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**Academics' metaphors and beliefs about university
teaching and learning**

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Abstract

University teaching is becoming more professional (Hativa and Goodyear, 2002); the discourse of 'the student experience' drives quality assurance processes, and lecturing staff are feeling compelled by institutional incentives and impositions to demonstrate improved curriculum and effective, efficient teaching. Cherished beliefs and teaching methods are changing. According to McWilliam and Palmer (1995), the certainty of 'standing and delivering' (lecturing) is coming to an end. How are academics experiencing these challenges to their teaching role and practices?

The qualitative research into academics' teaching beliefs and self-concept is meagre, with the most sustained research being the phenomenographic literature which attempts to identify and categorise lecturers' 'conceptions' of teaching. We know little about how academics actually see themselves as lecturers.

This paper discusses the teaching metaphors of 12 Australian academics who each teach in different disciplines and in online and face-to-face contexts. In the course of extended individual interviews with the researcher, the lecturer participants have shared images or metaphors that they believed represent them in their teaching role. In this presentation I will introduce the 12 academics through their metaphors, before presenting an interpretive analysis of these metaphors as a commentary on the changing role of the academic in the modern university.

Keywords: - post-compulsory education, academics' self concept

1. Introduction - Academics' Assumptions and Beliefs about Teaching

*We need to work to retain the complexity in teachers' accounts of themselves.
(MacLure, 1993: 382)*

The primary activities of universities and their academic staff are teaching and research. Tenured academics are acknowledged experts in particular fields and disciplines and they may have acclaimed research expertise. However, they have largely acquired their teaching skills experientially - through learning by doing - as tutors, demonstrators, lecturers. They will have experienced teaching as students themselves too, and some may communicate and share their teaching practices and beliefs with departmental colleagues. According to Dunkin (1995), academic teachers acquire what might be called 'craft knowledge'. What academic staff believe and practice as teaching is not necessarily anchored in scientific, research-led or professional knowledge. Moreover there is no certification or professional licensing to guarantee the maintenance of particular and consistent standards of university teaching. It remains the case therefore, that most academic staff in Australian universities, with the exception of most staff in Schools of Education, have not undertaken formal courses in the theory and practice of teaching, and are in one sense, formally unqualified as teachers. And yet whether they are qualified or not, academic staff are working from particular assumptions about teaching based on their experiences as teachers and learners.

The realities of globalisation, corporatisation, and new forms of managerialism are shaping the missions and work of universities, and the impact is not unnoticed by the academics who sustain the research and teaching of the institution. Academic work is changing; and while University teaching may be becoming more professional (Hativa and Goodyear, 2002), past freedoms and ways of doing academic work are being reformed by accountability practices and new strategies for 'efficiency'. Information technologies impose new demands and require new skills (Coaldrake & Stedman, 1999; Taylor, 1999). At the same time an ever-expanding and diverse student body enters the university with high expectations for a quality experience, as well as particular rewards and outcomes upon graduation. The contexts and events that characterise university study have diversified too beyond lectures, tutorials and demonstrations to include for example, workplace learning, problem-based learning, distance education, online learning and other forms of technology-based learning. Teaching academics are meeting these challenges by planning more flexible, responsive and inclusive programs of study. In addition to this, they are also being required to teach differently.

Cherished beliefs and teaching methods are changing. According to McWilliam and Palmer (1995), the certainty of 'standing and delivering' (lecturing) is coming to an end.

For some colleagues, new teaching practices bring new pleasures and (self-)discoveries. There are academics who embrace change, others find ways to resist. Some approach new technologies tentatively, critically, selectively or they find ways to avoid engaging with it in their teaching.

Many academics will have to confront the reality that the task of the academic teacher, traditionally encapsulated in the designation of lecturer, is shifting from the transmission of information towards the management and facilitation of student learning (Coaldrake & Stedman, 1999: 7).

These new demands do not sit easily with the scholarly values and the disciplinary traditions that academics seek to honour and cultivate through their teaching, research and service roles (Coaldrake & Stedman, 1999). Martin's (1999) research shows that many lecturers feel overworked, undervalued and overwhelmed by the enormity of the issues and challenges

that face them. Indeed, university 'restructuring' can induce feelings of shock in some academic staff, as Broadbent (1997) found.

In the midst of this pervasive institutional change, I focus my interest and concern on academics who teach in online and face-to-face contexts: How do they understand their role in the post-modern university? How are they responding to the changing demands and changing contexts of university teaching (and learning)? How do they perceive that teaching online is changing their self-concept as teachers? In researching academics' teaching role/s and beliefs, I have found discussions of metaphor can offer a safe and rich means of exploring lecturers' teaching self-images.

In the next section I will review some of the relevant literature on lecturers and metaphor, and follow that with an outline of the methods that shape my research. In later sections of this paper, I will present the academic participants in my research along with their teaching images, and proceed to establish and problematise a range of tentative thematic groupings around these metaphors.

2. Metaphors for (university) teaching

In the process of thematic sense-making, metaphors stood out from the narratives because of their richness of language, practicality, and capability to capture certain moments and feelings. (Koro-Ljungberg, 2001: 372).

The notion of metaphor (the Greek *meta-pherein*) is about *carrying with/over/beyond* or *transferring*. Metaphor is a creative linguistic and conceptual device that enables us to describe a way of being, feeling or doing in terms of another image. That image translates and recontextualises the original being, feeling or doing. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) identify and discuss metaphorical concepts such as ARGUMENT IS WAR and TIME IS MONEY, spatial metaphors like HEALTH AND LIFE ARE UP - SICKNESS AND DEATH ARE DOWN, ontological metaphors, eg. THE MIND IS A MACHINE, and common expressions and idioms like, for example, THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS, and LOVE IS A JOURNEY.

By recognising and articulating one kind of thing in terms of another (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 5), Self and Other established as separate, even as they become bridged through metaphor (Koro-Ljungberg, 2001: 371). The use of metaphor is an imaginative strategy that carries with it other nuances, shadows and tinges that are not (well) articulated in the experience and description of the actual, factual phenomenon. Metaphor offers a safe, playful and meaningful way of accessing the professional and psychological orientations of teachers.

Two studies of teacher metaphor from the 1980s proposed fresh ways of understanding how teachers talk about teaching (and learning). Fox (1983) reflected on the personal theories of teaching that emerged from conversations with newly appointed and experienced polytechnic teachers in the United Kingdom in the early 1980s. He identified four basic theories of teaching that read as metaphors: *the transfer theory*, *the shaping theory*, *the travelling theory*, and *the growing theory*. In Fox' view, simple views of teaching are reflected in the metaphors of 'transfer' (filling empty vessels and minds) and 'shaping' (of raw material and minds). Personal theories that are constructed around 'travelling' (teacher as guide) and 'growing' (teacher cultivating minds) are judged by Fox as more complex and as such, are favoured beliefs in his schema.

Munby (1986) conducted a concordance study of metaphoric language in the transcript data for one teacher, Alice, to reveal her tendency to talk about each lesson as a moving object.

Sample quotes from Alice's transcripts included, 'Kept it somehow moving slowly'; 'We were slow at getting started today'; 'It went real well'; '...when I keep it going'. There are hints of Fox' travelling metaphor ('stopping' and 'starting', 'going with', 'picking up'), and it appears that students 'gather up information as the lesson travels by'.

Research which documents and considers university teachers' metaphors for teaching, is notably scant. Koro-Ljungberg (2001) used an analysis of metaphor as one 'sense-making' strategy in a study investigating the creative thinking processes of two Academy professors. In conducting her interpretative analysis, she found the use of metaphor to have a productive, 'opening-up function'.

Ling, Burman, Cooper and Ling (2002) set out to discuss the work of university teacher educators as 'sown, grown, cloned or honed'. Interestingly the teacher educators interviewed in their study took these terms and applied them to their students and the context of teacher education, rather than personalise them to themselves and their teacher education role. Other metaphors that emerged as meaningful to the educators in this study were: River ('the notion of flow', 'the endless change'), Journey ('I'm still on the journey'), and Garden ('... where you can have the weeds and you can have the flowers').

Martin, Prosser, Trigwell, Lueckenhausen and Ramsden (2001) have identified and started to explore the metaphoric relationships in how lecturers understand their subject matter, teaching practices and student learning, and the ways they use metaphors in talking about their teaching. In their phenomenographic research the authors have noted that several teachers, whose conceptions of subject matter, teaching and learning were atomistic, concatenated, and 'surface', appeared to talk about 'Knowledge as a physical entity. Teaching is giving. Learning is getting'. Teachers whose conceptions were integrated, coherent and 'deep' discuss 'Knowledge as an interpretation. Teaching is being with students in the interpretation of experiences'.

Over the past decade, intriguing metaphoric allusions have started to emerge in research discussions of Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) in university learning. McWilliam and Palmer (1995) reflect critically on implications surrounding the notion that the use of ICT in university teaching and learning signals the end of lecturing as 'standing and delivering'. Hesketh, Gosper, Andrews & Sabaz, (1996) argue that the teaching role becomes refocussed on 'managing' and 'facilitating' student learning, on helping students to develop the skills to enable them to evaluate Internet materials, and managing this contact and information poses new challenges for academics. For Herrington and Oliver (2001), an online 'transmitter' teacher must become an online 'coach' in order to teach effectively in these electronic learning environments. Relabelling the teacher's role in ICT-supported education is common, and an extensive list of descriptors has been proposed by Berge (1995), and discussed further in Berge and Collins (2000). Participants in Berge's studies have proposed or selected role-focussed terms such as 'manager', 'firefighter' and 'social worker' to describe their online teaching role. However, the descriptive metaphoric potential of such labels has been overlooked to date and the contextual dimensions (consider, for example, 'the office', 'the fire' and 'interactions with others') have not been explored in any depth with the research participants.

This leads me to raise an important issue in any discussion of metaphor in qualitative research, and one which distinguishes my research from the previously cited studies. With the exception of Ling et al. (2002), the studies mentioned here have located and analysed metaphor in the language of research participants, typically from transcribed interview data. In most cases the researchers have elicited this data for other research purposes, and in their analysis, they have been drawn to particular images and metaphors in the language of the participants. Participants have not been consulted about what these analyses reveal,

and are not aware of the metaphoric language that they are using (Munby, 1986). The discussion of metaphor has not been a conscious or deliberate focus of discussion with the research participants, and so we are offered a researcher-only interpretation for metaphor.

This partly reflects the 'hidden researcher' of empirical research methodology. With the exception of Ling et al. (2002), the studies cited here have modelled their analyses on the methodological precedent adopted by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) in their ground-breaking work of two decades past.

In the next section I will describe how I have elicited metaphor in an explicit manner in conversations with academics about their teaching beliefs, self-concepts and practices.

3. Methodology

Metaphorical imagination is a crucial skill in creating rapport and in communicating the nature of unshared experience. (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 231)

This paper represents my developing thinking around one area of a larger research study in which I am investigating academic self-concept and online teaching. There are 12 university lecturers taking part in the study from a spread of disciplines in two Australian universities. Participants were selected after firstly reading about my research project and expressing interest. Five 'technology enthusiast' lecturers are from a large multi-campus university in Victoria. Seven additional lecturers, who work at a large metropolitan university in NSW, were selected for a range of reasons following my initial work with the first group of 5 (novice online teachers, teaching entirely online, faculty, gender).

My focus in this research is on documenting and interpreting participants' perceptions of how the experience of teaching online changes their self-concept as university teachers. Participants are encouraged to reflect on their teaching beliefs and practices in a series of dyadic conversational interviews and the occasional e-mail exchange with me. Participants exemplify their beliefs with lively stories and anecdotes, and the sharing of subject outlines and online teaching artefacts.

Unlike most of the studies referred to in the literature review, I have been explicit about my interest in metaphor. Participants receive a schedule of discussion topics before a formal, taped conversation, although I emphasise that this list does not set a formal agenda for our discussion. I have found my academic colleagues - and most are researchers themselves - appreciate the opportunity for prior reflection on the proposed topics for discussion. A sample list of topics for a beginning conversation is presented in Appendix 1. Our discussion rarely follows the order of the list. Initial talk usually centres on what they/we enjoy about teaching, how teaching sits in relation to their overall work role and research, and how they have learnt to teach. Usually I find that I have to initiate discussion about teaching image or metaphor in these conversations - it is not something that most academics talk about as a matter of course. Sometimes I have found myself providing examples to stimulate thinking and articulation, and increasingly I have found myself mentioning some of the metaphors offered previously by other participants in the research. My early concern about over-prompting in this respect has relaxed. Because this is not a mere role-labelling exercise, I have found that discussion of teaching metaphors can shift, and the notions that emerge sometimes return (often humorously!) later in our conversation, and in other conversations. There is a longer-term plan in the study to revisit with each participant their metaphor/s, particularly in the light of their online teaching experiences.

However, in this paper I will narrow my focus to the early metaphors of the 12 lecturers and take this opportunity to outline the types of academic-as-teacher images that have emerged so far.

The research participants and their teaching metaphor/s are summarised in Table 1.

| Name | Discipline, Years of University Teaching | Metaphor, Image |
|-------------|---|--|
| Ron* | Health Sciences, 25 years | performer, model |
| Zhang* | Business (Chinese language, culture), 8 yrs | team leader |
| Hilary* | Business (Communications), 17 years | mentor, facilitator |
| Seb* | Computer Science, 22 years | performer |
| Paul* | Health Science, 21 years | Obi-Wan-Kenobi, mentor |
| Evan | Arts, 4 yrs | preacher, performer |
| Frank* | Medicine, 5 years (DE/ ICT-only) | facilitator |
| Jane | Arts, 19 years | lamplighter |
| Aurea | Health Sciences. 23 years | a big ear, big brain, big heart, big eye |
| Rose | Arts, 3 years | tour guide, social worker |
| Cora | Arts, 3 years | coach, social worker |
| Rahime | Arts, 16 years | Performer, gift/present |

Table 1: Research Participants, Discipline, Years of University Teaching, metaphor, Image. Names supplied are all participant-selected pseudonyms.

* These participants are 'technology enthusiasts', (see Thompson and Holt, 1997); they are experienced and confident users of online learning resources, which they integrated into their on-campus teaching.

In communicating this research I find that many of my university and research colleagues take pleasure in identifying themselves, and other lecturers they have known or worked with, in these images. The images spark discussion and reflection, memories and anecdotes. However, what is in the participants' quotes inserted throughout the next section remains purely descriptive and in some ways fixed by the language of the transcribed extracts. Of course, all readers will bring their own interpretations to bear as they read some of these extracts. However, being engaged in on-going research into academic identities (with a focus on the 'move online'), I would like to advance my own interpretative analysis and insights in the next section.

4. The Problematic: 12 lecturers, 11 metaphors

Metaphors need not make sense - indeed, it is the unfamiliarity of some that render a frisson, a jolt, to push us to see the world in a different way. (Chapman, 2002: 199).

In researching academics' teaching self-concept, I have approached metaphor differently from most of the studies mentioned in my literature review. While the use of metaphor has served a number of functions in my research, it is not the only rhetorical strategy I use in this study to elicit and explore teacher identity. However I have been curious to see how the invitation to suggest metaphor would be received by the academic participants and most have embraced this opportunity imaginatively as a means of exposing and exploring their teaching selves. I have captured their words - on tape and in transcripts - and fixed parts of their images in extracts in this paper. It's now my turn to elicit my patterns within the conceptual dimensions of their metaphors.

Here I am faced with 12 lecturers and 11 metaphors: people personifying themselves in terms of other persons - translating their humanness into 'other' human images.

Looking into their language choice I see mixed metaphors and allusions to other unconscious metaphors. I could step over my participants' verbal representations, now fixed in the transcripts and extracts, and offer contradictory readings based on linguistic evidence. No - moving forward more uncertainly, I will explore the metaphors of the academic participants by analysing them firstly for what they allude to in terms of teachers, learners and learning. I will turn to them a second time, and apply to my analysis the criteria I took into consideration in selecting participants for this study (gender, discipline, experience with ICT). A third review will consider other pedagogical experiences and histories (educational qualifications, distance education and online teaching experience), which are common to some of these participants.

4.1 Teachers and learners and learning - inside the metaphors

Looking over the list of academics and their metaphors, we can infer humorous and profound understandings about (these) teachers and (their) learners, and what is being taught/learnt. So I could count types and classify these metaphors, according to the teaching, learning contexts and roles that are suggested by the metaphor.

4.1.1 The Metaphoric Teacher

Three colleagues acknowledge being performers; there are 2 facilitators, 2 mentors and two colleagues have offered sporting images (team leader, coach).

Kim: Cora, have you ever thought about an image for your teaching?

Cora: No, no, no I'm just thinking about it as [Rose] is talking. Not a metaphor as such. I guess I'm more like coach in some ways. It's about keeping people enthused, and.. challenged and.. encouraging them. Yeah...

Zhang: Now, I suppose I like to be a team leader, for on-line teaching as well. I'd like to do that, I'm doing that at the moment. I want to, because [it's] paramount with this kind of a deal. Once we have students, [and] all got enough facilities to communicate, and at the moment [...] these forums lack that. Is lack that team-work.

Six of the metaphors are occupational: performer, model, preacher, lamplighter, tour guide, social worker. Four clearly refer to theorised roles in teaching: model, mentor, facilitator, coach. Crude categorisation in this way does lead to speculation here about other elements of the metaphoric context - and some of this I have deliberately (and playfully) explored in the conversations with participants. What do we learn from performers and tour guides? How do gurus like Obi-Wan-Kenobi conceptualise teaching? Do preachers teach, I wonder?

Evan: For me teaching is absolutely performance. Ahm, you know. I wouldn't have said that three or four years ago, but you know as I've found my feet and found my style and found my confidence, it's become absolutely performance. It's it's it's it's the one part of my life where I think where I do cut loose in that way. [Kim: How do you cut loose?]

Just in the sense that it's that I'm enormously ah it's all about enthusiasm, and energy. I'm not somebody who stands at the lectern. You know I'm somebody who who paces around and gestures. It's very much a dramatic performance with me. You know a lot of overheads but you know I'm whipping things on and whipping things off. So I'm very much a moving target, kind of thing.... But you know to get them up off their feet, and get them moving, get them motivated, get get it, get something across to them, so you know.. yeah, I actually did .. my wife jokes a little bit about the fact that you know that yeah as a teacher I'm very much like an evangelical preacher. And you know I tend to come out of lectures dripping with sweat and exhausted cause I do literally work myself into that, depending on what the topic is, but you know I mean. It's preaching, It's much more one of those old style, evangelical [Kim: gospel] sort of gospel-tent preachers standing up at the front ending up dripping at you know grabbing the lect.. and walking around yeah and just you know working themselves up into it.

4.1.2 The Learners and the Learning

Interested readers are invited to reflect on what the learners are doing in the broader context of each metaphor (learners as audience members, spectators, members of a congregation, sports-players, candle-bringers, tourists, and social work recipients). It is equally fascinating to consider the nature of what is being taught: the presentation and interpretation of a play script, physical and sporting skills, the gospels, process (modelling), the historical and cultural information of a terrain or place, and the passing on the flame/s of enlightenment. Indeed all of these images there is a sense of passing on something: skills, ethical dilemmas in tragedy and comedy? Old/er ways and traditions, 'God's word', (local) knowledge, the flame...

Jane: I've thought a bit more about your question re a metaphor for teaching and have come up with 'lamp-lighter'. The image of the teacher as someone who passes the candle of knowledge from generation to generation has always appealed to me, but the notion of a 'lamp-lighter' goes a little further. I believe that the love of learning has to be nurtured and protected - especially in these materialistic and 'economically rationalist' times - and I like the idea of 'shedding light' for students - not so much telling them what they need to know, but helping them to see things differently, move outside their own frame of reference, and question what they have learnt so far. Thus, it is part of my responsibility to keep my own candle bright by conducting research, reading, thinking, debating and generally keep up with the field. If my candle is small and sputtering then I can't help my students to see the 'bigger picture' - they will be confined to a narrow patch of ground. I try to 'light lamps' that my students can carry into whatever corners of the earth they go. [email communication: 16th April 2002]

4.2 Participant Selection Criteria

When I first started on this research in to academics identities (and online teaching), I was confronted by the complexity of academics' professional histories and work responsibilities, research interests, and their very diverse work contexts, all commonly labelled as 'university'. In selecting participants I decided in the first instance to ensure a spread of gender, discipline, experience in teaching using ICT.

4.2.1 Gender

In terms of gender, 5 of the 6 women lecturers lay claim to these metaphors: mentor, facilitator, lamplighter, tour guide, coach and social worker.

Rose: Well actually I read that question [about teaching metaphor]. I was thinking back to ahm just the discussion [inaudible]. I thought it still applied, about the tour guide thing. About kind of offering the kind of the array of things and even just this week for example when we were talking about how you define violence or whatever and then someone came in and quick 'But, what should I include and what shouldn't I include?' and I said 'Well you know, where does that leave us all?', you know. So yeah, it is about offering and then the students try to unpack [...] and then to take up more as they're going along... That's why I'm thinking a tour guide thing. [The students are] actually going and moving. [Kim: Yeah] Yeah. Yeah. I suppose the tour ahm.. leader's role is basically to ahm.. set the scene in a sense the overall scene and then to offer some kind of guidance along the way...

The 6 men lecturers characterise themselves as: performers (3), model, team leader, Obi-Wan-Kenobi, mentor, preacher, and facilitator. A gendered analysis does not appear to reveal anything particularly new or striking - apart from the fact that three of the male academics referred to themselves as performers.

I find my best work comes, like these things that y'know, I've gotta get up and perform. Ahm, and I wanted to perform well, and ah, and y'know, I'll finetune and finetune it well into the night before sort of, jumbling images and graphics and whatever, and then at the end of it, I might finetune it a bit more, and put it on the web. Ahm, y'know..... Yeah, I mean I enjoy getting up there and cajoling and jumping up and down and inspiring and er, or trying to, and, and.. but I mean to me that's what a teacher is, I mean a teacher, doctor equals teacher, a teacher is sort of a cajoler, inspirer, performer ahm, so certainly yeah, performer is in my metaphor, if you looked at that image, certainly it's there somewhere.

Seb: I feel rewarded coming away from a lecture where the students appear to have learnt something that would have been difficult to grasp simply by reading and trying themselves. (Perhaps all I've done is speeded up the process for them.) As with a good theatrical performance, you have to hold their attention so they're at least listening to what you have to say and this is where being a good 'performer' comes in. [e-mail communication, 04.05.00]

A relevant aside here: Hilary would like to improve her face-to-face lecturing style: *I think I need to go to drama lessons and, ahm, yeah because, I'd like to sort of, come across more.... more dynamically.*

The significance of lecturing as performance to present-day academics is an intriguing but uncertain metaphoric theme in my work; anecdotal comments from other researchers and academic development colleagues suggest that this preference for performance on the part of male lecturers is not surprising - but I am not aware of any research evidence to support this gendered observation as a finding. In an earlier phase of this research study I have found that the technology enthusiast lecturers all kept face-to-face teaching and lecturing at

the core of their curriculum and teaching, in departmental contexts where they were not feeling pressured to 'make the move' online.

4.2.2 Discipline

In terms of disciplinary background, 5 lecturers are located in an Arts Faculty (preacher/performer, lamplighter, tour guide/social worker, coach/social worker, no metaphor), 4 work in the Health Sciences (performer/model, Obi-Wan-Kenobi/mentor, facilitator, 'body parts' image), and 3 are from a Business Faculty (team leader, mentor/facilitator, performer). Aurea's striking image, that as a teacher she was composed of all-important body parts, was most apposite to the therapeutic discipline in which she works in the Health Sciences.

Aurea: Are there images that describe me as a teacher? It's ahm. I'm thinking of [giggles] body organs. [Aurea giggles loudly].

Kim: No don't (worry). That comes with the territory. That's Health.

Aurea: Yeah. Yes. That's right. I kind of, if I can grow body or.. body parts that describe me as a teacher: somebody with a big ear, and a big brain, and a big heart. [laughs]

Kim: A big ear?

Aurea: A big ear.

Kim: And a big brain.

Aurea: A big brain, and a big heart. Somebody who, who...and a big eye.

Kim: Ooh, tell me about the big eye. What does the big eye do?

Aurea: It's people who.. somebody who sees, and listens, and thinks and and feels.

The image that Aurea offers her is not actually a metaphor, rather it is an interesting example of *synecdoche* - parts that refer to a whole (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980: 36). The parts here refer to a human body - not to a teacher *per se* interestingly enough! It is difficult to extend and test this collective image as a description of a teaching role. The body parts suggest learners might be 'speakers, feelers, the observed, other bodies'? - but not students. What is being taught and learnt is not clear - and the image itself (re)embodies and troubles traditional teacher-learner boundaries.

Apart from this slight diversion to consider Aurea's curious image, which could lead us in to a side discussion about bodies in teaching and learning, there is little in this analysis by discipline that appears to distinguish the participants.

4.2.3 Experience with ICT in University Teaching and Learning

There is nothing across the list of metaphors to distinguish the 6 'technology enthusiasts' (Thompson and Holt, 1997): performer (x 2), model, team leader, mentor, facilitator, guru/mentor, facilitator. However, there were what I would call 3 'hard-core' technology users (Seb, Ron, Zhang), who at times in our conversations seemed more focussed on the technology, than perhaps the students and students' learning. Zhang enjoyed learning new software applications which enabled him to develop more and more complex resources to

support this students learning. Seb revealed to me a concern that, without face-to-face contact with his students, he may become 'an entity', Seb sought to remain embodied in his (performance-based) lectures, but even there technology could let him down:

Seb: The face-to-face hasn't changed to a large degree, what I do except that I.. I mean, I'm dead if the machine's down.

Technology means Ron can extend what he is teaching, and by extension, himself as teacher:

Ronthe people are out there, ahm... The people are out there. Ahm, but I'm using a laptop. And ah, and it's extending, it's both... it's both improving what I'm doing if I'm giving a lecture on the screen behind, and it's linking me to that online world of resources and people and needs, and whatever.

Regarding the brief insights derived from these 'technology enthusiasts', there could well be some openings for research into embodiment and ethereality, and the notions of how information technologies extend and augment those bodies and the resources they add to them. While Frank used online technologies constantly to manage his teaching role and his learners, he didn't share the same fascination with new technologies. I will return to Frank in section 4.4.

4.3 Educational Backgrounds and Experience

I have been reconsidering the significance in and across these metaphors of different types of teaching experience and educational qualifications.

4.3.1 Teaching Qualifications

Hilary, Paul, Jane and Rose all held post-graduate qualifications in Education. They characterised themselves metaphorically as: facilitator/mentor, Obi-Wan-Kenobi/mentor, lamplighter and tour guide. There is some warmth in these images, and some sense of care and guidance. Often in our conversations, they spoke about their teaching selves, through their students' perceptions and responses.

4.3.2 Distance Education Experience

Hilary, Paul, Rahime, Frank and Aurea have all previously designed and taught distance education subjects. Their metaphors tallied up as: facilitator/mentor, guru/mentor, performance/gift, facilitator and the 'body parts' image. While the metaphoric facilitators and mentors stand out once more, what is more significant, based on my knowledge of this group is how they all emphasise their relationships with their students. This theme is pursued in the next section.

4.4 Perhaps it's all about relationships with ourselves and others: collaboration and solitude

Gathering up the metaphors of those with educational qualifications, and distance education experience, we can see that they all represent themselves in relationships with their students.

The image of the facilitator seems the most collaborative of the group. Hilary and Frank both viewed themselves as 'facilitators', a term which is often challenged and derided in some

academic discussions of teaching and learning. Hilary and Frank, who were comfortable using ICT in their teaching, really held to a view of new technologies as enhancing their relationships with their students.

Kim: What does facilitation mean to you?

Frank: Eh, oiling the wheels. Making things happen smoothly. The students ask questions and they get answers and they are encouraged to ask good questions to get good answers.

Hilary: I suppose... more.. more mentor in e-mail.. And more facilitator in discussion groups. Because in the discussion groups it's not, they're not writing to me, they're writing to each other, mainly. And.. ahmm... they allow me to read it, they know it's for marks, so they put nice things about me every so often, just to [Hilary laughs].

Other images move between solitude and collaboration (team leader, mentor, lamplighter, tour guide, social worker, coach).

While Rahime did not suggest a metaphor, she did talk at length about her relationship/s with her students (and how these relationships were multiplying and improving since actively inviting her students to email her). Indeed this theme of relationships is significant in terms of all of the metaphors proposed by the academics. Each model alludes to different patterns of human interaction. In some images (performer, Obi-Wan-Kenobi, preacher), there is a solitariness which I have discussed with some participants.

Paul:I sort of would see [myself] very much as, suppose probably more along as a guide, but not, not the traditional sort of tourist guide that sort of tells them everything, more, more of the sort of ah....I suppose my, my interest in science fiction will come forward here, I'd like to think I'm a bit like an Obi-Wan Kenobi that sort of lets them make their own, let them make their own mistakes.... Ahh...he umm, he, he did withdraw, yeah, he withdrew from society, oh no, maybe I've maybe the wrong one there.... Well, well he.... when ahm, Luke Skywalker came looking to him he took on that mentoring role again...and was prepared to take the risk again. I haven't withdrawn yet I don't think [Paul laughs]. Yeah, yeah...maybe the OSP was my withdrawal [Paul laughs].

Rahime has resisted offering a singular metaphor to define the complexities of her teaching role.

Rahime: I think, you know, just off the top of my head...I'd probably have a little bit of a problem with [describing my teaching metaphorically]. Ahm, I have a problem with it because I'm all of those and probably lots of other things, and that I'll be different things to different students as well. And...I'm not sure that I would actually even want to think of myself in metaphorical terms. I think that I tend to teach really well when I really know how to be what I am in that classroom, and ...in the end...the only thing you ever do have to give, is yourself .. and so the quality of the content, the quality of the performance, the quality of the relationships...have to do with how you see yourself as a person. And I certainly don't...think of myself as a person in metaphoric terms.

What is interesting here though is that I can see other unconscious metaphoric allusions in what Rahime says. (Do others see it too?). At this point I step in to must assert my researcher knowledge and (privileged) voice. I can hear other parts of my conversations with Rahime; and based on that remembering and my transcripts and notes, I cannot ignore the images here of 'performance' and 'giving'. Rahime is indeed a 'performer', who 'gives' herself to her students. She told me how early in the first semester she had projected photos of herself (over the years, in her research role) to the 400 students who attend her first-year

lectures. I think though, there is something to ponder in her assertion that she is all metaphors and none; that she is context-sensitive in terms of her metaphoric orientations. This offers another way of thinking and moving forward in this project.

5. Some Implications

Other ways of understanding the teacher images of the 12 lecturers continue to emerge as I look over the metaphor transcripts. You might discern patterns and see openings for other kinds of research into academics and metaphor. Currently in my broader research project, I am alert to signs of issues such as gender, discipline, teaching experience and generation (nothing emerged here) and relationships with students.

The application and analysis of metaphor, in this study, in this way, has revealed to me how explicit discussion of metaphors in fact reflect relationships - between the self and the 'other' metaphoric personification, as well as between the self and others within the metaphor.

Evidently I have plenty more to discuss with my research participants. I am planning to return to discussions of these metaphors with my colleagues both to explore the contexts and nuances of the images in more depth. I am also interested in how the metaphors of the novice-online lecturers might stretch and shift as a result of a period of online teaching.

6. Closing comments

We listen to their words, and try to reconstruct their meanings in our minds, but we can never be sure about the accuracy of these transformations. In our research reports, we further develop our re-creations of their re-creations (in words) of their reality. (Gudmundsdottir, 1996: 303).

The strategy of inviting my participants to consider and suggest their teaching metaphors has had other benefits for this research. Discussing such images has helped establish my relationships with the lecturers. These segments of our conversation are often times of hilarity, sometimes there is repartee, laughter and giggles. Evan and Ron became noticeably animated when they discussed their performance metaphors (I noted in my transcript notes for Evan: *At this point in our conversation Evan is becoming really animated. He is speaking very fast. The rhythm and mindset he is describing as part of his teaching are becoming evident here*). Discussing teaching metaphor/s is not the usual way that most academics talk about their teaching. Their revelations help us build trust in each other in this intimate research. For the participants, the sharing of metaphors is enabling them to think imaginatively and creatively about what they do in new ways, bridging both the participants and myself into new ways of thinking about university teaching.

These 12 colleagues think and work and interact in contexts of shifting disciplinary knowledges, juggling and organising very demanding teaching and research roles. Increasingly their 'performance' (one of the metaphors of new management, of course) is being documented and discussed under new reflexive and invasive management practices. The metaphors, and the analysis that I have sketched here, re-present one means of depicting the diversity that characterises lecturers and how they are going about their teaching in one of the areas of their work where they still maintain some autonomy, spontaneity, privacy and safety.

I continue to wonder about my metaphor as researcher. Shall I tell you, or will you interpret your own sense of my sense-making work? That is my dilemma as researcher in this research. Perhaps you will discover assumptions that I have yet to perceive in my own work.

If that dialogue continues in your head, and with others, then this paper has satisfied another hidden purpose.

Appendix 1

Conversation Schedule No. 1: Talking about your teaching

- Tell me about your teaching....

...in terms of your university role, incl. research and service; or the importance of teaching to who you are and what you do. The best thing about teaching is...? How important is lecturing, tutorials, F2f generally? Can you offer an image or metaphor to characterise your lecturing/teaching role (to date)?

- How have you learnt to teach?
- How would you characterise your relationship/s with your undergraduate students?
- Tell me about any particular beliefs or values you hold about teaching.
- Tell me a little about your planned online & face-to-face teaching choices (incl. which online resources and why).
- Anticipating your online teaching this semester: How do you think you will teach online (and face-to-face) now? How will you manage and integrate both? Any concerns about 'making the move' online? Things to look forward to?
- Tell me a little about your decision to 'make the move' to online teaching at this point in time... Your motives or reasons?

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