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Teachers' reflective practice in the context of twenty-first century learning: applying Vagle's five-component post-intentional plan for phenomenological research

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ABSTRACT

Vagle's 'post-intentional phenomenological research approach' applies post-structural thinking to intentionality. I apply his five-component research process, reflect on some initial findings of semi-structured interview discussions with 25 participants, and consider a meta-reflection by some participants on those findings. My larger on-going qualitative research programme is framed by the question: *What is the influence of the concept of 'twenty-first century learning' on the work of teachers and the strategic actions of leaders at a selection of New Zealand schools?* 'Twenty-first century learning' manifests in mandated curricula in the form of the skills, competencies, dispositions and attributes required for productive citizenship. In tandem is the parallel shift to digital pedagogies, increasingly enacted in flexible learning spaces. In interviews, participants considered teachers' reflective practice in relation to teaching and leadership approaches suited to twenty-first century learning. Selected participants further reflected on and responded to these findings. This article demonstrates research in action, and to emphasise the point, should be read following a reading of an earlier article published in this journal [Benade, L. (2015a). Teachers' critical reflective practice in the context of twenty-first century learning. *Open Review of Educational Research*, 2(1), 42–54.]

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Introduction

Vagle (2010, 2014), an American phenomenological education researcher, argued that intentionality is the most important of the 'old' phenomenological ideas to retain. Intentionality is 'used [by classical phenomenologists] to describe the way in which humans are connected meaningfully with the world' (2014, p. 112). By 'posting' intentionality (giving it a post-structural interpretation), it is possible to move beyond the place and language used by these earlier phenomenologists, who were sometimes critiqued for being too close to the Cartesian model that Husserl sought to challenge, or for being

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apolitical. When researchers focus on the *variant* features of a phenomenon, they can 'join the conversation about multiplicity, difference and partiality' (p. 114).

Vagle goes on to assert post-intentionality as more dialogic than 'old' phenomenology, opening possibilities for dialogue with other positions, and to this end, he draws heavily on Deleuze and Guattari's notion of 'lines of flight' (1987; cited by Vagle, 2014), a metaphor enabling the researcher to resist binaries and rigid definitions. Lines of flight are a reminder not to focus on the essence of a phenomenon, but to imagine what it might become. To support researchers to enact his post-intentional phenomenology, Vagle proposed a five-component research process. My intention in this article is to apply this process to understand the relationship between the concept of twenty-first century learning (the phenomenon of interest) and teachers' reflective practice. I do so, despite having a preferred affinity to critical theory, particularly critical pedagogy.¹

Vagle's post-intentional methodology

Vagle's five-component process is nonlinear, and the researcher may move iteratively in and out, and among the components while moving through the research. Furthermore, the details he provides within each component should not be regarded as a requirement; rather, individual researchers ought to use those elements that work well. Vagle's components:

- (1) Identify a phenomenon in its multiple, partial and varied contexts.
- (2) Devise a clear, yet flexible process for gathering data appropriate for the phenomenon under investigation.
- (3) Make a post-reflexion plan.
- (4) Read and write your way through your data in a systematic, responsive manner.
- (5) Craft a text that captures tentative manifestations of the phenomenon in its multiple, partial and varied contexts (2014, p. 121).

There are many features within each of these components that will be familiar to qualitative, inductive researchers; some may be less familiar to those who focus on experimental, quasi-experimental, effectiveness or meta-analytical forms, or, conversely, those who engage in deeply theoretical and abstract research. The production of this article has come at a juncture when the research study on which it is based had been in process for a year; thus, some of Vagle's components have been applied retrospectively (notably step 3). Aside from this limitation, what follows represents a coherent and honest attempt to provide a worked example that blends philosophical ideas, research methodology and a current programme of research that is evolving and developing.

Research component #1: identify a phenomenon in its multiple, partial and varied contexts

Identifying a phenomenon, argues Vagle, requires the researcher to state the problem, complete a partial review of literature, make a philosophical claim relative to the problem, articulate the phenomenon and research questions, contextualise the phenomenon and select participants (2014, pp. 122–128).

The research problem

... the emergence of ubiquitous connectivity, increasingly mobile digital technologies, and the power of the internet pose the most profound challenges and opportunities the education system has ever faced. (Ministry of Education, 2014, p. 2)

Vagle's first step is common to many (most) research projects, requiring a statement of the large overarching concern, and justifying the importance of focusing on the perceived problem. The epigraph provides a meaningful entrée then to a brief discussion of the research problem, and its justification.

A current policy priority of the New Zealand Ministry of Education addresses the challenge that digital technology presents to education, and it calls on school leaders and teachers to develop new approaches to pedagogy more appropriate to meeting the aim of equipping young New Zealanders with twenty-first century skills. Thus, the problem this study focuses on is related to the dramatic changes brought about by digitisation, which has added to the complexity of globalisation and, linked to these developments, the urgent requirement for schools to become places that realign their intentions and purposes to ensure students are well prepared for this rapidly changing world. These new approaches to teaching and learning are having a powerful influence on both the way teachers work, and how they reflect on their work. Simultaneously, the strategic behaviour of school leaders is fundamentally challenged to manage and lead these changes.

Do teachers and principals understand this urgency? What changes are teachers making, and how are their principals supporting them? It is especially important to know how teachers and principals are influenced or affected by these changes and imperatives. Not all teachers and principals will respond in the same way or equally quickly; so it is valuable to know and understand what may be preventing them from acting and responding. As rational action is likely to be supported by reflective thought, it is significant to know and understand the awareness and understanding teachers and principals have of such thinking, how it should influence their action, and what they do to enact such thinking.

As there is a noticeable absence of critical enquiry into the demands made on New Zealand school communities, teachers and principals by the imperative to 'educate for the twenty-first century', and even less consideration of the relationship of Māori and Pasifika to the practice of twenty-first century learning in New Zealand schools, this qualitative study will seek to close this gap in New Zealand education literature.

Literature review

Vagle downplays the place of extensive literature reviews, as 'the primary goal in post-intentional phenomenology is to capture tentative manifestations of the phenomenon as it is lived – not use [*sic*] existing theories to explain or predict what might take place' (2014, p. 124). The literature becomes more important, he argues, in the final write-up. Vagle's position on the literature review – indeed, on several aspects of his methodology – bears some resemblance to grounded theory (see Dunne, 2011, on the [contentious] status of literature reviews in grounded theory). Limitations of space here preclude a summation of my review of literature in the twenty-first century learning study. Readers are,

however, referred to my recent article in this journal, which performs this task (Benade, 2015a).

A philosophical claim

It is important, says Vagle, to enter into at least one philosophical ‘conversation in phenomenology’, remembering that post-intentional phenomenology treats ‘all knowledge and all philosophical ideas as partial, fleeting, malleable, and ever-changing’ (2014, p. 124). The claim that I wish to promote here is that this twenty-first century learning study can be informed by an approach that blends critical theory and critical hermeneutics. Despite some differences, there is a strong overlap between critical theory and critical hermeneutics, and this too is a discussion I have detailed recently in this journal, which performs this task (Benade, 2015a). Suffice it here to say that critical theoretic research rejects positivism, exercises an option for social justice, overtly positions the researcher, seeks to strip away ideological layers of power and aims to have practical value in socio-political life (see Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2012, for a detailed discussion of these qualities). Ideology provides the grounds, argued Roberge (2011), for the complementary relationship between hermeneutics (which has deep roots in phenomenology) and critical theory, because a critical hermeneutics will engage in interpretive activity that will extend beyond the visible ‘to the exposure of concealed motives that move events and shape everyday life’ (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2010, p. 148).

Bringing together these approaches to research is consistent with Dewey’s (1910) idea that reflection is spurred on and encouraged by any challenge that ‘perplexes and challenges the mind so that it makes belief at all uncertain’ (p. 9). Steinberg and Kincheloe (2010) advocated bridging critical theory and the bricolage of postmodern and post-structural theories that reject boundary-setting and Cartesian rationality. The challenge here is to integrate this dialogue and Vagle’s methodology.

My intentionality statement: a statement of the phenomenon

Vagle suggests that the researcher’s personal understanding of intentionality should be mapped out, providing it some philosophical roots. This task must lead into an identification of the phenomenon (which must be related to the intentional relationship of people to the world). The researcher would end by writing a research question, beginning with: ‘What is it like to ...’; or ‘What does it mean to ...’; or ‘What is it to find oneself ...’. This particular framing of the question is intended to draw forth the concept of intentionality. Vagle’s relatively late placement of the question is not consistent with my own general practice (and advice). I am reminded, however, of his commitment to ‘knowledge [as] always, already being tentative and never complete’ (2014, p. 121) and his position that ‘phenomenological research components should not be viewed [as] linear ...’ (p. 122). Thus the sub-components may be re-ordered.

The concept of intentionality is one that Heidegger regarded as a key finding or discovery of phenomenology (Gorner, 2000). It was an idea developed by Husserl, who emphasised consciousness, and always in terms of *consciousness-of*. Thus, intentionality expresses the reaching forward into the world beyond consciousness. Husserl believed that any kind of entity and any number could yield to objects of consciousness. Entities could be

physical objects, people, ideas, particulars (this patch of colour), universals (the general concept of colour), states of affairs and mental entities, such as thoughts, images and feelings.

Gorner (2000) argued that Heidegger did not believe Husserl went far enough. Heidegger emphasised Being (*Dasein*), which he contrasted with Husserl's consciousness. Quay (2015) helpfully emphasised the notion of be-ing as a verb, rather than *Being* as a noun, emphasising the self-reflective 'experiencing experience while living it' (p. 7), thus clarifying how *Dasein* is the bearer of intentionality and is oriented towards entities. Heidegger differed fundamentally from Husserl by emphasising the concept of *Besorgen*, namely a 'concernful having to do with' (Gorner, 2000, p. 79). Being is thus oriented towards things or entities that can *matter*.

Vagle describes intentionality as the inseparable connectedness between subjects (people) and objects in the world (animate, inanimate and ideas). Intentionality signifies 'how we are meaningfully connected to the world' (2014, p. 27). It does not, however, refer to planning to take action, or a deliberate choice. Regarding post-intentionality, Vagle indicated that 'post' indicates an identified association with post-structural approaches. Research understanding is revealed 'in the dynamic intentional relationships that tie participants, the researcher, the produced text, and their positionalities together' (p. 30). Post-intentionality enables us to constantly critique our own position, which is an ethical matter requiring researchers to be conscious of their own positioning and to critique their performance in the field. For Vagle, 'this positioning is only known through intentionality' (p. 30), once the step has been taken to 'post' the concept of intentionality.

The phenomenon of interest to me is the concept of 'twenty-first century learning', which is at once bounded and unbounded. At one level, it seems to suggest an obvious link to teaching that not only incorporates digital technology, but that is transformed by this technology. At a less-bounded level, it is a concept that indicates some degree of understanding of a rapidly changing world, and that, for children to be prepared for such a world, requires them learning certain skills and competencies. At an even more porous level is the intimation that this concept rejects past ways of schooling, calls on teachers to abandon positions of power and unseats the role and place of traditional and disciplinary knowledge. More extended still, this concept appears to call on teachers to undergo fundamental mind shifts and to learn dramatic new ways of engaging with their students. Across this range of interpretations are located the teachers who are appealed to, focussed on, targeted and implicated in various ways by the concept of twenty-first century learning and its proponents and adherents. Likewise, principals are expected to take up strategic positions and lead through this diverse call for change, as well as to greet and take up the enormous opportunities presented to them, their teachers and their school communities. Last, but by no means least, is the question of social justice, and how or to what extent, these calls for change, and the supporting infrastructural and practice changes, actually support marginalised students. These concerns led to this focussing question: *What is the influence of the concept of 'twenty-first century learning' on the work of teachers and the strategic actions of leaders at a selection of New Zealand schools?* A limitation of the worked example presented in this article is that this question was framed before I came in contact with Vagle's work. It is, however, in my subsequent work, within the same study, that I am able to mitigate this weakness, as Vagle's influence

has encouraged me to reorient questions raised in interviews, focus groups and in my own data analysis.²

The concept of intentionality, from Husserl to Vagle, holds some promise for me as a researcher. Vagle's post-intentionality liberates me from the view that I have to extract a universal or defined essence of meaning and understanding of this phenomenon. Simultaneously, I am comfortable with the idea that the knowledge developed from the course of this study exists in reality, and not simply in my mind or those of my participants. We will share and develop mutual understandings. Heidegger's notion of having concern for entities that matter sits very comfortably with my sense that I reach out to the Other (my participants) in a way that prioritises their experience and that also recognises the phenomenon of twenty-first century learning as fundamentally significant for them and me. I am able to keep my ethical focus using strategies Vagle suggests, such as his 'bridling plan' (discussed below), which ensures I do not rush to judgement, and constantly reflect on my own positioning in relation to this study and its participants.

Research component #2: devise a clear, yet flexible process for gathering data appropriate for the phenomenon under investigation

The final two requirements of Vagle's first research component are to contextualise the phenomenon in 'multiple and varied contexts' (2014, p. 127) and to select participants. My reading of these requirements is that they constitute both part of one's thought processes underpinning research design, and the actual presentation of that design. I have therefore followed this assumption in my worked example, and included these requirements in this second component. In regard to this second component, Vagle advises researcher flexibility and creativity, and though he acknowledges (or privileges) interviews and observations as key data sources, he recommends some eclecticism in using methods that come from different approaches – as long as what is used helps make sense of the phenomenon.

The research design

The design of the first phase of this twenty-first century learning research programme is a case study of three primary schools (PS 1, 2 and 3) and three secondary schools (SS 1, 2 and 3). PS 1 and SS 1 are new schools built as modern learning environments (MLE); PS 2 blends single-cell classes and MLE; SS 2 has adopted a 'Bring-Your-Own-Device' approach across the curriculum; PS 3 and SS 3 are conventionally built schools with single-cell classes, and limited information and communication technology (ICT) use across the curriculum.³ Participants (identified by fictitious names) from each of the schools were purposively chosen (see Table 1). In addition, four participants located outside of the six schools were invited to participate in interviews, and agreed to do so. They are identified in Table 2.

Semi-structured interviews are the chief source of data in this phase of the research. In these interviews, participants are asked to think about, and discuss, what 'twenty-first century learning' means to them in concept and practice. They are also asked to think about, and discuss, the idea of reflective practice and the view that teachers' reflective practice is enhanced by the use of digital technologies. In the case of the principals, I want to understand the strategic actions they take in response to twenty-first century learning. Teachers tell me how they perceive their practice changing in light of the

Table 1. Participants (fictitious names) by school and position.

School	Principal	Head of e-learning/ICT	Experienced teacher	Inexperienced teacher
PS 1	Eric	Moana	Moana	Susanna
PS 2	Teresa	Karen	Caroline	Bella
PS 3	Harold	Alan	Liz	Mohini
SS 1	Nick	Dianne	Dawn	Quentin
SS 2	Tania	Steven	Tracey	Catherine
SS 3	Eugene	Mary	Trevor	Nigel

Table 2. Individual participants not linked to case study schools (these tables were first presented in Benade, 2015b).

Individual	Role	Comments
Brian	Ex-principal	Was a recent leader of a futures-oriented secondary school
Nicole	Consultant to schools	Engages with schools on e-Learning
Neil	Consultant to schools	Engages with schools on e-Learning
Evelyn	Principal	Leads a traditional low-decile regional primary school

challenge offered by the concept (and policy) of twenty-first century learning. The experience of principals and leaders of ICT/e-learning in managing change, specifically in regard to evolving teacher practice, is significant. Interviews have been transcribed and analysed to develop thematic patterns.

Other sources yet to incorporate include website evidence (of the schools) and suitable online materials in the public domain (such as blogs and twitter feeds). These latter sources help build up the picture of how educators, teachers and commentators are relating to the various attributes of twenty-first century learning. The various online sources will be analysed either to reveal new themes or to support the development of themes that emerge from interviews. A second layer of source evidence from the participants has emerged with some participants having the chance to provide feedback in response to selected interview findings. Finally, the various logs, memos and notes I have written as I have progressed through this research process will contribute further evidence, particularly in relation to my own personal lived (and living) experience of the phenomena of twenty-first century learning.

Research component # 3: make a *post-reflexion* plan

Vagle regards this as perhaps the most important part of the research process. This aspect is what focuses researchers on the value of taking a self-reflexive position, when one consciously thinks about one's personal axiology, assumptions and personal relationship to the research. For Vagle, this self-interrogation is critical if one is to engage in a post-intentional methodology that leads to recognising knowledge as partial and fleeting. Commence with a 'post-reflexive statement', akin to a subjectivity statement in which the researcher's role, beliefs and perspectives are described, particularly in relation to the phenomenon.

My 'post-reflexive statement'

My thinking and writing seeks conceptual clarity is often drawn to individual agency and human flourishing, considers ways education prepares us to engage in a rational democracy, and critiques the social structures that undermine social justice. I am influenced by the

analytical philosophy of education, liberal theory and Marxism learned and experienced as an undergraduate, the writings of Paulo Freire having much appeal. Freire's thoughts cohered strongly with my adult life experiences of teaching part-time in a night school providing second-chance schooling qualifications to working Black South Africans; of teaching in working class and non-racial schools in pre-1994 South Africa; and of seven years in a low-decile, predominantly Pacific Island Auckland secondary school. Freire nourished me as a practitioner, and he continues to nourish my thinking as a researcher.

The general paradigm to be associated with Freire is critical theory, which Creswell (2014) refers to as transformative theory. The research question that focuses on the influence of the concept of twenty-first century learning on a selection of principals and teachers suggests, however, a concern with the 'lived experience' of a group of participants, and seems, at first glance, to lack a political dimension. Thus, I questioned whether critical theory was the correct paradigm to inform my apparently phenomenological inquiry. Being open to new possibilities, I have begun to explore the relationship between critical theory and critical hermeneutics, the phenomenological tradition led by Gadamer, in relation to making sense of my data. The comments made here can be read in the context of endnote 1, which helps capture some of my personal and professional motivations. Vagle's appeal (indeed, the appeal of many 'post' positions) is that I can be liberated of the tight restrictions of tried and trusted paradigms, and begin to experiment, in a playful, but professionally and scholarly way, with paradigms that might be both novel and uncomfortable, if this will enable me to better represent, and comment on, the developments in education I research.

Post-reflex as you gather and analyse data

Vagle advises the maintenance of a system of journal writing, and logging details after various data-gathering events. He has taken a flexible approach, suggesting researchers use any suitable form of capture (such as Word files, handwritten logs or blogs, as examples), or form, so long as it becomes 'a space to wonder, question, think, contradict yourself, agree with yourself, vent, scream, laugh, and celebrate' (2014, p. 133). I have adopted a research journal design suggested by Hughes (2006), namely a grouping of four dimensions: observational notes (descriptive notes of events such as interviews, with little interpretation); methodological notes (a reflection on methodological aspects and researcher actions); theoretical notes (making meaning of data, and initial explanations) and analytic memo (the place to bring several inferences together, noting patterns or recurrent themes, including an attempt to link to the literature). What follows are examples from relevant, recently written entries.

Futures education/twenty-first century learning research programme: researcher journal

26/9/2014

Methodological note

I am trying to put into action the steps that I have figured out as a result of reading the Vagle article a few months' ago, on developing a 'post-intentional phenomenological research approach' (2010).

From his second component (*Devise a process for collecting data appropriate for the phenomenon under investigation*), he suggests going back to his participants to get some further feedback, in the form of 'lived experience descriptions'. The idea I came up with was to engage all the first-round participants in thinking reflectively about my findings on reflective practice. This is achieved by having them think about the findings using a 'Plus/Minus/Interesting' (PMI) chart and also asking a range of reflective questions that allow the participants to probe what they think are the assumptions of the other participants ...

Theoretical Note

Reflective practice enables practitioners to *be* reflective. A central feature of this reflectivity is the questioning of assumptions. Many participants reported in this study took the view that reflection requires teachers to have certain dispositions, such as the willingness to write one's thoughts about one's practice. Courageous practitioners share these thoughts with colleagues, invite feedback, question their own practice and commit to change. Some participants, such as Susanna (teacher, PS 1), understood themselves to be reflecting when they engaged in a process of self-questioning and evaluating evidence. A reflective teacher, according to those reported here, is able and willing to look outwards and inwards; can both articulate inner thoughts and listen to others; and is committed to self-questioning.

... I am [now] asking the participants to reflect *on* my findings regarding participant understandings of reflective activity, their approaches to reflective activity, and their applications of reflective activity ... I [want] the participants to engage in a form of reflective dialogue with the other participants (hypothetically) and with me, which will be helpful to developing their reflective abilities, *and* enable them to question their own assumptions about reflective activity, and, indeed, the research process, which they will now find themselves participating in.

7/10/2014

Methodological Note

Since last I entered the diary, I have received feedback from Alan (ICT Head, PS 3). I have had a quick skim, and there are some good ideas there. I see he (as several other participants) is keen on teaching as inquiry (Ministry of Education, 2007), and I just do not understand why! He actually challenges the views of two participants who were less supportive of the model. It may be interesting to put these participants in debate with each other.

15/10/2014

Theoretical Note

Three days since my last entry. I am trying to understand the concept of intentionality. There is an important point made by Vagle, which is the importance of breaking with traditional Western conceptions of the autonomous agent – I have no doubt that is the strong belief I have always had. It will not be easy for me to make this break in thinking about consciousness as focused on the world, rather than on the self-imposing on the world.

Methodological Note

I have come to this concept of twenty-first century learning with relatively few preconceptions, apart from a critical sense that it is an idea surrounded by hype and zeal, being imposed on schools and teachers. I now have the opportunity to become more familiar with phenomenological approaches that seem to require a sense of suspending judgment.

Research component #4: read and write your way through your data in a systematic, responsive manner

Vagle promotes a whole–part–whole approach to data analysis, whereby the whole, such as each transcript, is considered, relevant parts are extracted and these recoupled to make a new whole. Selections from the initial whole have a focus on intentionality, not on subjective experience. He advises that the new wholes will be deconstructed, which will give the process its post-intentional flavour. This process, according to Vagle, is systematic and rigorous, and any attempt to find the ‘tentative manifestations’ of the phenomena on the first reading will not yield a rich post-intentional flavour.⁴

To find these tentative manifestations, Vagle suggests using Deleuze and Guatarri’s ‘lines of flight’ metaphor, contrasted with the metaphors of molar or molecular lines (1987; cited in Vagle, 2014). First, seek where the knowledge ‘takes off’, and look for what does not fit, and what seems contradictory. In a more recent article (Vagle, 2015), he points out that the French word, *fuite* has meanings more complex than captured by the English, *flight*. Specifically, *fuite* suggests leakage, disappearance and flow, while also suggesting escape (Massumi, in Deleuze & Guatarri, 1987, cited in Vagle, 2015). While ‘taking off’ may suggest escape, ‘lines of flight’ may indicate a need for the researcher to be attentive to leaks, flows and intensities in the narrative or account of participants. Thus, the attentive researcher (Vagle refers to ‘noticing’) is looking for moments of surprise, elements of inconsistency within the general narrative or perhaps evidence of participants concealing genuine thoughts and feelings, or evading deeper discussion of contentious issues.

Second, seek out the distinctions between lines of flight, and molar or molecular lines (the notion of rigid binaries and spaces of greater flexibility, yet still liable to revert to Cartesian duality). Vagle suggested that the researcher asks: ‘Where might I have retreated to either/or thinking?’; ‘Where might I appear “certain” of what something means?’; ‘Where might I have extended to something creative and intriguing, but then backed off to something a bit more safe?’; ‘Where might I appear “uncertain” of what something means?’ (pp. 135–136). In this moment, the researcher journals, diaries or blogs will be significant, as here one seeks one’s own defaults to traditional and ‘safe’ researcher practice. Vagle urges researchers to seek out their own uncertainties, which ‘are the richest space for explosive insights’ (p. 136).

Data analysis in this project, to date, has (inadvertently) followed Vagle’s ‘whole–part–whole’ approach. Transcripts have been uploaded to NVIVO. Each is read through, and then initial broad-brush themes (‘nodes’ in NVIVO) are created. These nodes become containers for relevant extracts, thus creating new wholes. Once the nodes are filled, they are printed as hard copy documents, which are then re-read, as new, more specific themes are identified as they emerge. Further analysis and grouping or categorisation occurs. Vagle cautions (in chapter 6) against the use of NVIVO as it may be too mechanistic; however,

I see little difference between his physical handling of the transcripts and my handling of the transcripts on NVIVO. The software is a tool that rapidly speeds up the mechanical 'cut and paste' required in creating new wholes. Where I do see a danger, however, is that NVIVO can encourage a 'rush to judgement', and creation of nodes or themes (what Vagle calls 'tentative manifestations', on p. 99) well in advance of the multiple readings of the original whole that Vagle recommends. Following Vagle, the researcher must exercise patience and care, and not seek to impose meaning on the participants, but rather to 'embrace the open searching, tinkering, and reshaping that this important work requires' (p. 104).

Initial analyses of the views of the first two principals interviewed (reported in Benade, Gardner, Teschers, & Gibbons, 2014) yielded a general theme called 'role of reflective practice (principals)'. Subsequent readings yielded 'reflective attributes/characteristics of reflective practice'; 'reflective practice in action'; 'the content of reflective practice'; and 'challenges'. Harold (Principal, PS 3) remarked:

If you're not doing anything, you're not taking any risks, it's all very safe and well and good. But if ... people are getting the odd feathers ruffled and you get your own feathers ruffled and then you sort it out, that's when you make progress.

I read this as an explanation of 'risk-taking' and as a fundamental attribute of reflective practice, along with the ability to negotiate meanings and ideas at the boundaries of tolerance.

'Teaching as inquiry' is a practice being implemented in New Zealand schools through the national curriculum to encourage forms of practitioner reflection (Ministry of Education, 2007), of which Teresa (Principal, PS 2) said: 'I suppose one area that I would find a little bit disappointing really is [that] teachers ... see it as a stress thing. It's an add-on. Teaching as inquiry is an extra over-and-above'. Here I hear a principal struggling with the requirements of change; wanting to ensure her school is current, yet feeling the frustration of teachers not whole-heartedly adopting new initiatives. Yet, simultaneously, I hear the word 'stress', and I recognise (as Teresa must) that teachers are overwhelmed. I am left wondering about the emotional energy required to implement (and impose?) policy on teachers, while still recognising the personal stress this implementation places on teachers.

Research component # 5: craft a text that captures tentative manifestations of the phenomenon in its multiple, partial and varied contexts

Vagle offers less in this component, although he regards it as the culmination of the process of crafting post-intentional phenomenology. What he does suggest (apart from reading appropriate phenomenological texts, such as those in chapter nine) is that writing must be framed by a restatement of the multiple and varied contexts in which the phenomena are manifested, and that the writer not be bound by strict conventions of form (so the completed text could include graphics or irregular textual forms). He recommends researchers 'think outside of traditional form and go to examples that explode beyond tradition' (p. 136). Vagle's reiteration that the researcher is 'crafting text' (p. 136) serves as a reminder that the researcher has an ethical commitment to the participants, to accurately, compassionately and critically understand their relationship with the phenomenon.

Context is critical, and must be reflected in the text (Vagle, 2014). This is consistent with hermeneutic phenomenology, and thus it is important to understand the work contexts of participants. It is self-evident that teachers who opt to work in a foundation futures-oriented school, where there are no single-cell classrooms, but rather large shared teaching spaces or open halls, and where pedagogy is deeply linked to various technological practices, will have different responses to questions about their practice than teachers in a traditional school. Likewise, teachers working in a school that is shifting proactively from traditional pedagogies and structures to ones that are futures-oriented will present equally different experiences.

The elicitation of feedback from some participants to my initial written findings of the experience of reflective practice as reported by participants now refers. Harold (Principal, PS 3) wrote over 600 words of feedback, where he commented on a contradiction. The findings recorded that while some participants indicated that reflective practitioners must be open to reflect broadly on their personal failures and success, many teachers limited the focus of their reflective activity to improving student achievement. As risk-taking was specifically one of the points Harold contributed to the first round, he can be seen in his follow-up reaching out to this contradiction. He wonders: '[is this] indicative of the constraints and pressures put on teachers to relate learning to the narrow curriculum and its familiar pedagogies?' He goes on to write that this is 'the "retreat" back to the safer ground of tangible student learning'.

Taking a self-reflexive position, I note that I have adopted a critical perspective towards teaching as inquiry (Benade, 2015b). This is reflected in my own log entry, where I express surprise at the feedback from Alan (ICT Head, PS 3). He was surprised that my initial findings revealed a significant level of ignorance among several participants. This extract is from the discussion sheet Alan returned to me:

Q: If you could engage in discussion with one or more of these individuals, what would you raise?

A: I would like to engage in a discussion with the teachers who are confused with teaching as inquiry. I would probe to discover the reasons why they are confused and also find out how much support they have had from their school leaders.

Indeed, elsewhere in his responses, Alan suggested school leaders are complicit in this ignorance, and he questioned the level of support they have provided to teachers. Additionally, he noted that some leader participants saw the teaching as inquiry model as 'one size fits all'; however, this perspective has had a desirable outcome for Alan: 'This got me thinking that schools could use the model as a basis then develop their own tailor-made model to suit their own school'. Post-intentionally, Alan could be asked to consider his certainty concerning the merits of teaching as inquiry. He could be asked what it is like to be at odds in his (secure) belief with some who are confused (or, as I) who actively critique the concept.

Conclusion

This article has taken the form of a worked example by re-creating a current research study using the five-component research process suggested by Vagle (2010, 2014) to achieve a post-intentional reading. Post-intentionally, it can be said that I, as a researcher, have my

own position, though I have sought (and continue to seek) a deeper understanding of what it is like to be a teacher in 2014, in a system that actively promotes a vision of education requiring radical changes to the way teachers work and think about their work. My participants are variously contextualised, and these contexts help shape their current practices and beliefs. The available understanding and knowledge of twenty-first century learning and its relationship to reflective practice (and the role of teaching as inquiry in that practice) is variable among my participants, but what remains consistent and constant, however, is the policy imperative requiring teachers and school leaders to respond to a rapidly evolving work context.

As a researcher, I have (and continue to) seek proactively to reconcile my default position (influenced by critical theory and critical pedagogy) to new research work that appears to appeal more readily to phenomenology than to my default position. I therefore find myself in a conflicting or uneven space, where my usual position is now challenged to equip itself to provide a meaningful conceptual framework of understanding, or be jettisoned if it cannot do so. Scholars, such as Vagle (2010) and Steinberg and Kincheloe (2010), afford a possible way out of this conceptual difficulty, with their notions of 'post-intentionality' and 'bricolage'. While many of his steps appear to be very similar to regular qualitative research, Vagle's contribution is to bring a political or social justice dimension to phenomenology (see his 2015 article for a specific example), thus moving beyond purely descriptive phenomenology. Recognising this insight enables me to recognise, draw attention to and comment on those elements of global and national policy-making that underpin the imaginary of the twenty-first century future, student, teacher and citizen. In turn, this ensures that my contribution to developing knowledge of, and insight into, notions such as digital learning and flexible learning spaces, is not couched in terms of zeal and advocacy, but in terms of a critical understanding of the lived experience of, and resistance to, these notions.

Notes

1. My search for a phenomenologically oriented position was motivated by shifting my research focus from conceptual, theoretic work, to field-based research. Here, van Manen's (1990/1997) emphasis of 'lived experience' provided a helpful starting-point. Also, as a teacher of courses in research methodology and theory, I am committed to modelling some of the approaches I teach about. I think there is something challenging about 'playing' with different approaches that place me in discomfiting places in my thinking. That being said, I do not want to lose my links to critical theory and critical pedagogy. My challenge, even as I write this note, is to work through these apparent challenges, such as the view that critical theorising is rationalist, for example, while working with Vagle requires me to develop a sound understanding of post-structural approaches.
2. By way of example to highlight Vagle's influence on my on-going work, the 2015 phase of research (this article is based on the 2013–2014 phase) has been guided by this question: *What is it to be a teacher in the twenty-first century?* In addition, focus group and interview participants were asked questions such as: 'What are the transitions you have made that bring you to this space?'; 'How do you find yourself in that place?'; 'How do you find yourself in a role like that?'; 'How do you find yourself here?'; 'What's your connection?'; 'How do you come to be in this place? What brings you to this place?'; 'What kind of labels would you use now to describe your feeling about BYOD and your experience of BYOD at the moment?'; 'What kinds of shifts have you had to make? What kinds of changes have you

had to make? What's different?' and 'How does it make you feel having given up control in different ways?'

3. As noted above, this article, first written as a 2014 conference contribution, and reworked as an article in May 2015, reflects on research that was undertaken late 2013 to late 2014. The research has progressed, and in 2015, went on to study, in depth, PS 1 and 2; and SS 1 and 2, including focus groups, interviews and almost 30 hours of classroom observations. As I write these additional notes in response to my reviewers, at the start of 2016, I am considering how my work with these schools will proceed, to explore additional avenues and sources of evidence.
4. Vagle's 'whole-part-whole' method is more completely described by Vagle (2014, pp. 98–104) than I have space to summarise in the context of this article. It is a rigorous method, entailing at least three passes over the original whole (reading, first line-by-line reading with initial margin notes, and a second line-by-line reading in which those notes are interpreted). It is only after two readings of the new 'whole' that 'tentative manifestations' or themes will be allowed to emerge.

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