

AARE 2016

What students think about ambiguity in the visual domain:
Fluid transitions in real world learning

Never Stand Still

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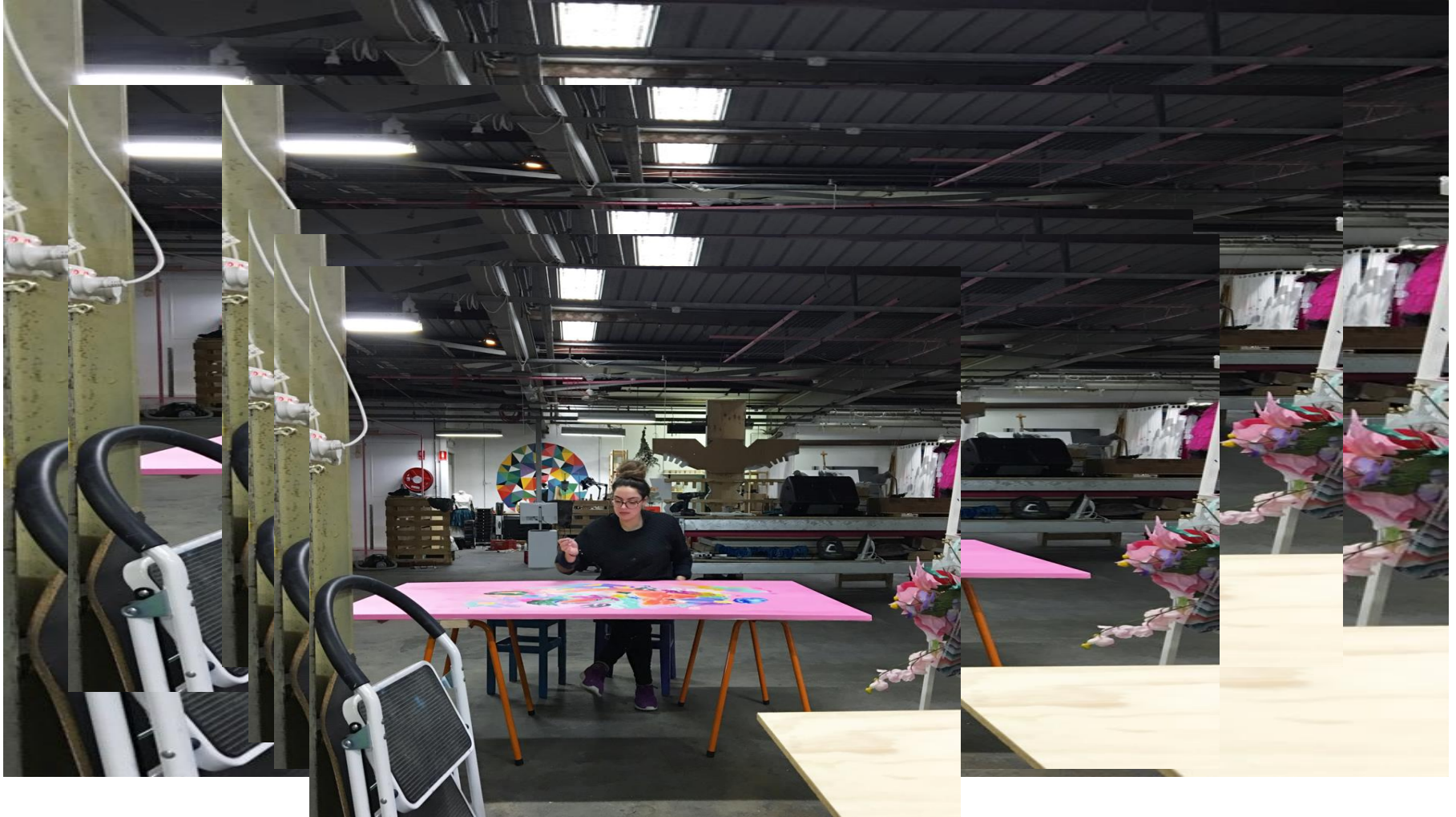
Dilemmas of real world learning and professional identity formation

- **First & Second Year** students' perceptions of their developing professional identities & dilemmas encountered in professional practice.
- 3 faculties: Art & Design, Science and Medicine;
- Keywords: Ambiguity, Dilemmas of Practice, Critical Self-Reflection, Real World Learning, Disequilibrium.

Addressing ambiguity

- Embraced in art, design & media, creative fields of practice, **yet** Stage One students still experience dilemmas in learning;
- Exposing & discussing dilemmas **instead of** hiding them, the key role of actively planning disequilibrium;
- Balanced alongside a clearly articulated structure **how much** disequilibrium?
- Passion, confusion & frustration visible and explicit in professional learning as **“catalysts for conversation”**.

Why focus on dilemmas?



Why focus on dilemmas?

- **Dilemmas of practice** as a theoretical framework with which to analyse the complexity of real world learning; (Windschitl, 2002; Cherry, 2014).
- **A dilemmas space** (Fransson & Grannäs, 2013) ongoing negotiation of issues that arise in everyday work with others;
- **Critical incidents and ethical dilemmas** (Ehrich et al, 2011) interrogating relational space application to developing creative professional knowledge as a moral and ethical field of practice.

Why a dilemmas space?

- **Build resilience** when working with ambiguity and troublesome knowledge;
- Review perspectives of **novice**, beginning professional, graduate, lifelong learner and **expert**;
- Reveal defining moments of **intensity**.

Dewey and disequilibrium

- The power of disequilibrium is the **reconstructive activity** required to reach a state of equilibrium enhanced by attention to learning within and through what we do and what happens to us;
- Having ‘an experience’, flow, seamless, dynamics, completion;

Disequilibrium as a symptom of ambiguity

- Learning as a **transition** from an initial disequilibrium (confusion, doubt) toward equilibrium (satisfaction, knowledge);
- Learner is an active participant in the dilemmatic space and engages with their own learning processes depending upon how they respond to encounters and experiences;

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Mixed Research Methodology

- **Online survey** of First and Second year students in a large tertiary art and design school in Sydney, Australia n=80;
- **Focus groups** (students, staff & industry) & member checks;
- **Research interviews** (industry);
- **Data analysis** of Online Survey and Focus Group transcriptions;

Student quotes from online survey data – examples of unease & ambiguity

- *I'm not professional and I won't ever be* (Transcript, p 35, Response 23).
- *I have felt very **confused** at times during this course so far. For example, when addressing one assessment task I was **unsure** of what the actual aim was, and **what the marker was looking for**. In that time, I felt very **anxious** and very confused* (Transcript, p 35, Response 29).
- *It has been my experience so far that my highest moments of passion and happiness often were the things that also caused my moments of **confusion** and **frustration*** (Transcript, p 35, Response 35).
- *When I felt **humiliation** in front of one of my classes as my idea was disregarded by the lecturer. I felt **upset and not worthy**. I turned that situation into a positive and created an empowering work for myself and anyone who ever feels like that when it seems they are being **put down** by higher forces* (Transcript, p 37, Response 63).



Data Analysis – Online Survey

Student quotes from online survey data – examples of dilemmas from one question:

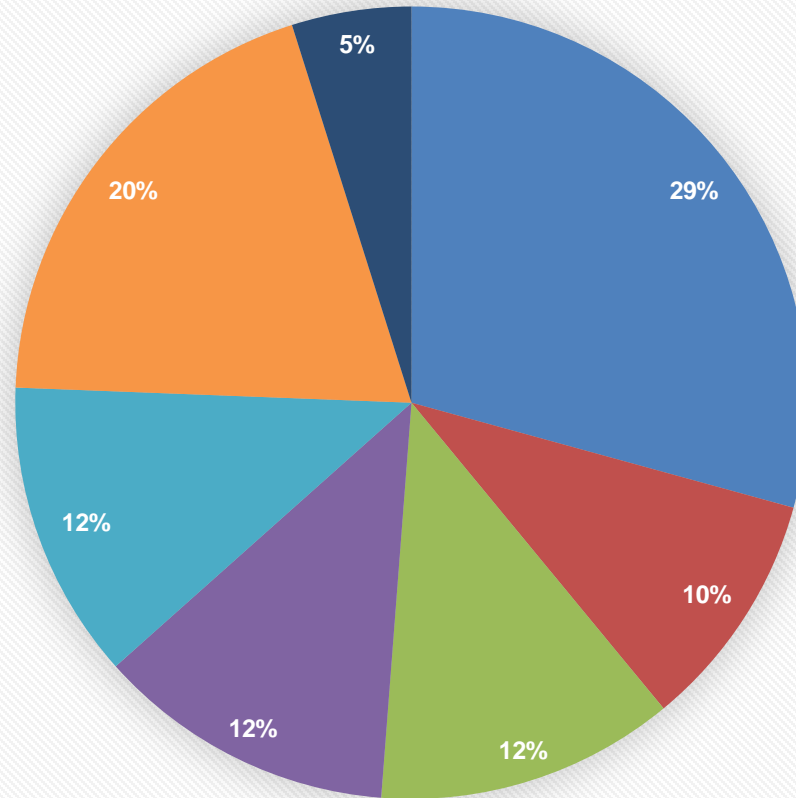
Q9 - Describe one ethical issue that has emerged during your study within this program?

This question provided a useful starting point of analysis from which to quantify data into emergent categories.



Data Analysis – Online Survey

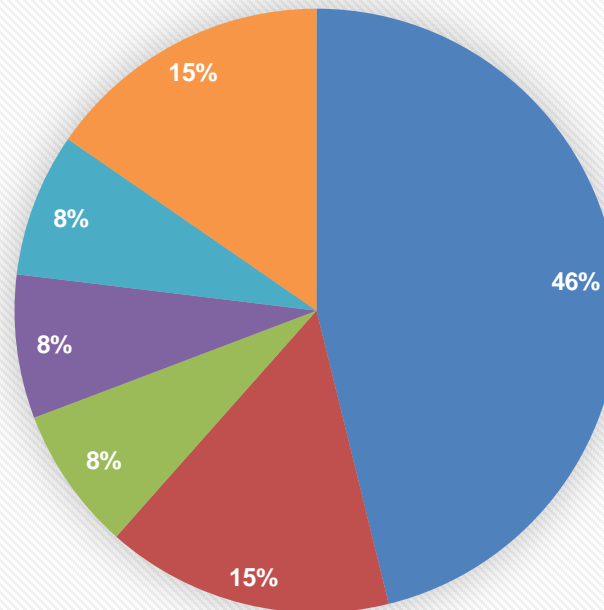
Student Responses Q9



■ Intellectual Property ■ Group Critique/Communication ■ Ambiguity/Communication ■ Financial Constraints
■ Professionalism of Tutors ■ Diversity/Voice ■ Skills Attainment

Data Analysis - Online Survey

Dimensions of Intellectual Property



- Plagiarism
- Creative collaboration/Crediting assistants – working in teams,
- Mass production and the creative workshop
- Ambiguity including what constitutes intellectual property rights/the copyright laws
- Respecting people's privacy
- Cultural sensitivities

Data Analysis - Online Survey

Student Quotes - Dimensions of Intellectual Property

2001 – An ethical issue I have found in this field would be the issue of research. I see other people are not citing sources or citing influences; or using other people's material and claiming them as their own.

1897 – Not being sure whether or how to credit art teams and assistants who helped me make artworks.

1993 – The mass production done by commercial artists and the use of cheap labour to do so. Often these artists don't even acknowledge the presence or credit the work of their fellow practitioners where in most cases, they've done almost all the work.

1955 - When doing videos and things it's hard to determine what information is copyrighted and what things are and aren't people's intellectual property and as a result must be referenced.

1913 – For my lighting class I had a lot of different interesting ideas for assessments but they mostly included taking photos of other people, specifically strangers. However I didn't want to impede on other people's privacy so I had to use myself as a model.

1985 - How ideas develop in a group and who has ownership of what

2010 - Plagiarism. Not necessarily blatant, but some people's works can be uncomfortable similar to ones seen elsewhere/give basically the same message/ use the same technique.

2029 – There are really good ideas I want to manipulate but I guess it is still is a way of taking other's ideas?

2007 – Being sensitive to other cultures. It can be easy when researching to pull ideas from other cultures so sensitive research and execution is required.

1960 - Seeing someone else's work on social media and wanting to make something similar.

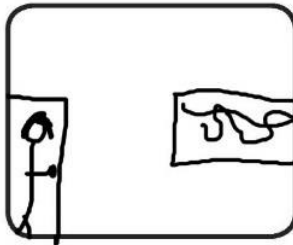
1899 - An ethical issue that emerged for me during my study would be to be honest with my work and not to steal credit from someone else as the risks in doing so are fairly high. I haven't as yet plagiarized someone's work and don't plan on doing so in the future, however being honest with my work helped me to become an honest worker.

1966 – Is it ethical to use part of another artist's previous work in your current artwork?

OUTCOMES - *Story Boards – Animated Encounters – Cultural Sensitivities*

Being sensitive to other cultures. It can be easy when researching to pull ideas from other cultures so sensitive research and execution is required.

Story Board 8: Cultural Sensitivities



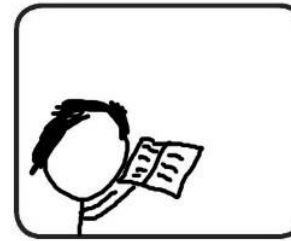
main character opens door and enters
an art exhibit



main character stops to look at a piece of
cultural art



main character goes to a bookshelf
labelled china or culture



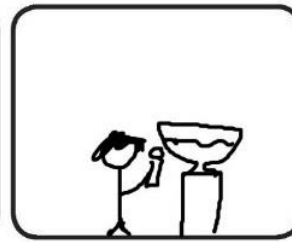
main character opens a book with a picture
of a chinese painting class



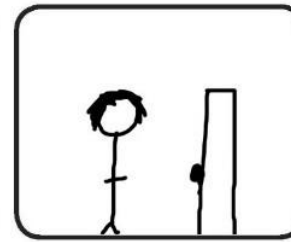
main character rips page out of the book



main character walks up to a blank
vase/pot of some sort



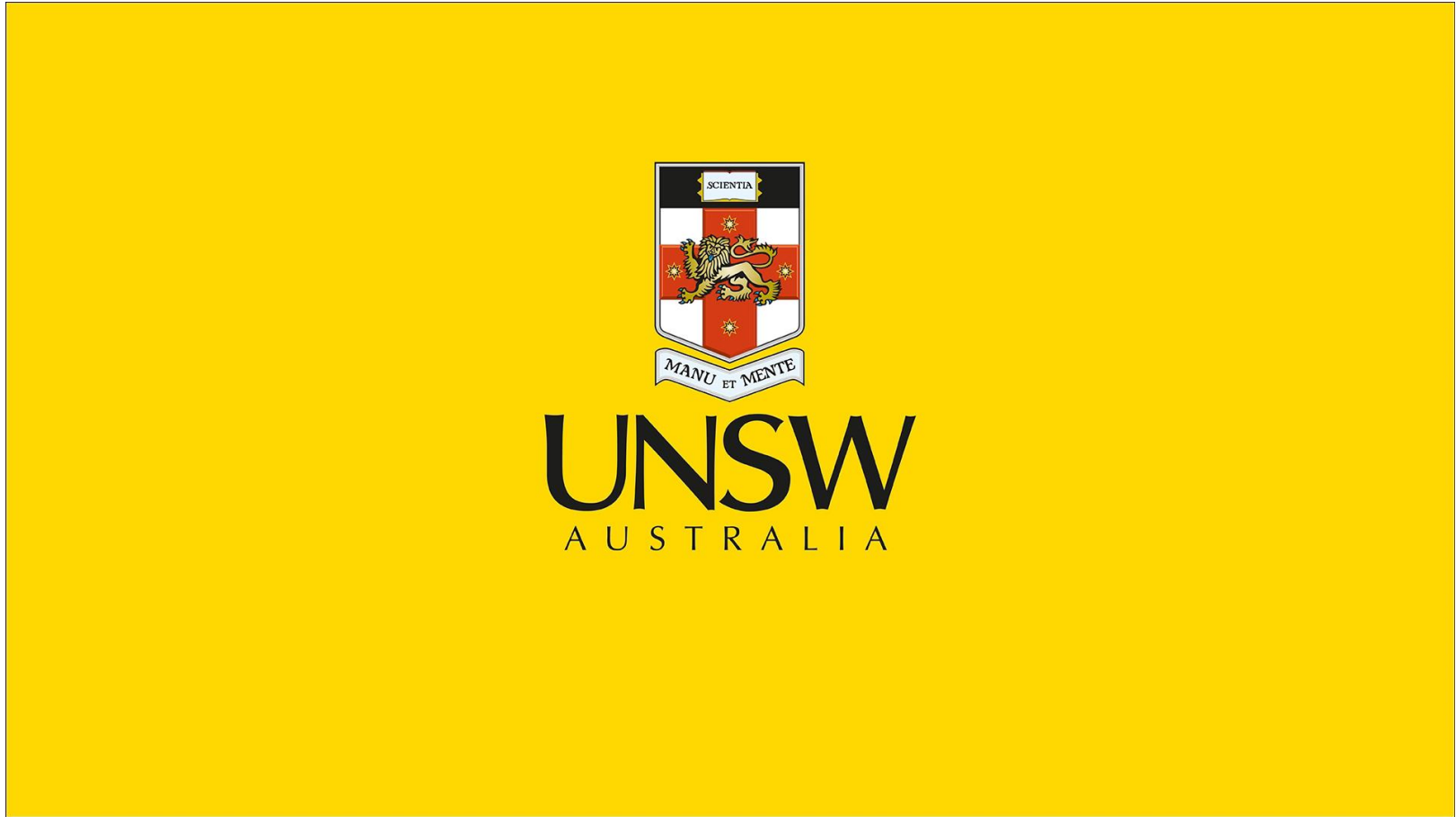
main character paints the design from the
painting onto the vase



main character leaves through another
door

Name: _____

Animated Encounters: Cultural Sensitivities



Addressing Ambiguity

- Case study examples;
- Animated sites of inquiry;
- Dilemmas of practice;

Dafen, one of 10 painter-villages in southern China, 6,000 "painter-workers" copy everything from the *Mona Lisa* to Picasso's *Guernica*. Their assembly-line art is sold all over the world.



- Challenging existing learning models – moving beyond replication & application towards association & interpretive inquiry;
- Embodied visual practice to address IP vs written accounts & punitive actions;
- “Catalysts for Conversation” vs prescriptive explanation.