

A Sticky Business? Exploring the “and” in Teaching and Learning

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This article takes as its focus the “and” in discourses of teaching and learning. Drawing upon the work of Deleuze and Guattari, I argue that the “and” signifies a complex, sticky relationship between teaching and learning, and that we can radicalise our conception of “and” to bring forward a range of different discourses. The argument suggests that those critiques of discourses of teaching and learning which argue for an alternative discourse of pedagogy can be supplemented by the radicalising of the “and”. I am therefore proposing the possibility for different forms of immanent and transcendental critique in relation to contemporary debates about teaching and learning. And that there is significance in the apparently insignificant . . .

In real life people fumble their words and stare blankly off into space and don't listen properly to what people say. I find that kind of speech fascinating but it seems writers never write dialogue like that because it doesn't look good on the page. (Christopher Guest, Theatre Director)

Introduction

The title of this article suggests a somewhat esoteric interest in what seems to be a rather obvious central concern of educators, that is, teaching and learning, or as it is often also significantly stated, learning and teaching. This is especially the case as I am part of a team engaged in a large-scale empirical project, Literacies for Learning in Further Education (<http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/lflfe>), administered by the ESRC's Teaching and Learning Research Programme (TLRP)—and note that it is “teaching and learning” rather than “learning and teaching”. The TLRP has an explicit mild enlightenment aim “to improve outcomes for learners of all ages in teaching and learning contexts across the UK”. Yet I find myself intrigued by the “and” in teaching and learning. How have the two become conjoined in this way? What type of link is being suggested in the use of this conjunction? With what purpose and effects? Why this particular conjunction rather than others? And what theoretically is implied in this use of “and”? And how does the “and” glue concepts, such as teaching/learning together? I therefore follow Doel (1996, p. 422) in his enthusiasm for the “and”: “‘and’ enables everything to be put in general circulation. And yet, who

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amongst us has reflected seriously on this little superglutinous superconductor, rather than on that which it supposedly bonds, binds and connects?" Who indeed? There is a tendency to focus on teaching/learning, but give little attention to the "and" that attempts to glue them together.

This particular journey began through the process of trying to work out our project's conceptions of teaching and learning for the 2003 TLRP Annual Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland. For a multi-disciplinary group of researchers intending to explore literacy practices as a vehicle for learning across the curriculum, this in itself was not an insignificant task. The discourses of teaching and learning in applied linguistics and education have similarities and overlap, but their framings differ and are obviously contested. To reach a project view therefore involved a certain amount of reflexive surfacing of taken-for-granted assumptions and recognition that attempting a grand narrative of teaching and learning would be misplaced, especially at the start of a research project.

At the same time as framing our presentation for the conference, I was also reading two texts of very different sorts. The first is an examination of changing pedagogic practices and identities in a range of post-compulsory settings by a number of Australian-based academics (Chappell, Rhodes, Solomon, Tennant, & Yates, 2003). The second is recently published in a series of lectures presented at the College du France in 1976 by Michel Foucault (2003). In different ways, both provided examples of pedagogical practices that caused further conversations about teaching and learning, which crystallised into a focus on the "and".

In the text by Chappell et al. (2003), they describe a parent attending a technical and further education college in Australia and asking the principal about the college's approach to teaching and learning. The principal's bemused response was apparently "we teach, they learn". The authors treat this example as somehow representative of an outmoded way of thinking about pedagogic practices, perhaps reading into the comment a view that teaching is active and learning passive, and that teachers are not responsible for learning. That is one interpretation. My own is slightly different. For me, the disappearance of the "and" raises the question of why it is there in the first place and how it came to be there in considerations of teaching/learning. It questions any common-sense linking of the two activities and raises what sense we make of the "and" within the phrase itself. Does it simply link or does it supplement? I will return to this in due course.

What was the second example? A condition of Foucault's chair was that he taught 26 hours per year, reporting on his original research. Much of this teaching took the form of lectures. These were given in rooms for 350 people that often held 500 due to the interest in Foucault's work. Second lecture theatres were available to listen to the lecture over a loudspeaker system when the audience became too large. Anyone could attend these lectures. Foucault professed and no questions were allowed. To try and cut down on the numbers attending, Foucault moved the lectures to early morning, which is perhaps hardly an example of widening participation. More importantly, an obvious point to raise would be a question about what anyone might have learnt from such an experience. Reading the lectures in print is a challenging

enough experience, but being there, we may question what people learnt and whether there was any concern with what people learnt from Foucault’s professing, apart from the enactment of a certain French intellectual culture perhaps. The example once again points towards the problematic nature of the “and” in teaching and learning as an empirical phenomenon, and the perhaps somewhat cheeky prescription that Foucault could have done better!

In applied linguistics there has been a wider political exploration of the use of “and” recently in Fairclough’s (2000) analysis of the language of the New Labour government in the UK. He argues that “and” is used in the Third Way discourse of the government to try to bring together elements that were previously considered to be opposites, contradictory, or in tension with each other. In this way the government presents itself as able to realise a range of apparently irreconcilable goals, such as economic competitiveness and social inclusion. Fairclough is critical of this discourse for the ideological work it does in mystifying choices that governments have and do make. But for me, once again, it raises the question of “and”, and the rhetorical significance of this conjunction (Edward, Nicoll, Solomon, & Usher, 2004). In conjoining teaching/learning with an “and”, might there also be a bringing together of the irreconcilable, an attempt to mystify certain choices? Or might there be an attempt to reshape the framings through which pedagogical choices are made?

There is no one-to-one relationship between teaching and learning and they can be considered separate as well as related activities. Apart from anything else, as Strathern (1997) has pointed out, there can be a lapse of time in learning—for recontextualisation, absorption, and reformulation. Similarly, Eraut (2004) has argued that different forms of learning have different temporal dimensions to them. The “and” therefore has a temporal dimension to it. The principal above was expressing perhaps an over-generalised view of this, but the “and” in teaching and learning is not inherently descriptive, but has a certain ethical imperative behind it, that teaching *should* entail learning, even if the reverse is not often posited as similarly necessary. The discourse of teaching and learning might therefore be said to be unbalanced.

This argument is not altogether novel. Others have previously raised questions about the discourse of teaching and learning (e.g. Malcolm & Zukas, 2003). I will turn to antecedents in the next section of the article and explore the way in which, through a form of transcendental critique, they suggest the need for an alternative framing of practice. While I value this form of critique, I want to argue something slightly different as an addition. I therefore draw upon the work of Deleuze and Guattari (2003) to extend understanding by radicalising the meaning of the “and”. I take this to be a form of immanent critique that supplements that of others. Finally, I will return to teaching and learning and suggest some further questions for future exploration. The increased hegemony of teaching and learning discourses, and their reverse in education is indisputable. Whether learning is a supplement to teaching or teaching a supplement to learning will not be explored here. My task is to put some “or”s into the “and”, and conjoin some further additions to current debates.

Critiques of Teaching and Learning Discourses

The principal critique of discourses of teaching and learning is that they position these activities as a set of techniques and skills that can be utilised across multiple contexts. They therefore remove questions of context and power from discussions of curriculum and pedagogy and indeed displace the very discussion of curriculum and pedagogy themselves (Edwards, 2001). Teaching and learning are fabricated as disembodied and disembedded techniques to be articulated across subject domains and institutional contexts in the mobilising of teaching as a professional order and learning as a lifelong activity. The irony is perhaps that this has developed even as more situated and contextually sensitive understandings of learning have become popular in many parts of the academic domain (e.g. Lave & Wenger, 1991). Indeed, to date, the TLRP projects themselves seem to be indicating that a grand narrative of teaching and learning is unachievable. The danger is, of course, that the critique of certain discourses of teaching and learning is generalised into a critique of discourses of teaching and learning per se.

But to return to the critique. As Nicoll and Harrison (2003) argue, in certain discourses of teaching and learning teaching is positioned as a universalised and decontextualised set of process skills that can be adapted and applied as appropriate. There is the assumption that teaching can be defined by a set of generally accepted rules for pedagogic practice. Learning is constituted as the activity of the individual that can be, and is, regulated and controlled by the teacher through the application of pragmatically relevant ideas drawn from evidence—research and experience. For Zukas and Malcolm (2000, p. 7), this produces a separation of disciplinary and pedagogic knowledge that “enables pedagogy to be analysed simply in terms of ‘teaching and learning’ rather than as an aspect of knowledge production, and in effect creates a superfluous community of (decontextualised) pedagogues”. Pedagogic practice becomes a technical and atheoretical activity, focusing on methods and lacking a reflexive understanding of the generation of knowledge. Here Zukas and Malcolm are making their own linking of course, conjoining disciplinary and pedagogic knowledge. I view these as not simply knowledge but practices, where their separation into distinct domains in order to create a link through the “and” is itself significant. So, in addition to the linking work that “and” does, it also separates, in order that the conjunction can be made. Interestingly, another critique of teaching and learning adopts precisely this notion of the work of “and”.

Like Zukas and Malcolm, McWilliam (1996) is highly critical of the separation of the learner from the teacher, of learning from teaching, and the emphasis on the individual learner in contemporary educational discourse. “Within the framework of education as an academic discipline, current literature usually interrogates educational practices through the binary formulation of ‘learning and/as *distinct from* teaching’” (McWilliam, 1996, p. 2). For McWilliam, therefore, the “and” explicitly not only links the two practices, but provides a space between them. Such a separation has been constituted by and reinforced through the primacy of certain psychological theories of the individual and a philosophy of liberal humanism. In the

process, she argues that teaching has been partially erased as a focus of research and developmental practice (McWilliam, 1996). In other words, “and” is unbalanced insofar as the link mystifies the primacy of learning and the learner in discourses of teaching and learning—most notably when the practices are reversed giving primacy to learning over teaching.

“Learning” thus becomes a highly effective perlocutionary device for implying that any discussion of the purposes and social relations of educational practice (rather than its facilitative techniques) is so much teacherly self-indulgence, akin to spending too much time in front of the mirror. (Malcolm & Zukas, 2003)

The trickiness of the “and” is apparent again here.

Although positing a different argument to Malcolm and Zukas, McWilliam nonetheless reaches some similar conclusions. With the multiplication of forms of resource-based learning, teaching is increasingly divided into techniques of “design” and “delivery”. This further depletes the emphasis on teaching and the teacher. Ball (1997, p. 241) has gone so far as to argue that “the teacher is increasingly an absent presence in the discourse of education policy”. The learner and lifelong learning becomes a core of much policy discourse (Field, 2000). McWilliam (1996) argues that these separations and elisions tend to reinforce contemporary views of pedagogy as knowledge dissemination and consumption, and take attention away from notions of pedagogy as relational practices of cultural exchange and exercises of power. This appears to have occurred within the UK where views of teaching as “delivery” suffuse, for instance, the further education (FE) context: “The language of FE tends to be rooted in the technical—thus tutors ‘deliver’ courses to students” (Scaife, Colley, & Davies, 2001, p. 9). This discourse, embedded in standards of competence, is not of course restricted to the FE sector alone, as the proliferating discourses of “flexible delivery” in education illustrate. This suggests a need for refocusing on pedagogy as a relational sociocultural process, which does not separate the learner from teacher. In their later paper, Malcolm and Zukas (2003) argue for a “revitalised understanding and reclaiming of pedagogy”, as, for them, the notion of pedagogy, when used at all, has been collapsed into a concern for didactics, in other words, the techniques of teaching. “This is linked with the dominance of psychologistic explanations of learning, and encourages a technicist view of the processes of ‘effective’ teaching” (Malcolm & Zukas, 2003). The argument for a refocusing of discourse is also to be found in Lingard, Hayes, and Mills, (2003, p. 401), who argue that “pedagogy should be recentred” and that there is a need for a sociology of pedagogy. This is part of their work on “productive pedagogies” in Queensland schools, where they have taken as a starting point the critique (in their case, following Bernstein, 2001) that pedagogy has become “thinned out” as “mere technology” in contemporary policy discourses. While this argument may be powerful, there is a need to caution against generalisation, for, as Hamilton (1999) suggests, in other than Anglo-Saxon contexts, didactics is as much about codes as it is about techniques.

We are left with the question of how to make the link between teaching and learning if not with an “and”, which, in turn, raises questions about whether the concepts of teacher and learner, and teaching and learning, are themselves appropriate starting points for consideration. Would other footings provide a firmer basis for understanding educational practice? Following the above critiques, it would appear that we need to engage in a different discursive trajectory by reframing our starting points, putting pedagogy back in the picture.

This raises a reflexive question about the role of research in mobilising certain concepts rather than others and in engaging with concepts as though they simply represent an existent reality “out there”. Research can be considered an “‘intellectual technology’, a way of making visible and intelligible certain features of persons, their conducts, and their relations with one another” (Rose, 1998, pp. 10–11). To name is to make visible, to be visible is to be named. How do teaching and learning come to be named and made visible? These concepts tend to be taken to be pre-existing in a social reality to be explored rather than being considered as mobilised through discursive practices. However, as Miller and Rose (1993, p. 80) point out in relation to the economy, “before one can seek to manage a domain such as an economy it is first necessary to conceptualise a set of processes and relations as an economy which is amenable to management”. In other words, while objects of research are “an effect of stable arrays or networks of relations” (Law, 2002, p. 91), they are usually treated as naturalistic objects, pre-existing in the social world. The same might be argued of teaching and learning. I am therefore following Pels, Hetherington, and Vandenberghe (2002, p. 11) in the view that “objects need symbolic framings, storylines and human spokespersons in order to acquire social lives; social relationships and practices in turn need to be materially grounded in order to gain spatial and temporal endurance”. In other words, they need ordering and mobilising, part of which is provided through the circulation of discourses: “different modes of ordering produce certain forms of organisation. They produce certain material arrangements. They produce certain subject positions. And they produce certain forms of knowledge” (Law, 2001, p. 3). What I am suggesting is that this symbolic ordering is not being addressed in teaching and learning research to any great extent, as the latter is held to provide a secure footing upon which to develop further practices. The performative aspects of research on specifically *teaching and learning* as such are thereby left reflexively unquestioned. Indeed, even the critiques of discourses of teaching and learning may increase the apparent reality of the concepts through their discursive repetition—teaching and learning becomes a truism, trite, taken for granted, not worth considering. . .

Previous research (e.g. Sargant, 1991) should result in caution. This shows that while researchers and educators may name certain practices as “learning” and “teaching”, for the people concerned, they may name them in different ways, for instance as “play” or “leisure” or “work”. Some of these discourses are more privileged than others and we might question the potential reductionism in naming too wide a range of social practices as learning. It is one of the paradoxes with which educators work that expanded understandings of learning—the range of practices we

can name as learning seems ever-expanding—might actually produce a reductionism, where all social practices are taken to be forms of learning. Whether the same is the case for teaching is another matter of course, although there would appear to be an extension of the teacherly role in much contemporary debate.

This transcendental form of critique might therefore be said to leave us with the idea that we should abandon the discourse of teaching and learning and revitalise that of pedagogy, where the relational aspects are embedded in the concept rather than sustained through the use of the conjunction “and”. However, another line of critique is also possible.

And now for Something Completely Different . . .

The critiques of discourses of teaching and learning above are useful and insightful. However, they would appear to remain framed within a foundational view of knowledge and language. They tend to provide forms of ideology critique which attempt to strip away the mystifications at play in contemporary discourses and expose what is really going on—get to the root of the issue. This is a form of discursive struggle with which we are very familiar in education. It is a language game that suffuses the social sciences. It is the attempt to anchor language with certain specific meanings rather than others, even as the very existence of such discursive struggle points to the insecurity of such a conception. This is an area that has been much debated in many subjects and disciplines in recent years. I do not want to rehearse those debates here. What I am interested in is something slightly different. Rather than provide a critique of the discourse of teaching and learning as a foundation for reframing the debate around concepts such as pedagogy, I want to move in a different direction, one that involves not a problematisation and critique of the “and”, but rather its radicalisation. To do this, I draw very selectively on Deleuze and Guattari within whose work the conjunction “and” plays a significant part, to the extent that it seems surprising how much can be generated from it.

And so I go on, wandering tentatively into the nomadic space of a thousand plateaus (Deleuze & Guattari, 2003). Unlike the work of Foucault, Derrida, and Lyotard, that of Deleuze and Guattari has had relatively little influence on educational research until recently. Yet, like those other writers, their work attempts to refashion our understanding of, and therefore our practices in relation to, the dominant history of western modernity. In other words, their writing is not simply a *writing about* a subject, but also a *performance of* the different forms of writing that makes their critique possible. Central to their work is an effort to undermine foundational and fixed views of language and meaning associated with such pervasive arboreal metaphors as the “tree of knowledge” or “twigging something”. This foundationalism provides the basis for a view that knowledge can grow and be secure, located, wherein language can represent that which exists. The arboreal metaphors suggest a logical hierarchy of root, trunk, branch, twig. All is ordered, all is rooted.

However, as Deleuze says in his interview with Foucault, “representation no longer exists; there’s only action—theoretical action and practical action which serve as relays and form networks” (Deleuze & Foucault, 1997, pp. 206–207). By contrast to the arboreal metaphors, therefore, Deleuze and Guattari (2003) introduce the idea of the rhizome, thereby displacing roots with routes and introducing unexpected eruptions rather than steady growth into the view of language and meaning, wherein desire plays a role in reason, and experience and experimentation are privileged over interpretation.

We’re tired of trees. We should stop believing in trees, roots, radicles. They’ve made us suffer too much. All of arborescent culture is founded on them, from biology to linguistics. Nothing is beautiful or loving or political aside from underground stems and aerial roots, adventitious growths and rhizomes. (Deleuze & Guattari, 2003, p. 15)

Travel is introduced into the framing of language and meaning; things are metaphorically and literally uprooted. This travel is multi-directional and enables all sorts of entwinements.

Unlike trees or their roots, the rhizome connects any point to any other point, and its traits are not necessarily linked to traits of the same nature; it brings into play very different regimes of signs, and even nonsign states. (Deleuze & Guattari, 2003, p. 21)

What is significant here is the way in which that connectedness is represented. In challenging arboreal metaphors, Deleuze and Guattari are challenging the centrality of “to be” as the fabrication through which the world is represented. As Doel suggests (1996, p. 434),

whereas an arboreal system works through branching and hierarchical organisation (a geneology), a rhizome comprises an entanglement of contingent (dis)connections (an antigeneology). A tree or root fixes a central point, and thus an order, from which there emerges a preprogrammed, irreversible, and essentially hierarchical series of bifurcations. By contrast, everything on a rhizome is connectable and disconnectable, everything is reversible and displaceable, and everything can be broken-off or set in play; it is a multiplicity and a becoming, with a consistency all of its own—it does not lead, or refer back, to a being subject, object, unity, or totality.

And this is where we move in an alternative direction, making different connections, to those critiques of teaching and learning that we outlined above. Central to the struggles of the latter are the attempt to uncover what is really going on in discourses of teaching and learning. In other words, what is the case needs to be rooted out in order to find a more adequate conception of what is the case. The transcendental critiques remain within an arboreal system.

But what marks the rhizome? “The tree imposes the verb ‘to be’, but the fabric of the rhizome is the conjunction, ‘and . . . and . . . and’. This conjunction carries enough force to shake and uproot the verb ‘to be’” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2003, p. 25). It is important to bear in mind the play of words here, so beloved of certain strands of social theory and so detested by others, as in French “is” (*est*) and “and”

(*et*) are pronounced in the same way. There is thus a playfulness in the argument, which is nonetheless serious in its intent. The conjunctive “and” here becomes integral to rhizomatic approaches which metaphorically shake the tree of knowledge. In the process, meaning is mobilised. In itself, this is not a new position, as it falls within the tradition of philosophy that seeks to displace an ontology of being and a logic of either-or, with one of becoming and, well, “and”. It is in the particular formulation of their argument and their compelling metaphors that is distinctive in the work of Deleuze and Guattari. They aim to “establish a logic of the AND, overthrow ontology, do away with foundations, nullify endings and beginnings” (2003, p. 25, emphasis in original). And so, we must move on . . .

Paradoxically, what emerges from this is a more tentative form of discourse. Rather than simply being able to say what is the case, the assertion of an authoritative stance on the nature of the world and the meaning of things, Deleuze and Guattari (2003) argue that the “and . . . and . . . and” of the rhizome results in a certain tentativeness, a stammering.

It’s easy to stammer, but making language itself stammer is a different affair, it involves placing all linguistic, and even nonlinguistic, elements in variation, both variables of expression and variables of content. A new form of redundancy. AND . . . AND . . . AND . . . (Deleuze & Guattari, 2003, p. 98; Emphasis in original)

Making language stammer may seem perverse in an era in which plain speech, communication skills, and articulateness are valued and their lack decried. However, this is to miss the point. Even in articulate speech, language can stammer in the multiple conjoinings that are possible through “and”. It is language that stammers as there are always additions, not necessarily the speakers of language. Herein lie creative possibilities for meaning-making.

I would tentatively suggest, therefore, that looking at the “and” in teaching and learning in this way offers different possibilities to those provided through the above critiques. Here “AND is less a conjunction than the atypical expression of all the possible conjunctions it places in continuous variation” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2003, p. 99). While some might want to root the meaning of teaching and learning, on this understanding of the “and” it is ceaselessly shaken, as there is always rhizomatic variation in play.

“And” therefore does all sorts of supplementing work. It involves mediation and mobilisation. It involves power. It may act as the glue between terms but one could easily end up with sticky fingers by taking it for granted and not seeing the multiple forms of mediation to which it points. And the possibility that it should not be replaced by an alternative discourse, but should be radicalised by further additions, more connections, for instance, teaching and learning and pedagogy and curriculum

and didactics and learners and resources and . . . and . . . and . . . In this situation, we would be brave to try and answer the question of what “is” teaching and learning. Indeed the point becomes less one of examining what is the case, and more of finding what sticks.

And so . . . ?

Is this just word play? The answer, inevitably, is yes and no. All discourse is word play in some shape or form. Yet the “and” already points us in directions that mean that we cannot answer the question in any straightforward manner, but stammer a response which already puts in question the very fact that this “is” word play. As Doel (1996, pp. 424, 427) indicates, “the conjunctive ‘and’ unfolds a space that holds onto, whilst hollowing out, that which it relates. . . . It deconstructs the borders, boundaries, and limits which are projected between things”. Conjunctions, connections, and events rather than layers, strata, and levels come to the fore, in which there is always more and more and more. The radicalising of the “and” on this reading already mobilises us to fabricate a range of possibilities which emerge rhizomatically rather than adding cumulatively to the tree of knowledge of teaching and learning. The implications of this for a research programme such as the TLRP are themselves significant, as it points to complex framings that tangle some conceptions of practice based upon the accumulation of evidence.

However, in writing this I am already falling back into the either-or logic that I am meant to be displacing by drawing upon Deleuze and Guattari, privileging the rhizome over the arboreal. This is, however, tension in the work upon which I am drawing. At a certain early point in their discussion Deleuze and Guattari (2003, p. 20) argue that

the important point is that the root-tree and canal-rhizome are not two opposed models: the first operates as a transcendent model and tracing, even as it engenders its own escapes; the second operates as an immanent process that overturns the model and outlines a map, even if it constitutes its own hierarchies . . .

Thus my own positioning of the two forms of critique above as transcendental and immanent. The arboreal and the rhizome do different work, which suggests that rhizomatically we could argue for trees and rhizomes, roots and routes, foundationalism and anti-foundationalism. Would these glueings hold firm? It is clear that Deleuze and Guattari privilege the rhizome over the tree, thereby continuing the binary logic and privileging of one side that Derrida argues has haunted western philosophy. My argument is that both and more are possible, even if they become subject to the types of critique to which Fairclough (2000) has subjected New Labour discourse.

And so, what are the implications of writing about teaching and learning rhizomatically? It certainly shakes the roots of any view that teaching and learning are rooted in decontextualised techniques, indeed that they pre-exist the performances named as teaching and learning. The multi-directionality of the “and” and

its rhizomatic movement points to a range of further connections, additions, that need consideration, as the boundedness of teaching and learning practices becomes unsustainable. It also points to the tentativeness that is both embraced in teaching and learning practices and in research about teaching and learning. In a sense, the stammering of language makes a mockery of any firm assertions about what teaching and learning are and about how one can enable the other. Inferences may be drawn from particular contexts, but manifestations elsewhere are not predictable. Nor can we take for granted the strength of the glue that holds teaching and learning together. One might want to argue prescriptively, as I suggested above, that they should be glued strongly together, but the extent to which such a performance is possible on an ongoing basis is open to question. And maybe we should conjoin some other concepts in our educational assemblages. Malcolm and Zukas (2003) helpfully remind us of pedagogy and didactics. We might also wish to glue concepts such as education (Biesta, 2004) and, from languages other than English, for instance *Bildung* (German) and *formation* (French), thereby entwining a fuller ecology of . . . what? I am left stammering for the all-embracing totalising concept, but am resistant. And not all terms can be glued. Like a bad meal, the components may not stick together. This is a sticky terrain.

The “and” also offers a spatio-temporal understanding of teaching and learning. It engenders a space between them while conjoining them. We might write of teaching as learning or learning as teaching, as with the tradition of autodidacticism (Solomon, 2003), but we are invited to write of teaching and learning. In the process they are separated out and related in the multiple ways of the “and”. This resonates with the position put forward above that there is no one-to-one relationship between teaching and learning. There is a space for action, mediation, mobilisation, conjoining, experimentation, and the exercise of power. It is perhaps then that a focus on the “and” more than that which it conjoins examines the performative ways in which practices are or are not conjoined. In a very real sense, teaching and learning are only made possible by the “and”. Here, once again, we should be open to further conjoinings rather than seek to root ourselves in teaching and learning alone.

The spatial is also temporal. The space that is opened by the “and” therefore also introduces a temporality into teaching and learning, one that we can emphasise by “and . . . and . . . and . . .”. Stammering introduces a temporality in language itself. Earlier, I mentioned Strathern’s (1997) argument that learning is itself something which cannot be evaluated immediately, as it takes time to absorb and reformulate things. Mobilising “and” in the way in which I am is consistent with this view. Teaching and learning take time and the relationship between them may stretch across time and space in unexpected rhizomatic ways. Our learning is through the conjoining we make and those we are allowed and those that are valued. “And” therefore gives a certain credence to contemporary educational discourses of lifelong learning—a certain grasping for more, but not necessarily simply in terms of climbing trees, and maybe more through following different lines of experimenting. The rhizome also points to the significance of life-wide learning in lifelong learning.

Where does this leave us? Rooted to a spot and/or mobilised in different ways? I have attempted to show that as well as critiquing discourses of teaching and learning and suggesting alternative footings, it is possible to radicalise those discourses by focusing on the “and”. While offering different forms of engagement—transcendent critique and immanent radicalising—both are suggestive of moving the discussion of teaching and learning on. Whether we can have critique “and” radicalising I leave open to debate, such are the aporias in which we are glued. “And” may seem an odd point of departure and some may feel this exploration has not told them anything they did not already know. And some may feel that the rhizomatic writings of Deleuze and Guattari are too distant to be glued to the discussion of teaching and learning. But in folding them together, entwining them, I hope for some there are lines of enquiry worth pursuing, not least a genealogy of the discourses of teaching and learning. “And” seems so innocent, yet it is so powerful. And yet the power is in the very mobility and stammering it introduces rhizomatically into language. For the college principal, there may have been no glue between teaching and learning and for Foucault, his is a stickier position. For those of us participating in TLRP-funded projects across different contexts with different participants, it will be interesting to see the extent to which the “ands” outweigh the “ors” and “buts”.

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