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The cult of celebrity and medical misadventures: two case studies symptomatic of assessment as a social construction.

**Abstract:**

The author presents a new perspective on current policy debates in outcomes-based assessment, providing insights from research in art and design education. This paper developed from ongoing doctoral research challenges orthodox approaches to assessment and evaluation. Examples and discussion are distinct from conventional best practice structural or definitional models of assessment. Using a qualitative approach (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, 2005) to data collection and analysis, the author anticipates the psycho-social and publicly constructed dynamics of assessment as a practice. Two case studies drawn from popular culture and public life, act as metaphors which reveal assessment as adaptive and socially constructed. The first, deals with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and boys' auditory problems, while the second samples an instance from the cult of celebrity. Conditions or symptoms derived from case studies are subsequently deployed to explore art teacher perspectives of their public actions regarding assessment. Emergent aesthetic concepts from fieldwork, such as authenticity and consumption anticipate the final part of the investigation which is drawn from data collected in secondary school settings. Here transcript excerpts act as snapshots of assessment culture and practice, to reveal evidence of motivational and communal symptoms of the social milieux.

## **Background and introduction to the research**

Empirically located within the larger field of qualitative research (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, 2005), this project covers new ground in seeking to investigate the processes of assessment from the perspective of the teacher. Selected from the authors research in progress, the two case studies (Stake, 2005), discussed in this paper represent a small snapshot of a larger research project. In this speculative paper, case studies describe medical intervention in Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and the celebrity body double. Conditions or symptoms derived the case studies are then used to analyse fieldwork data. The theoretical approach of Guy Debord, in the book, *Society of the Spectacle* (1983) also informs the case studies by contextualising the spectacle as a social relation among people mediated by images. Through his analysis of public display and celebrity, Debord suggests that life has been reduced to a series of images, a spectacle comprised of transactional situations. In other words, reality is described as mere appearance in a spectacular society. These ideas are salient for the larger research project as they affirm the importance of studying the mechanics of a system which maintains the appearance of social relations. Whilst the author is focused on a snapshot of a larger study, the case studies do illuminate some of the mechanisms of how socially constructed situations work, such as the complexity surrounding diagnosis of boys with ADD/ADHD and the conditions and symptoms of celebrity. Drawn from the broad educational field (ADD/ADHD) and popular culture (celebrity), the cases provide insights and challenges to do with how assessment can be thought about from the perspective of the teacher. Together the cases provide a set of conditions of assessment within the social milieu. The author then looks for evidence of these conditions (a kind of symptomatic analysis) in the transcripts from fieldwork data and interviews with art and design teachers. The focus of this paper then, is on the relationships and interactions of teachers and students when they undertake assessment in the localised context of a classroom, rather than the whole cultural milieu of the school or the subject itself, visual arts. The two selected case studies form part of the research methodology of a larger study. Emergent data has been collected from fieldwork, interviews and participant observation in three secondary school sites.

Previous studies of assessment practice have generally focused on pre-determined value frameworks such as defining evaluation methods (Maling, 1983), examination effectiveness (Orme 1987), and deployment of assessment criteria (Boughton, 1984, 1994). Alternatively, this study provides a rich understanding of how assessment is conceived, thought about and actually used by teachers. Theoretically then, the study makes new data available to investigate assessment as a practice. The goal of the research is to provide an explanatory framework to inform a visual arts teachers' sense of anxiety, when undertaking assessment in art and design. The research was initiated by the author to investigate some of the dilemmas that had arisen when undertaking assessment as a visual arts educator. These dilemmas and anxiety may be unique to art education, because teachers', alongside their students' and artworks are on show, involved in exhibition and ongoing public display. Psychological views of talent and artistic ability complicate issues of artistic assessment when linked to public exhibition and display of teacher and student work. Public display is situated centrally in art and design teaching discourses, in the form of exhibitions and other public performances. Public performances typically manifest as events and are an

integral part of an art teachers world. The dilemma for art educators intensifies when the purposes of assessment derive from a range of sources and are motivated by different audiences. For example, in the practical implementation of assessment, difficulties can be experienced between the degree of 'fit' that teachers perceive between the purpose of assessment for individual students/groups and the purpose of assessment for a final year examination system. Appropriately, in the last section of this paper, excerpts from fieldwork transcripts have been selected for inclusion as they are event-based and the topics selected are common to all three sampled sites. In terms of the sample transcripts (assessment snapshots), the topics selected 1. *Preparing the Reports* and 2. *Parent-Teacher Night*, are common events in all three secondary school sites.

Current NSW Teachers Federation Bans on Assessment Portfolios in NSW Government schools (Leete, 2004), are symptomatic of teacher frustration with outcomes-based approaches and an increased range of assessment requirements. There are now so many external testing and reporting requirements for teachers, across the assessment continuum from Year 3 Basic Skills Testing (BST) to Year 11/12 HSC Examination, ARTEXPRESS and internal school based assessment, that administrative and accountability pressures on teachers have intensified. The author's research focuses on understanding the hidden and incidental advantages of assessment, which avoids constructing prescribed concepts and outcomes. The larger study informed by social constructivism (Guba and Lincoln, 1981, 2005), investigates individual, school and parent interactions in the context of three secondary school sites. The study with a focus on teacher transactions enables the researcher to demonstrate a transparent representation of the psycho-social (individual, group and system), dynamics involved in assessment practice. Importantly, this understanding anticipates the teacher's role in relation to student achievement. Yet, what analogies can be made between the case studies and field research on assessment from the social community of the school? My hunch is that there is analogous behaviour, across the social mechanisms at play in the educational contexts for ADD/ADHD, popular culture and assessment practice in art teaching. The motivation for investigating the assessment practice in schools as a case study across three sites, using a naturalistic methodology, (Guba & Lincoln, 2005) stems from the researcher's concern about the level of teacher confusion and debate surrounding assessment.

An example of the current debate about the particular qualities of assessment, can be seen in three media articles on 'outcomes-based curriculum'. The first, written by K. Donnelly, (2005) signals a key claim, "*Classroom basics have a better outcome.*" The other two articles, one by Max Redmayne, (2005) the other by Gordon Stanley (2005) are both from the letters section. Donnelly questions the dominance of outcomes-based approaches, and comments, "Those who control the NSW curriculum argue that an outcomes approach represents best practice." Yet, as Donnelly argues, an outcomes-based approach leaves little room for a teachers professional judgement about what should be taught and assessed at a localised level in the classroom. Donnelly goes on, "traditional approaches to curriculum tend to give authority to teachers, as deeply immersed professionals in the learning process. Alternatively, an outcomes-based approach, privileges student centred learning, offering non-competitive and equal experiences". A teachers role and professional judgement if we follow Donnelly's lead, is complex and moderated in an

outcomes-based environment. The author's work then, is interested in questions about what teachers actually do, within these broader debates and structures of assessment practice.

Set against such contemporary debates surrounding teacher judgement and professionalism, the author presents two case studies. Case Study One questions the authenticity of clinical diagnosis and drug treatment for ADD/ADHD. Case Study Two provides an example of how an individual becomes the focus for public scrutiny. The case studies have been chosen to provide exemplars of some of the shifting dimensions of social practices in the public domain, beyond the rather narrow focus of secondary teaching. Aesthetic concepts such as authenticity and consumption inform and anticipate the symptoms identified in each case. For a further discussion of authenticity and assessment practice see Snepvangers (2002). The key organisational devices deriving from the case studies are symptoms, however, each case has been included to show the efficacy of the mechanisms across two quite different realms of public life.

### **Case One: *Boys' auditory problems.***

This case is based on a paper by Dr. Ken Rowe, the Principal research fellow at the Australian Council for Educational Research, titled, *Auditory Processing: Why many boys are behind the literacy '8-ball' throughout the early and middle-years of schooling*, was broadcast on the ABC Radio National program, *Life Matters* in 2003. The program was about the physical damage to hearing caused by listening to Walkmans, and the physiological genetic factors identified in the different structures of girls' and boys' ears, and how these factors affect auditory processing. The story emerged from contemporary research by Rowe, and Dr. Eric Le Page, Senior Research Scientist from National Acoustic Laboratories. Their research suggests that both physical damage to hearing and hearing loss diminishes the capacity for boys, in particular to engage in "typical" classroom contexts. Rowe's recent research makes stronger connections between literacy, behaviour and auditory processing and links the functionality of students to the importance of professional development of teachers. (Rowe, Rowe and Pollard, 2005).

Many contemporary educational settings combine language, interpretive sounds and images in their approach to curriculum. Such approaches to classroom dialogue and discourse allow for student-centred learning and highlight the importance of providing contextual information in order to understand a problem. The findings of Rowe's study suggest that in such instances the classroom may become difficult to negotiate, especially for boys. Boys, may not be as engaged in literacy/listening activities and have less interest in interpretive contextual information surrounding a problem. For Rowe, the significance of this work lies in teachers' improving the academic achievements and behaviour of boys. Academic functionality deteriorates when hearing loss is combined with a classroom setting where the physical problem remains untreated and un-addressed. There is a significant role for teachers in changing the educational outcomes for boys', yet, Rowe's message is set against a backdrop of a range of confusing diagnosis and treatment options for ADD/ADHD. Added to the complexity of the debate is the current context of outcomes-based assessment, with its focus on end-products. The role of teacher judgement in the milieu of options remains at best obscured and at worst unacknowledged.

Many teachers spend a great deal of their professional time satisfying the *administrative* demands of outcomes-based assessment and trying to find ways to survive increasing demands for accountability. In an outcomes-based model there would seem to be little room for the plethora of research findings about ADD/ADHD, including that of Rowe and Le Page. Rowe's research is powerful because the genetic and structural strengths and deficits that any child brings to the learning environment account for many instances of perceived misbehaviour, particularly, according to Rowe, on the part of boys. Boys with auditory or processing problems will today most likely be diagnosed with ADD/ADHD. Indeed the impetus for this research emerged in response to the high number of boys being diagnosed with ADD/AHDD at Melbourne Children's Hospital. What resonates here for the purposes of the study is the pathologising and medicalisation of boys and their education in deficit discourse, (Miller, 2007). Rowe's research seeks to see the issues in terms of teaching and learning, rather than the quick fix, the pill, following medical diagnosis. In addition, the focus of 'deficit' in the instance of ADD/ADHD is typically aimed at the individual, rather than the structural application of treatment options. (Prosser, 2006).

Rowe's research in this case, suggests that each child comes to class with different abilities and capacities, requiring the input of a teacher to get each child to the same starting point. If there were room for such dual biological and curriculum findings the focus would be on the process of education, rather than the outcome. Whilst disadvantage and poverty are acknowledged barriers to educational achievement, the focus on outcomes does not readily allow for newly reported auditory and processing problems, and for such psycho-social contexts to intervene in the delivery of reported outcomes and products. The economy of focusing on products is easy to manage and measure yet, the economy of the product is a false economy, where students and teachers are implicated and may be unwittingly caught up in the visualisation of results. A focus on the presentation of results relates well to the Debord's (1983), evocative writing about the functions of public display. For example, an outcomes-based focus, promises teachers and students a concrete and material kind of access to the world of 'goods', that is the economy of the world of work beyond schooling in an authentic way. Assessment commodities take the form of league tables, reports, prize nights, and computer software on which to map kids' progress (i.e: KidMap and other examples of the proliferation in assessment software). In the production of an assessment system, little account can be taken of students (mostly boys) who may not have the capacity physiologically to cope. In other words, as students are compared, benchmarked and standardised over the course of schooling, any allusions about addressing the material nature of the world, one which requires good hearing and the capacity to engage and understand interpretive contexts, is difficult given the demands on a teachers' daily work. For example, easily digestible assessment products in the form of assessing and reporting acts, events and opportunities may mask the identification and treatment of a child's actual problems.

Choice and diversity are also offered as pathways to a desired outcome. The illusion that everyone is moving forward in a dynamic, contemporary, real-world, context bound classroom is easily projected in art and design, as a panorama of regular displays and systematised goods are produced for consumption. Yet, research and professional development into hearing loss and its effect on a large segment of the



population, boys, seems hidden in the overwhelming push for standards, benchmarks and outcomes.

Broadly speaking a symptom may be described as something that indicates the existence of something else, or a slight indication: trace. The narrative so far has focused on illuminating some symptoms of socially constructed situations with the purpose of leading into a discussion of some emergent field-based research findings. Traces of Debord's spectacle identified through the functions and motives involved in both case studies are useful in developing a narrative about assessment and the working life of teachers. Some of the symptoms, from the previous discussion of the clinical diagnosis and treatment of ADD/ADHD emerged as two layers of meaning, in the public reception of boys' education. On the one hand there are misconceptions of the key role of the teacher in an educational exchange. On the other, there is a kind of displacement, where beginning links in the learning process such as hearing and structural processing deficits may inhibit the teachers' ability to see such prior difficulties as impacting on educational behaviour. Outcomes-based education promises students access to the world, the world of goods and educational achievement, through the provision of measurable success. In actuality, success in the material world is clearly not for all. Rowe, sets out a clear method of teacher interventions, which in themselves embody good teaching practice. A teacher's work remains challenged by the complexity of ADHD discourses, as does the question of privileging consumption of pre-determined, often instrumental outcomes over individual student needs and progress. The psycho-social motives of an individual actor/teacher within the communal public milieu become key traces in socially situated activity.

### ***Case Two: Popular culture and the cult of celebrity.***

The celebrated hip-hop icon Eminem, star of recently released movie '8 Mile', provides a salient example of Debord's (1983), interest in celebrity as a manifestation of the spectacle. A case study of the pop icon, Eminem is used to focus on how an attack on individual autonomy are manifest in the economic reproduction and consumption of a star. For Debord, the celebrity, the spectacular representation of a living human being approaches banality by embodying the mere image of a star.

Being a star means specializing in the seemingly lived; the star is the object of identification with the shallow-seeming life who has to compensate for those fragmented productive specializations which are actually lived. Celebrities exist to act out various styles of living and viewing society. (Debord, 1983, 60).

Examples of the 'seemingly lived' are given material form in this paper, through the guise of the body-double. To illuminate aspects of Debord's spectacle, the specific example of Eminem's body-double, 'Particles' is included below. In an article about Eminem titled, *Nervous celebrities call in the body doubles*, the author, Gordon (2003), uses the language of economic exchange. Entrepreneurial terms such as employ, firm, deal, pulling it off, signed a record contract, risk, protection, military precision, security and hired all place the article firmly in the realm of Debord's spectacle. As Debord puts it,

The spectacle is the other side of money; it is the general abstract equivalent of all commodities. Money dominated society as the representation of general equivalence, namely of the exchangeability of different goods whose uses could not be compared. (Debord, 1983, 49).

Equivalence is a useful term here as Debord is alluding to the masked use of monetary terms and concerns to create the illusion that the article is not about money at all, rather about the fans, the selected celebrity's talent and the need to protect the star. Many celebrities, not all music or Hollywood stars are noted in Gordon's article as "... following Saddam Hussein's lead and employing body doubles." (Gordon, 2003). Britney Spears, ... Russell Crowe, ... David Beckham and Eminem are noted as having hired body doubles. "Eminem, who is afraid of being shot, employs a man named Particles..." as his lookalike, however, there is more to being a doppelganger than you would initially think. Firstly, as the security manager explains there are the fans.

"... Kevin O'Brien, who owns OBS security, a favourite of VIP's, says that pulling it off requires almost military precision: Fans are not stupid, they will clock very quickly if something is amiss. They obviously have to get the dress, the look and the mannerisms down to a T."  
(O'Brien in Gordon, 2003, 9).

The sheer appeal to the self importance of the star and simultaneous banality of the body double resonates well with Debord's concepts. In the example, the celebrity body double is a diversion and a reflection of the 'real' star. 'Particles' as an example, is useful in understanding the concept that an economic transaction has already occurred. A transaction between the appearance of celebrity, so that the fans have got what they came to see, and the real life of the star whose presence is being consumed whilst they are simultaneously absent. The star is not real, yet, in the eye of the fans, 'Particles' is authentic. Another symptom of the situation is that all of the players (Eminem, 'Particles', support staff, the fans) are complicit in seeing that the misrepresentation of the star is complete. In addition to the monetary and contractual conditions, the timing of the exchange for the celebrity and their double is crucial. The exchange has already taken place before the event unfolds. 'Particles' does not require payment at the time of the event actually taking place, because the exchange of goods, the 'way to walk, the way to talk' and in Eminem's case the replacement of the actual celebrity's physical body has already occurred. The framework of social behaviour has already be prescribed and probably will not deviate from the carefully scripted plan. The importance of sticking to the rules is all encompassing, as otherwise the deception may be revealed. In other words, the consumption of the star can continue through a supposedly authentic set of coherent references to the star. The symptoms just described, involving the mediation, authenticity and consumption of the copy and the star, lead into a larger question about the socially constructed nature of the situation. In relation to assessment in visual arts education, the concepts involved in social exchanges are useful in understanding other examples of public display. In this case, from popular culture the end goal is pre-determined. Effectively, 'Particles' is not paid unless there is evidence of the goal being accomplished.

In the next section some symptoms of the social construction of assessment identified above, are explored by connecting them to some examples from fieldwork data. In that way, some analogies across the social space of the public domain, whether in a school setting or popular media can be illuminated. A key link between this discussion of celebrity and the work of teachers, from research fieldwork is the focus on events and public engagements in both the work of secondary art teachers and the work of a body double. Whilst art and design teachers are typically not celebrities, in describing a society engaged with Debord's spectacle, the qualities and discourses of celebrity permeate individual and collective understandings of student identity. In the social situation of the school, art students and teachers could be seen as kinds of quasi-celebrities within the situation of the classroom, as artists having an exhibition, or as stars with talent and extraordinary artistic abilities. Many individuals aspire to some level of 'celebrity', or fame and situations are frequently constructed in art and design education to massage the vicarious experience of celebrity. Publicly celebrating the self is an aspiration and an example of living and working in a spectacularly celebrated society.

### **Assessment snapshots**

This section provides a snapshot, including some example transcripts from my research into what art teachers think about assessment. Discussion of some transcript excerpts provides some analogies and anticipates the dynamics and psychosocial dimensions of assessment. The terms assessment and evaluation were not pre-specified in the emergent design of my field research, rather respondents definitions and concepts about what constituted assessment practice was the focus of the study. Many respondent examples from the results of the author's larger study, identified many public events and structures as being about assessment. For the purposes of this paper, two event exemplars identified by one respondent as being about evaluative practice have been included. In the transcript, events flow fairly seamlessly into each other, beginning with a discussion about reports, then connecting with the next event in the calendar, prize or presentation night and finally parent-teacher night. In other words, many events are interconnected and require similar levels of engagement from teachers and a range of supporters. 'Reports' as obvious examples of assessment practice identified by respondents, were embellished with unforeseen events like parent teacher night, presentation night, Year 7 BBQs, prefect investitures and prize giving as all having a role to play in assessment practice. The following excerpts from research transcripts focus in the first example on preparing the reports and in the second example on parent teacher night.

Example 1: Preparing the reports.

Red Transcript Day One, Interview One. (1.1. line 872-881).

**Interviewer:** *So your experience of that, [preparing the reports] of doing that - what would that look like?*

**Respondent:** *Um. I think again the teacher is sort of they always come in for the last minute fiddle, don't they, you ask OK various teams to give this kid a grade. Um, Then the teachers still got to collate them and look over them and give them a grade. Did the lecturette get dominantly A's or B's, is that what it's going to get. If you feel that some kid's been hard done by*



*the um, the judicious fiddle, now and again,, one of the areas, we have a prize induction in every subject and umm(pause) and marks are very close at this school sometimes and if your looking at who's getting the Year 10 prize, and it looks like two kids are going to tie...*

The preceding statement highlights the belief that assessment in the form preparing for reports is abstract, quantifiable, objective and accountable, yet what emerges is sometimes more concrete, qualified and personal. In the assessment snapshot above, the procedure to follow is described, yet, along the way what is interesting is how the teacher adapts and constructs the situation to be socially acceptable. The individual is embedded within layers of school and community adjustments which present a psycho-social dimension in assessment practice. Like the case describing boys auditory problems the possibility of misdiagnosis of the problem is apparent. A set of rules and routine must be adhered to in public, yet behind the scenes, through the 'judicious fiddle' outcomes and results are re-configured in a different way. The example provides evidence of something else going on in addition to the 'real' assessment, which is credible enough to act as a double. Its doubling function is to bring it to the community level, which the community itself requires and is anxious to celebrate. Accumulation of merit on bulletin boards or prize inductions is one example, where the exchange of capital has already occurred. Resonating with the reasons why hearing impairment may not be readily acknowledged as a causal factor in boys' behaviour, or why a celebrity might employ a body double, the example shows that the conditions for acceptance into the pre-existing reward structure are pre-determined. As many teachers would recognise such events are constrained by the instrumentality of an outcome, as in outcomes-based assessment. In other words a negotiated exchange, concerned with strategy and the varying demands of bureaucratic system accountability, has occurred well before the writing of reports in the calendar year.

Example 2: Parent-teacher night.  
Red Transcript Day One, Interview One. (1.1. line 989-991).

**Interviewer:** *Who would you say is it an evaluation of? Who is in the evaluation?*

**Respondent:** *Um. The parent probably wants it to be an evaluation of not only their child, but they also quietly evaluating you, the teacher, and they're evaluating - they're adjusting their perception of you, right at that time. They come with a different agenda to the teacher's. And in a way the teacher, if they need to, uses it as an opportunity to suss out well this is a difficult kid or a brilliant kid - what's this kid bringing with them, this difficult kid, in terms of the parents they've got, the home life they're subjected to and all that sort of thing? And how that will colour and affect what I try and do with them in class? So, I guess it's almost three and four ways. It's a fairly multi-layered little event, that one!*

The 'sussing out' evidenced in the transcript excerpt above, is not spoken about, nor overtly intended as an evaluation, rather it is a conversation, a consultation. However, the spectacular qualities of the event are starkly described in this quote from an experienced teacher. The teacher is making adjustments in light of what they make of the parents and vice-versa. In a structurally adaptive way, the event and

each situation present a new set of relations to negotiate, yet, both of the quotes above reveal a similar approach. Like the celebrity body double, the teacher is disposed to participate in paying attention to the ritual details and prescribed set of relations involved in being a front person for the school and syllabus. The teacher is positioned directly as the public face of assessment. However, participants it seems do not want to be exposed, and so 'walk the walk and talk the talk', not letting each other see the mechanism of how assessment works, as that would expose the real/actuality of the situation in an authentic way. There are two sets of people (parent/teacher) who are trying to manage a third set, the student. Yet, the student is a wild card, who could circumvent the process by neglecting to give the report to the parents, indeed to misplace the notification letter before it gets home.

### **Conclusion**

In using a small sample of transcript excerpts, from one school setting, the author acknowledges the speculative disposition of the paper. Whilst the space constraints of the paper, have only allowed for a limited sample of assessment snapshots to be discussed here, the rich detail apparent in transcript data can be found across all three school settings, used in the research. To triangulate the data, in the larger study, examples such as 'preparing the reports' and 'parent teacher night' are incorporated in the results section from all three secondary school sites.

From both case study examples the following key symptoms emerge. Firstly, symptoms are event based within the classroom and between teachers, parents and students with all actors assuming ritualised and pre-determined positions. For example, it could be easy to professionally mis-judge a child's misbehaviour and mis-recognise effective treatment/teaching options if hearing impairment of boys' is not factored into how to work effectively with ADD/ADHD children in a classroom. In the case of celebrity, the roles and rituals of the body double and the star are constrained by a system of public practice. In public, during an event, whole lives could be spent working within the parameters of the game plan. Another key condition which emerges from the case studies, is the mediation of the body double. Mediation here is between the real and the copy, yet the star maintains control of the interventions made by the body double. In an analogous way, from the transcript evidence, mediation of assessment results is also an important role for the teacher. Raw assessment data about students and their products is mediated prior to public dissemination. Another condition is the instrumental dimension of assessment, where there is always a means to a end. In the fieldwork transcript on preparing the reports the teacher has authority over deployment of the means. The teacher therefore has some control/authority in the game, because they know that to give the reward to student 'x' is avoided because 'y' is a more powerful symptom of the reward of prizing. In addition, the teacher knows they can do something for the apparently rejected student. The comments in the transcript about the acknowledged widespread self awareness of the way to act behind the scenes can be seen in the following excerpt. "*Um. I think again the teacher is sort of they always come in for the last minute fiddle, don't they, you ask ... various teams to give this kid a grade.*" This deployment of the social construction of assessment results is reminiscent of the 'stars' hidden role. The star deploys a body double because they want less of the public eye, so the copy acts like a cipher, mediating the audience reception in the public sphere. The star has made a conscious decision to use a sign/symptom of the

star without being a star and mediation is predicated on the instrumental, ritualised and strategic aspects of the event. Another key symptom then is the mis-recognition of the 'true' state of affairs, by stakeholders preserving past practice as inevitable or unalterable despite alternative options, as long as the agreed game plan is followed completely. Finally, the symptom which is most powerful in terms of the student is the possibility for pigeonholing student achievement within the roles and rituals of teacher/student exchange, all the while constrained by system requirements and public practice.

In the previous section, the quasi-celebrity character of some teacher/student/community events is explored. In the discussion about the celebrity body double, the distanced and nuanced behaviours necessary to be seen to 'walk the walk and talk the talk', yet remain unexposed have been noted. In an analogous way, assessment inputs and syllabus outcomes focus on products, yet the implementation of policy, with state government education agencies as custodians, is conducted by teachers. Teachers implement the policy. In these transcript examples, there is a kind of agreed, yet unspoken mis-recognition, a socially acceptable way to proceed, where all parties understand what they are getting and they seem happy with it. There are two options/explanations here for the exchange. One is that the exchange is a result of a mis-recognition of the true state of affairs. This works because the parties find a plausible and workable exchange that will explain the symptoms, but does not resolve the problem. For example, a drug regimen for ADD/ADHD. The second works as a strategic exchange which if enacted (like the body double) with due consideration of all sensibilities of engaged parties is deemed to be acceptable to and work as well as the original. Importantly, the exchange in both examples has already occurred before the events described above have taken place.

The perspective on assessment that has been advanced in this paper sees assessment like a deferred set of conditions, in which teachers are drawn in and like body doubles, hope that they will not be betrayed by the system. The function and motives of the players are what drives the representation of the celebrity, yet, like the confusing nature of many clinical symptoms we do not see the transaction in a transparent way. Rather, there is a kind of masked public display. A social construction in which all of the players understand a game plan which is seen as acceptable practice. Authority and authenticity occur as a consequence of agreed socially constructed public enactments of the outcomes game.

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