

SEMINAR

DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM & PEDAGOGY

Making Academics' Work Visible

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Universities rely upon the collaborative work of academic staff and students, yet the nature of this work has been undergoing profound and rapid change. Neoliberal ways of operating have come to dominate the political landscape of higher education and in an era of supercomplexity (Barnett, 2000), universities are scrambling to 'manage' and control the work academics perform. Barcan (2013, p. 69) describes universities as a "fractured and palimpsestic work world" where three different types of institutions simultaneously coexist: "a scholarly community, a bureaucracy and a corporation". Each of these types of institution has its own demands, values, rhythms, sense of time, and purpose. These competing demands and pressures within the higher education sector have led to a fracturing of traditional academic roles and notions of collegiality, leading to growing feelings of disconnection and emotional insecurity.

Through a series of emergent events that have encouraged sensual ways of knowing, academic colleagues from several institutions have been able to reflect not only on the intellectual, cognitive domain of the work they do, but also on the affective, emotional aspects, thereby making these aspects of their work visible. In this interactive presentation, we consider the competing discourses that frame academics' work and offer ways to enact a collegiality that buffers the current era of emotional insecurity, and which also 'speaks back' to the powerful impersonal university machine. We will discuss the ways we have engaged with colleagues using arts-informed methodologies (Butler-Kisber 2010; Leavy 2015), which harness the power of learning and inquiry through the arts to consider the diverse and emotive journeys of being an academic.

Mark Selkrig is currently a Senior Lecturer in the fields of teacher education and creativities and the arts at Victoria University (Melbourne). His research and scholarly work focuses on the changing nature of educators' work and how educators navigate the ecologies of their respective learning environments. Linked to this focus is an interest in the ways concepts of quality and creativities are interpreted and promoted in education contexts. This focus probes the uneasy tensions and intersections that influence change and the capacity building and agency of individuals and communities. He is always keen to work, talk and collaborate with others who have an interest in these areas. As well as working in higher education, Mark's professional experience includes working in primary and secondary schools, and sexual health education in the community health sector. He is also a practising artist, having participated in numerous solo and group exhibitions and several community-based arts projects.

Ron "Kim" Keamy is an experienced educator, having taught across a wide range of education and training contexts, including initial teacher education at three Australian universities, primary schools, special education settings, prison education, loss and grief education, and as a workplace trainer. He was a Director of Learning and Teaching in the College of Education at Victoria University (Melbourne) from 2013 to 2016. Kim has conducted research into pedagogical approaches utilised in pre-service teacher education courses, and in the professional learning of in-service teachers. Kim's research has mainly been in the area of educational leadership, and now extends into the field of academic leadership. Kim is currently employed as a Teacher Education Researcher in the Centre for Program Evaluation in the Melbourne Graduate School of Education, at the University of Melbourne.