AARE Theory Workshop, June 16-17, 2017

Hosted by Southern Cross University, Gold Coast Campus

Southern Cross University's Gold Coast campus is located at Coolangatta just 400 metres from North Kirra Beach, and adjacent to the Gold Coast Airport. Views of the Pacific Ocean can be seen from many vantage points in the campus' buildings.

This AARE Theory Workshop is organised and held in conjunction with two AARE Special Interest Groups: Qualitative Research Methodologies SIG and Arts Education Practice Research. These two SIGs collaborated with success on an application for a AARE competitive grant to bring to Australia Professor Rita L. Irwin, an expert in Arts Based Education from the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada.

As with other AARE Theory Workshops, the aim is to promote critical and engaged dialogue, to test and explore new ideas, theories and approaches, to meet and interact with other researchers who are at different stages of their graduate studies and academic work, to make connections, to encounter intriguing 'big ideas', and to enjoy the challenge of intellectual exchange.

Within this Theory Workshop there will be focussed theme on Arts Based Education Research [ABER]; as well as sessions that complement yet also explore other matters and methodological approaches. One of the aims of the focussed theme is for SIG members to come together to learn from each other and to support the establishment of a Network for Arts Based Educational Research (NABER) in Australia, that will have international reach and significance.

Over the two days, there will be a combination of common and concurrent sessions, with an Arts-Based Education Research workshop on Day 1 (Friday afternoon) that is open to all attendees. This interactive workshop will be of much interest, I am sure, to researchers working across many paradigms and traditions of research. We are featuring a number of sessions that showcase collaborative and experimental approaches to building knowledge and making meaning, to doing research and to the art/s of writing and representing research.

Timetable details will be fine-tuned.  
Program outline: 

Day 1 Friday June 16
9.30 - 1.00; ABER networking event; small group ‘meet and greet’; ideas bombing
Lunch 1.00- 2.00
ABER workshop - 2.00-5.00
Reception and drinks- 5.00-6.30
Workshop dinner – at own expense.

Day 2. Saturday June 17
9.00 – 11.30 concurrent sessions x 2
Lunch 11.30-12.30
12.30- 3.00? pm : concurrent sessions x 2
Presenters include. (bios below/here)
Professor Rita Irwin UBC Vancouver),
Professor Tracey Bunda
Dr Louise Phillips, (UQ)
Dr Lexi Cutcher, SCU Gold Coast
Dr Melissa Wolfe, Monash
The Women Who Write collective
  Dr Ali Black,
  Dr Gail Crimmins
  Dr. Linda Henderson

What is ABER?

Arts based educational research (ABER) utilises aesthetic and embodied forms to move beyond explanatory texts. ABER has been prevalent at University of British Columbia since 1990, when the university hired a critical mass of faculty who pushed the limits of research and accepted forms. ABER and a/r/tography evolved from this critical mass, into an established and internationally renowned methodology. Professor Rita Irwin (Curriculum Studies and Art Education) (http://ritairwin.com) has been a key contributor to the arts practice based methodologies of ABER and a/r/tography in particular, across the last 2 plus decades. In Australia, there are a growing number of scholars and students who are engaged with ABER and a/r/tography, however due to the disparate nature of our geography, we are often working in isolation from one another.

Session descriptions

A/r/tography: Emergent Propositions and Potentials for Research
Rita L. Irwin, Professor, The University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada

A/r/tography is a form of practice-based research that embraces the processes of artmaking, researching and teaching/learning by way of emergent propositions and the potential of generative spaces. While products emerge from such creative engagements, we will focus on how concepts and methods form the basis of this practice-based methodology. In this workshop, everyone will participate in a short collective experience (please bring a camera or phone with camera) as we begin thinking through our creative concepts before moving into theoretical ideas and pedagogical matters. Experiencing a/r/tography, if only briefly, will allow for fruitful discussion of its premises, possibilities, and potentials for research in arts education as well as education more generally conceived.

Post-Qualitative Research in Education: Utilising creative methodologies and how they matter:
“Re/Active Documentary”
Dr Melissa Wolfe

Melissa Wolfe works at Monash University as a lecturer in Visual Art and Media education. She was recently awarded the International Visual Sociology Association 2016 Prosser ECR award for her filmic research project Girls’ tales: experiences of schooling. She was also awarded the
Australian Association for Research in Education ECR Award, 2016 and the 2016 Mollie Holman Doctoral medal. Her research focuses on creative filmic research methodology specifically for utilization in educational research that takes account of gender, social justice and public pedagogical practice. She pragmatically applies Karen Barad’s (2007) theory of agential realism as a conceptual framework. Wolfe’s 2015 film, Girls’ tales: experiences of schooling, was developed as a pre-service teaching aid and was released in December 2015 through Ronin Films. Wolfe’s research interests in education encompass a filmic synthesis of aesthetics, affect, gender, and participatory creative methods.

Workshop title: Post Qualitative Research in Education: Utilising creative methodologies and how they matter: “Re/Active Documentary”

Research through, with and as storying
Professor Tracey Bunda and Dr Louise Phillips

We define storying as the act of making and remaking stories. Storying proclaims stories as the central form from which meaning making can occur. Additionally, we acknowledge stories are cultural artefacts and ontological and epistemological symbols for all. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures have theorised through embodied storying for tens of thousands of years. This legacy, we argue, whilst evident for Indigenous peoples in the everyday has currency for others. The contemporary footprint of story and storying work contributes an innovative use value to research practice for all scholars and writers. In this workshop, we will explore how Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars employ storying to decolonise academia to demonstrate how stories speak back into cultural laws, offer wisdom, are living oral archives, are collectively owned and authored, and nourish the human spirit. Participants will be invited to share personal lived, cultural stories as reflective of positionality—to foreground and anchor who we are in this research space.

Storied, slow, aesthetic, relational: A wabi-sabi approach to doing and writing ‘research’
Dr Ali Black, Dr Gail Crimmins, University of the Sunshine Coast
Dr Linda Henderson, Monash University

Our research journeys often begin in ways that connect with the concept of wabi-sabi: “the art of imperfection” (Lawrence, 2001). This may seem to be in contradiction to all things associated with the acts of doing and writing ‘research’. However, in this workshop we highlight the value of wabi-sabi for negotiating the demands of the often sterile and sterilising contemporary university:

Broadly, wabi-sabi is everything that today’s sleek, mass-produced, technology-saturated culture isn’t. It’s flea markets, not shopping malls; aged wood, not swank floor coverings; one single morning glory, not a dozen red roses. Wabi-sabi understands the tender, raw beauty of a gray December landscape and the aching elegance of an abandoned building or shed. It celebrates cracks and crevices and rot and all the other marks that time and weather and use leave

behind. To discover wabi-sabi is to see the singular beauty in something that may first look decrepit and ugly...Wabi-sabi reminds us that we are all transient beings on this planet—that our bodies, as well as the material world around us, are in the process of returning to dust. Nature’s cycles of growth, decay, and erosion are embodied in frayed edges, rust, liver spots. Through wabi-sabi, we learn to embrace both the glory and the melancholy found in these marks of passing time. (Lawrence, 2001)

Wabi-sabi asks us to re-consider views about ‘what matters’ within the sometimes hard and cruel spaces of the contemporary university where our bodies are subjected to the violence of the ‘publish or perish’ mantra. For this is a mantra that positions us against each other—we compare and compete, and we push and pull our bodies to live up to the demands made upon us. We secretly count up our outputs to ensure that we will ‘count’ when the ‘counting’ is done. We work on grant application after grant application in the hope of winning that all elusive research dollar. Because if don’t we will not count when the counting is done. But, sometimes serendipity and magic occurs in research spaces. The unintentional, the imperfect, the humble become sites for listening and responding to what research is and can be, and who researchers are and can be. This has been our experience, and this workshop emerges from our learning and becoming ‘the women who write’ http://www.thewomenwhowrite.com/.

Taking a wabi-sabi approach to research, this workshop will challenge you to think beyond such binaries as ‘publish or perish’ to explore aesthetic and paradoxical notions of research and research processes. You will be asked to connect to your ability to slow down, to shift the balance from doing to being, and to appreciating rather than perfecting (Lawrence, 2001).Nested in theories of embodiment, affect, materiality and desire we will be deliberately/promiscuously (Childers et al, 2013) breaking the rules and exploring the cracks and chips of our lived experiences and engaging in kintsugi-like golden repair using constructs of slow scholarship and story. This workshop offers space for contemplation, listening and responding—inviting reflection on the theories that resonate, the nature of relational research, and ethics of caring in research worlds.

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<td>Dr. Lexi Cutcher</td>
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This networking session will enable a roundtable conversation of art-based educational researchers to identify future plans of actions for a Network for Arts Based Educational Research (NABER), to discuss issues such as: the contributions of ABER to education, the weight and value of arts practice in research, parity for creative works as research outputs, findings vs. understandings, assessment of and awards for ABER theses/ exegeses, networking mechanisms and initiatives.

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**Professor Tracey Bunda** is a Ngugi Wakka Wakka woman and the Head of the College for Indigenous Studies Education and Research at the University of Southern Queensland. Her research interests are inclusive of storying as methodological approach; Aboriginal feminist theoretical work and interrogation of the relationship between Indigenous peoples and white institutions. She is most recently a recipient of a Roberta Sykes Indigenous Education Foundation scholarship to attend Harvard University to study Women and Power.

**Dr. Louise Phillips** is an academic in the School of Education, at The University of Queensland
where she teaches early years, arts and literacy education and researches children’s rights and 
citizenship. Louise performs stories, writes stories, and weaves stories and storytelling into 
research methodology for their great capacity to cultivate deep understandings of humanity. 
Louise is Convenor of the AARE Qualitative Research Methodologies SIG. 
See http://louptales.education

Professor Rita L. Irwin is a Distinguished University Scholar and Professor of Art Education at the 
University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada. While her research interests include arts 
teacher education, artist-in-schools programs, and socio-cultural issues, she is best known for her 
work in expanding how we might imagine and conduct arts practice based research 
methodologies through self-studies as well as collaborative community based collectives.

Some recent publications:
Reconceptualization of Curriculum Studies: A Festschrift in Honor of William F. Pinar (pp. 

Alexandra Lasczik Cutcher
Alexandra is a multi-award winning researcher and teacher and currently Senior Lecturer, Arts and Education at Southern Cross University. She is Founder and Research Leader of the Creativity, Arts and Education Research Group [CreAre], World Councillor for the International Society of Education through Art [InSEA] and Chair of the Arts-Based Educational Research Special Interest Group [ABERSIG] for the American Educational Research Association [AERA]. Alexandra was previously Head Teacher, Creative Arts in Australian secondary schools for 25 years, specialising in Visual Arts education.

Dr Ali Black is a narrative researcher and early childhood educator. Her arts-based research and 
 scholarly work seeks to foster connectedness, community, wellbeing and meaning-making through 
the building of reflective and creative lives and identities. Ali is interested in storied and visual 
approaches for dismantling personal/professional binaries and representing lives. Her research 
and writing is concerned with the power and impact of collaborative and relational knowledge 
construction.

Dr Gail Crimmins is an arts-informed narrative researcher. She is interested in finding ways to 
unearth and re-present her own voice and lived experience and that of other ‘yet to be voiced’ 
women. She is particularly keen to create alignment between how people understand and 
communicate their experience, how ‘scholarartists’ may express it, and how others (the audience) 
may encounter it. Increasingly ‘promiscuous’ (Childers et al., 2013) in her research, Gail employs 
narrative paradigm, feminism, post-structuralism and new materialism as theoretical frameworks, 
and bicultural forms of communication including drama texts, theatre, creative writing and 
traditional scholarship

Dr Linda Henderson is an Early Years researcher in the Faculty of Education, Monash University. 
Her work draws on feminist, post-structural and post-humanist ideas, methodologies and 
practices. Recently Linda has been exploring and experimenting with forms of writing that disrupt
and disturb the false divisions between the professional and the personal in academia by engaging with a slow ontology. Through this work she aims to foster connectedness with all matter in an effort to create a world that values connectedness, heterogeneity and multiplicity. Her work includes poetry, narrative and creativity with the aim of generating new and just imaginaries for education and society.

Together, and with others, we represent **The Women Who Write** [http://www.thewomenwhowrite.com/](http://www.thewomenwhowrite.com/), a growing group of women academics seeking to acknowledge and reflect on the complexities and cultures of academic work. We are choosing to write and work together in ways that support an ethic of care and caring. With our writing as research we are listening to ourselves, connecting and responding to deep, real things in our personal/professional lives and accidentally/intentionally supporting the renewal of nourishing research, meaningful research productivity, and collaborative cultures. Please visit our website and connect with us.

**Selected publications derived from The Women Who Write collaborations include:**


