

REFLECTIVE WRITING 1

WEEK 1 – INTRODUCTION TO CREATING KNOWLEDGE

Universities are knowledge centres. Knowledge is created, applied out in society and taught within universities with the mechanisms of research to lead the education and development of research skills in students to teach them “how to learn and not just what to learn” as the VC Professor Ian Young put it. DVC Professor Lawrence Cram added on to this vision exploring the difference between facts and values where emotions may be the intersection which allows exchange and action to occur. Ms Fowler presented the vast array of opportunities at ANU and with Ms Cody’s encouragement to pursue actively other dimensions of inquiry outside our course of study. The introductory session touched lightly on what we would be learning but it set the tone of the course and set our minds ready for Dr Aat Vervoorn who delved deeper into what it means to know.

Dr Vervoorn believed that “knowledge is never wasted” which contrasted to my father’s opinion - that knowledge is wasted without practise. The distinction in these two opinions is that Dr Vervoorn defined knowing as requiring effort and like a compost heap, shifting with additional information. Dad saw knowledge as the information and skills taught at university which may not be used later and wasted. I now (in week 7, writing this) disagree with my father and believe that whatever is learnt stays with the person be it influencing their decisions or raising their awareness – it all has an effect.

Question: What do you suggest should be done with people who are “self-centric” and believe their way is the best?

To realise that there is more than one way of discovery and the validity of that; there can assist bridging of understanding and tolerance for a more peaceful world.

WEEK 2 – CREATIVITY

TUTORIAL TICKET

“The research article about creativity in Western popular music song writing points out what I’ve learnt previously in English Extension 1, in high school. The poststructuralist argument for “death of the author” were familiar to me as the agency/structure dichotomy I’d learnt briefly, as well, in sociology (SOCY1002). There is no ‘original’ idea, but works that are seen as novel/creative are drawn from individuals perceiving the world around them (domain) in a way that reconstructs the familiar to something different (in the field).

This is what occurs in the Hyperbolic Crochet Coral Reef created by the Wertheim sisters. Margaret Wertheim, from her background (domain) in mathematics took on Dr Daina Taimina’s idea of modelling hyperbolic geometry with crochet. From that, with Christine’s experimentation with embellishment, rebuilt the models which turned out to look organic – coral reef-like. This in turn was accepted in the field as a creative project whose importance is marked because of the global warming concerns.

An important point which resounded is the importance of embodied knowledge against the symbolic, traditional systems of education in order to engage both new learners and familiar workers in the field to make accessible the knowledge and create new understanding.”

Creativity underpins every noticeable idea and it is prevalent within our society more often than thought. It isn’t limited to a set of individuals and it can be trained as McIntyre iterates in the reading. Engagement with personal knowledge and/with the culture around oneself to question and synthesise ideas from elsewhere creates novelty. I found that through my studies, but it took this course – learning to see many different ways, especially in the Pacific way (a different culture) and always being asked to critically engage from the very first tutorial - to realise that it is more than just a rare occasion, it happens every day when something catches my

eye. It's the expectation factor; how cultures and disciplines, have aspects which are characteristic/stereotypical or taken-for-granted and when they are questioned, engaged with and/or have a spin put on it, it becomes something else interesting.

The panel reinforced my initial ideas about creativity with Dr Ferris commenting that she was always labelled as creative because her natural reaction is to reject the orthodox. Dr Flint stressed that knowledge across disciplines can be drawn at depth and at breadth synthesised and integrated to create better solutions that are applicable to the real world – these themes will reoccur in Week 5 – Science and Humanities gap. My learning contrasts with what Dr Farquhar believes in – that it isn't possible to be creative the entire life and there needs to be a grounding in a certain area of knowledge such as a discipline. To me, I believe what you know can be expressed in thoughts and ideas and no matter what, they will always interact in the unique "compost heap" of knowledge each person has which shapes the individual.

Question: Is creativity a way of thinking or presenting knowledge?

Expression of what is known is arguably important if someone thinks of something that can shake another's world, then it should be expressed and fostered to keep the world questioning what is important or right.

WEEK 3 – GREAT CRITICAL THINKERS

Critical thinkers are creative thinkers – they question the world around them and express it in such a way that the world listens. Although it was noted in the Q&A that timing is opportunistic and not up to the thinker/s themselves. It reminded me often of the times I am in groups with a common goal and I propose an idea which is ignored and then taken up later or realised that it was actually a better way. Marx and Wollstonecraft challenged the world which was ready to be engaged with them and their ideas. This resulted in distortion (as it was the case for Marx) or the key messages lasting for a long time because it addressed something fundamental to human nature at that time (as it was for Wollstonecraft).

But it is not a one way process nor is it elitist, as it was clarified in the Q&A time, because thinkers and their subject both change in tandem. Dr Greig showed Marx changing over time to recognition of multiple paths of development rather than just the one ideal he proposed in his manifesto. Just as knowledge changes with new ideas, people change with ideas too – it is a dynamic and organic system of which everyone is part of (back to the compost heap analogy). These great critical thinkers are remembered because they proposed something central to humanity that is still applicable to the changing world today, as I discover in the next week of Ways of Writing Human.

Question: If one is to question everything, then what is one to believe in?

There is a balance between analysing everything and believing even without experiencing the said phenomenon ourselves. Even emotions can be justified or is it that we justify our emotions? What works so far can be believed, but there is a point that beliefs should be reconciled with deconstruction.

WEEK 4 – WAYS OF WRITING HUMAN

TUTORIAL TICKET

"Literature is a powerful medium, which in today's world faces challenges in how it is being presented. Vargas Llosa points this out eloquently in his writing and despairs at the thought of books being "dead" - replaced with multimedia or transferred to digital formats. I agree with his view that literature evokes and creates a universe where readers can escape to – The Letter is an example of this phenomenon. I believe that readers of thought provoking literature are challenged in the way they see the world. With this disrupted view, they come back; to critically assess the world they are in – the differences between the two worlds, fictional and reality, to question the choices they make that shape the world they are in.

Readers aren't moulded to the perspective of the author because as language is not perfect in translating intentions and arguments to words. Instead readers bring their own interpretation and understanding from their past experiences with other readings, or in interactions with others, to draw information from what they are reading, just as I disagreed with the ramblings of Notes from the Underground. And writing is only one medium in communication - with its own strengths and weaknesses."

Writing or drawing is a form of self-expression that can be readily understood by analysing the writing itself as the tutorial activity of writing a piece about ourselves show our personalities and context. I was able to pinpoint a student due to her writing her thought processes down – being early and hard to think in the morning and knowing what she studies.

This was further reinforced in the panel where I didn't understand *Notes from the Underground* but I could understand the pieces at greater depth when I knew the context it comes from. Authors express what they are concerned with and timelessness comes from addressing the shared concern/s and experience/s of being human such as values (like Marx and Wollstonecraft).

Question: Is readability necessary?

Creators create because there is a purpose, if the work is not explained, then the wrong message may be given and even go against the original aim.

WEEK 5 – SCIENCE-HUMANITIES GAP

TUTORIAL TICKET

"Both Snow and Gould point to the Science-Humanities gap which has developed over time to be 'crystallised' (as Snow puts it) as part of society. Both disciplines may seem fundamentally different but they have their strengths (Science – self-correcting/depth, Humanities – re-inventive/breadth) and weaknesses (Science – fragmented/breadth, Humanities – goals/depth) and in unity they can realise an even greater power (Gould). I believe that each discipline is a way or tool to understanding the world deeply in a certain way, but due to their weaknesses miss out on breadth of knowledge which is needed to solve any complex problems such as those found in the world today.

I agree that it is difficult to reconcile, and it may be even more so such as in the UK where education has developed along specialisation for a long time (Snow). But it should be built into the education system earlier so that intellectual snobbery or ignorance, as described in Snow, does not happen. Courses such as the VC courses at ANU offer multi-disciplinary appreciation to be fostered, but as it is selective and so its reach is limited and dependent on students to take the lead in deconstructing views on both sides."

I came into the tutorial believing that there was a divide between the two disciplines without evidence to support my view. I found after listening to my fellow students that I was wrong; the gap is a construct in the mind.

Both fields do have their strengths and weaknesses but they feed into each other as Professor Makkai and Professor Byrne suggested. Professor Bryne viewed that both disciplines aren't as divided anymore as the world has changed from their origins to become more integrated. I could believe that, as this VC course is proof of it, as is my degree (Interdisciplinary Studies (Sustainability)).

Question: Is there a need for interdisciplinary courses or will after-university life show the application for both?

Specialisation has gotten humans to the point we are today and working together can bring multiple ideas to the table. But is it enough to learn it on the field with higher consequences rather than in university?

WEEK 6 – PACIFIC WAYS OF KNOWING

TUTORIAL TICKET

“The central themes across all three readings (Dark, Wendt and Hau’ofa) were of art and culture – of understanding them through other cultures, namely, the Western culture.

Art is central to expressing culture, and for the Pacific it can come in the form of tatau or malu – body art for the Samoans which has been called marks of the ‘savage’ and discouraged by colonisers (Wendt). Art by the Pacific people has been labelled as “primitive” (Dark), the islands as being “islands in the sea” instead of how they see it as a “sea of islands” (Hau’ofa) which shows the belittlement and their knowledge dismissed.

Language and art are mediums for knowledge which represents and conveys depth of beliefs which are often not understood from lack of attempting to understand or experience. Dark mentions that those studying the art often do not practise it and how purveyors of the art give little information about it and the connection is lost to the viewer who cannot understand it at a deeper level.

So it is learning the language and/or tolerance of the views which is important to realising that the culture is not as it seems from the initial outlook.”

I couldn't pinpoint the difference in Pacific ways of knowing to other ways until it was mentioned in the tutorial that it is in a different dimension of knowledge rather than just academic, as week 5 was discussing, it was cultural. I realised that academic ways or Western ways of recording and transmitting knowledge, namely by writing does have its restrictions from attempting to narrow interpretation to what is given on the page. Art and dance - other mediums - also convey knowledge and just as effectively but without language it becomes hard to pinpoint the ideas presented.

A main difference between Western and Pacific cultures I noticed emerge from Dr Teaiwa and Reverend Latai speaking was the strong kinship ties the Pacific people had with one another and with the land. It struck me that thinking collectively is something Western culture could learn from them as facing global challenges such as climate change requires thinking in a more collective and less selfish way for the survival of many species today.

Question: How could tolerance and understanding/appreciation of different views be fostered?

Marginalisation of legitimate ways of knowing, especially of the land they have deep wisdom on, can be discarded and damages done to both the environment and relationships between social and/or cultural groups.

REFLECTIVE WRITING 2

WEEK 7 – INDIGENOUS WAYS OF KNOWING

TUTORIAL TICKET

“Indigenous ways of knowing is posed to be quite different to the Western way of knowing, but I think that Western culture is increasingly moving towards adopting a more tolerant and experience based view of the indigenous people. I see spiritual connections with the environment being mentioned by students in my other course (Sustainable Development) with recognition that it is important to be connected and recognise connections and interconnections within the world. One thing that has been drilled into me by my courses (ENVS1001, ENVS1008, SOCY1002 and VCUG2001) is that there is not one way of perceiving and there are multiple realities depending on the context of the viewer. Indigenous Methodologies in Social Research splits indigenous and Western cultures of knowing into a table with many opposites which I feel is strict based upon the learning environments fostered in my courses.

With this course, VCUG2001, I feel we have done a lot of experience based learning as we are asked to continually reflect upon our own experiences with the readings as well as discuss our thoughts openly in a supportive learning environment which I liken to a ‘Galtha’ (Yolgnu Metaphors for Learning), a connecting place for discussion and collaborative learning.”

This week’s tutorial picked up from where the Pacific week left off – it demonstrated in depth how cultural ways of knowing can interact with other ways of knowing in dynamic and creative ways where labels limit and constrain interpretations. Classification of art works divide what culture is naturally – a dynamic interaction with the environment. The Chooky Dancers were another showing by using creativity and dancing against expectations, our own prejudices are questioned. It questioned the power relations between cultures and the lack of representation they have on their own home land.

The panel also built upon the themes of power relations and communication with the need for ‘practical reconciliation’ - working together on a common goal aids understanding between cultures. This course is based upon Indigenous learning systems, as acknowledged by Professor Baker, which allowed people from different backgrounds to be in a space where experts pitch their ideas and get a dialogue for learning and peer-learning. It’s important to have dialogue to reject the stereotypes as Dr Arabena says to have knowledge systems learn from each other, new ideas can be developed and recognition that a participatory system will be better achieving common goals between interest groups, especially if the context is within a shared home.

Question: What are the reasons for the state of health for indigenous people in this present day?

Australia has a huge gap in terms of health for indigenous people; even with all that funding going to help them. Poor health will impact on their knowledge systems and function so it is important to isolate reasons for this gap to address them.

WEEK 8 – ASIAN WAYS

TUTORIAL TICKET

“Elements of the Code’ resonated with me as I have studied in sociology how clothing the body is a social construct in itself. What is worn conveys an element of the person who chose the item of clothing or is restricted by social norms such as women and wearing dresses. I did not fully realise that writing is a very new form of communication as compared to the history of humans but it makes sense now and intersects nicely with how Thai handbooks record knowledge and embody cultural intersections.

There was an interesting point mentioned in the Thai handbook article – that is that be having a dichotomy of ‘indigenous’ and ‘scientific’ knowledge does not represent well how knowledge is – a mix and adoption into ways of knowing. But there is a lot of dismissal of such ‘unscientific’ knowledge as the introduction to Chinese medicine Youtube video displays in the comments attacking its validity.

Knowledge doesn’t have to be proven or asked to be, it’s as the first short story in the reading points out – the means/medium of transference (finger) points out the truth, where you have to make that mental leap to understand it – and it will resonate inside you.”

Intersections – between context and knowledge (different cultures and knowledge systems) - were the main idea that came out of this week. In the tutorial, “Asia” was shown as not having one meaning but a geographical region filled with many similarities and differences through the “guess the culture” game with cuisine and architecture. When each of us was questioned what our definition of knowledge was, the main idea that emerged was knowledge in the intersection of time and space – what we’ve learnt shapes our progression of ideas and our actions. In this course I can identify our ideas’ progression from the intersection of overarching concepts such as creativity and critical thinking and knowledge systems split into two – cultural such as Indigenous, Pacific and Asian and discipline-based as in the Science and Humanities week.

The panel was specific to mediums used in Asian knowledge systems - the Thai handbooks, textiles and books, which have all changed over time. As Dr Farrelly says, knowledge changes with dissemination and the creation and consumption of knowledge has also evolved with it. This week supported what I wrote in my tutorial ticket but deepened my understanding through seeing specific examples of mediums – language, communication and storage of knowledge.

Question: What is the definition of Asia to you?

The definition of Asia isn’t set and the word is more of an idea which differs for each individual. There has been ridicule of anything besides Western knowledge systems, yet there is a lot of context-based knowledge which should be considered, especially within their context - Asia. A working definition would help frame understanding of possible solutions for problems due to similarities or differences between Asian cultures.

WEEK 9 – ECONOMIC WAYS OF SEEING

TUTORIAL TICKET

“How does economics relate to what I study?”

I study a Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies (Sustainability) so economics is one discipline which feeds into how our world functions and it is important to consider towards sustainability. As with all disciplines by themselves, it has its weaknesses and strengths. In this case I believe it is the double edged characteristic of using models to predict and know the processes of managing limited resources within our world – it allows us to understand the process but at the same time it simplifies them and so does not truly represent how the system is (and is mentioned by DeLong that it is frequently wrong in its predictions).

But it doesn't mean that economics should be dismissed at all – the “three pillars of sustainable development” refer to environment, society and economics – it is a vital area to address and integrate into any policy or management strategy towards a sustainable future.

What do you think defines economic ways of knowing?

To be honest, I never knew much about economics and nor have I studied it so my definitions would heavily rely on what I've been told by an economics student, limited experiences in listening to presentations with economists and the readings provided for this week.

So economics is a social science which relies on simplifying the world to ‘cause and effect’ processes and quantifiable measures to define them. Equations and graphs result as well as models used to aid understanding and make predictions. It's a plastic and dynamic field with a lot of variations in views of the principles (or methodology) which underpin economics as well as the practice of it.

I believe that the main aim is like any other discipline – to understand the world - they ask different questions in relation to their focus on nature or society and use different methods and perspectives to answer them.”

This was the week I was looking forward to albeit apprehensively – I wrote in my application to this course that I wanted to learn what I wasn't comfortable learning by myself with economics being an example. I was chided by an economics student earlier by asking “isn't economics all about money?” and from then wanted to know what it really meant after her very brief explanation leaving more room for questions.

The tutorial this week helped me get a working definition of economics and understand it was more about money, despite a lot of students coming from a similar way of thinking as me who have a loss of faith with economics due to the (environmental and social) situation of the Earth now. By the end I found myself appreciating how economics is just another discipline of thinking – with its strengths and weaknesses and having an important role.

The panel also reinforced my understanding when Dr Henckel defined economics as “people respond to incentives” and acknowledges the concerns people have about it. The main point that struck me is that sometimes wielders of knowledge are those who fail to use it effectively. It could be the lack of instillation of the view that if the data does not match up to the predicted model or hypothesis (in science) then it should be excluded from being widely accepted.

Question: How can economic methodology and outlook be communicated effectively and positively?

Economics has its importance in the future for a sustainable world. Though it is misaligned in the eyes of many people and causes division through prejudices. A way to communicate its theory to be understood by the public will help them understand how the world works - in policy-making and everyday decisions.

WEEK 10 – DEVELOPMENT WAYS

TUTORIAL TICKET

“Development to me is only worth doing if it is ‘sustainable development’. This semester I am studying ENVS1008 which is titled exactly that. My views come from my understanding that the future of the world depends on movement/change/development that is sustainable – good for the environment and all inhabitants. At the same time, I realise that there are societies which do not seem to “develop” in the sense that Sen and Sachs define development as. These societies are minority indigenous groups living in harmony with nature and each other who do not need the “freedoms” which Sen says development does.

I didn’t like Sen’s article - it assumes a blanket solution of development is needed to solve all problems. While development brought good it also brought a lot of bad under a monetary system and by defining aspects of it as “freedom” I feel it is meant to sound good but it isn’t because it is still restrictive – need for money and to work in the system. I feel it is a violent system which justifies changing what was already in balance. I side with Sachs and Estva’s view more but on hindsight it is something admirable twisted into something else.”

Since I’ve been learning about sustainable development, I recognise development has multiple facet. The tutorial brought a lot of ideas surrounding development up, such as globalisation which may have become synonymous with westernisation as well as development as a tool where statistics, GNP are measures though they make assumptions (economics week). The goals of development was also discussed with one being poverty alleviation.

I didn’t particularly get what this all meant until the panel where the history of development was discussed and the two contrasting views of Sen and Esteva were dissected. After the panel I found myself with a better understanding of development as a conceptual framework where a different future is imagined and change/progress towards it is marked out. Depending on what is wished for within groups of society, it is imagined and plotted out.

By the end I came to realise Dr Greig’s views and understood that redefining development was important, such as it relates to my study – sustainable development is development reimagined and worth pursuing. I remember a peer telling me it was dangerous to throw out the past because the past is where we’ve come from and it can be used to change the present and improve the future. Otherwise we’d be in the ocean, without anything to hang on to, as Dr Greig put it.

My issue was with Sen’s use of the word “freedom” which I don’t believe anyone can be truly free and not his purpose (I didn’t catch) of redefining development. I want a sustainable future for humans and I believe in change, so that does make me a believer in development – sustainable development.

Question: How can we engage people to dream big and come together to realise a collective vision?

Imagining a better, collective future allows a common desire to progress towards it. If there is a way to engage people to dream of it and realise they aren’t alone and to empower them to make changes for a better world.

WEEK 11 – ARCTIC ROLE PLAY

SECRET PLAN – WEEK 11: ARCTIC ROLE PLAY

Tutorial Aims:

- Translation of knowledge
 - into action (policy) in the face of pressing circumstances
 - into understanding
 - communication
- Dynamics of knowledge and the conflicts of interests (how do you balance?)
 - Knowledge conflicts? – Frames of disciplines and other knowledge
 - Who owns what? What right do they have?
- How the Arctic can influence us despite lack of geographical proximity

Other asides:

- Complexity of policy making
- Systems thinking

9.05 – 9.10/15

Introductory Activity – personal ideas

What was memorable about the readings

Possible Quotes:

“Yet, the Arctic circle was not used as the definition of the southernmost boundary of the Arctic, since all the Arctic states and the working groups defined “the Arctic” for their own purposes.”

“The only clear change that took place when moving from the AEPS to the Arctic Council was an improvement in the status of membership accorded to the indigenous peoples, and more specifically, to their international organisations that represent either one people living in many Arctic states or many indigenous peoples living in one state.”

“It (the Arctic Council) has not become a regulatory body, although the recent scientific assessments have been accompanied by policy recommendations, which represents the closest that the council has come to the realm of governance. Yet, no serious effort has been taken to go beyond the existing paradigm of producing non binding technical guidance or fairly abstract policy recommendations. And, without any legal status, the council seems likely to continue with a similar sort of body, its primary focus being to sponsor scientific assessments and to function as a platform for environmental protections and sustainable development discussions between the established Arctic actors.”

“Global feedbacks already arising from arctic climate change suggest that anything but the most ambitious constraints on greenhouse gas concentrations may not be sufficient to avoid dangerous interference with the climate system.”

What you thought the Arctic was before and after you read the articles

9.15 – 9.25/30

Presentation of personal views

How does the Arctic region relate to you and your discipline?

9.30 – 9.40/45

Introduction on the tutorial (aims, overview of activities)

Definitions being used for the tutorial (Arctic region, Arctic Council, 4 interest groups)

9.45 – 10.00/05

Introduction of activity – information exchange

Consolidate interests/concerns within interest groups
Relate interests/concerns to members of other interest groups

10.05 – 10.15

BREAK

10.15 – 10.40/45

A big group role play – discussing possible scenarios with input from different interest groups

Possible Questions

1. Should China be granted permanent observer status?
2. Knowing that there will be environment changes in the Arctic caused by climate change what will you* do? (What do you envision your* role in the future related to the Arctic?)

* refers to your interest group

Discussion

10.45 – 10.50

Conclusion and possible questions for panel

I came into the workshop feeling hesitant about running a tutorial then felt overwhelmed at the enormity of the task and left feeling a bit lost about activities. I realised that this was the concluding tutorial where using our knowledge of disciplinary, cultural and the lead up into how it fits together in the real world, we will have to somehow come up with activities to wrap it all up.

The main messages I wanted to communicate was how knowledge is translated into real life – action, understanding and communication and the dynamics of knowledge in conflicting with interests. Also the complexity of agreeing to action (policy-making) and systems thinking – every action or non-action will impact upon more than one aspect of the world. To fit it all in, we decided to do a role play to replicate dynamics of discussion about the Arctic, after all, it is the Arctic Role Play week.

I think we did manage to leave them with a few questions to think about the complexities and how knowledge interacts with each other as well as interests.

The panel built upon what we aimed to do, but more in depth as Professor Hamilton had much more knowledge than we did. In addition, it made me think about how I was able to adopt my stakeholder's views easily and let go of what my own individual views were and the behind-the-scene processes behind such meetings. His description of his involvement in getting an agenda through to save the polar bears without being inside the meeting itself, made me think how it is possible to influence decisions from the outside.

Question: What is the future for the Arctic region as you see it?

The Arctic is a vital part of Earth's functioning as a system, in the face of climate change and increasing interest by other countries to its future, I think it'd be important to consider the view of someone with much experience about the region.

WEEK 12 – PREPARATION WEEK

In the tutorial our group finalised our overarching theme and four meta-themes. Before the tutorial, we each had come up with several themes and meta-themes but mine was chosen. I had these ideas based off on the Global Cross Disciplinary Tournament (GXT) run by the ANU XSA so I was hesitant about using them in the presentation. The overarching theme was 'Creating a space for fostering/creating knowledge' with the meta-themes being curiosity, open-mindedness, engagement and critical thinking. After setting the order of speaking we defined what each were then found links between the meta-themes, struggling quite a bit to separate them as they were more than closely linked to each other.

In the panel time we came up with keys to our presentation delivery – use of a fire prop (Alicia) and a fire analogy (Alicia, and further developed by me) as well as standing on the different corners of the room to represent that we are creating a space for creating knowledge, stimulating thought (Melvin).

To me, developing this presentation helped me solidify what I've learnt over the course, not specifics about certain knowledge systems, but about commonality about knowledge systems over space and time then relate it to my own experience.

Question: What can *you* add to creating spaces for knowledge you find important to be fostered?

We all had input into our presentation, going along to help what we believed we should communicate. Reflection within us and dialogue with others will help consolidate our views and beliefs to find value in them so creating spaces for these activities are important to keep our ideas grounded, help them take off, find support or question and think again about our lives.

WEEK 13 – PUBLIC POLICY

After our presentation, I realised that I shouldn't be hesitant about using similar themes to the GXT, after all the ideas have been recreated in our minds, for a different subject. It is as creativity works – using ideas presented and recreating it to something different. I was struck by how each of us tackled our speech even though we did discuss and run through what we'd be saying. This reinforced the idea of perception and engaging in dialogue with the subject matter through our own experience.

Likewise the other tutorial presentations were all different and engaging. I liked the last presentation best about the environmental ways of knowing and found it used analogies very well (frog in the well, network of frogs to see the sky but never conceiving of the ocean) as well as using their discipline (which they all shared) to link all the course themes and knowledge systems.

Of one of the presentations where the overarching theme of climate change was also the topic addressed in the panel, but in two parts – the science and the social science.

I found Professor Lockie's part more striking only because I've heard Assoc. Professor Lindesay's presentation on climate change twice before. Added on to my understanding was the separation of attitudes of denialism between weak and strong and the differences. I was able to relate with personal examples of people I knew and understand that it also applies across different contested views.

The most important message I found was his warning to be mindful of polarisation which splits down into "only" options. This resounded with me in observing the climate change action debate in which the carbon pricing scheme was only achieved through forced scraping and is still not widely accepted.

Question: Is there a way to bridge understanding across an already polarised debate such as climate change?

There is no chance of a happy resolution unless there is a calm and open-minded dialogue between the difference stances. If there is a way to bridge understanding or wipe the slate clean then it would be a more fruitful discussion and a conclusion which can be agreed upon.