cause, but is eternal; which is it men call God' (p. 65).

But with his curious expression, 'lust of the mind', which certainly implies desire but

might suggest deficiency in other respects, Hobbes' words touch on an ambivalence

that has surrounded curiosity. It is celebrated now as one of the epistemic virtues,

whereas Augustine struggled with the notion,5 and it was a target of Heidegger's *Being and Time*.6 And, as we know, it killed the cat.

The idea of curiosity as an intellectual or epistemic virtue seems a natural outcome

of recognition of the value and achievements, especially of the physical sciences.

The term is often coupled with the adjective 'disinterested', a word that many native

speakers have some difficulty in disentangling from 'uninterested'. Football referees

should be *dis* interested (that is, unbiased), whereas one presumes that they will not

be *un* interested in the game! Correct usage of these expressions is sometimes worn as

a kind of badge of a certain level of education. I do not know how far the distinction,

playing out in these prefixes, is found in other languages; but in any case, there are

some reasons to be suspicious of a distinction that purports to contain interest in this

tidy way. In an impressively subtle discussion of curiosity, Marianna Papastephanou

presses the point in a political direction:

The adjective 'disinterested,' which has been attributed to curiosity and qualified its employ-

ment in educational philosophy at a given time, operated in political ways that disentangled

epistemic from moral and political stakes and prepared the ground for what ended up to

be an unqualified educational welcome of curiosity. However, attention is drawn to the fact

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that, though social and virtue epistemologies complicate disinterestedness and reclaim the

social and virtue dimensions of episteme, they fail to adequately reclaim its political opera-

tions. Likewise, a politicization of curiosity and a concomitant political queering of curiosity as an educational aim are still missing. Transfers of virtue epistemology into educational

philosophy continue to treat curiosity apolitically and to recommend it unreservedly as an

educational aim (Papastephanou, 2016, pp. 1-2).

My sense is that the problems Papastephanou highlights are to be addressed

also in, more obviously, epistemological terms, and that there are already political

dimensions to the epistemology. 1

In order to advance the argument along these lines, I shall begin by taking a step

to the side and turning to an example from film. Stephen Poliakoff's *Close My Eyes*,

starring Saskia Reeves, Clive Owen, and Alan Rickman, was released in 1991, and

the film has always struck me not only as providing an indictment of aspects of the

British political landscape of the 1980s but also as offering an allegory of knowing,

in wide-ranging human terms. Let me provide a sketch of salient episodes in the

film.7

Ways of Knowing in *Close My Eyes*

'But if you are certain, isn't it that you are shutting your eyes in the face of doubt?'—They've been shut. (Wittgenstein, 2009/1953, p. 236e, §331)

A relentless blue sky hangs over a cityscape. Cranes punctuating the line of the

horizon display the construction boom that betokens an economy that thrives, with the

reinvention of the Isle of Dogs and the creation of Canary Wharf. This is London,

magnificent but listless in the summer heat. This is the high summer of Margaret

Thatcher's premiership.

We do neither see the frenzied activity of the stock exchange nor the frenetic lives

of barrow-boys turned jobbers in the stock exchange; we do not see the champagne

bars, crammed with bankers and hedge-fund managers. The main representative of

this new capitalism is instead the handsome figure of Sinclair (Alan Rickman), who,

in a palatial building on the banks of the river in the heart of London, presides over

the small fortune of a margarine manufacturing business. Sinclair is a humane and

good-natured man, whose genuine, if domineering, charm and generosity scarcely

ever falter. Whatever the pressures of such a working life must be, he is calm and

apparently unflustered. Yet he is animated by an unflagging interest in things, mani-

fested in a curiosity about minor details, about little things that others walk casu-

ally by. 'These ashtrays—they're very interesting...', he remarks, passing some new

1 Papastephanou has pursued this topic more recently with the publication of a thought-provoking collection of essays entitled, *Toward New Philosophical Explorations of the Epistemic Desire to Know: Just Curious About Curiosity* (2019). I am very grateful to her for generously encouraging me to draw on my own contribution to that collection (Standish, 2019a) in the two pages that follow.

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installation in the reception area to his building. He collects and he attracts, and he

observes. There is something magnetic, mutual about this charm, and it seems to

gather people to him. Perhaps he collects them too.

Sinclair's character is juxtaposed against that of his wife, Natalie (Saskia Reeves),

and her brother, Richard (Clive Owen), who is some 5 years younger. As children,

they were separated when their parents divorced. Now in adulthood, in their late 20 s

perhaps, and against suggestions of tension between them when they were younger,

they are coming to know one another better. Richard works in an environmental

conservation practice, a counter-culture to the land-grabbing construction that is all

around, while Natalie seems unsettled and between jobs, disconnected from things.

The affection between them slips into feelings that are intense and incestuous, and this

is realised when they stay in the faded elegance of an apartment building, converted

from what was once a grand hotel. It is important that Sinclair is no philistine, but

he appears to live in a relaxed ease with the changing world of late-1980s London,

while Richard and Natalie are shown to exist in varying degrees of friction with it.

Two incidents in the film warrant particular mention. The first arises when Richard

and his boss, Colin, go to a meeting with a property developer. The meeting is tense,

and the property developer is nervous and on the defensive as they question him

about his company's compliance with planning regulations. He has heard that Colin

has been in hospital and has AIDS. As the meeting intensifies, and in a pointed act

of indecorousness and effrontery, Colin opens a triangular pack of sandwiches and

bites into one in a display of hunger. He then, in an act of mock-sociability, reaches

across the big desk behind which the man sits and offers him the partly chewed

sandwich, pressing it on him, almost forcing it into his mouth; the man stammers

and shakes with embarrassment and fear. This is the new plague, and there is no

cure. Colin then offers the same sandwich to Richard, who without hesitation takes a

bite and chews ostentatiously, both of them calmly staring at the man, now reduced

to a sweating, gibbering bag of nerves. Eventually Richard and Colin leave. AIDS

and the dark fears and repressions it represented, the signature disease of the 1980s,

are now also seen symbolically to undermine the ubiquitous growth and prosperity.

Richard's biting of the sandwich, accepting the saliva of the sick man, exemplifies

his readiness to acknowledge and live with this dark side and, let us say, to live with

its risks.

The second incident occurs a little later in the film. Sinclair and Natalie live in a

beautiful, large house on the banks of the River Thames, upstream from and outside

London. The harshness of the London skyline is here contrasted with the leafy banks

of the river, even if the impeccable lawns of the gardens must this summer be lavishly

watered, as betrayed by the yellowing, parched surrounding fields in which they

picnic. But this is still a Green World, and thus it represents a kind of pastoral, a

garden of England manicured and trimmed but still somehow preserved. In fact, it

goes beyond pastoral when, one afternoon, when relationships have intensified and

hostility simmers beneath the surface, Sinclair and Richard take their boat upstream,

where leafy alders and willows lining the banks overhang the narrowing river. The

parched grass gives way to the dark green shade of the trees. But why are they going

upstream, and what source will they find? What does Sinclair know of the dark secret

of this relationship between his wife and her brother? What is that relationship? After

some time, Sinclair and Richard moor the boat and step onto the overgrown bank.

They are in unknown territory. There is a rustle in the bushes, a strange noise, and from

somewhere in the undergrowth a dragon appears... There is a flurry of excitement,

and then the dragon's head and body lifts up. Some children giggle as they slip the

elaborate disguise from their shoulders, laugh at the surprised adults, and run away

into the surrounding trees. What is this heart of darkness?

The voyage upstream is a journey of discovery, a reaching back, towards the past

as if its sources might explain where it is that we are now. It suggests a way of knowing

the world that is in tension with the possibilities of the present, with the newness of the

world of the booming city. Sinclair is impressively knowledgeable, and he is open

and interested in people, places, and things. Richard and Natalie are constrained,

introverted and troubled, at times alienated and enervated—in her case more obvi-

ously so. At the extreme, theirs becomes an intense carnal knowledge that smoulders

and then explodes, releasing something dangerous in her but almost destroying him:

its incestuous nature calls into question in particularly disturbing ways the relation

to other people and suggests a possible overwhelming of the relation to the other,

a loss of appropriate distance, symbolically a denial of separation. In the end, this

is shown to be destructive, and they survive partly through the resourcefulness, the

circumspection that Sinclair appears to show, which is sufficient to withstand this

trauma. But the product on which his wealth and success are built is a light-spread

butter substitute, supposedly (at the time) a healthy alternative, and this oily product

symbolises, in some ways at least, his lightness of touch on the world, the light touch

of curiosity.

The powerful nature of the relationship between Natalie and Richard —its

madness, its carnal knowledge—constitutes a drastic contrast to the well-oiled

interest Sinclair has in, in effect, everything. There are problems in both direc-

tions, but paradoxically these converge in pathologies of the self. Remarks on the

acquisitive, consumptive orientation of knowledge from Jean Baudrillard in his 'The

Systems of Collecting', are apposite: for the collector, he writes, 'the singular object

never impedes the process of narcissistic projection, which ranges over an indefinite

number of objects' (Baudrillard, 1994, p. 12). I am taking the pathological tendencies in Sinclair to be of this type. The turning inwards represented by incest also implies

a shoring up of the self—an avoidance of the break-up that must in some sense come

in order that the family should healthy—health, that is, in a continual, partial dissolu-

tion and gathering into new forms, not in consolidation. Both constitute the relation

between the self and the other in ways that are destructive. How we come to know

and the ways that we know become constitutive of who and what we are. These are

subjectively inflamed relations to the world that have not found their measure.

What the title of the film, *Close My Eyes*, refers to is left unclear. Natalie closes

her eyes, we might say, to the significance of what she is doing when she asks her

brother to kiss her; in responding, Richard does the same; they close their eyes as

they kiss. The land-grabbing property developer turns a blind eye to conservation

and planning regulations; Colin and Richard share a sandwich, shutting their eyes to

the risk of HIV infection. Sinclair acquiesces in the monetarist capitalism that has

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fuelled his company's success and flaunts his bemusement at his own good fortune;

but this is the capitalism that has refashioned the city and the country, changed

working lives, and changed people. In the end, Sinclair says to Natalie and Richard,

'It's got to stop!'—as if perhaps resolutely closing his eyes to what has happened, to

let something of the past go, to let go of some demons and move on.

What, we can ask also, of the names of the characters? Is Richard—who has given

up a steady and well-paid job in town planning for a poorly paid one in environmental

conservation—not driven by a vision of the good city and, hence, cast as the protector

of the city, the 'hardy ruler', as his name implies? Natalie asks her brother to kiss

her, but she is no Eve: Natalie suggests 'natality', perhaps a newness struggling for

expression, stifled at present by the kindness, generosity, and capability (and power)

of her husband, relentless like the blue sky. And, while there might be some reasons to

suspect overinterpretation here, there is one name, Sinclair, that cannot pass without

notice. It is not that Sinclair's 'sin' is 'clear', or that he is clear of sin, but perhaps

that his sin is a certain kind of clarity—the absence in him of darkness, and hence his

inadvertent repression of Natalie. There is something too Apollonian to him, and in

the end, this is stifling. In the end, however, something breaks through. The tension

between Richard and Natalie—his pursuing her, her saying it must stop—finally

erupts in a physical fight, and it is in a bloody, torn, and dishevelled state that they

arrive at Sinclair's party on the lawns of his riverside house. But in the end, Sinclair

walks with them, away. There is something here about letting go, about not holding

on too long to any idea of how things *must be*. But also something about carrying

on: Sinclair and Natalie are not leaving for the US after all. As with Poliakoff's work

generally, the meanings overflow, sometimes indulgently so, and it can all seem too

much.

But what happens if the title of the film is read against Wittgenstein's enigmatic

remark quoted at the start of this section? Wittgenstein's interlocutor asks: 'But if

you are certain, isn't it that you are shutting your eyes in the face of doubt?' And

the response is: 'They've been shut.' (Wittgenstein, [2009/1953,](#) p. 236e, §331. The question is posed in the voice of the sceptic, the voice of epistemic conscience; but

the reply comes from the voice of *human* conscience. It is as much as to say not

'This is what I know', as if amassing evidence, but rather 'This is what I do.' It is an

expression of resolve, a shutting of the eyes in order the better to see (remembering

the fact that if they do not shut, they cannot see, cannot be human eyes). Or perhaps,

if we recall the scene played out by Colin and Richard with the sandwich, it suggests

the sustaining of the gaze on someone who is doing wrong. Stanley Cavell extends

the point as follows:

[The answer Wittgenstein offers to the skeptic's question] is not generally conclusive, but it is more of an answer than it may appear to be. In the face of the skeptic's picture of intellectual limitedness, Wittgenstein proposes a picture of human finitude. (Then our real need is for

an account of this finitude, especially of what it invites in contrast to itself.)

His eyes are shut; he has not shut them. The implication is that the insinuated doubt is not *his*.

But how not? If the philosopher *makes* them his, pries the lids up with instruments of doubt, does he not come upon human eyes?—When I said that the voice of human conscience was

not generally conclusive, I was leaving it open whether it was individually conclusive. It

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may be the expression of resolution, at least of confession. 'They (my eyes) are shut' as a

resolution, or confession, says that one can, for one's part, live in the face of doubt.—But

doesn't everyone, everyday?—It is something different to live *without* doubt, without so to speak the threat of skepticism. To live in the face of doubt, eyes happily shut, would be to

fall in love with the world (Cavell, 1979, p. 431).

It is possible, I think, to see the inflamed ways of knowing I have identified—the

net cast by Sinclair's curiosity and interest in things, his all-purpose good humour, and

the incestuous, inward-turning orientation of Natalie and Richard—as expressions

of scepticism: they are attempts to secure knowledge and live without doubt. Yet one

can live resolutely in the face of doubt.

Given the extent of the attempts to manage risk, in education as in so much else

(to manage it by calculating it and then supposedly controlling it), might it not be

seen that these are barriers, if not falling in love with the world, then at least to

genuinely caring about, and showing the value of, what it is that we pass on. How

does epistemology help with this?

Epistemology, Acquaintance, and the Classroom

I think its dominant trends lead away from what matters. Epistemology classi-

cally makes the distinction between knowing-that (propositional knowledge) and

knowing-how (skills, competences), and the importance and educational pertinence

of much of the work that has been done in studying their relation should not be ques-

tioned. But a third kind of knowing is also acknowledged—knowing by acquaintance

(or knowing with a direct object). Bertrand Russell, the philosopher associated most

in the modern period with this tripartite division, adopted the phrase 'knowing by

acquaintance', and it was indeed important in his Theory of Descriptions. 'We shall

say', he writes, 'that we have *acquaintance* with anything of which we are directly

aware, without the intermediary of any process of inference or any knowledge of

truths' (Russell, 1912, p. 78). It is part of Russell's position that *S* has acquaintance with *O* (a subject has acquaintance with an object) is essentially the same as *O* is presented to *S*. The subject has acquaintance not with the table but with the sense

data of the table. There are obvious Cartesian traces in this position (in its founda-

tionalism, it's opening to scepticism), and it is plainly empiricist (relying on what

is given through the senses). Moreover, it prioritises *direct awareness* and *presence*.

It also leads surreptitiously to a hardening of subject-object relations (the knowing

subject in relation to an object-world). Knowledge by acquaintance *is* cognitive, on

this view, but it does not involve the forming of descriptions or judgements. *Descrip-*

tions are about the world and involve judgements (the application of concepts to the

world); acquaintance, by contrast, has a necessary relation to an object (the sense

data) and, in a sense, cannot be wrong (whereas descriptions obviously can be).

Russell's conception of acquaintance in this epistemological context contrasts

with acquaintance in ordinary usage.8 In ordinary usage I might say that I know the apartment I live in, my cousin Fred, Lake Como, Beethoven's 5th Symphony,

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Quentin Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction*, etc. This is a matter of familiarity, and it commonly involves duration and some kind of recurrence or repetition. This is not to say that

such knowing is a mental state but rather that to say I know Lake Como will ordinarily

mean that I have visited, walked beside, or perhaps swum in the lake, experiences

that have some duration, and it is to put some emphasis on this: I will not say

I know Lake Como if I have glimpsed it for a few moments from an aeroplane.

Like Russell's version, it involves direct experience, but what is direct experience?

Unlike Russell's, it is *not* non-conceptual, *not* infallible, and does not appeal to a metaphysics of presence (me-here-now as the ultimate authentication of the real).

The direct experience referred to here is constructed out of, or made possible by, a

vast background of experience and knowledge of the world, in which language and

the different ways of knowing it makes available are implicated in complex ways.

There is no raw, pure, or totally unmediated experience.

An instructive contrast is provided by the comparison of *objects* with *things*. 2

Whereas objects are conceived in terms of an observational stance, things are under-

stood in terms of use and holistic experience. Talk of objects reinforces the hardened

S–O dichotomisation. Talk of things is characteristic of our ordinary involvement in

the world, and it tends to imply familiarity; at least, it opens this register of thought.

It is in terms of the latter that the idea of dwelling comes into play, a term that is

meaningless without a sense of duration and familiarity. Hence, it harmonises with

notions of habit, habitation, and habituation.

In the light of this, it can be seen that there is one aspect of education where

knowing by acquaintance, in the ordinary sense, is *essential*: aesthetic appreciation.

If you pass the literature exam, but you have read only the SparkNotes guide, not

the original texts that are on the syllabus, there is a real sense in which you have

not had a literary education at all. By contrast, if you are studying physics and read,

say, the SparkNotes *Introduction to Vectors*, you may not learn as much as from a

good teacher, but you may genuinely gain some knowledge. Aesthetic education,

thus, depends upon direct encounters with artworks. I shall not labour the point that

artworks take different forms: what needs to be emphasised is that artworks are

[particulars.9](#) Let me repeat, however, that direct experience of such works is nothing like direct experience in Russell's conception of knowledge by acquaintance.

But think also of the following:

- the chemistry teacher's relation to the chemistry laboratory and to the Table of

the Elements on the wall

- the history teacher's familiarity with a particular historical period

- the mathematician's sense of the 'feel' of different areas of mathematics

- the role of repetition and rhythm (particular rhythms, particular patterns), which

might extend from the sequencing of activities in a class or a school day or year,

through patterns in the substance of a subject itself, and to such matters as muscle

memory in sport or music

2 For related recent discussions of *things*, see Sharon Todd (2020) and Gordon Bearn (2020).

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- learning to speak—always a particular language, with its characteristic rhythms,

intonations, accent

- learning by heart.10

In all the above cases, appeal needs to be made to something beyond knowing-

that and knowing-how if justice is to be done to the experience. Moreover, in each of

these cases, there is the necessity of staying with something, of a certain instilling,

and this is at odds with the novelty that curiosity seeks.

If my claims for knowledge by acquaintance are still obscure, however, consider

the following example. Imagine that you are looking into a picture of flowering plants

in a gardening catalogue. Each picture shows the head of the flowers in bright sunlight,

their colours emphasised and the foliage in pristine form. A caption to the picture

gives the plants their horticultural name as well as some additional information, such

as: 'Grows well in full sun. Height 1–2 m. Flowers July–September.' The plant you

are looking at is a sunflower, variety 'Lemon Queen, impressive with stylish pale

blooms'. The photograph of the plant is eye-catching, and a range of information

useful to the gardener is provided. But consider this image once again, now juxtaposed

against another picture of sunflowers—not of a different variety of sunflowers but

a picture that is different in kind: one of the iterations of Van Gogh's *Sunflowers*.

While it was easy to *describe* the picture in the gardening catalogue (in terms of the

information it provided and the categories this readily fell into), with the Van Gogh

painting it is more difficult to know what to say. The artwork does not really provide

information at all. Rather, it encourages anyone looking at it to *slow down*... Maybe you begin to notice the hang of the petals, the dark yellows and ochres, the thick paint

and brush-strokes, and the flatness of the image. This list suggests something other

than a checklist of criteria, and it has little to do with the amassing of information. It

solicits from you a different response. You are becoming acquainted with the work,

absorbing something of its presence. As this is sometimes put, though in phrasing

that can easily grate, the sunflowers 'show themselves forth': you do not see them as a

certain species with distinct properties but simply as there-in-themselves. Moreover,

you looked at the entry for 'sunflowers, Lemon Queen' in the catalogue because let

us imagine, you were considering what to plant, and you might still have chosen

this variety in the absence of the detailed information or of the photograph. But the

experience of the painting is not dispensable in this way. Your interest in it will be

of a quite different order.

I expressed some unease above about the idea of disinterestedness, which is apt

to imply the detachment (in some sense) of the learner from the object of study

and is partly at odds with the idea of instilling. If we consider this in relation to

Plato, it looks decidedly out of place. How odd it would be to speak of those who

make their way out of the Cave as having a disinterested attitude towards the light.

It is crucial to the epistemology advanced in *The Republic* that knowledge, in its

higher reaches, requires not only a seeing of the truth but also an effective response

appropriate to the object of attention: it would be unthinkable, for example, for the

emancipated prisoners to be indifferent to the light. While, as was made clear above,

'disinterested' does not mean 'indifferent', the term's muffling of interest is at odds

with what Socrates describes as the process of coming to see the truth.

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A recent paper by Yoshiaki Nakazawa nicely demonstrates a further aspect of

what is at stake here. In 'Habituation and Familial Love in Plato's Theory of Moral

Education', Nakazawa moves from the familiar idea of habituation in Aristotle to

a consideration of this theme in Plato too. His discussion centres on the idea of

oikeion, which might be understood as kinship, familiarity, and a sense of things as

close to oneself; or, in the words of Gisela Striker that he quotes, of 'recognition and

appreciation of something as belonging to one' (Nakazawa, 2018). Aristotle stresses becoming habituated to virtuous actions, whereas Plato emphasises becoming habituated to things of value. It is of special importance on the latter view, therefore, to

grow up in circumstances where one becomes familiar with or used to good things.

As Nakazawa writes: 'It is not the task of moral education to train, directly, one's

capacity to understand the attractions of the virtuous life, but rather, first, to make

one capable of being attracted to the life of virtue' (*ibid.*). It is worth pondering here the importance that is attached, in *The Republic*, to an education in music: '[R]hythm

and harmony permeate the inner part of the soul more than anything else, affecting it

most strongly and bringing it grace, so that if someone is properly educated in music

and poetry, it makes him graceful, but if not, then the opposite.' The learner will

'receive them into his soul, and, being nurtured by them, become fine and good'.

He will become familiar with these things while he is young and before he is as

yet unable to grasp the reason why, but 'having been educated in this way, he will

welcome the reason when it comes and recognize it easily because of its kinship with

himself' (*ibid.*).

The phenomenology of knowing things helps to show, as we saw, that there is no

pure acquaintance with things. Acquaintance always occurs in a context, against a

background, and this is always linguistically conditioned. The experience of a thing is

interwoven with and partially constructed out of descriptions and images of that thing

(including fictional accounts). Our language (and other modes of expression) is not

just representational and calculative but productive (*poiesis*), enabling new things in

the world to be experienced. Heidegger says that it is not the human being that speaks,

using language as an instrument of communication. It is rather that language speaks.

But Heidegger's way of expressing this turns language into something impersonal or

neuter. It misses the way that when something is said, when a thought is expressed, it

is said *to someone*. That 'someone' is being addressed. This characteristic is funda-

mental in that it is out of this practice, out of being addressed, that we come into

language, into thought (in the way that we ordinarily conceive of thinking), and in a

sense into our lives as human beings. The practice has a specificity to it. Of course it

relates to conceptual structures, but these do not describe well the nature of the lives

of human beings as talkers: as people who address one another about things in the

world. In addressing one another about things in the world, people make statements,

ask questions, utter particular sentences, in patterns that become familiar. (Note the

temporality and finitude of what they thus say.) This is formalised in the discipline

of particular academic subjects, and it takes on a unique quality in forms of art. (The

work of art is particular, specific.) What the child thus grows up with will constitute

their habituation, and hence their *oikeion*— the things they are familiar with, which

they can then experience as their own and as part of themselves. It is in light of this,

furthermore, that we can interpret the 'voice of human conscience', which Cavell

attributes to Wittgenstein. That voice is *doing something* in response to the sceptic's problematics: it is engaged practically with the human propensity towards doubt.

Ways of Knowing and Educational Research

I have tried to show problems that relate to the current acceleration in learning and

research. The importance of *Close My Eyes* lies in its illustration of contrast in

orientations towards the world, which I have described as ways of knowing: one

extreme is presented as, on the whole, attractive, and the difficulties attached to it

are not initially apparent; the other is seen as obviously deviant and disturbing. I

do not say that this is a straightforward *contrast*—we are not dealing simply with

opposites here. A further virtue of the film is that it shows that these matters are not

exclusively epistemological but are dimensions of what it is to be a human being, in

the fullest and most rounded sense—hence, the importance of connections the film

makes to matters of psychological, moral, and political significance. Much of this is

beyond the scope of my discussion, but it does have some bearing on the political

issues relating to curiosity that are Papastephanou's concern.

I have provided an account of the importance of knowledge by acquaintance in

educational practice, especially in schooling. It seems to me beyond doubt that an

inadequate grasp of the realities of such practice can skew educational research in

ways that undermine its *raison d'être*. But my argument has a more direct bearing

on educational research as I shall briefly explain.

It is a regrettable fact that research method courses are generally governed by an

empiricist orientation. I say 'empiricist' not in order to criticise the vast range of

empirical work that takes place, much of which is of quality and value. My objection

is rather to a prevailing assumption that it is *only* by gathering empirical evidence

that research into education can take place, a belief I have argued to be obviously

false (Standish, 2016, 2019b). Research method courses often impart that assumption, whether deliberately or inadvertently; and this tendency itself, in putting the emphasis

on technical approaches and protocols, further hides from view the knowledge by

acquaintance I have been describing, as well as so much else (see Stone, 2006;

Hodgson & Standish, 2008). There are exceptions here, one of which is to be found in certain kinds of ethnography where, for example, the researcher stays patiently

with a class over a period of time and absorbs its feel and rhythms, and where the

aim is to provide a rich picture of a particular context through the patient gaining

of familiarity with it. The approach I am describing is, in fact, found much more in

contemporary anthropology, a subject that seems less anxious about its credentials

as science than educational research sometimes is. Clearly then, much could be

achieved if more time and resources were given to extending students awareness of

the importance of enquiry into education based on the humanities. Most readers of

this journal are unlikely to need persuasion in this respect, and so I would like to

conclude with a more specific suggestion. This will bring us back more clearly to

the particular argument I am pressing regarding knowledge by acquaintance.

Over the past two decades, I have been involved in two international colloquia for

doctoral students in which film has been a central feature of our research practice. Our

2-day meetings have been structured around the viewing of a film, typically chosen

in combination with readings and presentations that are thematically connected in

some way. The films are usually challenging and sometimes experimental in style,

and the readings are taken from classic texts. The films are generally not directly

about school or other educational institutions, but we have always found them to be

pertinent to education in broader terms and to advance our thinking about teaching

and learning, about human beings and human transformation, and about a variety

of more specific concerns. The viewing of the film leads to careful consideration of

language, expression, and forms of representation; but reflection and interpretation

can acquire a different rhythm where we, as it was, attend to Wittgenstein's repeated

advice: 'don't think, but look!' (Wittgenstein, 2009/1953, §66)—we try not to rush to interpretation. The experience of watching these films together, the ways of knowing

this enables, is at the heart of the kinds of conversations that ensue. The experience

stays with us (much as I have found that *Close My Eyes* has again and again come

back to me when I have thought about curiosity and what it is to know something)

and it finds its way into published work of a variety of kinds.11

Notes

1.

Gleaned from various items online at:
https://hbr.org/2018/09/curiosity.

Accessed 10 September 2020.

2.

Quoted at the start of Philip Ball's *How Science Became Interested in*

Everything (Ball, 2012, p. 1).

3.

Editorial by S.G. Damle, Editor in Chief, *Contemporary Clinical Dentistry*,

(Damle, 2014, pp. 147–148).

4.

Quoted by Elizabeth A. Hoffman in Exploring the Literate Blindspot:

Alexander Pope's Homer In Light of Milman Parry (Hoffman, 20, p. 394),

referenced in her text as ' *Twickenham* 5.49'.

5.

'Now, really, in how many of the most minute and trivial things my.

curiosity is still daily tempted, and who can keep the tally on how often I

succumb?' (Augustine, Confessions, Book 10, Chapter 35, para 57).

6.

In *Being and Time*, curiosity is connected especially with seeing. 'It seeks

novelty only in order to leap from it anew for another novelty... [C]uriosity

is characterized by a specific way of *not tarrying* alongside what is closest...

[I]t seeks restlessness and the excitement of continual novelty and changing

encounters. In not tarrying, curiosity is concerned with the constant possibility

of *distraction*. Curiosity has nothing to do with observing entities and marvel-

ling at them— *thaumazein*. To be amazed to the point of not understanding is

something in which it has no interest. Rather it concerns itself with a kind of

knowing, but just in order to have known' (Heidegger, p. 216). 'You must have

read..., you must have seen...'—this way of speaking, Heidegger suggests, is

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characteristic of the way of thinking he is criticising. Tarrying is not a matter

of this fleeting connection: it is staying with something and connects with

dwelling.

7.

The plot summary provided by the British Film Institute is available at:

http://www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/494649/synopsis.html. Accessed 20

September 2020.

8.

My argument here runs parallel to my discussion in 'Lines of Testimony'

(Standish, 2020). Attention to the topic of testimony in epistemology has been shaped by a technical usage of that term, somewhat at odds with everyday

usage of the expression. The technical usage has the effect of suppressing the

ordinary sense of the respective terms and hiding the significance of testimony

and acquaintance in human lives.

9.

There is only one *Mona Lisa*, and it is in the Louvre in Paris. Shakespeare's

Hamlet exists as a play in different iterations and different performances, night

by night. There is only one *Casablanca*, but it exists in multiple celluloid

and now digital copies. Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* exists in multiple French

editions, but it consists of a singular configuration of words. Andy Warhol

experiments with multiples, etc. The boundaries are not always clear, and

there are matters of degree: if you have read but not seen Shakespeare's rarely

performed *King John*, you are in a position to exercise aesthetic judgement;

if you have read but not seen Lin-Manuel Miranda's *Hamilton: An American*

Musical, rather more is missing. But in all these cases, appreciation involves

direct encounter with a particular.

10.

See, for example, 'Learning by Heart' (Blake et al., [1998).](#)

11.

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Education, Fast and Slow

Richard Smith

Abstract The demand for ever greater speed, characteristic of our time, has swept

over formal education in the UK and other Anglophone countries. I give examples

from schools and universities, and in particular the latter. There is a slow scholar-

ship movement in reaction to this, and a Slow Professor Manifesto, but there are

many flaws in these including the failure to conceive time as anything other than

linear. The contrast between *chronos* and *kairos*, linear time and time as an opportunity moment of epiphany or intensity, is sometimes invoked in this context, but

its application to institutionalised education is not straightforward, and it is notable

that *kairos* is vulnerable to being commodified. What I here call 'an epistemology of

slow', emphasising interpretive rather than scientific understanding, and defending

the importance of the arts as the epitome of slow knowledge, offers a potentially

significant challenge and alternative to the educational culture of speed.

Faster and Faster

The tendency of educational systems throughout the developed world today to

demand ever-increasing speed is all too familiar. 'New and improved' education must

constantly be, as Fendler notes (2008), 'faster, more powerful and longer lasting'.

Manic demands for quick solutions and immediate improvements in schooling are

fuelled by global assessment systems such as PISA (Programme for International

Student Assessment). Its 3-year assessment cycle is blamed for causing 'a shift of

attention to short-term fixes designed to help a country quickly climb the rank-

ings, despite research showing that enduring changes in education practice take

decades, not a few years, to come to fruition' (Andrews et al., 2014). Headteachers and classroom teachers too are expected to secure measurable improvements in

examination results on a time-scale that has led to comparisons being made with

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football managers, for whom a run of bad results generally means the sack, irre-

spective of their long-term record of success.1 This tendency involves ignoring the

'important role of non-educational factors, among which a nation's socio-economic

inequality is paramount. In many countries, including the US, inequality has dramat-

ically increased over the past 15 years, explaining the widening educational gap

between rich and poor which education reforms, no matter how sophisticated, are

unlikely to redress' (Andrews et al., *ibid.*). The first step towards a better under-

standing of nation states' relative educational performance is clear: 'slow down the

testing juggernaut' (*ibid.*). The emphasis on short-term fixes, by contrast, leads to

the desperate search for the philosopher's stone of 'accelerated learning', versions

of which generally rely on a few dubious or discredited shibboleths such as talk of

'brain learning', the step changes that we are regularly encouraged to expect from

neuroscience, Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, and the idea that we

each possess a 'personal learning style' (see Accelerated Learning Systems Limited,

2001 for an example that includes all of these).

Universities are naturally not immune from the demand for speed. For instance,

why should a university student not complete a bachelor's degree in 2 years rather than

3? Such accelerated programmes are usually designated 'fast-track', to trade on the

associations of elite athletes or first-class air travel; at the same time, advertisements

tend to foreground the advantages of paying only 2 years' worth of fees and entering

the job market sooner (BBC News [2018](#) Staffordshire University, n[.d.2).](#) It is notable that such advertisements often describe time as a 'luxury' which not all can afford,

implicitly casting the traditional 3-year degree as an effete indulgence. The complex

pleasures and challenges of undergraduate study are now to be subject, according

to the UK universities minister, Sam Gyimah, to new 'consumer-style ratings for

university courses to help drive value for money'. These have been widely derided

as 'moneysupermarket [ratings'.3](#) They will no doubt further fuel the panic over achieving what is now called 'student satisfaction', which will be measured by the

Government's new Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). The sense of urgency

this is creating is reflected in many universities by a policy that all emails from

students must be answered within 48 h. Their emails now come with '(Student)'

automatically added after the individual's name, in case we forget.

The pressure on time in academic research is only too well known. Better to

publish journal articles now rather a book later (and of course this 'salami slicing'

means more publications too; better to submit your article to a journal with a quick

turn-around to publication rather than one which would be the article's natural home

but takes longer over the process of refereeing. (This of course adds to the time

pressure on journal editors and reviewers too.) For those with the stomach to read

such things, an online document titled Russell Group Academic Progression sets

out the criteria for passing probation and securing promotion for academic staff at

the UK's 25 universities of the Russell Group (a self-defining group of the most

'research intensive' institutions). One university expects that as an academic you

will not only 'apply for appropriate research funding in support of your research'

but also 'demonstrate that you have the potential to win external research funding

competitively and through peer review on a sustained basis'—that is, the pressure

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will be unrelenting, from the moment you are appointed. Probationary periods vary

from 1 year to 5. It is hard to be sure whether the universities that set the bar at

1 year have humanely decided to end probationers' uncertainty as soon as possible,

possess exceptional confidence in their ability to spot potential, or require their new

appointees to progress at manic speed. In the US, the long (usually 6 or 7 years) period

between appointment and decision on tenure is known as the 'tenure clock', a phrase

that suggests sand running fast out of an hour glass or an imminent alarm bell. In

my own university, all academic staff are now required to apply for promotion every

year. There are (as yet) no sanctions for failing to succeed in this annual sweepstake,

but cynics see it as a device for making people feel they need to have more to show—

publications, grants and so on—every year, and must work ever faster in order to

chalk them up.4

As Fendler (2008) explains, university education has been taken over by the demands of what Deleuze calls a 'control society' where monitoring is conducted at

high frequency, comprising 'an unrelenting series of assessments' (Fendler's phrase,

p. 18) as if in response to urgent problems that could be solved in no other way. In a

'control society', the accountability measures are diverse and change constantly; 'a

wide array of different standards may be applied simultaneously to evaluate practices

and performances' (*ibid.*). Thus it is not enough now for an academic to research and

teach. A Research Excellence Framework (REF) in the UK adds the requirement that

university departments demonstrate the 'impact' of their work on the world beyond

the university, preferably in economic terms. A Teaching Excellence Framework

(TEF) puts a premium not on good teaching but on student satisfaction and graduate

salaries 6 months after graduation. (If your students embark on socially responsible

but poorly paid careers it is the fault of the lecturers, who cannot have taught them

properly.) A further expectation is that where appropriate academic staff will engage

in Knowledge Transfer, a term used to indicate a very broad range of activities,

paradigmatically but not exclusively spin-out businesses and the licensing of intel-

lectual property, in the pursuit of collaborations between universities, commerce and

the public sector. The term 'Knowledge Transfer' is relatively new and has not yet

been elevated to the status of a framework. Clearly, the expectation is more suitable

for academics in some disciplines rather than others, for whom it is an unattainable

target functioning as a mark of failure from the start.

Slowing Down

It is tempting but, I think, a mistake to respond to the academic culture of speed by

praising the virtues of slowness, widespread though such acclaim is in other contexts.

There is a slow food movement, which is generally credited with inspiring a wide

range of other slow movements, from slow cinema and slow fashion to slow money

(which directs new capital streams to small and organic food businesses and local

food systems) and slow sex (which focuses on orgasmic meditation). There is a fitful

slow school movement, whose principles, reminiscent of the values of a traditional

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liberal education, were sketched by Holt (2002). Mindfulness, currently enjoying its place in the sun, comes in many forms, but the central idea seems to be slowing

down in order to focus on your feelings. The UK's National Health Service website5

explains: 'It can be easy to rush through life without stopping to notice much. Paying

more attention to the present moment—to your own thoughts and feelings, and to

the world around you—can improve your mental wellbeing'.

It is even possible now to buy a slow watch.6 It has a 24-h face, an hour hand but no hands for seconds or minutes. You can now 'see your day at a glance, and feel how

time naturally flows'. The watch 'allows you to experience time in an entirely new

way… [it] reminds you to stop chasing the minutes and live for the moment'. The

internet advertisement includes a video enjoining us to 'stop counting the seconds

and make every second count'. After all, 'who cares whether it is 2.35 or 2.36?'

Resisting the temptation to reply 'Someone who is boiling an egg, or who has just

missed their train', we are reassured to see that the watches are made in Switzerland

and cost £250.

There is a slow scholarship movement, particularly associated with Berg and

Seeber's (2016) book, *The Slow Professor: Challenging the Culture of Speed in the Academy.* The authors write in a section of their Preface titled 'The Slow Professor

Manifesto' (p. ix): 'We believe that adopting the principles of Slow into our profes-

sional practice is an effective way to alleviate work stress, preserve humanistic

education, and resist the corporate university'. They offer many examples of the

ever-increasing demands made on those who work in the modern university, or the

'accelerated academy', as it is sometimes called. (I write 'those who work' although

the authors seem interested only in the academic staff, and mainly the senior ones at

that.) Their solutions amount to a call for active resistance, ensuring that you have

space for 'timeless time' in your working day: timelessness being understood, in a

quotation from Charalampos Mainemelis, as 'the experience of transcending time

and one's self by becoming immersed in a captivating present-moment activity or

event' (quoted on both see p. 26 and p. 27; the resemblance to 'mindfulness' is clear).

The authors claim, in the next sentence, that 'Research shows that periods of escape

from time are actually essential to deep thought, creativity, and problem solving'—

which presumably they see as the heart of the work of the university professor—but

the only research they cite is that of Mainemelis and of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi.

Berg and Seeber's recommendations include 'We need to get off line', 'We need to

do less', 'We need time to do nothing' (pp. 29–31). We need to incorporate calming,

transitional rituals at crucial points in our day, and make room for playfulness and

laughter.

The book has been both well received and criticised. Of course, it speaks to many

academics who feel over-worked and put-upon. Several reviewers and commentators,

however, complain that its authors write from a position of privilege as tenured

professors, that their junior colleagues, especially part-time and short-term contract

staff, are in no position to act on their recommendations, and that it would simply put

more pressure on them if professors slowed down. Berg and Seeber reply that it is

precisely on behalf of less privileged colleagues that they ask tenured professors to

take the lead in the struggle against ever more speed and efficiency. Yet complaints

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about the culture of speed in the university too often sound like special pleading

on the part of those whose working lives are more comfortable than those of other

professionals. In any case, why should the nurse or doctor, working under even

greater pressure and where the stakes are far higher, not demand a slower hospital

or general practitioner's surgery? Or, *mutatis mutandis*, the barrister, judge, social

worker, accountant, data analyst? The thought of health professionals, in particular,

insisting that 'We need to do less', 'We need time to do nothing' (above), or of the

defending barrister making space for 'timeless time' when she needs to be alert to

every nuance of the prosecution's case, should make us uncomfortable and wonder

what is so special about the university professor. These other professionals can also

make a case for opportunities for 'deep thought, creativity, and problem solving'.

Another and perhaps more searching criticism is that Berg and Seeber look for

individuals to take action when the problem is a systemic one and needs to be

approached on the institutional level, for example combining in trade unions (where

these still exist) or other professional bodies, or at least by the development of much

greater solidarity by all academics (and university managers and administrators too).

I would add two further criticisms. The first is that there are hints of instrumentalism

in the Manifesto. It is paradoxical to defend the Slow University on the grounds that

it is 'an effective way to alleviate work stress' (p. ix, quoted above), for example,

or secures other, more or less extraneous, outcomes, not least because these could

easily be co-opted by cynical management in the interests of bringing us 'back up

to speed', as the phrase revealingly puts it. Instrumentalism can also be detected in

the authors' 'careful choice … for our book not to grow into a 300-page tome our

colleagues would likely be too busy to read' (p. ix). There are only 90 pages of text,

leading several reviewers to comment on the paradox of promoting the idea of the

slow university in a quick read.

Time Before and Time After

The book's main failing, however, is that Berg and Seeber offer only a limited analysis

of the idea of time. For them, time seems to occupy a straight line with slow at one

end and fast at the other, each being only quantitatively different amounts of the same

thing. They seem unaware, for example, of a distinction commonly made between

time as *chronos* and as *kairos*. Both words come from classical Greek. *Chronos* points to the familiar sense of time as duration: before, now and in the future—a dull but

necessary matter of chronology, timetables, illnesses that are chronic and not merely

acute. *Kairos* is time as opportunity and critical moment, lucky chance and intensity,

even epiphany, rather than duration of mundane experience. It is the right moment,

as when a wine has matured to reach its best; the move from *chronos* to *kairos* marks a change in quality and not merely quantity (Smith, 1986). It is the word used for

'time' in the Greek texst of Ecclesiastes (3. 1) to indicate 'just the right time' in the

lines 'To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

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a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, a time to pluck up that which is

planted…'.

The contrast between *chronos* and *kairos* is explored by T.S. Eliot, although he does not use the words, in *The Four Quartets*, especially *Burnt Norton*. Eliot describes an epiphany in the rose garden of the ruined house that gives *Burnt Norton* its title.

Its garden is full of echoes:

Quick, said the bird, find them, find them,

Round the corner. Through the first gate,

Into our first world, shall we follow

The deception of the thrush? Into our first world.

There they were, dignified, invisible,

Moving without pressure, over the deadleaves,

In the autumn heat, through the vibrant air,

And the bird called, in response to

The unheard music hidden in the shrubbery,

And the unseen eyebeam crossed, for the roses

Had the look of flowers that are looked at.

A lotus rises out of a drained pool, 'dry concrete, brown edged'.

And they were behind us, reflected in the pool.

Then a cloud passed, and the pool was empty.

Go, said the bird, for the leaves were full of children,

Hidden excitedly, containing laughter.

Go, go, go, said the bird: human kind

Cannot bear very much reality.

'Reality' means intense experience, here the moment of epiphany in the rose

garden. This is *kairos,* from which we flee to what we normally take for reality,

which is described in the third section of *Burnt Norton*:

Here is a place of disaffection

Time before and time after

In a dim light ... Only a flicker

Over the strained time -ridden faces

Distracted from distraction by distraction

Filled with fancies and empty of meaning

Tumid apathy with no concentration

Men and bits of paper, whirled by the cold wind

That blows before and after time,

Wind in and out of unwholesome lungs

Time before and time after.

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This is the world of *chronos*: devoid of meaning and of 'concentration', that

is, intensity. The language recalls the experience of travelling on the London

Underground.

Although Berg and Seeber nod to the idea of time as moments of intensity

and opportunity ('the experience of transcending time and one's self by becoming

immersed in a captivating present-moment activity or event', in Mainemelis's words

that they quote, above), the dominant theme is rather that of doing what we do anyway

but resisting demands to do it faster. The result is that much of the book is banal: 'We

need to admit that speed can produce less than desirable results' (see p. 64). One of

the authors submitted a book manuscript before it was properly ready. 'Of course, it

was rejected. I took a break and the time necessary for my project, and then it got its

happy ending' (see pp. 64–65). ' *More is not necessarily better.* Jane Austen wrote

"only" six novels (and none very long by eighteenth-century standards), but they are

really good' (p. 66). We need to think about whether time pressure excuses texting

during department meetings, retirement events, and graduation ceremonies. 'When

a colleague turns to answer a text when talking to us, it is difficult to feel that we

matter' (see p. 75).

'Kairotic' moments at school and university are in fact not so rare. In my own

experience: a junior school teacher transfixed our class by reading to us, over many

weeks, the whole of Falkner's *Moonfleet*, a novel about smuggling set in the Dorset of

the teacher's own childhood. A secondary school physics teacher wore an academic

gown and demonstrated experiments with an austere and mesmerising intensity, as if

revealing religious truths. The philosopher A.J. Ayer conducted seminars at Oxford

with complete respect for his audience, whatever question was asked or comment

offered. A student recently emailed me to apologise for missing a seminar. He had,

he said, been in the library and lost track of time. I felt that this was something to be

celebrated, not apologised for, and replied to that effect.

While we might do well to relish such moments it is hard to see how *kairos* can

be the basis of any systematic alternative to education's culture of speed and frenzy.

Moments of opportunity by their nature cannot be planned for and institutionalised.

Kairos presupposes *chronos,* for it is the world of linear time that it offers an escape from. We should not miss the readiness with which it is recruited and commodified.

Institutional managers of change like to tell us that all change is an opportunity, that

is, it presents us with *kairos* (they tend not to use the word itself). The slow watch also reminds us that in the world of late capitalism even *kairos* can be commercialised.

This is remarkable since a watch is an integral part of the world of *chronos*, of 'Men

and bits of paper, whirled by the cold wind', of time before and time after. It tells

us that we are late for the meeting or have time to buy a newspaper before our train

leaves. It is, quite properly, a chronometer. But for £250, it seems, you can make

every second count as you rise above the mass of those condemned to spend their

time counting seconds. Not time before or time after, but time *now*, endlessly.

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Towards an Epistemology of Slow

There are some fields of learning and of knowledge in which slowness is unavoidable,

or even of the essence. Some of Wittgenstein's remarks alert us to this as well as to the

way that slowness is intimately bound up with the making of progress in philosophy.

In *Culture and Value* (1980, 80e), he writes that philosophers should greet each other

by saying 'Take your time!' and that 'In philosophy the winner of the race is the

one who can run most slowly. Or: the one who gets to the winning post last' (34e).

Wittgenstein notes that his own writing—his own 'sentences', as he puts it, which

here must mean his philosophical writing—is 'all to be read *slowly*' (57e, emphasis in

original). Referring to his writing as his 'sentences' itself suggests that what he writes

is to be absorbed slowly, line by line and sentence by sentence. His other remarks

on the importance of slowness include the warning that 'In philosophy we may not

terminate a disease of thought. It must run its natural course, and *slow* cure is all important' (*Zettel* § 382). The emphases are in the original: they too seem to demand

a slow reading. In *On Certainty* (1975, §141), Wittgenstein writes about learning

more widely that 'When we first begin to *believe* anything, what we believe is not a

single proposition, it is a whole system of propositions. (Light dawns gradually over

the whole.)', a remark that echoes his comments elsewhere on the need for patient

mapping of the ways we use language.

To be struck by these remarks does not amount to attributing to Wittgenstein theory

of learning, still less a theory of *all* learning. That would jar with the efforts he made throughout his work to insist that he was not offering philosophical doctrines of any

kind. For example, the second sentence of the Preface to the *Tractatus* (p. 3) reads

this 'is not a textbook' and in the first paragraph of the Preface to the *Philosophical*

Investigations (p. vii) Wittgenstein writes that the book consists of 'the precipitate

of philosophical investigations', as if it offered less the results of a coherent research

programme than jottings arising almost accidentally from an ongoing process.. In

the same paragraph, he notes that he has 'written down all these thoughts as *remarks*'

(emphasis in original): that term was used for the publication of various notes from

manuscript material that Wittgenstein left behind under the title of 'miscellaneous

remarks' (*Vermischte Bemerkungen*). It is unfortunate that a translation of these was

published under the title of *Culture and Value*, suggesting something coherent and

authoritative, when the phrase 'miscellaneous remarks' warns us neither to expect to

find a systematic theory here nor, by implication, to construct one on the basis of them.

But it is still possible to ask—to investigate—whether Wittgenstein's remarks about

particular kinds of learning, meaning and the mapping of language and language

games may bear on our understanding of what I am here calling the epistemology of

slowness. I shall approach this by considering possible connections between 'slow-

ness' and some of Wittgenstein's other central ideas, particularly the idea that art or

what he calls 'aesthetic questions' (*Culture and Value* 79e) might often serve as a

better paradigm of understanding than science does, and his well-known conception

of philosophy as a kind of therapy.

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The difference between the earlier and the later Wittgenstein has much in common

with the familiar philosophical distinction between *Erklären* (explanation) and

Verstehen (understanding). *Erklären* is at home in the natural sciences, as when we try to explain the evidence for the expansion of the universe or why the patient

is suffering from repeated headaches. *Verstehen* refers us to ordinary human under-

standing and the 'imponderable evidence' (*Philosophical Investigations* p. 228) that

we rely on everyday in our engagements with each other and the world: that is,

evidence that cannot be calculated precisely, weighed and measured, but which is

nonetheless good evidence. We see in someone's face that they happy or sad. We

see the state they are in, rather than deducing it from what we see. We read what is

happening on the street around us as threatening. The 'reading' is as much visceral as

cognitive. The researcher records what children say about their experiences of various

aspects of schooling and tries to sort out what they seem to feel they ought to say

from the hints of a different story altogether. Imponderable evidence, Wittgenstein

writes, includes.

subtleties of glance, of gesture, of tone … I may recognize a genuine loving look, distinguish

it from a pretended one (and here there can, of course, be a 'ponderable' confirmation of my

judgment). But I may be quite incapable of describing the difference. (*ibid.*)

There is no certainty to be achieved here of the sort way that the doctor hopes

to arrive at *the* explanation of the patient's headaches. There is only interpretation: better (searching, measured, patient, apt, sensitive, astute…) or worse (hasty, one-dimensional, obtuse, over-confident, inappropriate, tin-eared…). Better interpreta-

tions characterise things or persons or states of affairs in ways that do justice to them;

flawed interpretations somehow pass by what they hope to characterise, do not seem

to fit. We may well not be 'capable of describing the difference', in Wittgenstein's

words above, in a way that satisfies those in the grip of the picture of science, for

there are no general rules for getting things right, no rigorous decision procedures to

be learned and applied.

If science still captivates us as the best example of *Erklären* or explanation, liter-

ature and the arts are paradigmatic of *Verstehen* or interpretation and in particular of its necessary slowness. In reading a poem or responding to a painting or sculpture,

we need to be searching, measured, patient, sensitive, astute (etc., above), just as

we need to bring those qualities to listening to the child speaking of school. In our

best efforts at interpretation, moreover, we know that we have to interpret our own

interpreting: to be alert to the possibility that we bring to this particular poem our

impatience with poetry that has no obvious poetic form (rhythm, rhyme, structure and

so on) or to a classical Greek statue our discomfort with the patriarchal, slave-owning

society in which it was made. This is a disconcerting dimension of slowness, since it

may send us back to the poem or the statue to look and read once more, as if starting

again from the beginning. Yet another dimension comes from our awareness that the

interpretation of art is always provisional: even as we arrive at an interpretation of a

poem, a statue or a piece of music that we believe is justified we are conscious that

we may want to revise our interpretation at some point in the future; we know too that

someone else may offer an interpretation that strikes us as an improvement on our

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own. This is why silence is often the first and most appropriate response to art. We

turn a corner in the gallery and encounter an abstract expressionist painting (by, say,

Barnett Newman). There is no landscape depicted, no human being or other animal,

no obvious theme—beauty, love, religion, death—to set the beginning of a narrative

running in our minds. (Later we may wonder whether this was the painter's inten-

tion.) Silent contemplation is all we can achieve at first and perhaps for some time.

Museums and galleries, as if anxious about our inability to bear this kind of reality

(cp *Burnt Norton* above), offer us the wordy Guide to carry with us, the unilinear

narrative playing on our headphones, and, increasingly, extensive chunks of text on

the walls around the painting to explain what we are (or were, or might come to be)

seeing. These well-meaning attempts to help us make sense of what we are seeing

thwart the silent and lengthy contemplation during which aspects of the painting or

sculpture reveal themselves to us.

These reflections on the place of slowness in certain kinds of learning help to

explain why Wittgenstein thought of philosophy as a kind of therapy (*Philosophical*

Investigations §133 and elsewhere). A particular 'disease of thought' in need of

therapy in Wittgenstein's time and ours is our expectation that there somewhere there

are immediate answers available, fast and easy routes to comfort or satisfaction. Ours

is an impatient age, where six sessions of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) are

the standard treatment for all kinds of 'mental illness' and distress. By contrast,

the therapist following older traditions of psychotherapy and psychoanalysis works

slowly. The patient must not be offered solutions, but helped to learn how to go

about finding solutions, just as one learns philosophy not by being told the answers

to the traditional problems of philosophy (is Descartes's reasoning to his conclusion

cogito ergo sum sound? Is knowledge justified, true belief?) but by learning the

philosophical way of approaching them. This is why Wittgenstein writes that 'In

philosophy we may not *terminate* a disease of thought … *slow* cure is all important'

(*Zettel* 382, original emphasis, quoted above). Hence too, according to Rush Rhees's

famous reminiscence, philosophy for Wittgenstein meant going 'the bloody hard

way … If you see the kind of difficulty that is raised in philosophy, you will see why

there cannot be a simplified way of meeting it … And this means: take the difficulties

seriously' (Rhees, 1969, p. 169). This, it hardly needs to be added, is necessarily a slow process.

Coda

It is tempting to wonder whether recent interest in slow learning is the latest variation

on, or substitution for, something much older: the idea that education worth the name

involves the search for meaning. It is not 'an enterprise designed to yield a profit,

[nor] a contest where a winner gets a prize' (Oakeshott, 1991, see p. 490). At its heart is a kind of conversation (*ibid.*), not the scramble for examination results,

especially when these are seen chiefly as the means by which individual schools and

universities, and national school and university systems, rise and fall in the rankings.

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It seems as though, when the vision of education as an intrinsic good succumbed to

the neoliberalism that cast it as a marketable commodity, and when the language of

the older vision came to seem to many people somehow old-fashioned and effete,

and not up to the job of responding to its critics, the truths of that older vision

could only be expressed in ways that chime with the spirit of an age that looks into

therapeutically inspired solutions for the sickness of the culture of manic speed.

It is unclear to me whether those new ways offer us a road back to something like

that older vision, or make that vision harder to recover. The same question must of

course be asked of this paper.

Notes

1.

[150 Heads and deputies sacked last year. *The Guardian* 6 March 2009 https://](https://)

[www.theguardian.com/education/2009/mar/06/headteachers-sacked; Teachers](https://www.theguardian.com/education/2009/mar/06/headteachers-sacked)

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https://www.standard.co.uk/news/education/teachers-fear-the-sack-as-

their-jobs-depend-on-good-gcse-results-8069309.html.

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Nov.

2018.

2.

'We don't all have the luxury of time. With an accelerated degree you'll benefit

from the full university experience and new £40 million city campus. But, unlike

a traditional three-year degree, you'll graduate in just two years. So you can go

on to your graduate job or further study, faster and cheaper'. http://www.staffs.

ac.uk/accelerated-degrees/. Accessed 27 Nov. 2018.

3.

Times Higher 12 March 2018.

4.

To be fair, one of the declared purposes of this policy was the belief that

there were many academics deserving of promotion—particularly women—

who simply did not have the confidence to put themselves forward. The evidence

so far is that the policy has been significantly successful in this respect.

5.

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6.

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Possibilities (Bloomsbury, 2020).

Mastery in the Study of Education

Requires Restraint. An Epilogue

Paul Smeyers and Marc Depaepe

Abstract In the Epilogue the editors offer some final reflections after a journey

of two decades that took them and the colleagues participating in the *Research*

Community from 1999 to 2018 floating on the current of the *Zeitgeist* that carried the Discipline of Education. They draw attention to the intrinsic value of practicing

philosophy and history of education. This applies similarly, so they claim, to the

activities of the *Research Community.* Conversation and discussion for their own sake

were always at center stage. They hope that the insights that are offered from histories

and philosophies of education appeal to colleagues as well as to practitioners. The

Research Community has strived to create a space for conversation and discussion.

Whether this was successful or not, so they conclude, history will tell.

On Facts, Themes, and The Overall Approach

In 1999, the *Research Community "Philosophy and History of the Discipline of*

Education: Evaluationand Evolution of the Criteria for Educational Research" was

established by the Research Foundation Flanders, Belgium (Fonds voor Wetenschap-

pelijk Onderzoek (FWO)—Vlaanderen).1 *The Research Community* has convened annually, mostly in Leuven (Belgium).2 As the 2018 conference was the final meeting of this academic group, amongst other reasons because a number of colleagues who

have been active from the beginning became emeritus/emerita or will soon retire,

we want to offer some final thoughts on this most interesting and stimulating long

journey.

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The academics involved in this network3 share the belief that there is a place within the discipline of education for so-called foundationalist approaches, not, however, to

answer a need for a (new) foundation, but to systematically study a particular area

from a discipline-oriented stance. Giving language and structure to facts, visions, and

events from the past, seeing relationships, making connections, asking questions—

in short, constructing an acceptable story from what happened, about how it could

have been and how, presumably and roughly, it must have been—is the historian's

task. Though, as many have argued, because of our historical "thrownness" into the

world, we are only capable of producing "small" and thus very fragmentary stories.

In some sense, philosophy of education is not dissimilar. Philosophical argument

may show that some questions do not make sense. The philosopher can defy and

provoke by offering another reading, another interpretation. However, she cannot

impose a compelling argument for either educational practice or theory without at

the same time embracing a particular stance. The scholars involved in this network

fully accept that insights from neither philosophy or history of education nor, more

generally, from educational theory can simply be applied in educational contexts.

Thus they present themselves as true participants within education research and

practice.

Over two decades the *Research Community* discussed various aspects of educa-

tional [research.4](#) Although there is a considerable number of publications from this collective, the reader has to bear in mind that it spans a period of 20 years. More than

180 chapters published in 12 books have grown out of the conve[rsations.5](#)

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Even if the titles of these books to some extent speak for themselves there are

generally speaking two main areas into which these papers can be grouped. The

first are papers addressing "internal" educational research topics such as generalis-

ability, homogenization, normalization, prediction, (in-) determinism, what educa-

tional research can (not) do, whether it is a Kuhnian science, the kind of argumenta-

tion, evidence, proofs, reasoning it works with, whether it is to be characterized as a

representation or as a presentation, as an inference to the best explanation, whether it

deals with "the single case", can be seen as educational historiography, transgresses

(logical) empiricism, what its relation to the *Geisteswisschaftliche Pädagogik* is,

what validity and reliability can mean here, how it can be assessed, what the role of

interpretation is, and whether it is a kind of rhetoric. This broad category includes

in addition work on methods of training in educational research, the relevance of

methodology, the problematization of methodology, how educational research is

commodified, how it functions, is communicated and disseminated, what its recep-

tion is, how it is visually represented, how in the space of the text, what genres of

writing it uses, whether there are "good practices", how far it should avoid being

"fast" and aspire to produce "slow" research. Still more general are such matters as

attention to the workings of practical judgment, how it relates to uncertainty, how

far it is or is not a collaborative, and how far an international undertaking, how such

networks function, what the role of conversation is, as a means or even as its proper

goal, of journals, of virtual space, institutional spaces and material culture, whether

it is subject to the lure of statistics, the attractions of psychology or neuroscience,

the "publish or perish culture" and productivity, formalism in academic writing, and

the lust for academic fame.

The second are papers addressing more "external" relations of educational

research such as its relevance, the ethics of educational research, its relation to perfor-

mativity, to the knowledge economy, to identity politics, to learning and capability, to

the school, to public space, to the discourse of change and whether it can change the

discourse, to more general processes of educationalization and pedagogization, to

educational theory and other disciplines, to educational practice, and to philosophy

and history of education.

Knowledge for a Particular Purpose?

From a group of researchers active for such a long period it may be required to offer

at the end of its journey some justification toward society. After all they could only do

what they did through the support—directly or indirectly—of the taxpayer. Giving

the growing *Educationalization*—a phenomenon the 2007 meeting of this group

already focused on— such evaluation easily slips into the question what if anything

at all one really has "learned" from this longstanding international collaboration.

For us, it remains highly problematic whether lessons for future educational practice

and policy can be drawn from philosophy and even more from history. Deliberate

attempts to that effect lead easily to framing, not to say to the manipulation of data. An

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example from the history of science is the case of the Marxist-Leninist educational

theory developed once in the German Democratic Republic (see Cloer, 1998), which illustrates plainly the kind of danger that lurks when an excessive instrumental use

is made of philosophy and history of education.

It goes without saying that it would be lamentable when philosophical and histor-

ical research are not supported (particularly financially) by the Government, but there

is more to it when that Government would want to have a say in terms of content. Such

is the case in dictatorial regimes of whatever nature where the monopolization of

knowledge can manifestly be shown. Obviously, there is always the threat of abusing

scientific knowledge, no less in times of *fake news*, and indeed, this may even concern

philosophy and history (and philosophy and history of education). Notwithstanding

the wisdom carried in "he who pays the piper calls the tune", it should never be the

starting point for a scholar; contrarily, educational research results should always

be "used" cautiously and require an open-mindedness and critical comments. An

illustration of how it can go wrong is the general practice that research commis-

sioned by the Ministry of Education cannot be published without the approval of

that authority, meaning that when the results are not along the lines of what was

expected it probably will not be authorized. And although studies in philosophy or

history of education are rarely eligible for such financial support (understandably as

policymakers are interested in interventions and thus in means-end relations), this

does not stop certain politicians and practitioners at various levels who do not have

intimate knowledge of these sub-disciplines, to make use of the research results as

they please. Even in a "free" and "critical" environment, philosophy as well as history

(including philosophy and history of education) are more than once seen as a grab

bag on offer for a variety of arguments one could freely draw on to "prove" that one

is right. (Depaepe, 2004).

Some see in the "historical" Corona-times that we now experience, the end of

the traditional Western school model, comparable to what Illich (1971) announced decades ago as a "de-schooling" society, a world in which distance and online learning

are central, with numerous opportunities for students living in remote areas, part-time

students, and students with certain disabilities; where digital learning functions as a

lubricant for the realization of the creative collaborative learning that contemporary

society yearns for. Others, on the other hand, expressed objections, possibly based

on historical and ideological elements as well, or at least, in order to make historical-

philosophical corrections. Will this supposedly "disruptive innovation" be able to

transcend the neoliberal and corporate interest of the most powerful interest groups

in society? And does it result in more than a few peripheral phenomena in the margins

of the on-going modernization that seems to draw more than ever on the discourse

of progress (see Honorato & Bortoleto Nery, 2020; Bostad et al., 2021)6?

Members of our research community have also made various comments on this

point. Hutt (2021), for example, wonders in particular whether the legacy of Corona could, ironically, trigger the ebbing of human capital considerations and set the

stage for the re-emergence of "old" values (such as the right of the state to restrict

personal liberty), while Nick Burbulus relates the educational Corona-discussion

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to the process of "educationalization", in line with the definition we have devel-

oped for that concept within the *Research Community* (Burbulus, 2021; Depaepe & Smeyers, 2008)—which, incidentally, made us

conclude earlier (Depaepe, [2020]),

that all renewal announced with great fuss, also in Corona time, collides with struc-

tural resistance, which touches, among others, the a priori *'s* against which Illich

fought from the outset, such as "children need school" (…) "and that most learning

is the result of teaching". And even though, from a social point of view, the pursuit

of a more humane society remains vital, schooling may not need to be overhauled

immediately. Even in its historical form, it has been of crucial importance for the

informal and social development of people. Despite its pronounced disciplinary char-

acter and the many alienating "objectives" of various normative educational systems,

people were able to rise above this thanks to education. Autonomy and emancipation

as an unintended side effect of schooling? Here too, the history of education seems

to contain more continuity than discontinuity.

Is this a lesson to be drawn from history? It might be, but what we have "learned"

in our "educationalized" society is, in any case, to be reluctant to any educational

utilitarianism grounded in history. We have always shown restraint for whatever

kind of means-end reasoning. If there is something that can be learnt from so-called

"foundations", it is more likely to be found on a different level, more abstract than

what is desired by educational practitioners and policymakers. Instead of filling in

their expectations, we have always strived to see through what lies behind, thus to

demythologize their assumptions (Depaepe, 1997). For example by outlining that as well in democracies as in dictatorships child-rearing and education neither at the

individual nor societal level result in what according to existing normative systems is

prescribed and/or predicted—possibly some "good news" and a lesson after all. It is

beyond the scope of these afterthoughts to develop this further, yet we wanted to draw

attention to what characterizes in our experience practicing philosophy and history

of education, i.e., the intrinsic value, a concept hopefully not too worn out nor vague

to identify research that is felt as for "its own sake". This applies similarly to the

activities of the *Research Community* (see Smeyers & Depaepe, 2015); nothing more nor less than conversation and discussion for

their own sake were always at center

stage. Arguments were developed and stances scrutinized with an eye for what was

previously debated realizing that one could be assured that what was yet to follow

would not be oblivious of it.

Intellectually Exciting Exchanges With Colleagues

and Friendship En Route

It goes without saying that what was characterized as "intrinsic" was facilitated

by external elements. Further, the annual meetings nurtured the ties of friendship.

Seeing each other again in a not unpleasant context (spatial, in terms of facilities,

the level of presentations and discussions, and the social aspect during breaks and

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in the evening) was not only a much welcomed interruption of the daily academic

work but a real joy. Notwithstanding the three delightful conferences which took not

place in Leuven, the rooms of the KU Leuven Faculty of Psychology and Educa-

tional Sciences and what the town itself has to offer—incidentally the place where we

studied and built our career—felt for many colleagues as the home of the *Research*

Community, a recurring event in the Autumn of each year. An academic atmosphere

complemented, supported, and facilitated by pubs such as the *Erasmus* and restau-

rants as *Rafaël,* which both closed their doors a few years ago. There is no need to

stress the importance of figures such as Erasmus (professor at the Leuven Univer-

sity till his death in 1537 who breathed life into the *Collegium Trilingue* founded

in 1517), nor of the occasionally poetic language in which Justus Lipsius described

in 1605 this university town as the place where the "Homeric lotus flower blooms",

"whoever tastes of it can hardly be dragged away" (Lipsius, 2000, 225).

The characterization of the atmosphere above applies as well for the three meetings

elsewhere which took also place in an historical setting: Nürnberg, the cradle of "toys"

but regretfully also guilt-ridden with the National Socialist past of Germany; Hotel

Métrople at the Brouckèreplein in Brussels, where amongst other meetings the very

first Solvay Conference took place in 1911, focusing on chemistry and physics in

the presence of the world's most famous scientists including Albert Einstein and

Marie Curie; and last but not least, Brixen or Bressanone in South Tirol in the Hotel

Elephant of all places. In the history of that town an important symbolic role is given

to the elephant Soliman, staying there for two weeks in 1552 on its way from India

to Vienna, accommodated in the stable of the inn of the historic hotel. Since the

Early Modern Times this large animal was seen as a living and spectacular treasure,

a favored instrument to influence the politics of the European rulers. The elephant

figures in one of the contributions in this collection, but in this case also it is only

symbolic.

It may be clear by now: we enjoyed ourselves. Conversation, discussion, and being

together in an open atmosphere averse to showing off, where it is possible instead to

listen to and participate in the intellectual struggle of one's fellow travelers toward

greater clarity, moreover in appreciation of the numerous particularities that have to

be given a place. A serious game, so one could say, not toward "output" or what

can be "delivered" at the end (often required by research funding agencies) but for

its own enjoyment; insensitive to the pressure of acceleration (one of the issues this

collection focuses on), witness the time it took to produce this book, a happy ironic

pitfall after all that shows the desire to distance ourselves from the "modern science

industry", which continues despite postmodernity along the lines of the principle of

meritocracy (Sandel, 2020). That to measure, to evaluate, and to rank (preferably in percentiles) plays there the first violin is well known. Yet, one should realize that

this too is a game, one in which the need for justification is hardly felt. That some

companies pay for counting all kinds of things concerning universities, journals, and

individual scholars in order to rank these is hardly criticized by the Government. It

gives them something to hold on (be it illusory) to evaluate as well the merits of

science as of individual scholars.

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A Humbling Experience: Over to History for the Final Word

It has to be acknowledged: the Government paid our salaries and supported for many

years through its agency (FWO) what the *Research Community* could do. We should

therefore not be ungrateful. Putting the "results" of our scholarly discussions into a

wider picture does not mean we think these are not important; on the contrary, we

highly value critical thinking and consider our deliberations as an example thereof.

This brings us again to "learning", not the kind that prepares for a degree neither

as required for a profession or certain positions in society. Instead it leads us to the

older tradition of *Bildung,* which amongst other things comes down to the creation of

sufficient distance in order to avoid a (deliberate) manipulation of the mind, in other

words to be able to escape from this. It seems to us that here history and philosophy

of education can play a central role. It would be a mistake, however, to conceive this

role as the furtherance worse as the imposition of the way *we* see things. We can

only hope that the insights we offer appeal to colleagues as well as to practitioners.

The direction of a critical evaluation of what we argued for lies not in our hands.

Moreover, the humanizing and/or emancipatory effects can never be controlled.

Whether the world will be better of thanks to our insights (a somewhat Romantic

aspiration) is very uncertain, to say the least. Notwithstanding what Aristotle, Kant,

or Rousseau claimed in an encouraging spirit concerning the role of thinking, it is

not impossible that this perspective is different, even darkened for young people

nowadays when they imagine the future. We hold that one should not give up:

future generations (students, scholars, those who want to embrace "critical think-

ing") should not be shielded from different points of view. The willingness to listen

to the other remains at the basis of the desire to learn and often fosters tolerance. In

the societal context nowadays it seems of the utmost importance to learn to live with

different "ways of seeing": *la culture au pluriel*, as Certeau (1993) calls this. We invite the reader to learn from histories and philosophies of education—the plural

is deliberately here. That is the reason as well that we always were in favor of a

collaboration between universities and between disciplines. Neither to force them

into collaboration, nor to merge into something else, but to show their own identity

in a dialogue, and thus to gain strength.

The *Research Community* has strived to create room for this, some would say

clearly utopian. Not necessarily we would argue. Certainly not the "utopia" of a

blind battle against windmills (i.e., the trendy evidence-based paradigm and what

this implies), instead a realistic space to develop some human wisdom that allows to

surpass to be swayed by the issues of the day. Whether this was successful or not, is

not for us to decide, history will tell. And possibly, other groups of researchers will

take up our and new challenges. It should not end here.

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November 10 2016, Hotel Metropole, Brussels.

From the left to the right, front row: Lynn Fendler, David Bridges, Marc Depaepe,

Jean Paul Van Bendegem, Lynda Stone, Paul Smeyers and Karen François;

second row: Karin Karlics, Ethan Hutt, Richard Smith, Nick Burbules, Jeroen Dekker,

Karin Priem, Frederik Herman, Jeff Bale, Frank Simon, Bob Davis, David Labaree,

and Edwin Keiner.

Notes

1.

The Research Community received funding from FWO-Vlaanderen for three

consecutive periods of 5 years. For the final 5-year period it was supported by

a generous grant from the *Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain*,

support from the Stichting [Foundation] *Paedagogica Historica,* and the *Inter-*

national Network of Philosophers of Education. A basic principle developed for

the annual 3-day seminar was that colleagues themselves paid only for travel;

accommodation and meals were offered by the hosts.

2.

Three meetings took place elsewhere: in Erlangen-Nürnberg (Germany), Brus-

sels (Belgium), and Bressanone (Italy). In these cases, the gathering was

generously supported by local grants.

3.

The number of participants was rather small, between 20 and 30. The large

majority of those who attended the first meeting were still there at the final

meeting.

4.

The subtitles of the focus for the different periods were: 1999–2003 Evaluation

and evolution of the criteria for educational research; 2004–2008 Evaluation

and evolution of the criteria for educational research (continued); 2009–2013

Faces and spaces of educational research; and 2014–2018 Purposes, projects

and practices of educational research.

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5.

Smeyers, P., & Depaepe, M. (Eds.). (2003). *Beyond empiricism: On criteria for*

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statistics: Dordrecht: Springer.

Smeyers, P., & Depaepe, M. (Eds.). (2006). *Educational research: Why 'What Works'*

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alization *of social problems.* Dordrecht: Springer.

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and effects of institutional spaces. Dordrecht: Springer.

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and the representation of educational research: Cham, Switzerland: Springer.

Smeyers, P., & Depaepe, M. (Eds.). (2016). *Educational research: Discourses of*

change and changes of discourse. Cham, Switzerland: Springer.

Smeyers, P., & Depaepe, M. (Eds.). (2018). *Educational research: Ethics, social*

justice, and funding dynamics. Cham, Switzerland: Springer.

There were also several special issues (or suites of papers) where the material

produced by members of the *Research Community* was published for instance in

Journal of Philosophy of Education, Educational Philosophy and Theory, Ethics

and Education, Educational Theory, Zeitschrift für Pädagogik, and *Paedagogica*

Historica.

Further, we would also like to draw attention to two major works that found their

origin in the discussions of this group of scholars and that contain contributions by

a large number of colleagues from this group:

Smeyers, P., Bridges, D., Burbules, N., & Griffiths, M. (Eds.). (2015). *Interna-*

tional handbook of interpretation in educational research (Part One and Part Two).

Dordrecht: Springer.

Smeyers, P. (Ed.). (2018). *International handbook of philosophy of education* (2

vol.). Dordrecht: Springer.

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6.

Paedagogica Historica is also preparing in the coming years a special issue in

this respect: *Histories of the Present and Histories of the Past: Pandemics and*

Historians of Education with Ian Grosvenor and Karin Priem as guest editors.

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Debatte – Discusssion. Coronation or Educona? Pardon me?!? Coroziehung oder Erzierona?

Wie bitte?!? With contributions by / mit Beiträgen von: Inga Bostad, Nicholas C. Burbulus,

Judith Harford, Ethan Hutt, Malin Ideland, Helen Proctor, Norbert Ricken, Maarten Simons.

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Rocha, Romano, Rousmaniere, Southwell, Souza, Taborda, Veiga, Vidal) and European (Depaepe,

Escolano, Magalhães, Nóvoa) researchers. *Acta Scientiarum Education*, *42*, 21.

Hutt, E. (2021). The sickness in our schools: corona and the logic of human capital. *Bildungsgeschichte International Journal for the Historiography of Education, 11*, 61–64.

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Paul Smeyers is since 2018 Emeritus Professor of Philosophy of Education, KU Leuven Belgium.

He is the Editor of the international journal Ethics and Education. He co-authored and co-edited a number of books in the area of philosophy of education and interpretative research. His journal articles deal with issues of philosophy of educational research, epistemology, postmodernism, and pays attention amongst others to the legacy of Wittgenstein and Winch for philosophy of education and educational research.

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Marc Depaepe (1953) was deputy chancellor at the KU Leuven (2013-2017). Since 2005 co-

editor-in-chief of Paedagogica Historica. Former president of the International Standing Conference for the History of Education (1991-1994) and member of the International Academy of

Education (2012-). In 2015 he was awarded an honorary doctorate at the University of Latvia.

Since 2018 Emeritus Professor ("with duties") of the KU Leuven and since 2019 Leading

Researcher at the University of Latvia, in Riga. Published abundantly on various aspects of international educational historiography and the history of education in Belgium and Congo.

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