

DO TEACHERS NEED FREE WINE
(to swallow academic theories)?

OR

**Deontological Perspectives in Professional Motivation to Translate Academic Theories into
Praxis: Developing a Communications Epistemology by Action Research**

Emerita Angela M Thody,
Professor of Educational Leadership
University of Lincoln, England
angelathody450@hotmail.com

Deontological Perspectives in Professional Motivation to Adopt Academic Theories into Praxis: Developing a Communications Epistemology by Action Research

Introduction

Persuading teachers and school principals to convert academic theories into praxis requires:

- 1) good research,
- 2) appropriate communication of that research.

This paper concentrates on raising issues about the latter beginning with two possible formats for the introduction below. Or would the free wine promised in the conference abstracts be more persuasive?

Introduction A: for readers with little time to devote to conference papers

Successful research is that which proves something new, original, innovative and at the cutting edge of ideas; our most generally acceptable forms of research writing and presentation usually shun all of these. We university academics write mainly in formal, pseudo-scientific formats of conferences or journal papers that no-one reads. We can't give you direct advice – that would breach our ethics of academic caution. And, oh yes, there's that post-modernism that's confusing us too – there's no single right answer to anything. Of course we only write formally because we have to follow the traditional, academic formats to get our work into the journals that count for our careers. Can this really meet your needs as policy makers in classrooms, schools or government ministries? What do you want?

I've summarised some communication options in my paper below. To help you chose one that might most motivate you to put our academic theories into praxis (even without the wine!), I've divided the possible styles into three.

<p>The professional educator Emphasis – YOU. Rejoicing in relativity</p>	<p>The traditional academic EMPHASIS – IT, THEM In praise of displaying objectivity</p>	<p><i>The alternative academic</i> <i>EMPHASIS – I AND YOU</i> <i>Celebrating subjectivity</i></p>
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Each of these three is first defined and then you'll find some comparative examples. The divisions are a bit artificial so see these options as extremes. You could compromise with a combination but is that too easy a solution? Especially when you think about the ethics involved – the last topic for this paper. To help you to make up your mind, come to the conference discussion of this paper. I'd like to add your views to my ideas. Thanks.

Introduction B: for readers with more time

In the UK and the USA, there is evidence that university research into education (especially qualitative or narrative) is not highly regarded outside universities partly because university academics fail to write or speak in the languages of governments and practitioners (Hargreaves, 1996; Tooley with Darby, 1998; Gomm and Davies, 2000; Knight, 2002; Westrick, 2004:278). Academics cling instead to traditional formal communications that appeal only to fellow academics. This leads to the conundrum that successful research is that which proves something new, original, innovative and at the cutting edge of ideas yet our most generally acceptable forms of research writing and presentation usually shun all of these (Thody, 2006:12). This contrasts with the historic missions of universities.

The mission of the first universities in the early middle ages was to serve 'the purposes...of the host state...in their communicative processes and in their openness to ideas, ... {and the] interests of their local sponsors' (Barnett,2005:786). Yet today, influencing government praxis is not easy

and ‘immediate and direct linkages between study results and policy decisions are relatively rare’ (Weiss, 1983:219. See also, Bradley and Schaefer, 1998; Tooley with Darby, 1998). Elected governments need solutions that are not too expensive, fit within the strategies chosen by a majority of voters and which respond to as many pressure group interests as possible. Confronting this, researchers appear to see themselves as the only pressure group, expecting immediate and direct implementation of their every conclusion (Hammersley, 2002:148).

Universities need to be relevant to society’s needs. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, communicating universal truths was the universities’ search engine and their output. A few such unequivocal findings would today be very helpful to practitioners caught between governments and pupils who both believe they are more right than teachers. Yet any academic’s conclusions offered to the profession tend to be cautiously ‘hedged’ (as Holliday terms it, 2002: 179). So, for example, academic restraint requires writing such phrases as: ‘One might think it possible that pupils could behave better if...’, or ‘This case study offers some valuable illumination but it should be remembered that it was researched in a single school in Outer Mongolia on a wet Wednesday afternoon when the principal was absent...’

Cautious, traditional, scientific-sounding, academic discourse, impersonal, distant, non-committal and passive is the usual language of university social scientists, including educational leadership experts. Findings are presented as research reports and papers for conferences or peer-reviewed journals, all of which are mainly read by our university colleagues alone (Knight, 2002: 201). Such articles and reports were rated as least effective for influencing practice while conference presentations were dismissed as passive dissemination unless in ‘innovative, user-friendly formats’ (Gomm and Davies, 2000:141).

Admittedly, university faculty have excuses for this. First, careers will suffer. In the ‘harsh realities of becoming...members of [the academic] discourse community’ (Gosden, 1995: 39) academic writing is, tautologically, a major means of social communication amongst academics (Jakobs and Knorr, 1996; Holliday, 2002: 124). If academics don’t write in the standard, academic formats accepted by their university peers, they are unlikely to gain entry to the right journals (Sadler, 1990: 1,8; Pirkis and Gardner, 1998; Zeller and Farmer, 1999; Lindle, 2004; Thody, 2006:214,220). These journals are the ones that count for university research ratings which determine university research income¹. They do not include magazines that teachers read for professional advice. Secondly, post modernism prevents belief in oneself as being able to offer straight forward guidance to professionals. Post modernism from the 1970s has led to our understanding that research is always subjective and context bound. Research findings cannot irrefutably prove anything. Postmodernism has given ‘licence to doubt and to suspect’ even ourselves (Thody, 2006:13). Finally, the social sciences are as much in thrall to trying to be like the natural sciences as they were when they emerged as important disciplines in the 1960s (To, 2000). These determinants make academics take the safe way of publishing their findings guardedly as pseudo-scientific papers.

Post-modernism offers, however, a route to change. Its ferments blur the lines between social and natural sciences, particularly in how they reach the public consciousness (Willinsky, 2000: 233). The conventional formats of ‘scientific’ writing are questioned for their clarity and even the meaning of clarity itself becomes debatable (Zeller and Farmer, 1999: 12-14). The diaspora of research methods produced in the post-modernist era should lead inexorably to a spread of differing means to present the data gathered from them. Woolcot’s seminal work on writing up qualitative research (1990) led the way though since then only a few academics have seen the communication of research as so worthy of debate as to merit books (e.g. Holliday, 2002; Thody,

2006), or even parts of books (e.g. Ivanic and Roach, 1990; Nestor and Barber, 1995; Coghlan and Brannick, 2001; Knight, 2002; Darley, Zanna and Roediger, 2004) or articles (e.g. Paget, 1990; Vipond, 1996; Pirkis and Gaardner, 1998; Woods, 1998). There are more examples of the genre of guidance texts on specific types of writing such as theses or essays (e.g. Berry 1994; Griffith, 1994) but these tend to be written as unproblematic rulings.

Hence this paper is a contribution to raising the significance of writing formats. The academic jargon of the second title to this paper offers an example in itself. Translating its academic precision into 'everyday' English could obfuscate its meaning (as well as making it completely unwieldy).

Deontological Perspectives (let us seek rational, rather than moral, causes for change)
on Professional Motivation (conscious or unconscious inducement to alter a course of action)
to Translate Academic Theories into Praxis (Identity, research and practical wisdom from particular examples of actions from which general guidance to others might be produced since where the ends of one's actions can be anticipated from previous evidence then you can gain moral guidance on what you yourself should do):

Developing a Communications Epistemology (theory of knowledge about academic writers' rules of conduct)

by Action Research (cycles of discussion of this paper, feedback and improvement of its ideas). If readers are thought unlikely to know the correct terminology, should academics provide definitions, produce a simple version (the first title for this article) or assume readers can use a dictionary? If academics retain their specialist language, will professionals bother to go beyond the title?

This paper now divides into three. Section 2 is for teachers in schools and universities who have only a short time to devote to reading conference papers. The emphasis is on you, the professional educator and the text attempts to rejoice in relativity. Section 3 is presented as the traditional, formal conference paper. Its emphasis is on it or them and it praises displaying objectivity. Section 4 offers some alternatives letting you and I celebrate subjectivity. Each section reviews first, its audience and secondly defines the style for each audience. Comparative examples of each genre are presented in Table 1 to illuminate the distinctions amongst them. Ethical issues raised by all three approaches are discussed in Section 5 prior to the conclusions.

The paper's varying formats are intentional; they are illustrations of the content of the paper. Each format should be seen as an 'ideal type' sharply delineated here to facilitate comparisons. In practice, combinations can be used (though they rarely are). The aim of all three is the same, "to enhance readers' knowledge and so persuade them 'do something' "(Raimond, 1993:167). The 'something' arising from this paper is to consider options for communicating theories so educators are more likely to put them into praxis. Further discussion of this will be at the conference paper session which aims to stimulate debate about research writing; it is as much to be contested and justified as are research methodologies.

The professional educator: teachers and principals in schools and universities

In a world of supercomplexity, researchers now acquire – whether wittingly or not – the challenge of communicating their intellectual wares to wider publics and so advancing public understanding of a chaotic world (Barnett, 2005: 794-5). Are researchers communicating well with you?

Who are you? Do you agree with how the experts view you? You're:



- ✓ not 'interested primarily in the specific program and setting that was the object of the study' (Hammersley, 1993: 203). You want the conclusions only.
- ✓ wanting 'to learn...economically...with as little trouble as possible' (Griffith, 1994: 236).
- ✓ 'generally kindly and well-disposed [towards academics]. You will forgive most things except excessive length, pomposity or being patronized' (Thody, 2006:37).
- ✓ enjoying the social life of the conference and wanting to absorb learning as easily as possible.
- ✓ preferring 'short, clear, practice focused, human interest and topical pieces' (Knight, 2002: 201).
- ✓ lacking 'the time and skill to sift out the relevant and useful information... do not have the skills to critically appraise the papers [you] read' (Gomm and Davies, 2002: 135).

Academic authors are supposed to take these characteristics into account when writing for professionals

What style do you like for articles and conference papers? Tick your choices.

Specialized academic language (since it's a compliment to your intelligence)	
Specialized educational jargon (since it's a compliment to your profession)	
Colloquial language (its chattiness is comfortable and easy to relate to)	
Main findings clearly summarised, preferably at the beginning (you don't have time to read the whole article)	
You don't want to know about arguments amongst academics – you want the majority viewpoint	
You don't want citations cluttering up the text but a few pointers to extra reading at the end would be helpful.	
You don't need to know how the researchers collected their evidence	
Plenty of 'visuals' – diagrams, illustrations, colour, well spaced text with good graphics, pictures (an image is worth a 1000 words)	
You like to know what are new ideas but you want them translated into practice too	
Comprehensive and extensive statistics, effectively presented tables and graphs	
You prefer a 'presentation' to a 'reading' of a conference paper; you like to have notes provided or a copy of the whole paper.	
Others? Please add your own ideas and pass them on to Angela	

Follow up

Take a look at Table 1 for examples of this genre. See its rivals in sections 3 and 4 below. There's some ethical issues to face up to as well and you'll find these in section 5 of this paper. And if you want more – see the list of references at the end.

THE TRADITIONAL ACADEMIC

Researchers and practitioners inhabit ‘different worlds’
and speak different languages. (Gomm and Davies, 2000:135, 136)

Readers’ characteristics

The extreme traditional view is that there is no audience and that any audience is a ‘constraint’ (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000:89). The researcher’s interpretations must dominate. Adapting for differing readers can be seen as unethical manipulation. Writing is just a task that must be done in order to disseminate the work without which, research is incomplete. All you have to do is to ‘convince others of the worth of a study in a clear and concise manner’ (Cresswell, 1994: 193). Modernists view writing and presenting as reports on discoveries, in which language precision accurately conveys what happened and emotion is not a concern. Writing is non-contentious, a formulaic process (Bryman, 2001: 460) though such a view has been criticized as ‘naïve realism...the doctrine that language and the texts created from it directly represent in an unproblematic way the world as it is’ (Usher, 1999:150). The view also assumes that the academics who listen to and read conference papers such as this one, are not ‘audience’.

Other academics are, however, the prime audience for all researchers. Academics are ‘usually intelligent, literate and serious’ (Griffith, 1994: 236). They are ‘a community of writers who greatly value scrupulous scholarship and the careful documentation, or recording, of research’ (MLA 2003:xv). Writing and presenting must, therefore, be ‘acceptable to the “expert” readers who function as gatekeepers of the academic community’ (Gosden, 1995: 53). These powerful people are editors, reviewers, examiners, committees, research assessors. They have been somewhat uncharitably described as pedantic traditionalists who ‘think not wearing a shirt or tie a lesser sin than using ‘I’... [who prefer] double spaced drabness’ (Knight, 2002: 194, 198) and standardised APA² style. Theses, articles and papers alike must all conform to this to gain acceptance into ‘an invisible college of scholars in a cosy club atmosphere’ (Sadler, 1990: 10). Academics can ignore this but only if they do not want career progression.

Defining traditional styles

Whether academic audiences are perceived negatively or positively, the traditional format that meets their needs as the ‘audience’ commences with a statement of the problem to be solved and the setting of this in its context of previous research on the same topic (including the literature review). This is part of the rationale for the problem which stresses the importance of studying it. Next, the research methodology is recounted. From this, the findings emerge ending with the conclusions drawn from the evidence presented. Such conclusions can relate to practice but greater status accrues to those who also produce developments in concepts or theories.

It emerges as logically sequenced, elegantly simple and standardised into any one of about 400 different referencing systems (of which Harvard is the most common in educational leadership research). Its language is precise. Some might see this as esoteric jargon but how joyful is a title for a conference paper such as, ‘Towards a prolegomenon for understanding what radical educational reform means for school principals’ (Ribbins, 1993). How turgid it would sound were the accuracy of ‘prolegomenon’ to be replaced with, ‘Towards a preliminary discussion or a formal critical introduction for understanding what radical educational reform means for school principals’? How insulted would an audience of academics be if it were thought that they might not know what a prolegomenon was?

Academic audiences are, after all, the only ones who will accept that a presenter should simply read his/her conference paper rather than making any attempt at a more theatrical ‘presentation’ since the latter would elevate the speaker at the expense of the data. There is respect for Weber’s views that, ‘the calm, rigor, matter-of-factness and sobriety of a lecture declines with definite

pedagogical losses, when the substance and manner of public discussion are introduced, in the style of the press' (Max Weber, 'The meaning of ethical neutrality' cited in Shils and Finch, 1949: 4). Without hearing the whole paper, it is not possible to appreciate all the intricacies and interstices of the reasoning.

An overtly objective, impersonal, passive report is produced. The researcher's voice is heard only in the conclusions to a paper; neither the writer's nor readers' interpretations are deemed to affect the data. The authority of the research is established from its extensive literature and methodological reviews. The research shows that it has produced general, unassailable truths from irrefutable evidence and these are presented to the readers with exactitude. The subject matters, not the speaker. The value of the work speaks for itself without tricks or artifice. It eschews creativity and chatty anecdotes alike. It is impersonal so that it does not appear 'subjective and egotistical' (Griffith, 1994: 237) or unscientific or less than rigorous. This applies whether the data is quantitative, qualitative or narrative, as Bryman was astonished to discover (2001). The tone is authoritative, disciplined and objective. It is 'the language of management control' (Thody, 2006:66).

Further reading

Table 1 provides examples of this genre. Other styles which some might consider as possibilities are discussed in sections 2 and 4 of this paper. The ethical issues that arise from communicating research findings in forms that meet the needs of varying audiences are outlined in section 5. Citations in the reference list provide additional literature.

THE ALTERNATIVE ACADEMIC

I couldn't figure out what I wanted to write
about until I could picture my audience
(Ackerman and Maslin-Ostrowski, 1996:6).

Readers and the writer

CCEAM conference, Umea, Sweden, 2002.

She, the reader was there. I, the researcher was there. Both of us were as integral to the interpretation of the research hypothesis as the views of the respondents I had interviewed. We discussed what she expected of a conference presentation of research. I transcribed her views as a poem in order to best capture her intensity of feeling and convey the content of her ideas.

It should be teaching,

She said.

I go to a conference to learn from the presentation of the paper,

It is research, explained by the originator,

Just the main issues,

Different styles,

She said.

You should comprehend from hearing a clear summary of the paper

There, at the conference.

You see researchers illuminating with power point,


Duplicated notes, pictures, sound, enthusiasm;
They feel the need to share with US.
So you are close to great teachers,
She said.

(Thody, 2006:4-5)

In post-modernism, you, the readers, are as integral to my research as am I. You have as much power and ability to interpret my research as I do. This requires me to respect your academic, professional or political viewpoints through my adaptations to your communication needs and through allowing you to see as much as possible of the original data so you can formulate your own ideas from it. I must show respect for my research respondents in presenting their data in as near to its original form as possible. I must also show respect for myself in willingness to express my personality through my writing and presenting. This makes the 'audience' more significant to the research, wider and more difficult to characterise than for either of the two previous styles. One might expect, for example, a stereotypical qualitative or narrative, risk-taking academic but quantitatively inclined academics can fit this category too³. The editors and reviewers who guard entry to journal publication are established academics but with confidence enough to value new ideas and approaches. Policy-makers need original data from which to source the all-important 'sound bites' that catch political attention. An academic writer acknowledging her own subjectivities may chose to do this in APA style instead of in poetry yet still be a post-modernist. For the purposes of this paper, though, I will assume that you are joining those who question the scientific style (Bazerman, 1987; Vipond, 1996; Richardson, 1998:347; Zeller and Farmer, 1999) and want to try something different to that in sections 1 or 2.

What's my style for you?

Chatting with colleagues over a June dinner in London⁴, I reflected on how I should present this section of the paper. The day was warm enough for the just-escaped office workers to be outdoors. Some sat neatly about a table, others had more haphazardly moved the chairs so they seemed less allied to their table; where chairs were lacking, some friends still stood around tables as if chairs were present while others confidently stood alone or propped up on surrounding walls. We pseudo-sociologists speculated on the interpretations to place on these arrangements, all reaching different conclusions. And so presented itself the arrangement for this section. You should view the raw data below that I have extracted from authorities in the field as being the table groups. This will allow me to present multiple perspectives as short extracts like the snatches of conversation overheard from other 'tables'. My power as the researcher ends with my choice of the extracts. You can interpret these as well as I can. At the end of the section, you should be able to essay some views of your own on possible styles for 'alternative' writing.

 'language is not a simple given but is created by a writer's subjectivities' (Richardson, 1998:349).

☞ 'Qualitative ethnographic and narrative methods have much developed since 1975. We now use focus groups, photography, life history, email interviewing, observation, diaries, critical incidents and more. These do not always fit comfortably with conventional reporting formats. In trying to make them do so, I find that I can lose the excitement, personality and immediacy of the original research' (Thody, 2006: 13).

☞ 'Computer-based systems for composing documents enable us to use the 'interconnectedness of and alternation within the writing sub-processes' (Sharples and van der Geest, 1996: 8).

☞ 'A balance must be struck between the aims of the researcher, the researched and the readers/listeners (Hammersley, 2002:126). All these different subjectivities contribute positively to enhanced understanding.

☞ 'expect to be reflexive... to write in the first person...and to write with passion' (Knight, 2002: 194).

☞ 'Even silences must be recorded as evidence (Skultans, 2001)

☞ 'Research is better if it is overtly subjective (Mehra, 1997:70) and this subjectivity has to be overtly acknowledged in the text. This is aided by 'the use of the first person [which] has for some time been acceptable and is becoming more so' (Holliday, 2002: 129).

☞ 'Language should be 'vibrant, suggestive, engaged and passionate' (Harper, 1998: 144). 'It is the language of emotional control' (Thody, 2006:67).

☞ 'Conveying research data emotively and rigorously is termed 'creative analytic practice' (CAP) (Lewis-Beck, Bryman and Liao, 2004: 212--3)


☞ 'This is, 'in the age of inscription [when] writers create their own situated, inscribed versions of the realities they describe' (Denzin, 1998: 323).

☞ 'The meaning of communication is inescapably situated and contextual'(Limerick, Burgess-Limerick and Grace, 1996: 450).

☞ 'The need is to experiment with alternative ways of writing and presenting research, supplementing the traditional model with 'tools from the literary world'(Lewis-Beck et al, 2004: 1197).

☞ 'Options for written research include word-for-word transcribed interviews (e.g Bush, Kogan and Lenney, 1989: Rice, 2004), photographs with minimal text (e.g. Staub, 2002; Soth, 2005), narrative poetry (e.g. Woodley, 2004), graphic cartoon strips

e.g. (Sacco, 2005), drama e.g. (e.g. Section 5 of this paper; Thody, 1990; Casati and Varzi, 2004). We can be adventurous, entertaining and emotional, drawing from fiction, poetry, painting, photography, performances, sculpture, posters, music and other creative work.

 Variations I've seen or used for research orally presented include readers' theatre (where researchers acted their research respondents' views); dance interpreting the emotions arising from findings; town meetings (researchers reported their findings briefly as political speeches and then invited audience participation assisted by mobile microphones; debates (six researchers had exactly three minutes each to put their cases; drama in which the presenter assumes a persona from the research (I have been a Tasmanian nineteenth century school principal,, an astronaut, a fairy, a lawyer); methodology demonstrations (a group of us replicated our focus groups though a conference session arranged as a Romano-Hellenic symposium). All these are entertaining but also intended to display the research findings better than can words alone, to reinforce learning and to communicate ideas that can be difficult to put into words.

EPILOGUE

- Do research conclusions become anarchic when raw data is presented as above?
- Does anarchy matter?
- Should researchers do the work of concluding for readers?
- How can you hope to influence practice or policy if presenting research in this way?

You can review examples of this genre in Table 1. If you want to explore further, I've offered some choices for additional reading at the end of this paper. If you're concerned about ethical issues, see the next section. If you want to share your perspectives with me, come to the paper session.

ETHICAL ISSUES

A one-act play. The scene: a conference round table, first session of the day, a Hilton somewhere. The remains of a few muffins and fruit juice litter the table. The paper presenter has just three companions who have braved the early start.

Tradademic: Thanks for that summary above, Angela, but adjusting what is written or spoken to fit the needs of different audiences raises ethical concerns. One may have to exclude reservations to conclusions, simplify findings or – horrors - omit referencing!

Altademic: But if we don't write in ways that professionals and governments like, someone else will do it for us and then you'll see how our findings get twisted. Remember that 2004 MacBeath and Galton's research on secondary teachers problems? (2004)

Profeducator: Great stuff – showed it was all the parents' faults for not supporting us and the pupils' faults for behaving badly.

Angela: Well that's what the newspapers claimed. The front page was teachers' 'constant battle to be allowed to teach, a struggle compounded by confrontational parents'⁵.

Tradademic: (laughing) Yes, the National Union of Teachers (NUT) made the same points on their web site. They claimed it was independent research because they didn't do it themselves just paid for university academics to do it. They must think we're simple. Suppose the National Union of School Students had paid for it – one can be sure they would have found that poor teaching was to blame. More coffee?

Altademic: The newspaper and the union were correct - bad behaviour by pupils was the worst problem highlighted by the researchers. But the next worst problem wasn't confrontation parents - there were seven other factors ranked higher and these weren't put in the headlines. But academics can't control what the newspapers write.

Angela: They write executive summaries for their sponsors and they can also produce press releases and short versions for the professionals. You can't guarantee your emphases won't be changed but it's a step on the road. 'You can make your directions obvious by only offering one conclusion or recommendation. More subtly and effectively, offer a selection of recommendations, any one of which you would be happy to see in place, or offer evidence that mainly leads to option A while offering the readers a choice also of B. Intelligent readers, you will thereby imply, will chose A' (Thody 2006:56). And if you also ensure that the results which accord with your sponsor's agenda are placed first, they'll be happy, you'll still have room for other conclusions and...

Tradademic: Sounds like deliberate falsification to me. That's why the objectivity one associates with scientific, largely quantitative, impersonal research is so important and rightly has such an influence on policy makers. Figures demonstrate unassailable truth...

Profeducator: quick to absorb too

Altademic: and quick to falsify. Listen to this: the publication of statistics relating to racial issues 'has not been a neutral exercise in pursuit of knowledge...These statistics became part of the 'numbers game' used to justify racist immigration laws...More recently arguments about the use of statistics in favour of black populations...have been put forward' (Ahmad and Sheldon, 1993: 124).

Angela: You're all too young to remember Sir Cyril Burt's quantitative research in the 1930s on which the whole British government's policy on selecting children for secondary education by ability was based from 1944-64. After he died in 1975, they found he'd invented his figures, his research assistants and his neat correlations. But it's small things too. Does anyone use tests showing 95 per cent level of significance without pointing out that one in twenty of the results so obtained will be incorrect, as Hammersley reminded us (1993:160)?

Profeducator: You're not fair to my traditional friend. You're quoting extremes.

Tradademic: Thanks but even I have to admit that you can point readers to your viewpoints by how you even title you tables, select the graph style and axes, the wording of the questions it was decided to include in the survey, whether you round figures up or down...what happens if the rank order data is not quite as conclusive as you hoped, do you leave it in rank order or just list it randomly so that the priorities you felt to be most important are less easy to distinguish from those that the research indicated were most important?

Altademic: It's really important to be true to yourself. Like you've just pointed out, we're inextricably in the research like it or not so we need to admit authorship. It's as important ethically as is admitting sponsorship. And not just in the author notes though they're a start. Readers need to know what your mental filters were so they can see what your biases are and decide for themselves if you've been influenced by them. So I'd need to tell readers that as well as lecturing at Cambridge, I left teaching when I was failed by OFSTED⁶, that I'm a folk musician, love chocolate and my Dad was a primary school teacher and...

Tradademic: Enough! Just because I use conventional, impersonal style doesn't mean that I don't realise I'm transmitting 'feelings and attitudes, unstated assumptions and embarrassing implications, as well as concepts'(Lanham, 1976: 34). I don't need to tell readers what those are.

It's irrelevant that I holiday in Cyprus, have a dog and failed French A Level. Readers trust my ethical stance because I'm carefully objective and precise in my language.

Profeducator: Oh you mean those 'mincing steps of academic debate' criticised by Marshall (1995: 29). You see, I can play you at your own game and support my views from academic authorities but I don't see how that makes it all more ethical.

Angela: It shows you have a majority on your side. – an ethical proof. Now that will persuade others to support you.

Profeducator: No, those bracketed citations are just boring interruptions

Alteducator: when we really need to be creative. Imaginative. Entertaining. (*He waves his arms excitedly*) Different. Then people will WANT to read us.

Profeducator: I'd love to see management text books in graphic novel style.

Tradademic: (*exploding with laughter*) Pictures for the illiterate your mean? They're a prime example of researcher unethical dominance. Just how much do you think you can convey in a cartoon? And then you've got both the researcher's power to dominate what's offered as findings but also the illustrator's power. You'll be telling me we should write it in poetry next!

Angela: Well yes...

Profeducator: What I really appreciate is researchers who include direct quotations from my fellow professionals – that's real people advising me what to do from their experiences that mirror mine. That's truth!

Angela: Great idea but think of the ethical questions. Should researchers omit information from respondents who might be personally hurt by its publication but which really proves their points well? Do you make sure that you present an equal number of views for and against your propositions? Do you quote exactly as your respondent spoke even if it's ungrammatical? Do you allow the professionals you interviewed to see the transcripts before publications and, if so, do you allow them to alter their words at this point. Do you tell readers that a respondent's body language contradicted what she said?

Tradademic: ***** body language. That's the trouble with you lot. 'Blind to facts' (Hughes, 1990:116) that what you are. You've got to accept that 'sadly, qualitative, interpretive research data cannot provide facts and figures' (Fail, Thompson and Walker, 2004:333). It's irretrievably unethical. You're on to a looser guys.

Angela: A 'fact', in qualitative data, is another voice, each voice producing their part of the picture as they see it. The whole is a truth. That's democratic ethics.

Altademic: However you write, you'll be automatically ethical since you can't control how readers will interpret what you write.

Angela: Have power relations in research shifted so far that the researcher's adaptations to audience are more important to credibility than the research? As a writer, surely you try to direct that power towards your chosen interpretation?

Tradademic: I thought you said that was automatically unethical?

Profeducator: Look, I haven't got time for all this play-acting. Just email me the conclusions, Angela, when they've finished arguing.

Exeunt omnes to attend the AGM of the CCEAM

CONCLUSIONS

From: "Angela Thody" <angelathody450@hotmail.com>
Reply-To: angelathody450@hotmail.com
To: profeducator@yahoo.com

Subject: *conclusions: theory into praxis*
Date: *Mon, 3 Jul 2006 08:05:03 +0100 (BST)*

Scholars appear to agree that the ways in which you present your research really do matter but offer surprisingly little guidance on how to do it, assuming it to be unproblematic or formulaic. You should write in differing styles to influence varying audiences but beware of being too different. It can be seen as a threat to academic leaders in the field (Sadler, 1990: 16-17), patronising to professionals and confusing to policy makers.

But if you don't aim carefully at your audience, your research discoveries are unlikely to capture the readers' imaginations sufficiently to encourage them to adopt your suggestions.

Table 1 Examples of variations for different audiences

Professional educator	Traditional academic	Alternative academic
PERSUADING TEENAGERS TO GO TO UNIVERSITY		
<p>From the introduction to an article in an imaginary <i>Caribbean Secondary School Principals' Bulletin</i>, presenting the same information as in column 2 but aimed at a professional audience.</p> <p><i>Helping your students to access and success in our tertiary institutions</i></p> <p>The CSSP Annual Conference reminded us that we're becoming increasingly successful at persuading students to progress to our colleges and universities. This is beginning to alter the low enrolment rates they've had until now and that fits with the government's drive to increase post-16 enrolments. So what has been holding students back and what can we in schools do to encourage staying on to higher education?</p> <p>-----</p>	<p>From the introduction to 'Overcoming Barriers to Access and Success in Tertiary Education in the Commonwealth Caribbean', Roberts, V. (2003) <i>International Studies in Educational Administration</i>, 31(3): 2-15.</p> <p>Enrolment in tertiary education in the Commonwealth Caribbean has remained comparatively and consistently low over the years. Not surprisingly, the actual numbers of tertiary education graduates have also been well below the optimal level. On the other hand, indications are that there is a increasing demand by potential students and private sector employers as well as by governments for tertiary education graduates. Additionally, educational leaders and policy makers continually express a need for, and a desire, to expand tertiary education opportunities to a wider range and greater number of its citizens in an attempt to promote national and regional development.</p> <p>In spite of concerted effort by many stakeholders, the goal of increased access to tertiary education has been elusive to date. It seems reasonable to infer therefore that there are resistant barriers to the expansion of tertiary education access and that these may be related to persistent challenges which also place limits on the success of learners in the tertiary education system.</p> <p>This paper attempts to identify some of those barriers to access and success and to highlight some of the initiatives which have been taken in an attempt to overcome these barriers. Before proceeding to a discussion of the barriers themselves, it may be useful to define the terms tertiary education, access and success and to examine also what constitutes the Commonwealth Caribbean tertiary education context and to locate within this context some inherent barriers to access and success.</p>	<p>From the introduction to an imaginary academic article, presenting the same information as that in column 2 but presented in post-modernist style.</p> <p>'I'm not hanging in here for mo'school, I got a job at de hotel pool, Hotel pool, money's good Now y'tell me why I should' (Beginning of a rap by Trinidadian Year 9 student, recorded 2005 as part of a school music activity)</p> <p>'We can't live on tourism for ever. We need to move into and through the technological revolution and ensure that our people are equipped for the new global economy. For that we must provide more university places' (Jamaica's Minister for Education, in a semi-structured interview for this research, May 2005)</p> <p>'It's not easy persuading students to go on to university. It's not vocational enough. They just think it delays their earnings. And now there's the added costs too' (Secondary school principal, Barbados; focus group excerpt for this research, June 2005)</p> <p>Three voices. Several problems. The research for this article gathered views from parents, students, teachers, university</p>

		admissions tutors and deans and government sources. From these, presented without commentary below, you will be able to form your own ideas on the reasons for low tertiary enrolment in the Carribean. A methodology and literature review is provided separately at the end of the primary data. -----
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DESCRIPTIONS OF LEADING EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATORS

<p>From an English novel about a retired chief education officer.</p> <p>Aspirate-dropping politicians, educational psychologists, parents hot under the collar, lunatic school teachers, had all added to the tally of ludicrous error but then so had he. His whole career was shot through with misjudgement, mismanagement, support of wrong causes, failure to assist decent men and women, yet he was still praised as one of the most successful directors of education in the whole country since the war. He could not see why he had made such a name, except that the favourable publicity or circumstances had helped him and his pleasant but utterly serious committed manner and approach had led people, political masters or paid subordinates alike to act more sensibly. (Middleton, 1986: 70--71).</p>	<p>From a USA academic journal article about school board superintendents.</p> <p>The superintendent moves between the nomothetic to idiographic dimensions to transactionally and transformationally interact with board members, principals, parents...to persuade these individuals to accept the goals of the organisation as defined and visualized by the superintendent, The superintendent acts to persuade these individuals to participate in the formulation of goals additional to his own. (Griffin and Chance, 1994: 81).</p>	<p>From an English academic book.</p> <p><i>Chief executives are 'hubs of wheels endlessly transmitting and receiving information along different spokes...linking joint initiatives from different points in the system...CEOs are both the effective centre, as the organizers, and the affective centre since their symbolic role in representing the unity of the service must be acknowledged'</i> (Thody, 1997:182).</p>
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MAKING READERS AWARE OF THE SUBJECTIVITY OF THE RESEARCHER.

Is there enough information provided?

<p>From the professional journal, <i>Management in Education</i> Author note for ('Let's Work Together, 1997, 11[1]:5. An article discussing how institutions can co-operate to help adult learners.</p> <p>'Graeme Wilkinson is Head of Community & Leisure Learning</p>	<p>From the academic journal, <i>International Studies in Educational Administration</i> (32 [3]58,73. For an article discussing the applicability and effect of western notions of school decentralisation in Guangdong Province).</p> <p>The author note at the end of the article replicates the author's name at the beginning of the article. Hence, the title, 'School Autonomy in</p>	<p>From the academic journal, <i>Auto/Biography</i>, IX [1&2]. For an article on 'A maze in stories: Deconstructing and confronting identity'</p> <p>The researcher, a Roman Catholic</p>
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<p>at Suffolk College'</p> <p>Note: Suffolk College was one of the institutions discussed in the article.</p>	<p>China...’ is followed by the author’s name, Jocelyn Wong Lai-ngok, Faculty of Education, The University of Hong Kong, HKSAR, China. At the end appears Author Wong Lai-ngok, Faculty of Education, The University of Hong Kong Tel: (852) 28578398 Fax: (862) 25471924 Email@jlnwong@hkucc.hku.hk</p>	<p>single mother, interviewed others in the same category, in Ireland (including her own mother). The author slipped her bio-data into the text: ‘At least one from each mother-daughter groups was a personal friend of mine, making for interviews of great emotional and experiential depth...My experiences are aligned with those of the women I interviewed ...my analysis of the larger social movements in Irish society is paralleled with my personal experiences’ (Kelly, 2001: 21).</p>
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METHODOLOGIES

<p>In a university monograph aimed at US school principals and discussing suitable ways to develop education leaders in practice, the authors described the methodology on a separate page before the main text started. Thus it could safely be ignored by practising school principals but seen by other university academics while also being available should the principals be interested. (<i>Leading for Learning [2003]</i>, Washington: Centre for the Study of Teaching and Policy, University of Washington. www.ctpweb.org)</p>	<p>Jocelyn Wong Lai-ngok’s article (see above) has four paragraphs, headed as Methodology, on the fourth page of the article, after its context and literature reviews. The methodology covers: ‘The data are derived from an interview survey...The survey consisted of eighty interviewees who worked in seven schools located in...all of which are urban areas. The reasons for choosing...[this] locality are...First [it] has been ranked as one of the most affluent provinces of China...Secondly, Guangdong families’ investment in education is constantly increasing...This is a distinctive feature...The seven schools... included...All government schools studied were recommended by...Of the eighty interviewees, nine were principals or vice-principals and twenty-eight were responsible for school administration such as...Sixty of the interviewees were from mainland China. Most... were chosen from a pool...recommended by school administrators. The analysis process was guided by the grounded theory...To protect individual schools and teachers, each school was identified by an English letter...All interviewees were given a number...</p>	<p>From the <i>International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education</i> (2002, 15 [1] 43-54), Anthony Klevan’s article on ‘Fighting the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS): the shedding of stereotypes at a bilingual high school’. The methodology is threaded throughout the article in brief references as the writer recounts how his views changed over the period of the research. On the second page, we learn that he started with a ‘negative mind-set’ as he began his role as a ‘participant observer’ (p.44). He recounts how his</p>
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		<p>observations began with the TASS and his first month's field notes contained only his own views. He then began to interrogate documents to find 'the truth behind statistics' (p.45). Not til p.46 do we find Anthony recording an approach by a student to him which forced him to change his direction from the exam to the students (p.48). Then on p.50, comes the decision to incorporate the teachers' views by 'seeing these teachers in action'. Finally. his data collection became more informal as he talked with students on their way to school in the morning (p. 51)</p>
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NOTES

¹ The United Kingdom's Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) commenced in 1992 and New Zealand's similar system in the early 2000s (Lord, Robb and Shanahan, 1998). The USA began Carnegie ratings in 1973 though with less force than the RAE (Middaugh, 2001). Hong Kong and Australia also check university outputs (Mok, 2000; Taylor, 2001; Mok and Lee, 2002).

² American Psychological Association whose strictures have strongly influenced journals' contributors' instructions, university thesis regulations and writing styles for social sciences and other disciplines far removed from psychology.

³ See, for example, Edwards, Roberts, Clarke, DiGuseppi, Pratap, Wentz, Kwan, and Cooper, 2005 whose review of influences on the returns to postal questionnaires presents readers with over 150 (electronic) pages of 'raw' findings on which to base their own judgements and a one page summary. Though their work fits this category, I am not sure if they would so label themselves.

⁴ June 29th, Truckles Wine Bar, Pied Bull Yard, Bury Place, with Teresa Smart, Institute of Education, London University and Julia Strong, National Literacy Campaign. CHECK ON INTERNET

⁵ Daily Telegraph, Clare, 2004:1.

⁶ Office for Standards in Education, the UK government's school inspection agency.