Teaching in New Times

Week 12

Big data
Activity 1: Historicising data

• Choose one or more of the “animals” in this medieval bestiary [http://bestiary.ca/manuscripts/manubeast1345.htm](http://bestiary.ca/manuscripts/manubeast1345.htm)

• For background on the bestiary see this page [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Physiologus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Physiologus)

• How might such categories and descriptions have "made sense" in the context of Medieval Europe?

• Contrast these categories and descriptions with those used in the scientific West today. E.g [https://zapatopi.net/treeoctopus/](https://zapatopi.net/treeoctopus/)

• How might these modern scientific categories "make sense" in our own historical present and what function might they serve?
Activity 2: Big Data -- Benefits & Problems

Big data has obvious implications for education.

• Discuss what you see to be some of the possible benefits of big data for education.

• Discuss the potential problems of big data for schooling, teaching and education.
Activity 3: NAPLAN Critique

Examine the visualisation of NAPLAN big data on the next slide

• Discuss possible impacts of such high stakes testing on teachers and on students and their families (see Tait, 2016, p. 152-156).

• Discuss how this operates as a technique of categorisation, surveillance and governance.

• What sort of educational and social reality might such practices produce?
Activity 4: Define these key words (all in the textbook). Provide examples.

• Big data
• Standardised testing
• Statistics
• Student tracking
• Mass surveillance
• Meta-analysis
• Testing culture
Activity 5. International and national comparisons of student data

• Look at these 3 links
  • https://www.acer.org/au/ozpisa/key-findings
  • Declining Naplan participation
  • https://www.nap.edu.au/results-and-reports/how-to-interpret

• Discuss the various implications of what you can see on these websites in terms of the collection of data, the effects of the comparison of this data and the impact on individuals
Activity 6: NAPLAN and the school

• Suppose you teach at a low-SES, multicultural primary school.
• Discuss the usefulness of the information gleaned through NAPLAN testing in your (imaginary) school.
• Discuss how this testing may have changed your school, for better or for worse.
• Discuss how your school might respond to the testing requirements.
• Cover the same three discussion questions, but change the school type – e.g. affluent primary school, private secondary school, large state secondary school.
• Discuss how standardised testing systems in schools could be improved (or not), in terms of pedagogy, reliability, administration and ethics.
Activity 7: Investigating national and local comparisons of student results

Look at this website ranking Brisbane’s top secondary schools

Click on some of the categories in the left hand menu as well

How is quantified data like this linked to the governance and regulation of

(i) Teachers’ conduct?

(ii) Students' conduct?

(iii) The market