Plaiting Perspectives
Transdisciplinary connection-making

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We acknowledge the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first inhabitants of this country and pay our respects to the Traditional Owners and Elders, past, present and emerging, of the lands on which we meet today, the Djabugay, Yirrganydji and Gimuy Yidinji people; and the Bindal and Wulgurukaba people. We also pay our respects to the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on whose lands and seas we have carried out our research.
Summary

• The play of plaiting perspectives
• Possible applications
• Inspirations from texts in science and the arts
• Juxtaposition is not just a position
• Performative plaiting roles and process
• Plaiting a paper
• Invitation to play
Playing with plaited perspectives

• Let’s experiment with possibilities!
  – Asking questions about how collaborative work can manifest with an equity of inquiries.
  – The plaiting of practices & perspectives presented side by side.
  – A transdisciplinary mode of collaboration that works *through* the disciplinary areas *into* something new and emergent.
  – An opportunity to work with existing knowledge, skills and attitudes to find new twists.
Plaiting perspectives - applications

• Plaited perspectives can report on results while generating new results – which are the interpretive perspectives.

• There is potential for ongoing dialogue between researchers and fields that generates transdisciplinary results in
  – Papers & articles
  – Exhibitions
  – Performances
  – Conference presentations
  – Events on Country
Scientific perspectives – an example

• An article on niche construction theory that started with one perspective, that of the sceptics (Scott-Phillips et al., 2014).
• It was sent to the advocate for comments.
• Discussion led to a collaborative paper, making differences explicit.
• Features:
  – standard two column layout;
  – taking a case study (lactose intolerance);
  – giving each perspective under separate headings;
  – presenting an evaluation; and
  – a table that presents specific questions and responses from sceptics and advocates in separate columns.
Comparative layouts

A Comparative Ecological Layout

The standard approach to adaptation

The standard approach to adaptation

The standard approach to adaptation

The standard approach to adaptation

The standard approach to adaptation

The standard approach to adaptation

The standard approach to adaptation

The standard approach to adaptation

The standard approach to adaptation

The standard approach to adaptation
Plaited arts perspectives

- Krauth (2011), identifies styles of creative writing exegeses, including plaited texts.

- Plaited texts bring together the creative writing artefact with the exegetical conceptual / historical framework and reflective journals on creative processes.

- In one example, the plaited texts “worked off each other and created their own dialogue” so that the “discontinuous narrative was about reading the gap between exegesis and artefact, and analysing it”.

Juxtaposition / Double Description

• Reading the gap between two perspectives relies on juxtaposition.
• Gregory Bateson describes a method of double or multiple descriptions.
• Phenomena with similar and varying properties are juxtaposed and mapped together to find new abstractions.
• The greater degree of abstraction becomes the pattern that connects them (1980, pp. 70; 84; 142).
Juxtaposition as a method

- Shank (2006, pp. 349-50) proposes juxtaposition as a methodological alternative to mixed methods (quantitative with qualitative methods).
- The emphasis is on transforming understandings rather than enhancing, expanding and elaborating on quantitative research.
- Juxtaposing allows contrasting different areas of understanding:
  - “to see how one might inform the other” and
  - to push understandings “out into areas that have not been considered before”.
Juxtaposition as a method

- No existing theoretical reason to compare the phenomena is required.
- Shank proposes using an arbitrary guiding metaphor as a framework for comparison in juxtapositional analysis.
- However, in environmental research, the research topics are already rich in relevant, productive, materialised metaphors.
## Multi-layered, Multi-method

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantitative Research</th>
<th>Qualitative Research</th>
<th>Performative Research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A focus on outputs of inquiry expressed in quantities—with numbers, graphs and formulae.</td>
<td>A focus on outputs of inquiry expressed in nonnumeric data—with words and images.</td>
<td>A focus on outputs of inquiry ‘expressed in nonnumeric data, but in forms of symbolic data other than words in discursive text. These include material forms of practice, of still and moving images, of music and sound, of live action and digital code’ (Haseman, 2006 p. 6).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the scientific method</td>
<td>social inquiry / multi-method</td>
<td>multi-method led by practice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Possible plaited responses

- numerical data
- sculpture
- prose
- maps
- photographs
- poetry
- charts
- drawing
- oral storytelling
- graphs
- music
- dance
- diagrams
- video
- painting

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Topics and approaches

• Use one concept; for example, leaf decay
  – each researcher writes (shapes / illustrates) about the concept from the perspective of their discipline.
• Take juxtaposed aspects, elements or entities; for example, rainforest canopy* and roofs; roots and rivers; seeds and insulation
  – *note where there is a conceptual metaphor embedded in the topic.
  – each researcher writes their own juxtaposition of the two elements which can include analogy
  – choose two researchers to write from perspective of one element and one researcher to write / shape / illustrate both elements in an analogical juxtaposition (architect on roofs, botanist on canopy, poet on analogy of both).
The Research Inquiry

• Decided on collaboratively.
• Phrased as an open question without prompting for a particular outcome.
• Is there a metaphorical basis for juxtaposition?
• Used as a provocation for responses by each researcher
  – What do I, as a <field of interest>, make of the relationship between roofs and rainforest canopy?
  – How do I, as a <field of interest>, view roofs and rainforest canopy?
  – What emerges from a juxtaposition of roots and rivers?
Roles – curator-researcher

- Curator (general editor) responsibilities:
  - co-ordinating the team
  - managing collaborative decision-making on topics and tones
  - writing the introduction, conclusion and summaries of the three levels of response
  - layout of text and visual artwork
  - collating reference lists
  - inserting links to other media (online)
- Curator as co-ordinator and a catalyst for the collaborative co-practicing
- The curation process as research
Roles – participant researchers

- In this suggested format, three researchers from varied fields.
- Each presents their results / perspectives, with the assistance of an editor / reviewer from their field.
- One may additionally take on the role of curator.
Plaited paper process & structure

Overview
Plaited paper process & structure

General introduction:
- Drafted by one researcher (curator)
  - with input & editorial suggestions from others
- Explains the method
- Outlines the paper structure
- Situates the topic from each of the three perspectives
- Notes pre-existing cultural conceptual metaphors in the topic description
  - (eg: rainforest canopy)
- Leads into the research inquiry by posing the question
### Sections two and three:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researcher 1</th>
<th>Researcher 2</th>
<th>Researcher 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response 1 to the research inquiry</td>
<td>Response 1 to the research inquiry</td>
<td>Response 1 to the research inquiry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Overview of Response 1:
- Input from all researchers then drafted by curator.
- What are the similarities & differences?
- Are there any overlaps?
- Perhaps the introduction of a modified research inquiry from this overview, which addresses the three responses.
## Plaited paper process & structure

### Sections four and five:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researcher</th>
<th>Response 2 to the research inquiry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Researcher 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher 1</td>
<td>Response 2 to the research inquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher 2</td>
<td>Response 2 to the research inquiry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Overview of Response 2:**
- Input from all researchers then drafted by curator.
- Contradictions and correspondences.
- What new ideas or information are emerging from Responses 2?
### Plaited paper process & structure

#### Sections four and five:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researcher 2</th>
<th>Researcher 3</th>
<th>Researcher 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response 3 to the research inquiry</td>
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</table>

#### Conclusions from Response 3:
- Input from all researchers then drafted by curator
- Emergent concepts
- Application of emergent concepts
Plaited paper process & structure

Conclusion:
• Drafted by one researcher (curator)
  • with input & editorial suggestions from others
• Summary of overall process
• Summarises the shifts in the three perspectives
• Notes the team’s perceptions of emergent perspectives and applications / calls to action
• Invites reader / viewer / audience input in further meaning-making, giving avenues for correspondence with the team (eg: email, online forum or blog)
Invitation to play

• Groups of three
• Different rooms / spaces
• 20 minutes - Groups Phase 1: Choose a research topic / question – each member responds. Juxtapose responses and look for emergent understandings:
  • What are the similarities & differences?
  • Are there any overlaps?
  • Perhaps the introduction of a modified research inquiry from this overview, which addresses the three responses.
• 10 minutes - Reconvene to share understandings / outcomes
• 20 minutes - Groups Phase 2: Given the emergent understandings, each member responds again. Juxtapose responses and look for emergent understandings.
  • Are there any contradictions and correspondences?
  • What new ideas / information have arisen (however tangential)?
• 10 minutes - Reconvene to share understandings / outcomes
Resources

- Lengths of paper for responses (cut to your requirements)
- Use paper for noting observations / insights / questions
- Coloured pens / pencils / pastels
References


Crawford, M. (2010). *Fingerprints: Exploration of Identity, Community and Place*. (Doctor of Philosophy), Murdoch University, Perth, Western Australia.


