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Media and pedagogical exchange: taking ADHD to Radio 2GB

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Abstract

Many researchers devoted to changing education policy give up on sharing their research findings through news media. To feel that one's work has been oversimplified or misrepresented wears down even the most dedicated public scholar, leaving them to wonder if contributing to debate is worth the frustration and disappointment that results. However, if academics are to improve education policy for all, they must continue to connect with the experiences of all.

This paper presents a reworking of Lusted's (1986) model of pedagogical exchange to appreciate the media's constitutive role in the education policy. In this reworking, the paper replaces teacher with the media and learner with the audience, thus creating a pedagogical triangle between the media, the audience and knowledge. The contention is that by using such a framework, scholars can think about how to conceptualise their research to shape meaning making along each exchange in the pedagogical triangle by locating themselves within it, rather than just supplying knowledge for media to report or discuss.

The author uses Lusted's definition of pedagogy to conceptualise an attempt to present a critique of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) through two interviews on talkback radio station 2GB. Further, the paper draws on Fairclough's (1995) model of discourse analysis to examine these interview texts as products of social identities, social relations and systems of knowledge. In doing so, the paper provides an example of an academic attempting to engage with education policy through the media.

The author of this paper previously worked for several years as a media adviser in state politics and is currently senior policy adviser in the Australian Senate. Consequently, the conference presentation that is based on this paper will use these unique experiences to reflect further on the relationships between education policy, politics and the media.

Keywords: education policy, media, pedagogy, Attention Deficit Disorder

Introduction

There has been a reformation in the relationship between the media and education policy over the last two decades. Writing with colleagues (Hattam, Prosser, & Brady, 2009), we have described how our research into the possibility for redesigning pedagogies in Australian urban fringe 'rustbelt schools' (Thomson, 2002) led us to a growing appreciation of the role of the media in shaping education policy development. Invoking both the terms 'interpermeation' (Lingard & Rawolle, 2005) and 'backlash pedagogy' (Gutierrez, Asato, Santos, & Gotanda, 2002), we considered how the mediatisation of education policy reinforced deficit views of marginalised young people, families and communities (Boler & Stack, 2007). We also considered how the mediatisation of education policy, and in particular its use by the Australian Federal Government (1996-2007), worked to create a perceived crisis in schooling that undermined the potential for the middle schooling pedagogical innovation that was the focus of our research. However, as this media and education policy situation has evolved and changed, largely through the previous Howard Government's 'inquisition' (Hattam, Prosser, & Brady,

2009) and more recently the Rudd Government's 'Education Revolution', we argued that it is timely for academics to look at new collaborations. In response to this reforming relationship between media and education policy, this paper argues for renewed efforts to reaffirm teachers as public intellectuals, support pedagogical innovation and encourage policy reform.

Yet, there is a risk that popular generalisations might hinder the creation of conditions to support research and pedagogical innovation. Broad categories such as 'the media', 'policy makers', 'politicians' and 'academics', or 'Left' and 'Right', are often used in polarity and obscure substantive differences within each category. Further, if we are to consider how the media has had an increasingly constitutive role in the education policy process, we need to have a sophisticated understanding of how this might work pedagogically, with adversarial polarity unlikely to be helpful to our efforts. One example of how polarised responses can inhibit engagement can be found in Lusted's (1986) critique that the work of critical scholars has been limited by their failing to connect with popular movements. However, it need not be this way and in Lusted's model of pedagogy we see an interactive (rather than transmissive) representation of knowledge production. While for many, pedagogy is defined simply as a 'way of teaching', when Lusted's relational pedagogy model is applied to knowledge creation with the media, there emerges a way out of generalisations that force an epistemological gridlock between scholars and the journalists.

This paper attempts to model how academic research may be used to influence education policy debate through mainstream media. To do this, it considers the links between one field of research (students diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)), media representation and education policy. This is followed by a brief case study of two interviews on a Sydney talkback radio station. The paper concludes with a discussion of what insights an interactive pedagogical model might offer for such efforts to connect research with popular audiences. However, before commencing this, it is important to foreground the paper with a brief consideration of the debate around the mediatisation of education policy and popular pedagogy.

Why pedagogy?

The mediatisation of education policy has yet to be defined thoroughly, but recent scholarship has begun to discern a number of patterns (Hattam, Prosser, & Brady, 2009). Broadly speaking, the policy makers who current Prime Minister Rudd has labelled 'neoliberal' have been described by critics as responsible for the increase in policy work being articulated through the media (Blackmore & Thomson, 2004; Thomson, 2004). Specifically, these critics have argued that policy processes are being shaped by '[p]oliticians' preference for sound bites above sustained policy debate' and 'the determination [of governments] to set the news agenda and to use media to inform, shape, and manage public discourse about policy' (Franklin, 2004, p.256). Other critics argue that this highlights the 'processes of governance which attempt to manage, contain or render invisible potential controversies that relate to policy development and implementation by impression management, or 'spin'' (Gewirtz, Dickson, & Power, 2004).

Meanwhile, ‘much of the news now deals with events which interest the public, rather than with issues which are in the public interest’ (Thomson, 2004). Lingard and Rawolle (2005) describe the mediatisation of policy in terms of the inter-permeation of the logics of practice from the journalistic field. They find that:

journalists and their logics are not only operant in the journalistic field in the media, but also in the offices of politicians and policy producers, thus affecting the very processes of policy production (p. 362).

Lingard and Rawolle (2005) also identify that the relationship between media and educational policy can be considered through: ‘media constructions as de facto policy, policy as sound bite, media policy representations as deliberate misrepresentations, and policy release as media release’ (p. 363). Critics claim that journalists seem preoccupied with reporting educational matters (Blackmore & Thomson, 2004; Franklin, 2004), albeit in reductive terms (Boler & Stack, 2007), and the media-tion’ (Blackmore & Thomson, 2004; Thomson, 2002) of education policy is not only about the way that government media units expand in both size and influence (Franklin, 2004; Thomson, 2004) or about how politicians and policy makers shape the news agenda (Levin, 2004), it is also about how the media have an increasingly constitutive role in policy production and public debate (Lingard & Rawolle, 2005).

However, too often, a sophisticated consideration of the diversity amongst the media is absent in these debates. Even in the paragraphs above, there are echoes of ‘the media’ as a homogeneous purveyor of false consciousness, or at least a puppet of right wing conservatives. While Lingard and Rawolle (2005) rightly imply that the logics of journalism are appropriate in the field of media, some scholars take it a step further and imply that there is little or no place for the media in policy and politics at all. Lusted argues that such views do little to take scholars forward pragmatically, and I would add they do little to assist us conceptually. In fact, Lusted (1986) argues that the failing of critical scholars has been a failure:

to connect radical cultural theory to popular movements whose interests that theory declares it represents (p.3),

[and] so much cultural criticism has failed to work for the penetration of its arguments into the mainstream of cultural and political life (p.7).

But the hard fact is that critical movements for change fail if they cannot command attention from groups other than their own (p.7).

Lusted explains that the success of so-called ‘neoliberals’ in capturing the public’s attention has been because they have developed a pedagogy to do so. Meanwhile, Buckingham (1996) is more direct in his critique, suggesting that critical scholars often hide behind descriptions of ‘the Right’ as authoritarian and deceptive, as well as complaints about the media being anti-academic and anti-education. As Hall (1994)

argues, there is a need for more involvement by scholars in education policy and politics, as scholars cannot just wait for the scales to fall from the public's eyes, or if they do, they will be waiting for some time.

In some ways, Lusted's critique foreshadows more recent work by Giroux (2005) in the area of 'public pedagogy'. Framed in the context of the commencement of a 'War on Terror', emergent new media and expanding global culture, Giroux describes a situation where debased theoretical and political discourses have allowed 'the progressive Left' to fall into disarray under the successive attacks of 'the Right'. He argues that the logic of neoliberal economists dominate, not only in media and politics, but even in universities, as academics retreat into theory, jargon and ritual demystifying, rather than sustained civic engagement.

Meanwhile, Giroux also notes that the rapidly changing nature of public pedagogical spaces presents new challenges to scholars. New digital and media technologies are merging with corporate interests to create highly powerful and innovative meaning making frameworks. For instance, the emergence of technology such as Third Generation mobile communications and Web Three (both with an emphasis on highly personalised information gathering and meaning making), have expanded both the notion of media and the nature of knowledge creation. If anything, the recent changes described by Giroux only give further weight to Lusted's call for scholars to be thinking about how they might engage more meaningfully with 'the media' to influence contemporary education policy.

However, if scholars of all political orientations are to engage more meaningfully with the media, there is also a need to be diligent in our use of terminology. The term 'the media' was once clearly defined as television, radio or print mediums, but Giroux's work clearly indicates that these mediums have expanded greatly in range, rationale and consequences. Further, where the line between providing information and providing entertainment was once clear, this has long since been blurred as 'news services' seek to entertain (Goodson, 1995) and more recently as reality television seeks 'to inform'. Critics describe contemporary media as an entity that is increasingly driven by sensation rather than education, advertising rather than advocacy, and moguls rather than media professionals. While these changes cannot be overlooked, neither should they be wielded as unthinking assumptions because conceptually this may also not be ultimately productive.

I recall being interviewed in late 2006 on a national Australian morning television program. Sitting in the Adelaide studio, I was wired up, quietly enduring those nervous moments before an interview starts, when the female host had her microphone wired in while her producer briefed her. Clearly, the host was unaware that her microphone was on, and, as she was given background on each of the contributors to the upcoming interview, she flippantly remarked in relation to me, 'another ivory tower academic who's never been in the real world'. Given my work outside of academia with young people diagnosed with ADHD, I was disappointed by her remark and her assumptions about 'academics'. However, on reflection I realised that too often I also make assumptions about 'the media'. It is important to be reminded that in the same way that

‘all academics’ share certain general principles about what constitutes good research, but demonstrate great diversity in approaches, ‘the media’ share certain general principles about what constitutes good reporting, but also vary greatly according to medium, focus, news cycle, editorial influence and target audience. One has only to attempt to develop a successful media strategy across television, radio and print media to appreciate the politics and diversity amongst the media that has to be played out.

Having witnessed many interviews with academics, invariably afterwards one journalist will complain ‘why couldn’t they speak in sentences rather than jargon’, while the academic will complain of the journalist oversimplifying or misrepresenting their research. What underpins these responses is something akin to a transmission model of pedagogy, where ‘the academic’ produces ‘the knowledge’ that is to be transmitted via ‘the media’ to ‘the public’ for their consumption. It seems in such situations that there is a clash around the very fundamentals about what constitutes worthy knowledge between academia and media, with much of the frustration between the two groups resulting from this clash. I would argue that just as Levin (2004) suggests that the government and media need to attempt to understand each other better, academics and journalists also need to make an effort to understand the epistemological foundation and practical conditions around which each constructs knowledge. This will invariably involve discomfort, fear and mishaps along the way, but to do so is vital if we are to command attention from groups other than our own. Thus, I hope that a useful contribution of this paper will be to suggest a pedagogical model for conceptualising the links between research, education policy and the public, by modelling an attempt to provide a critique of ADHD through mainstream media.

So, in answer to Lusted’s (1986) question, ‘why pedagogy?’; it is because pedagogy draws attention to the process through which knowledge is produced, which occurs not at the desk of a researcher or through the microphone of a journalist, but in the consciousness of each of us.

An unlikely journey

I never planned to be a media or policy adviser, but as I entered the last six months of my doctoral work, I successfully applied for a senior adviser role in the Legislative Council of the South Australian Parliament. For the next four years, I provided advice across the portfolios of treasury, employment, education and higher education. It was while in the position that a publisher approached me to rewrite my dissertation as a handbook for teachers, parents and the public. The foremost motivation in carrying out my research was to attempt to provide an informed and compassionate account of ADHD, to address the issue of appropriate use of medication, to highlight the need for educational support, to point to the limitations of existing policy and to help young people with ADHD and their families. My findings in relation to these matters are documented elsewhere (Prosser, 2006), and I will not repeat them here.

However, as I conducted this research, it became increasingly apparent, through the accounts of teachers, parents and young people, that the media played an important (and often negative) role with ADHD. As a result, when I came to adapt my dissertation into a

book, I saw an opportunity to use my experience with the media to produce a book that would also be accessible to journalists. In this, I saw an opportunity for ADHD to be a Trojan horse that might foster new and more liberating discourses around families of young people with ADHD. Those familiar with the Greek legend of the wooden horse, will understand the term's metaphorical use to represent an entity that encourages one's combatants to lower their guard, while in reality ushering in a tool to enable attack. For me, ADHD was important as a Trojan horse both because of its unrecognised pedagogical, education and policy implications (Prosser, 2008), and because it was a vehicle through which one could attract popular attention to these issues. For me, the growing media interest in ADHD provided an opportunity to engage in a debate about inclusive education with the public that could assist the plight of a broad range of students with learning needs. So while my desire to repay the young people with ADHD and their families who entrusted me with their stories has remained foremost, it is how the media can be aligned with this effort that is the focus of this particular paper.

However, presenting a new view of ADHD is far from easy as media reporting encourages adversarial discourses that influence policy and practice. The 'black and white' struggle over the existence and recognition of ADHD has important policy implications and consumes much of the time of lobbyists, but what is important to note is the polarised, volatile and at times reactionary struggle with which policy advocacy and public debate operates (Prosser, 2006; Laurence & McCallum, 1998). It is through this minefield that the book attempted to guide parents, teachers and young people, but in doing so, it sought to use the strategies to defuse some of the traps set by elements of the media. It was these strategies that were also employed throughout 2006 and 2007 when the book's publisher arranged opportunities to 'flog off' this 'Trojan Horse' in the media. It was in the context of this book promotion that I was interviewed at Sydney's radio station 2GB.

Flogging off a Trojan horse

In Australia's most populated city, Radio 2GB is Sydney's most popular radio station. Devoted to talkback, it regularly rates over 13 per cent of the total listening audience, outmatching even its competitors in FM music radio. Radio 2GB markets itself primarily to the 40-54 age group, its format is news, sport and talkback, with a conservative orientation in its positioning and comment. Its promotional material states that Breakfast announcer, Alan Jones (AJ), is Australia's most popular talkback presenter. An ex-national rugby coach, who started on radio in 1985, Jones commenced work with 2GB in 2002 and presents a daily editorial comment segment on a major national television breakfast program. The Jones interview occurred on 13 June 2006 as a follow up to a previous interview on 2GB and in response to a report that more young people in Sydney's poorer suburbs took psychostimulants for ADHD. My previous interview had been with Drive program presenter, Philip Clark (PC), who is an ex-parliamentary researcher who started work on talkback radio in 1993 before joining 2GB in 2001. The Clark interview occurred on 10 May 2006. What follows are extracts from these interviews.

Interview with Philip Clark (10/5/06)

PC Dr. Prosser, good afternoon to you.

- BP Good afternoon Philip.
PC Does it exist?
BP Um... certainly the needs of young people exist and their families. What we have in ADHD is the best medical explanation for...
PC Mm.
BP but there needs to be more than just a medical explanation for ADHD.
PC What is it?
BP Um... it's a physical difference that causes young people to have problems in home, school and work environments.
PC But is it a thing ... is it actually a thing or is it just a collection of behaviours?
BP It's a collection of behaviours. It's diagnosed by a checklist, so that leads some people to say, because there's no medical test, blood test or...
PC That's what I'm trying to get to though, I mean, what actually is it? Because ... the trouble is ... the trouble with the condition is that every recalcitrant or ... or badly behaved kid seems to get diagnosed with this thing.
BP I ...
PC In other words what ... what exactly are we diagnosing?
BP Well you highlight a really important point there. There is a medical diagnosis of ADHD which is ... a really obscure... type of medical diagnosis, but there's also a popular phenomenon of ADD, where Bart Simpson has ADD and we recently had a number one song talking about ADD, so we have a medical diagnosis, and then we have this phenomenon where any bad behaviour ... could be considered ADHD, so we need to look at not only the medical explanation but the social issues around that. What's making it a problem, and that's what I try to look at in the book.
PC What's it caused by?
BP Um... I'm a... I'm a Doctor of Sociology in Education, so that's why I'm taking the social approach but ... so I'm not a medical practitioner, but the medical practitioners would say that parts of the brain that would normally help you slow down and to think before you act ...um... are not working properly and they need to be developed, and that's why they use drug treatment... psychostimulants... to get those parts of the brain to work so that people can slow down and behave ...
PC What do you think they should be doing?
BP I think we need to be going beyond just medical explanations, because if we only ask medical questions, we only get medical answers and we only get more or less drugs.
PC So you're... you're... you're... that's right ... your position is *Let's get away from ... from ... from drugging up kids.*
BP I'd say *Let's use drugs as the last resort not the first resort or only resort.* Medication certainly makes a big difference, but we need to be looking at a whole range of strategies to help young people, because if you give them pills it doesn't give them skills.
PC Mm.
BP So when they hit secondary school and the academic and social demands of secondary school, ...um... the drugs to give them a window of opportunity to learn some other skills as well.
PC Mm.
BP We ... we also need to be providing support for teachers, and that's something that I try to do in the book as well.
PC Ok. It's called *ADHD Who's Failing Who?* and it's out there in the shops now...

Extracts from interview with Alan Jones (16/6/06)

- AJ Well a terrible story today but not new. Talk of ADHDs *drugged* suburbs. We're told that children in Sydney's battler suburbs are being placed on drugs for Attention Deficit

Hyperactivity Disorder by doctors at a rate of up to ten times that which occurs in affluent areas. It's claimed there are large discrepancies between children being treated for the controversial ADHD condition based on where they live.

[AJ cites statistics]

- AJ Dr Prosser's on the line from Adelaide, Brenton Prosser, good morning.
BP Good morning Alan.
AJ Thank you for your time.
BP Thank you.
AJ Firstly, what is ADHD or ADD?
BP ADHD is the best medical explanation that we have for hyperactive, impulsive and inattentive behaviours that cause problems at home, at school, and work places.

[BP asked to repeat symptoms in more detail]

- AJ And how does Attention Deficit Disorder differ from Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder?
BP Ok. That's a very good question. Um... Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder is the latest medical label, while ADD or Attention Deficit Disorder is the previous version of the medical label. But I tend to use them ...um... a little bit differently in the sense that I'd say that once Bart Simpson was diagnosed with ADD it stopped being a specific medical condition. It's also got a cultural and popular ...
AJ That's it.
BP definition. It could ... some people confuse it with any bad behaviour.
AJ Yeah, that's it. Bad behaviour, call it that. Give them drugs. But where did it come from? When we were growing up this thing didn't exist, now it does, why?
BP I ... something that I like to think about is the Anzac tradition where we've got a tradition of ... of a whole lot of young Australians who went off with a lot of courage and gave things a go, but these very qualities of impulsiveness, anti-authority... rebelliousness... those sorts of things were the ... were the model of their success, but now if you're an Anzac, or a Ginger Meggs today, you're likely to be medicated.
AJ Mm.

Momentary pause

[BP calls for Australia to look beyond US response and ask about needs of Australian youth]

- AJ So basically, Mum comes into the waiting room. She's got this kid, carrying on, screaming like hell, won't sit down, won't stand up, won't shut up, so perhaps the convenient way to quieten the child is to, if it's unruly, give it a drug.
BP I think it's probably a little bit more complicated than... than that...
AJ I hope so.
BP I've ... I've yet to meet a parent who has ... been keen to get their... child put on medication. Most of them are taking... their children... or take their children to doctors because of a lack of services in schools and in the community...
AJ Right.
BP and they've got real concerns about 'if my child continues to struggle at school, what happens when it comes to getting them a job when they're older?'
AJ Right.

- BP What happens when they hit secondary school and the greater social and academic demand? My issue with this is that, currently we're only asking medical questions about ADHD. We're only getting medical answers, and we're only getting more or less drug treatment. We need to be asking social questions and educational questions about ADHD so we can get a ... a broader understanding and better support for families, because the reason ...um... medication rates are higher in lower socio-economic areas is because the services ... the other services are not available .
- AJ Good call. Do we have a tendency to say 'Look, I can't control him. He's got ADHD? I mean these levels of ... of medical prescription are phenomenally high – one in every 25 children. I mean ... what should be done if ... I mean ... can ... can GPs all GPs can we be confident that they can properly diagnose ADHD?
- BP Misdiagnosis of ADHD is ... is a real concern because we don't actually have a checklist or a test that proves exactly who has ADHD and who doesn't, which means some people are being misdiagnosed and not getting the best treatment and then there are many legitimate patients of ADHD who're getting discredited because of the misdiagnosis.
- AJ So what do Mum and Dad do?
- BP Well, in my ... in my book I provide a range of strategies so parents can make informed decisions and not just ...um... have a medication only response. So how do you ... build relationships with your school? How do you get a range of other supports in to you, like ... and how do you deal with ...?
- AJ But does the school have the capacity to be supportive? How ... how does the school have answers?
- BP Well, exactly right. One of the difficulties is teachers are caught between having to meet the significant needs of one child and the rest of the class...
- AJ That's right. That's right. That's right.
- BP and so the bigger your class size ...um... the more you have to use 'chalk and talk' style of teaching which does not suit young people very well. So it's really important that we look at some of our priorities in schooling and some of the pressures. I mean one of the ways I like to describe it is today you're more likely to find an adult at a workstation than a work site, and a young person at a Playstation than in a playground, so we've got to look at some of our priorities... what ... sort of work is being provided; what sort of schooling is being provided; what sort of career options, lifestyle options. These things ...er... make it very hard for young people with extra energy to find space to let of steam.
- AJ Ok. A lady's just said to me now. She's a single parent and she thinks 'I've heard that doctor speak and this must be what my child has got', what does she do?

[BP discusses a range of treatment options]

- AJ But then the medical practitioner says 'Look, here's some Ritalin'.
- BP Ok. Now one of the important things that I go through in the book is to say, if a doctor has only medical response to ADHD, then find another doctor. What needs to be put into place is a full range of strategies. So, in my studies with teenagers ...um... those who have had just medication ...ah... and as they grow up hit secondary school ADHD becomes a real problem. For those that have used medication for a short period of time and it's a window of opportunity and they've learnt other skills, they've managed to say 'Well I've grown out of ADHD'. Ah... for some people, that's not the case. There's adult ADHD is a growing concern, but it's really important that we don't just have a medical response, we have a much broader understanding and a broader response ...um... and these figures that we've seen in the *Daily Telegraph* today, what is concerning about them is that it highlights ... again, as it has in my research, that... if you're from a lower

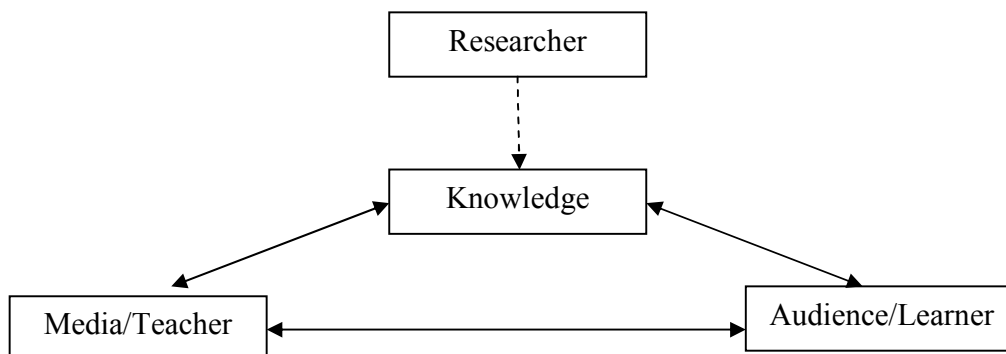
income area you're more likely to get just the drug treatment and for me that's a social inclusion and social justice issue.

AJ Good on you. You're a star! Thank you for talking to us.

Discussion

Media and pedagogical exchange

In his definition of pedagogy, Lusted (1986) opposes the notion of teacher as transmitter, learner as passive receptor, and knowledge as preset. For Lusted, pedagogy draws attention to the process through which knowledge is produced and enables us to question under what conditions and through what means we come to know. I have suggested earlier in this paper, that often researchers use a transmission model when working with the media, effectively only contributing to the knowledge component of the pedagogical triangle. I propose that a reworking of Lusted's model of pedagogical exchange can embrace the complex inter-relations at play and appreciate the media's constitutive role in education policy. In this reworking, I replace teacher with the journalist, and learner with the public. Thus, a pedagogical triangle is created between the journalist, the public and knowledge:

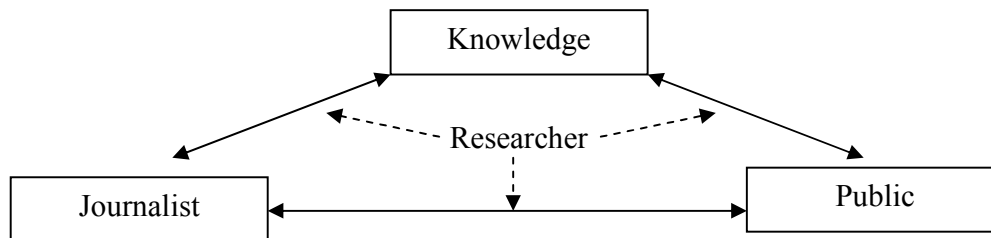


This model can advance our conceptualisation beyond 'media vs academia' dichotomies. Firstly, a consideration of the relationship between the media and the public can be compared to that of the teacher and learner, where a strong relationship may result in environments that are supportive of student needs and learning, but not necessarily new knowledge. In the context of the media, this relationship points to the role of such influences as ratings, this highlights a mechanism by which various media outlets are kept publicly accountable.

Secondly, a consideration of the relationship between the media and knowledge can be compared to that of the teacher and curriculum, where a strong link can result in the transmission of content, but no guarantee of learners adopting or adapting that knowledge. In the media context, this emphasises the role that authority or expertise plays to underpin both the underlying idea and various commentators within a story. It is often through this exchange that academics become involved with the media.

Thirdly, a consideration of the relationship between the public and knowledge is similar to that of learner and their life knowledge, which may result in engagement or entertainment, but not necessarily integrate with important information. This points to the

role of human-interest elements in the production of media reports. My contention is that by using such a framework we can think about how to conceptualise our research to shape meaning making along each exchange in the pedagogical triangle by locating ourselves within it, rather than just supplying the knowledge component:



To demonstrate how this model may produce new insights; I will use this reworking of Lusted's model to explore the case study presented above.

Preparing a media strategy

The contribution of the researcher to the relationship between the journalist and knowledge is providing one of expertise; this is the reason an academic is invited to participate in an interview. It is easy for researchers to assume that interviews will be easy as they are experts in their field; however, it is important to put careful thought into what knowledge is introduced in interviews and in what form. As the above interviews demonstrate, this involved a prepared media strategy with a message around the importance of educational perspectives and policy with ADHD, as well a series of 'hooks' that encapsulated that message ('only medical answers', 'pills not skills', 'window of opportunity', 'chalk and talk'). In line with Lusted's (1986) call for scholars to engage with popular movements and concepts, the media strategy also included a number of popular culture references to help make that message accessible to both journalists and the public ('Bart Simpson', 'ANZACs', 'number one song', 'Playstation'). Such preparation should enable the scholar to provide simple definitions, clear explanations and a tone of authority, which allows collaboration in the interview and contribution of new ideas around education and policy.

This model can advance thinking beyond 'media vs academia' dichotomies. This should not be seen as just another example of how the presentation of research and policy is increasingly driven by the media and marketing (see Lingard & Rawolle, 2005). Rather, this model seeks to not only look at an example of how 'media acts as a policy actor in education' (Boler & Stack, 2007, p.3), but also an example of how scholars can act as policy actors in the media. As such, it attempts to locate educational scholars in the process of knowledge creation by the 'interconnected pedagogues' (p.4) of education, media and state.

It must be remembered, however, that a radio interview is a co-construction not a public lecture. For this reason, it is important to consider the nature of the relationship between the researcher, journalist and the public. It is vital that the researcher takes the time to inquire into the characteristics of the target audience of the media outlet. Not only does

this enable the researcher to work with the journalist towards the common goal of engaging that audience, but it can help the researcher to prepare strategies to engage audience while presenting their message.

While the mantra of ‘controversy and comment’ is prevalent in many parts of the media (where the journalist provides controversy, and the expert comment, which the journalist uses to create more controversy), it has been my experience that negotiation can be used just as effectively. In my work as a media adviser, I find it useful to ask a journalist what sort of comment they have in mind to contribute to their story and then negotiate what could be said, and if it met their needs. Far from selling out one’s message, this gives the interviewee more understanding and can often influence over how their final comments are presented. It is important that these discussions and any background is provided ‘off the record’ (an agreement that I have yet to have breached by any journalist) and in both the above interviews, a discussion with the program producer had occurred to help shape subsequent discussion.

The other aspect of collaboration in a media strategy is providing a sense of respect and goodwill within the interview. Whatever the researcher’s personal view of the radio interviewer, one can assume that most of their listeners like that personality, so participating in their relationship can help further your message. In the examples above, respect is shown for the interviewer by accepting their questions and then using those questions to further the message. Attempts are also made to integrate the message with the purpose of the interview and (when the topic strays) to collaborate in bringing it back to the point. I leave it to the reader to ascertain my success a building a positive relationship in the above examples.

Thirdly, there is the relationship between the public and knowledge. What the media might broadly call ‘human interest’, the researcher might call micro level inquiry and it is an important challenge for those involved in policy research, not to lose sight of the human face of their research. Fortunately, my doctoral and subsequent research sought to combine quantitative inquiry into ADHD prevalence, with qualitative inquiry into the schooling experiences of students with ADHD and their families. This approach naturally lent itself to the media as it incorporated both the broad data to support the importance of the issue for the wider community, as well as the human face of this issue. I would suggest that those working in the field of education policy research who wish to speak to groups other than their own might consider this two fold appeal and an element of media strategy within their initial design of research projects.

The above discussion is far from comprehensive and takes a largely pragmatic approach to describing the relationship between the media strategy and the various pedagogical relationships at work. However, to assist with a more theoretical consideration, I look to Fairclough who shares an emphasis on the relations within media texts, while adding important concepts such as representations, identities and discourse practices.

Text, identity, representation and discourse practices

Fairclough (1995) considers these aspects of media texts as part of an attempt to model

discourse analysis within a broad definition of discourse (as the product of social interaction and a social construction of reality (p.18)). As it is not possible to know the thoughts of either journalist or the public in the above interviews, I will instead follow Fairclough's model of discourse analysis to consider the negotiation of possible discursive spaces, and in the process ponder how these interviews may point to the re-shaping of knowledge around ADHD and education.

Fairclough (1995) argues that:

Language use – any text – is always simultaneously constitutive of (1) social identities, (2) social relations and (3) systems of knowledge and belief. That is, any text makes its own small contribution to shaping these aspects of society and culture (p.55).

Further, he argues that beyond this consideration of the text, discourse analysis of a communicative event also requires consideration of discourse practice (including text production and consumption) and socio-cultural practice (including situational and institutional contexts).

In relation to the textual properties of the above interviews, they reveal assumptions by the media representatives about the social identities of:

- the researcher (as expert);
- the journalist (as advocate for the masses);
- the public (as concerned onlookers);
- the parent/guardian (as victim or villain);
- the medical profession (as quick-fix professional);
- the school (as out of its depth); and,
- the young person (perhaps ironically for ADHD, as passive receptor of the actions of others).

The social relations between the first three of these groups within the interview has been discussed above, however the representation of the others have not. As such, they emerge from a particular system of knowledge and belief about the society, where the emphasis is on the individual's responsibility to society, rather than society's responsibility to the individual. It is a representation that emphasises vested interests leading society into crisis or decline, perhaps as the result of a modern world that is moving too fast, changing too quickly, or losing traditional networks of accountability and community.

It is important to note that where these discourses are accessed by the two interviewers, they are not doing so as some part of a conspiracy, rather they are meeting their responsibilities as professionals in that they are using the discourses that are commonly aligned with their station's target demographic. Further, the epistemology of radio relies on the popular and controversial, areas that may clash with academic epistemologies, but ones that these two successful interviewers mobilise masterfully. However, within the transcript above, an attempt is made to challenge the conventional relations, identities and representations of Radio 2GB through a number of different discourse practices.

In these interviews, we see evidence of the blending of genres, where the traditional interview mixes with friendly conversation and at times verges on political speech. These shifts largely occur around what might be deemed a conventional discourse practice for ADHD in the media and my attempts to add alternative discourses to these practices. For example, initially in the Clark interview, he asks the question ‘does ADHD exist?’ In doing so, he draws on the popular discourse that ADHD has been created in recent years and it is just another name for bad kids. Throughout the interview, Clark maintained this position, until picking up on ‘not drugging our kids’ (which could be interpreted as a suggestion that we give them drugs just for being bad). In contrast, my purpose was to try and include other areas for consideration by critiquing the medical and popular discourses around ADHD.

The ‘black and white’ nature of public perceptions around ADHD made Clark’s initial question provocative and I feared that any unequivocal response would serve to alienate either side of the listening audience, and effectively shut down space to create new knowledge. In response, I introduced the idea of ADHD as a product of a medical discourse, of which I am not a part (a reworking of my identity as ‘doctor’ in the text). While not dismissing the advantages of medical assistance, this opened up the issue of the need for teachers and students to receive more support in schools, hence introducing ADHD as an educational issue (and introducing a new representation around the need for the inclusion of knowledge from educational discourses within ADHD debate). While only a short interview, it provided a brief opportunity to propose a rarely expressed educational discourse about ADHD.

In my interview with Jones, he also drew on popular discourses around ADHD that centre on blame. Considering ADHD from within this perspective, he picked up on my reference to the popular view that ADHD is any bad behaviour and explored the ‘it is the fault of the child’ discourse. The planned media strategy was prepared for such perspectives and sought to prompt new knowledge about ADHD by invoking the ANZAC legend. Within Australian culture, the ANZAC legend (built around the bravery and sacrifice of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corp at Gallipoli in WW1) is held as sacred, particularly amongst older and conservative Australians. By identifying the qualities of today’s children with ADHD to the ANZACs, it shifts the audience attention away from the individual blame discourse, but also opens up the potential for a new representation of ADHD that is located in appreciation of diversity, rather than deficit. This discursive shift interrupted the natural flow of the interview, which effectively stalled it momentarily.

Jones then drew on another discourse that is popular with ADHD, namely ‘it is the fault of the parents’. Again, the media strategy had prepared me to respond with a personal account of the experiences of parents (a discursive practice that allows others to disagree with but not discount my response) as a transition to highlight the importance of school services and resources (in the process introducing an educational discourse). Importantly, this move raised a new positive identity for parents as working hard in difficult circumstances, where the demands of ADHD can make even the perfect parent look poor.

However, conscious of our previous pause, I also sought to maintain the flow of the interview by reintroducing the news topic that formed the initial rationale.

Jones then subtly drew on a third popular discourse by implying ‘it is the fault of doctors’. Often, the polarised debate in relation to misdiagnosis can act to shut down discursive space, rather than encourage new knowledge. In response, I returned to the media strategy theme of the need for educational discourse to inform pedagogy and policy for ADHD, as well as looking at the treatment of ADHD from a social justice and social inclusion perspective. While Clark and Jones rightly presented the views that would have most interest and hold most currency with their listeners, what the media strategy sought to do in these interviews was to create a new discursive space with the audience that comprised not only an alternative representation of ADHD in popular debate, but also potential for new identity and knowledge production.

ADD, ADHD and education policy

Fairclough (1995) also calls for a consideration of socio-cultural practices in discourse analysis, including situational and institutional contexts. As I have provided the situational context above, I focus in this section on institutional contexts that informed my response in the two interviews. Although I have conducted a review of ADHD and Australian education policy elsewhere (Prosser, Reid, Shute, & Atkinson, 2002), I present here a few framing comments about the influence of the media on ADHD generally, as well as its impact on education policy through the concepts of popularisation, medicalisation and sensationalisation.

Firstly, there is often confusion between ADD and ADHD. Technically, they are both the same label with ADHD being the latest nomenclature. However, ADHD is much more than an obscure diagnostic label as it is now an established part of popular culture (Graham, 2008; Prosser, 2008). This is why I refer to Principal Skinner labelling Bart Simpson with ADD (Hoong, Houghton, & Douglas, 2003; Neufeld & Foy, 2006) which signified the label shifted from an obscure diagnostic term to the symbol of any bad behaviour. In my work, I tend to use ADHD to refer to the current diagnostic category, while I use ADD to refer to the surrounding popular phenomenon.

This growing popular presence of ADD has daunted Australian politicians and policymakers, which has resulted in policy inaction. Many fear an unaffordable wave of resource claims should ADHD diagnosis be included within education policy. Thus, there are currently no education policies or specific additional resources (other than psychostimulant medication) available for ADHD diagnosis in Australia (Prosser, 2006; Prosser, Reid, Shute, & Atkinson, 2002). As a consequence, most teachers must find their own response to the challenges presented by these behaviours, often with limited knowledge, resources and training (Prosser, 2006; Prosser, Reid, Shute, & Atkinson, 2002; Reid, Maag, & Vasa, 1994). This has significant implications for the intensification of teachers’ work. Despite this situation, errant parental perceptions that ADHD diagnosis provides additional learning support under education policy persist (Diller, 1998; Prosser, 2006; Reid & Katsiyannis, 1995; Reid, Maag, & Vasa, 1994). It may be that this tension between home expectations and school response (Damico & Augustine,

1995; Kos, Richdale, & Hay, 2006), in the absence of a policy, that has further fuelled the popularisation of ADD. It may also have contributed to the explosion in ADHD diagnosis and drug treatment in Australia (Bebatis, Sunderland, & Bulsara, 2002; Prosser & Reid, 1999; Prosser, Reid, Shute, & Atkinson, 2002).

Secondly, the medicalisation of ADD has resulted in marginalisation. By definition, disorders are biological differences that cause social impairment (Wakefield, 1992), and in the case of ADHD diagnosis, it is characterised by inattention, impulsivity and hyperactivity to the level that results in impairment of academic and social functioning (Barkley, 2006). However, the growing promotion by the media of a psycho-medical discourse around ADD has important policy implications. The urgency within the media to report the latest medical findings in the news can see the reporting of results of preliminary studies and often these results are not replicated or supported by subsequent review (Prosser, 2006). This contributes to errant public and policy perceptions about the medical basis of ADD. Further, this medicalisation of ADD, when accepted by policy makers, seriously marginalises the expertise and insights of educators (Ideus, 1994; Prosser, Reid, Shute, & Atkinson, 2002) for a condition that is defined primarily according to pedagogical practice and social functioning (Prosser, 2008).

For instance, the acceptance of the psycho-medical discourse in policy also risks the neglect of important social barriers that Boler & Stack (2007) describe as efforts to 'deflect attention from the issue of state-supported psychological, physical and symbolic oppression' (p. 4) by blaming the individual for their lack of success at school. It can lead to policy blindness in relation to how recent societal change is reforming the expectations on students and educational institutions (Prosser, 2008). Further, an emphasis on individual deficit in education policy funding criteria (Comber, Green, Lingard, & Luke, 1998; Thomson, 1997) has facilitated a shift in official policy toward greater responsibility for problem behaviours by families.

In the case of ADD, this dovetails with the medical reductionism within the label and leaves families carrying more of the financial burden. For many Australian families this means that ADHD diagnosis brings the only affordable support through Medicare bulkbilling and cheap listed psychostimulants on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (Atkinson, Robinson, & Shute, 1997; Prosser, 2006; Prosser & Reid, 1999). Not only does this reinforce integration rather than inclusive education policies (Graham, 2008; Prosser, 2008), it also links with efforts to locate responsibility for educational problems in the individual, thus hiding ineffective schooling practices through an emphasis on student behaviour management (Prosser, 1997, 2006, 2008; Slee, 1994). Again, it is these contextual issues that shape my responses within the interview text.

Thirdly, the sensationalism surrounding ADD in the media has resulted in policy distraction. It has been my experience that political and policy response is driven by the latest controversial media report about ADD. Usually television reports rely on visuals of a child out of control and a distraught parent, while radio or print media use shocking new statistics on the number of young people using psychostimulants. There are problems with this sensationalisation of ADD by elements of the media. Most families of

children diagnosed with ADHD find it an immense challenge, but are having some success. None of these families is willing to stigmatise their child by being the human interest in a current affairs story, with the result that only the most extreme cases are televised (which further sensationalises ADD). However, the potent cocktail of violent behaviour and illicit drug treatment is just too tempting for many media outlets to ignore.

Further fuelling the sensationalism is also a mistaken assumption that the level of psychostimulant consumed through ADHD medication is similar to that of illicit speed (when in fact it is just a fraction). Despite these limitations, the sensational nature of these reports is enough to evoke expressions of concern from government representatives who usually either re-announce previously promised funding (Franklin, 2004) or announce a new inquiry to look into public concern. However, there is often reluctance to enact long-term policy planning or strategies that may benefit another party when in government, so what is required are strategies that look like action for the news media cycle, but ultimately results in distraction and delay.

An understanding of above institutional and situational contexts, along with the aforementioned discursive practices and elements of the text, are vital to understanding of what occurred as I attempted to articulate research outcomes in the two interviews. It was an effort forged in a belief that as academics we need to make an effort to respond to the epistemological foundation on which the media constructs knowledge. I believe this effort needs to be conceptualised as a pedagogical effort and draw on Lusted's (1986) consideration of pedagogy within the context of cultural studies.

In short, Lusted claimed that the concept of pedagogy was dramatically under-theorised, while more theorisation was an antidote to transmission pedagogies. He also argued for scholars to develop pedagogies of connection with popular movements and the public. While I concur with these arguments, I note that they were not without their critics. Some scholars, such as Green (1998), argued that Lusted's (1986) pedagogical model needed a consistent theory around learning. Others, such as Lather (1991, 1992), argued that his model needed to be more clearly fore-grounded in the discourses that influenced knowledge production. Still others, such as Kenway & Modra (1992), saw his work more as a useful starting point to explore issues of concern to feminist theory. Meanwhile, others such as Ellsworth (1989) and Buckingham (1996) questioned his critical focus arguing that it was too abstract, avoided issues of power, and synthesised theory with politics. Having said this, two things stand out. Firstly, the consideration of the interactional nature of pedagogy in Lusted's model has not been disputed, nor has his advocacy for democratic education. Secondly, over two decades after Lusted called for more theorisation of pedagogy and stronger engagement with popular movements, his call remains largely unheeded.

Conclusion

The challenge facing researchers working within the field of ADHD is first and foremost how we can help young people and their families to gain better medical, educational and social support in the here and now. However, once one engages with the practicalities of how these changes can be made and sustained, the challenges of policy, politics and the

media come firmly into view. With this in mind, in this paper, I have sought to rework Lusted's pedagogical model to extend its use in the conceptualisation of the relationship between academia, education policy and the media. More specifically, I have attempted to apply this model to analyse an attempt to take an important social issue (that is framed in debilitating ways) and use it as a 'Trojan Horse' to foster emancipatory discourses on a conservative Australian talkback radio station. I make no bold claims that these two interviews have changed the face of ADHD or quantitatively made the ADHD situation better in Australia, but instead document this attempt in the hope that it may be helpful for others. In doing so, I am reminded by Lusted's warning that:

It would be a nonsense, of course, to minimise the difficulties of popularising critical analysis, of securing platforms to argue cases through the major media channels, in order to command the field required to engage the appropriate audiences (1986, p.7).

Neither do I forget the frustration and heartache that many education scholars have experienced, which makes us rightly reticent to share our research work in the media. However, unless scholars make the effort to connect with groups outside of our own, they risk continued failure to penetrate public debate and mould education policy.

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