

A Subjective Academic Narrative Reviewing Academic Collegiality

Josie Arnold^{1*}

¹ Swinburne University of Technology, Hawthorn, Australia

*Correspondence: Dr. Josie Arnold, Professor of Writing, Writing Discipline, Swinburne University of Technology, Hawthorn, Victoria, Australia. Email: jarnold@swin.edu.au

DOI: 10.12735/ier.v2i4p26

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.12735/ier.v2i4p26>

Abstract

This paper is based upon a conceptual approach to making a scholarly addition to the privileged academic discourse. This paper develops the methodology of a subjective academic narrative to address the issue of academic collegiality that is being explored. This methodology involves a journey of intellectual enquiry into the work of the self as data. This subjective academic narrative is a response to the research question: ‘in today’s world of the subjective self and online interactions is collegiality possible or even desirable?’. The conceptual approach of this paper involves constructing a personal narrative arising from experience and reviewing academic literature regarding the possibly inherent discordance between collegiality and personal career development. The core business of the university may well be teaching undergraduate students, as this brings in the most sure and significant income, but if you want to get up the academic scale, you must also excel at the various demands of the promotions regulations. These involve proof of collegiality as well as personal aspects of teaching and learning, research, and management of courses, people and discipline areas. This paper explores whether or not such interactions are possible.

Keywords: collegiality; competition; subjective academic narrative

1. Introduction: The Problem Being Explored

Today, ‘collegiality has increasingly become an indirect criterion in faculty evaluations’ (Connell & Savage, 2001). Connell and Savage (2001) invite us to question the possible hidden discriminations within collegiality including gender, race and even the right to speak out. They see its ‘potential danger to academic freedom’. However, having acknowledged this, they go on to claim that ‘strong reasons exist for considering collegiality in academic evaluations’, noting that a great number of academic responsibilities involve co-operation, and that ‘courts have consistently supported these institutional expectations of cooperation among faculty’ (p. 1). It is essential that collegiality does not become confused with acceptability: it should be evaluated as a part of teaching, research and service to the university and community as ‘the role of academe is to create and disseminate knowledge in a society’ (Baruch & Hall, 2004, p. 249). Do collegial interactions support this?

Collegiality involves working with other people in a way that respects their position as well as your own, and that develops the University for which you work. In other areas of business, it might be called team work: something that we insist all of our students become familiar with and even expert at as part of their courses so that they can work in groups in the workplace. There are many ways to achieve this. For example, Morris (2008) describes the regular symposia at her university as a ‘change initiator; a place for ownership of the problems and uncensored opinions to be proposed’.

The symposium she reviews looks at how to increase collegiality and/as faculty engagement in an environment where there are increasingly fewer tenured staff. Its goal was to investigate ‘how the institution could enhance faculty engagement and renewal and how all of its professionals could be more effectively engaged in campus life’. She notes how online teaching and research works against this, but also ‘that faculty members who are meaningfully engaged with the academy find greater satisfaction and productivity in all of their roles...teaching, research, public service and outreach, faculty governance and student life’ (p. 68). There is debate over this as the ‘3 pillars’ of academe are often quite explicitly added to by the 4th: collegiality (Hatfield, 2006). This paper identifies a number of aspects of that 4th pillar of the academy. In doing so, it develops scholarly relationships with refereed papers taken from the World Wide Web. Such sources are ratified and have a depth of scholarly peer-reviewed sources comparable to hard copy. Indeed, they are often an electronic version of hard-copy peer reviewed papers.

2. Methodology

It is quite acceptable to use the first person ‘I’ in qualitative academic research papers. This section explores a scholarly methodology that resides within the self as data. The methodology of this paper continues the work I have done writing about and in the ‘subjective academic narrative’ for publication within refereed academic journals. Storytelling is a basic human activity and the academy since the mid-20th century has begun to see its value rather than use it as the non-academic side of the dichotomy between thought and reason and feeling and emotion that the Enlightenment left as its residue of academic thought and knowledge. So ‘subjective’ refers to self and one’s own observations, ‘academic’ refers to the privileged intellectual discourse in which the discussion takes place and to which it adds, and ‘narrative’ asserts that all knowledge involves making a story.

In keeping with feminist, postmodernist (Arnold, 1994) and postcolonial (Achebe, 2009) ways of thinking, the qualitative methodologies that arise from non-fiction narratives have challenged traditional ideologies adopted by the academy. In this paper I continue to work with a methodology that I have called the subjective academic narrative (Arnold, 2012) so as to bring my story of dynamic knowledge practices into the academy. This challenges dichotomies and renders them unnecessary. The dichotomies that have been part of the qualitative/quantitative divide include what Leblanc (1997) cites as ‘reason/emotion, strength/weakness, hero/victim, objectivity/subjectivity, public/private, active/passive...’ (p. 1). As soon as a dominant methodology emerges that acts as a knowledge gatekeeper, then people are divided. Some are allowed in: some are locked out. In the same way, the strength and success of the scientific methodology that replaced religious ideology has both taken academic knowledge forward and prevented it from going forward even with Eurowestern modalities.

Enlightenment thinking comes from the Eurowestern world. Although challenged, it still provides the model for all knowledge and has dominated academic gatekeeping since the 18th century. Since the mid 20th century this has been challenged. Nevertheless this model dominates and other modes of knowledge continue to be judged against it. For example, even in qualitative methodology in particular practice led research, McNamara (2012) exhorts the PhD candidates that he supervises not to use the word ‘I’ as ‘whenever this is occurs, it is more than likely that the research topic is becoming blurred or lost entirely’ (p. 5). This inhibits the introduction of the self as data in this practice led research model.

Indeed, for many of us this this would reinforce that other ways of knowing and understanding different from the Enlightenment pattern have been rejected by the academy as ‘illogical’ or ‘subjective’. These terms have been seen as academically pejorative and have acted to be both patriarchal and dominating for women and examples of cultural colonisation for the non-western

world. Critical thinking has challenged this mode of producing knowledge not in itself per se but as a way of providing a template for all academic knowledge.

Partly, of course, this powerful domination exists because these scientific methods have been extremely successful in such areas as medicine, technology, manufacturing and warfare. They have led to European geographic colonisation of much of the rest of the world; to Euroamerican cultural domination of much of the world and to a similar cybercolonisation of the electronic technologies that emerged so strongly in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. The scientific formulation of a mind that was free to think about what was observed and to record it empirically is seen by many as contributing to the way our world exists and is lived in. He discusses the Western mind as having a passion that has developed ideas that underpin our global culture and that has led to rational knowledge. In doing so he emphasises the powerful patriarchal neo-colonial nature of the Western mindset. This is problematic. Midgley sees part at least of the problem as inappropriately applying Enlightenment ways or 'imperialistic ideologies' of validating knowledge to aspects of being, thinking and knowing that are other aspects of knowledge and ways of knowing altogether (Midgley, 2004, p. 21).

3. Multiple Notions of Reality within Scholarship

Postmodern cultural and critical theories ask us to look beyond masculinist scientific methodology as the one true road to knowledge; they '...reject traditional notions of truth and reality and claim instead that power enables some to define what is or is not considered knowledge' (Riger, 1992, p.734). There are multiple notions of reality and scientific modes are but one of them, but its powerful masculinist determinism constructs knowledge culture in a way that locks out other ways of knowing. Closely seen in literary theory, such postmodernist thinking indicates that people's actions and beliefs can be seen as texts and the discourse about them can be based on critiques of textuality '...i.e. , discursive productions located in a specific historical and cultural context and shaped by power' (Riger, 1992, p. 735). Moreover, such textuality provides opportunities for multiple readings as the reader becomes seen as bringing the text to life. In this sense, there is no permanency in one textual interaction and indeed the gaps and interstices are as important as what is said and revealed openly. There is no neutral observer, because such an anterior position requires placing oneself outside the situation: an impossibility especially within '...the prevailing asymmetries of power and androcentric assumptions of science and society...' (Riger, 1992, p.737).

Feminist epistemology aims to reveal the concrete conditions producing abstract knowledge at the same time as it argues to include the personal and/as the theoretical. Hooks (2006) (who always uses the lower case for her assumed name) says that '...merging critical thinking in everyday life with knowledge learned in books and through study has been the union of theory and practice that has informed my intellectual cultural work' (p. 3) It is this bringing together of the personal and the intellectual that underpins this paper. Hooks found this particularly apposite when she wanted to write in a way that brought together her academic and intellectual insights and also made them accessible to a non-academic audience. It was the growth of cultural studies that enabled her work to find an acceptable place within the academy and scholarship (p. 3).

Another form of 'the subjective academic narrative' is anecdotal theory. Jane Gallop proposes that anecdotal theory is a feminist activity that enables non-patriarchal ways of thinking and doing academic work. It aims to 'tie theorizing to lived experience...anecdotal theory must be...the juncture where theory finds itself compelled -against its will, against its projects- to think where it has been forced to think.' (Gallop, 2002, p. 15). Gallop forces us to consider theory itself as an act of power that disempowers others. Hooks (2006) agrees: 'I am constantly amazed at how difficult it is to cross borders in this white supremacist, capitalist, patriarchal society' (p. 6). It is not, she avers, an act of will but of social privilege that enables such border crossing; it relies upon material,

educational and cultural advantage that privileges individuals. Her aim is to establish how borders can be crossed by others (the 'non-us' of 'them and us'?) who enact multicultural and colonized backgrounds of repression so that there is freedom of movement available to all who desire to enact it. My 'subjective academic narrative' is one such border crossing.

Many such border crossings are enabled by feminist and postcolonial theories. The construction of women's reality is historically and contemporaneously one of oppression. Historically, it may be overt as in the 'first wave' of feminism where often privileged white western women sought the equivalence of voting and the 'second wave' where often privileged white western women sought to leave 'the women's room'. In the early 21st century, it is more covert as often privileged white western women claim a generational difference that enables a new understanding of what it is to be woman. 'Third wave' feminism argues that the advantages gained by the first and second wave have so altered the cultural construction that the rigid ideals and practices of earlier feminisms are no longer relevant. Hence, post-feminism results even as the times call for a feminism that is not singular.

The postcolonial moment presents a challenge to dominant ways of knowing that have become reified within the academy. Formulated by and belonging to dominant European colonisers, academic modalities are still judged against values that are increasingly under challenge. Hooks's (2006) claim articulates why this challenge is extant: 'politically, we do not live in a postcolonial world, because the mind-set of neo-colonialism shapes the underlying metaphysics of white supremacist capitalist patriarchy' (p. 7). Such cultural construction underpins our personal and academic existence.

Collegiality, then, is not outside dominant views of race and gender. The dominant cultural model for the university system remains what Spivak (1999) calls 'Eurowestern' in which 'the other of Europe' is not a necessarily significant aspect of academic practice. Patriarchal systems of culture dominate most aspects of the academy. Race and gender remain an issue that may be masked in western institutions but are particularly evident in non-western institutions. In both, gender too often remains an unspoken disruption to best practice collegiality.

4. Collegiality and Teamwork

In the service of the University, team work may involve working with small discipline groups, working in larger management groups and working within sections of the University itself. It is particularly pertinent in a teaching situation as there are day-to-day matters of student learning and staff teaching as well as curriculum building over a longer period of time. Consultation with one another, interest in the whole discipline and a willingness to review curriculum materials as well as interact with tutors and students is a strong part of this. There is a gulf between teaching and research activities with the latter becoming strong indicators of success within academe (Baruch & Hall, 2004, p. 249).

This gulf adds tension to a concept of collegiality that involves us in recognising that whilst individual research models may be followed and research activities undertaken, talking about and sharing them in the smaller team is both enriching for the researcher and enabling for the intellectual dynamism of the group itself. Such intellectual sharing also shows possible synchronicities where the members of the team can bring various aspects of their thinking into other projects. Baruch and Hall (2004) note that 'the academic career model builds on networking within and across organizations...scholars form teams to work on projects, and may be involved with several projects at the same time. In one they may lead, in others be participants, for others they provide advice and support' (p. 245).

This willingness to work together is a strengthening aspect of our work both as teachers and researchers. It is all too easy for eccentric habits of thought and action to develop when you work alone as a researcher, and whilst these are often a valuable aspect of the research work, they are also available to be critiqued as not always in the service of the University and also, perhaps, not always in the best interests of students and even staff themselves. After all, promotion emphasises various elements of contributory expertise such as the management of courses, people and discipline areas. Rather there is a readiness to develop appropriate contributions to research projects and other group activities that also contributes to the CV profile of the individual. This tension between the self and the collegial group is evident in making a personal career path in academe. Team work is subject to these tensions as each academic comes from a personal methodological perspective. This adds dynamism and depth to research and requires high levels of acceptance and open communication. O’Cathain, Murphy, and Nicoll (2008) state that ‘communication requires respect and collegiality between team members so that researchers feel able to expose their thinking to colleagues’ (p. 1575). It is this exposure of thought that brings a collaborative team effort richness and depth as ‘the desired outcome of collaboration between researchers is the creation of knowledge beyond that generated by researchers working alone’ (O’Cathain *et al.*, 2008, p.1576).

Each senior academic has a responsibility under his or her watch to foster in a positive way the groups that are placed together for teaching and administration purposes, as well as the larger management groups. In the service of the University it is a difficult but nonetheless rewarding activity to bring disparate intellectuals who are creative and often highly sensitive people together in as many aspects of their work as possible. Although this is a challenging task, it is indubitably an appropriate and rewarding one. Facilitating the ‘small dynamic team’ fulfils this mission as well as the individual missions of academics quite properly fostering their own careers: ‘in the wider literature on research teams, characteristics of successful teams include leadership, communication adaptability, shared mental models, and mutual trust’ (O’Cathain *et al.*, 2008, p. 1576). This form of collegiality is difficult within a promotion system that has as its ultimate accreditation ‘the number of citations of a person’s work’ (Baruch & Hall, 2004, p. 241).

5. Collegial Discussions

A major opportunity aspect of collegiality is bringing together academics through informal discussion so as to cover ground that opens new scholarly possibilities and projects. Szto, Furman, and Langer (2005) relate how their experiences of what they call ‘expressive/creative qualitative research’ about poetry and photography as a basis for social work research are based upon dynamic scholarly discussions. ‘...extended conversation between colleagues can be a tremendous source of growth and exploration. Such conversations become touchstones for creative research and inspiration and may also counter alienating and isolating factors that often accompany the academic endeavour within the modern university’ (p. 136). In doing so, they utilize conversation as data to analyse and reach insights that may not be available through other methodologies. Analysing conversations as data is no new methodology: what Szto *et al.* (2005) add to this is having another colleague analyse their conversation as data so as to explore conversational context in its original explorative form so as to enact ‘a means of independently eliciting the themes embedded within conversations’ (p. 136). In doing so, they contribute to the idea that the academic self as data is an important element of qualitative methodologies that recognise the dynamism of scholarly interactions in the academy.

Not all academics are so generous with their time, ideas, or recognition of the value of others’ insights into one’s own research in progress. Indeed, there is a long record of academic personal and institutional jealousy in guarding research and an unfortunate history of accusations of ‘stealing’ and/or plagiarising others’ work.

6. Collegiality and Roles

Academic leadership is an essential aspect of collegiality yet, like all interpersonal relationships, it is far from simple in its execution within a scholarly & collegiate environment. Ball (2007) identifies leadership within the academy, particularly within research, as essential regarding context, multiple formal and informal interactions and relationship patterns. He describes several aspects of leadership that act to transform others, yet he notes that research leadership is usually acknowledged as a particular position and that there is 'scant research' about the importance and existence of 'unofficial' leadership (p. 452).

Many members of faculty share a very deeply collegiate act when they co-publish a book or papers for submission to a refereed journal or conference. Such co-authorship introduces an academic discourse that aims to add to the privileged conversation about their area of expertise and interest. The support that co-authors give to one another is evident as far as shared experience in the knowledge domain under discussion. Clearly there is also a collegiality that ensures listening, respecting, acting fairly and working positively towards an agreed goal. There is also the other side: learning to put up with other people's vagaries, work habits, points-of-view and communication skills or otherwise. This means that we learn from co-authoring important personal and people management skills. Varieties of partnership are essential components of a lively academic institution, and such partnerships inevitably foster abilities that members of them may not have been fully aware of having.

7. Collegiality and Mentoring

Mentoring is a two-way relationship. It involves senior and experienced faculty in developing a relationship with newer members and enabling them to gain skills that will take them forward in their academic careers. It also involves readiness on the part of incomers to accept such a relationship whilst maintaining their own sense of worth and their own ability to contribute to the academy in general and this workplace in particular. For the mentor it means that a definition must be given to their often intuitive self-knowledge of the skills that they have developed over time. These might vary from curriculum development to working with academic support to supervising postgraduate students. The collegial relationship is not one of a didactic master and a non-reflective disciple who takes on every word and gesture: it most fruitfully will be an arena for discussion and even dispute as open debate about an academic skill goes forward. For the mentored this means that the perceptions and values that they bring to the debate are also clearly defined and able to be placed within the context of the discussion in a way that brings value to it. It also means that both parties should have a readiness to listen and hear as well as to speak. There is often, though not always, a power differential in this process as the mentor is usually senior and has been on faculty longer. What must be revered by both is that incomers too have valuable perspectives and abilities. In examining the relationship between mentoring and socialization, Schrodt, Cawyer, and Sanders (2003) indicate that academic mentors open gateways and provide support as 'sponsors, coaches and protectors' but warn that there is great dissatisfaction about this process of socialization for new faculty (p. 17-18).

8. Collegiality, Teaching and Research

The academy has developed an acute sense that there is a deep division between academics who teach and those who are researchers. There is no doubt that the latter are given preference over the former. Indeed, many undergraduate teaching positions are undertaken by sessional staff who have no clear career path. Teaching, it seems, can be done by a non-collegial group, whereas research positions are almost always more permanent in nature and/or more respected often gaining grants or industry support.

Research is a significant aspect of university existence. Indeed Ball (2007) states that research activities and successes define a university and that research leadership transforms academics' interactions through 'giving a group of people a clear vision and a clear sense of direction, trying to take them forward as a collective and as individuals...by initiating appropriate action' (p. 450). He notes, however, that teaching and research are able to be seen as not always complementary, but as causing conflict and jealousy 'between those teaching and those researching. This could be because the 'teacher' perceives the 'researcher' as having higher status, better conditions of employment or improved promotion prospects' (p. 451).

9. Collegiality and Sharing Teaching Skills and Curriculum Building

One of the most pleasing tasks we have as academics relates to curriculum building, and this is almost always a team effort. It involves colleagues in looking closely at the student programs and assessing them in such areas as subject reliability and awareness, institutional demands, national guidelines learning and teaching objectives. In building such strong curriculum, individual strengths are brought forward and at the same time, team work is essential.

Interactions with other staff there is also a responsibility to model their work as leaders within the wider Communications group and within Lilydale generally. This may be formally, for example by presentations to staff and/or mentoring staff. It may be more informally by a broader sense of teamwork as more incidental in conversations and less focussed interactions that are nevertheless encouraging to and supportive of more junior and/or other academics.

Strengthening discipline areas strongly if a 'small dynamic team' attitude becomes a commitment on the part of all involved. Getting academics together has sometimes quite cynically been described as 'attempting to herd cats'. In describing a team, however, there is no intention to make academics into some kind of mindless herd. Team teaching has become a mere shadow as academics have very busy schedules based on crowded workload models.

10. Collegiality and Interpersonal Relations

Respect and courtesy are a significant element in any relationship. The ways in which people present themselves is becoming more important for employment and on-going self-representation within the system. Traditionally, academic courtesy has involved a willingness to speak out reasonably even when against management. Today, the dominance of academic management sees more people unable or unwilling to address questions that management has taken a position upon.

Can this be standardised, demanded and measured? Woodward (2012) reports that such 'behaviour standards' are described by academics as 'managerialism gone mad'. She quotes the Australia's National Teacher Education Union's (NTEU) description of RMIT's demands as 'unnecessarily complex, ambiguous and patronising' (p. 1). She reports them as including, at the cost of \$100,000 consultancy development fee, 'commitments to "passion", being "resolute", showing "enthusiasm" and displaying a "positive rather than negative" attitude' (p. 2). The union also describes them as pressuring academics to conform to management demands regarding workloads and non-critical conformity. Today, the academic career is dominated by management aspirations for those who wish to star. This leads inevitably to a 'them and us' mentality that some may see as a form of cronyism within the academic promotions system, as many positions are actually filled by 'getting the tap on the shoulder'.

Can collegiality encompass humour and goodwill? Is work in academe allowed to be fun or is this too disruptive to proper academic gravitas? 'Work is one important source of an individual's social identity, and workplace interaction is a crucial means of instantiating that identity. As one

component of workplace discourse, humour can provide insights into the distinctive culture which develops in different workplaces’ (Holmes & Marra, 2002).

Collegiality occurs within an academic environment that has as its base a lively disbelief in ‘givens’. Academics are trained to see the privileged academic discourse as a place of contestation in which data is put forward and ideas developed from information into knowledge and even wisdom through a form of peer dialogue that is highly intellectual in its analytical and critical evaluations and interactions.

Collegiality can be either enriched or challenged by academics’ placing their intellectual work within various theories and methodologies. There continues to be strong dissonance between enlightenment based scientific modes of enquiry and more qualitative research methodologies.

11. Collegiality and Regulatory Systems

Regulatory systems continue to be delivered by internal and external bodies and are often used in a pejorative rather than supportive way. Such regulatory systems can be utilised to enrich curriculum development as this table below indicates. They can also be utilised to question the capacities of the academic, or to ratify them.

Table 1. For our MA (Writing) course delivery, I have made a preliminary checklist

TEQSA Criterion	Addressed
Corporate and subject support for students	
Institute/course opportunities and perspectives	
Integrated University-wide academic management and policy leadership	
Admission and retention activities and policies	
Unit guides, curriculum design and review including subject-level outcomes are being systematically addressed and detailed guidelines are present	
It is clear where key decisions are made including strategic planning, risk management, independent evaluation ; induction and training and review and self-review feedback	
There are continual quality reviews and demonstrable improvements to the course content, delivery and student satisfaction	
Scholarship is integrated in the curriculum	
Facilities, equipment, IT and library resources are currently adequate and there is a future plan for their upgrading	
KPIs are identified and there is systematic reporting and support	
There is intellectual academic support for student learning to achieve best outcomes in the course	
There is flexible delivery	
The quality of the academics is high; there is continual staff development with staff and sessional staff inclusion in operations and management discussions to enhance collegial dialogue	
There is systematic reporting and use of academic performance data	
There is engagement with industry	
Students receive qualitative and quantitative feedback	
There is an examiners’ committee	
There is provision for external examiners	
Workload is assessed	
Student results turnaround is appropriate	
There is assessment moderation to relevant expressed academic standards	

Internal and external regulatory systems are becoming more dominant within the academic life and may act cohesively for colleagues. For example, TEQSA is a regulatory system introduced into Australian tertiary institutions in 2013. Professor Greg Craven states that we must realise ‘it was a controlled regulatory system underpinned and controlled by three basic principles: regulatory necessity, reflecting risk, and proportionate regulation’. This will mean ‘constant intervention and engagement with TEQSA’ (in Bennett, 2012, p. 3). This reaches down to on the ground face to face or e delivery of curriculum, including the subject materials and their applicability to a number of aims suggested by TEQSA.

12. Collegiality and the Union

Staff unions and broader tertiary teachers’ unions have long played a significant part in enterprise bargaining for the best possible conditions for scholars in academe. They establish through enterprise bargaining the conditions under which academics work. Clearly, this is at heart not a collegial activity and produces difference not only between academic staff and academic management but also between union and non-union colleagues. D’Art and Turner (2005) are interested in the influence upon academics of ‘service employment’ and ‘new forms of work’ in acting to ‘manifest an individualist orientation and weak attachment to trade union membership’ (p.518). Their findings show that ‘solidarity’, which they define as ‘a community of interests, feelings and actions...that can best be advanced through collective means’ is still a lively issue for union membership of academics.

Union solidarity and collective bargaining power leads to the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA) that Australian Universities operate under. It also protects staff who are in some form of dispute with management or other colleagues or who have been ‘whistleblowers’ about unacceptable behaviour. Although there is nominal support for this and standards for protecting such whistleblowers within most universities, in practice whistleblowers almost always lose status, support and even promotion or their jobs.

13. Collegiality and Student/Staff Interactions

The ways in which collegiality – or its lack – effects academic staff relationships with students may be both obvious and hidden. The obvious elements include, for example, a sense being given to students that staff is in harmony over the curriculum, teaching and postgraduate supervision areas of their work with students; a realisation that staff are not using student loyalty against one another; a clear indication that, whilst the academy should be a place of vigorous professional debate this is to enhance student learning, this is not aimed to draw students into personal acrimony or personality clashes between individual academics. The hidden elements may be more sinister such as placing an academic to the forefront for positive student feedback to facilitate promotion whilst at the same time ignoring behaviours that are negative such as inappropriate staff/staff or staff/student relationships.

14. Conclusion and Recommendations

Collegiality becomes a very important consideration in academe when we look at the ways in which academics interact with one another and their students: our academic life. In considering staff morale, for example, Johnson and Indvik (2006) indicate that ‘the great silent secret of the

American workplace is that verbal abuse is far more pervasive problem than most people realise'. They define verbal abuse as 'language intended to cause distress to the target...a repetitive, targeted, and destructive form of communication' (38), and show it to be very costly in the workforce causing stress, depression and self-destructive behaviours. Such abuse may be overt or, more likely within the academy' clever and covert.

Clearly there are many positive aspects to collegiality. What, however, might we think of it in relationship to academic freedom of speech, willingness to dispute givens or to bring forward objections to management? In what ways do academics have a responsibility to be critical and analytical of their institution as well as in their teaching and/as knowledge production? In the production of a knowledge culture that values all members of staff and encourages positive interactions how can any evaluation take place by the individual much less of the individual? Collegiality is a warm/fuzzy term that has much positive signification as producing a caring and supportive workforce, and there can be no argument with that. However it is incumbent upon academics to rove widely in their thinking that underpins their research and teaching activities as well as their place in the organisational structure. Climbing the promotional ladder is done in a space that may be seen to preclude caring too much for anyone else, even when collegiality is a given in the performance evaluation. Thus collegiality needs to be carefully thought through and clearly defined so that there is an overlap between personal push forward and personal interactions with colleagues that are both positive in their actions and outcomes.

The significations contained in the word collegiality may be fruitfully broken up and described. They may contain the following, all of which I think describe ways of sharing: research teams; mentoring; co-authorship; curriculum building; presentations; courtesy; willingness to speak out reasonably even when against management; sharing teaching skills; respect; humour; a lively disbelief; methodologies; theories. These are the basis for recommendations to the academy regarding the importance of collegiality and its place within academic promotions as well as everyday academic interactions.

Developing a community of scholars that shares relevant aspects of this with one another is a significant attribute of academic commitment to the service of the University in which we work, to the richness of our teaching and learning and to the development of each of us as thinkers and intellectuals working in a creative field and able to share this work in some ways. Such collegiate collaboration has benefits that have been noted in the literature: there is greater creativity in intellectual and academic matters and prisms; mutual goal setting and support enables higher productivity; there is more opportunity for mentoring and role modelling; there is greater mutual appreciation and recognition of one another's achievements and there is more synchronicity (Austin & Baldwin, 1991; Kennedy, 1995). In practice is this so?

References

- [1] Achebe, C. (2009). *The education of a British-protected child: Essays*. New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group.
- [2] Arnold, J. (1994). *Feminism, postmodernism and education*. Unpublished thesis Deakin University.
- [3] Arnold, J. (2012). Teaching and learning about writing in the digital media culture: A subjective academic narrative. *International Journal of Asian Social Science*, 2(6), 950-960.

-
- [4] Austin, A. E., & Baldwin, R. G. (1991). Faculty collaboration, enhancing the quality of scholarship and teaching. *ASHE_ERIC Higher Education Reports, No. 7*. The George Washington University.
- [5] Ball, S. (2007). Leadership of academics in research. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 35*(4), 449-477. doi:10.1177/1741143207081058.
- [6] Baruch, Y., & Hall, D. T. (2004). The academic career: a model for future careers in other sectors? *Journal of Vocational Behaviour, 64*(2), 241-262.
- [7] Bennett, J. (2012). Learn to work with TEQSA: Craven. *Campus Review, 22*(6), 3.
- [8] Connell, M. A., & Savage, F. G. (2001). Does Collegiality Count? *Academe, 87*(6), 37-40. doi: 10.2307/40252089.
- [9] D'Art, D., & Turner, T. (2005). Academic Workers and Union Membership: An inevitable dilution to solidarity? *Industrial Relations: A Journal of Economy and Society, 44*(3), 518-524. doi: 10.1111/j.0019-8676.2005.00398.x
- [10] Gallop, J. (2002). *Anecdotal Theory*. U.S.A.: Duke University Press.
- [11] Hatfield, R. D. (2006). Enhancing collegiality in organizations: an examination of the dimensions and the development of collegiality. *Proceedings of the Academy of Organizational Culture, Communications and Conflict, 11*(1), 35-60.
- [12] Holmes, J., & Marra, M. (2002). Having a laugh at work: How humour contributes to workplace culture. *Journal of Pragmatics, 34*(12), 1683-1710.
- [13] Hooks, b. (2006). *Outlaw culture: Resisting representations (Routledge classics)*. New York: Routledge.
- [14] Johnson, P. R., & Indvik, J. (2006). Sticks and stones: verbal abuse in the workplace. *Journal of Organizational Culture, Communications and Conflict, 10*(1), 121-126.
- [15] Kennedy, E. L. (1995). In pursuit of connection: reflections on collaborative work. *American Anthropologist, 97*(1), 26-33.
- [16] Leblanc, L. (1997). *Razor girls: genre and gender in cyberpunk fiction*. Retrieved from http://project.cyberpunk.ru/idb/genre_and_gender_in_cyberpunk_fiction.html.
- [17] McNamara, A. (2012). Six rules for practice-led research. *Text: Journal of Writing and Writing Courses, 2012*, 1-15. Retrieved from <http://www.textjournal.com.au/speciss/issue14/McNamara.pdf>.
- [18] Midgley, M. (2004). *The myths we live by*. Oxon and New York: Routledge.
- [19] Morris, L. V. (2008). Faculty engagement in the academy. *Innovative Higher Education, 33*(2), 67-69.
- [20] O'Cathain, A., Murphy, E., & Nicoll, J. (2008). Multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, or dysfunctional? Team working in mixed-methods research. *Qualitative Health Research, 18*(11), 1574-1585.
- [21] Schrodt, P., Cawyer, C. S., & Sanders, R. (2003). An examination of academic mentoring behaviors and new faculty members' satisfaction with socialization and tenure and promotion processes. *Communication Education, 52*(1), 17-29.
- [22] Riger, S. (1992). Epistemological debates, feminist voices: Science, social values, and the study of women. *American Psychologist, 47*(6), 730-740. doi: 10.1037/0003-066X.47.6.730
- [23] Spivak, G. C. (1999). *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- [24] Szto, P., Furman, R., & Langer, C. (2005). Poetry and photography. An exploration into expressive/creative qualitative research. *Qualitative Social Work*, 4(2), 135-156. doi: 10.1177/1473325005052390
- [25] Woodward, S. (2012). Behaviour standards 'managerialism gone mad. *Campus Review*, 22(6), 1-2.

Copyrights



Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

