Figure 1: E Hall, *Plate optional*, 2019. Digital image.
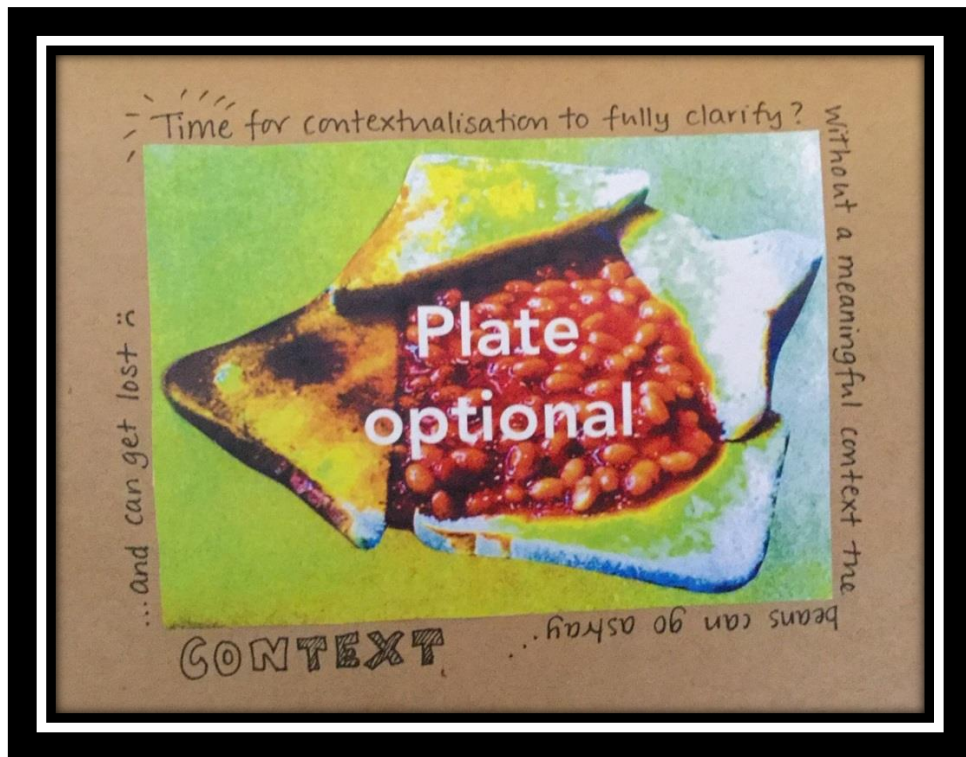

Figure 2: E Hall, *Plate optional*, 2019. Digital image with annotations.

VISUAL ESSAY

'Beanz Meanz Professional Learning': Beginning a Pedagogical Reflective Sketchbook

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INTRODUCTION

I was attempting to write a traditional text-based paper defining what I have come to term a 'Pedagogical Reflective Sketchbook'. The aim was to consider what insights might be gained from existing research on teachers' use of reflective sketchbooks—and similarly-named books—for their professional learning, leading to my definition of a Pedagogical Reflective Sketchbook. However, I told myself (aloud) 'I can't say what I want to say in words'. Although not a totally surprising revelation, it was a call to action. I therefore began to develop my own visual musings centred on the analogy of being like a Michelin-Starred chef serving baked beans on toast—a pedagogical frustration in my current academic role. In order to better understand a Pedagogical Reflective Sketchbook it made perfect sense to begin one, in keeping with the spirit of my research intentions. This visual essay explains more...

KEYWORDS

Sketchbook; reflection; professional learning; pedagogy; artist-teacher; dialogue

Above are altered images from my nascent Pedagogical Reflective Sketchbook, created from a single photograph, edited using *Photoshop Express* and then revisited in the sketchbook with annotations. The context is this: year-upon-year, my visual arts teaching responsibilities have been shrinking—and I am the only subject specialist in my department teaching a limited range of art education courses. Although I enjoy beans on toast/ teaching of 'the basics', my repertoire is so much more extensive. I began to explore this theme by entering into a dialogue with materials (Thornton 2011).

Via a process of 'reflective oscillation' (Adams 2002: 222)—imagining, making, seeing, reflecting, responding—it is argued that knowledge is created through art making (Eisner 2008; Pringle 2008). Indeed, art making is world-making (Goodman, 1976), and 'the artist creates possible worlds though the metaphoric transformation of the ordinary and the conventionally given' (Bruner 1986: 49). Furthermore, art is evidence of 'the never-repeatable uniqueness of actually lived and experienced life' (Bakhtin, 1993: 2). Who else has compared their pedagogical practice to the serving of beans on toast and made artwork about this? I would love to know.

Power (2018) describes sketchbooks as 'a widely used, although often overlooked aspect of the creative process' (199). I needed my sketchbook as a risk-free space to play and explore, to exercise innovation and creativity (Robinson et al. 2011). I sat down with self-imposed boundaries: two hours (without a break) to mirror the constraints of the teaching timetable but also to stimulate my problem-solving. Subsequently, the digital development of a selection of images exploited new affordances and illustrates how 'language […] itself can be treated artistically' (Eisner 2008: 8). The handwritten annotations add another layer of meaning.

Reflective sketchbook research typically focuses on student teachers (e.g., Hall 2012; Khanobbhorn and Sumalee 2018; Moate et al. 2019) rather than more experienced teachers. An exception is the *Sketchbook Circle* initiative (Brass and Coles 2014) but this prioritises art marking for its own sake over pedagogical reflection. As a former member of the *Sketchbook Circle*, I enjoyed sharing my 'doodle-y' artworks in dialogues with other artist-teachers. However, creating the baked bean series has tangibly emphasised to me that conceptual enquiry and meaning-making are key to artist identity (Pringle 2008). These visual artefacts are personally and professionally meaningful.

Figure 3: E Hall, *Concentrate*, 2019. Digital image.

Figure 4: E Hall, *Concentrate*, 2019. Digital image with annotations.

Nolan and Molla (2018) tell us that 'professional learning is anchored in a specific social space; and it involves thinking and acting against the backdrop of one's goals, values, understandings, beliefs and commitments' (722). Visual arts teachers are predisposed through their professional and personal interests to emphasise the centrality of learning in and through the observable world. I trust that I am exemplifying this. 'We all possess 'a basic human contemporary need to tell and preserve our stories' (Delacruz and Bales 2010: 38)—here is my lived experience (Moate et al 2019). Creating this visual essay has been a valuable learning exercise, despite teachers' ongoing learning being 'taken for granted' (Thornton 2011: 32).

It has been proven that the practising art teacher, even if that practice is relatively small, is likely to have a positive impact on student learning outcomes (Morris et al. 2018). Additionally, the best way to teach about using sketchbooks is for teachers to engage with their own (Buffery 2009), modelling best and authentic practice as an artist-teacher. I look forward to sharing this work with my students to illustrate how something positive—and artistic—can arise from pedagogical frustration.

Even when sketchbooks are not designated as 'reflective sketchbooks', their potential for supporting reflection is often recognised (e.g., Brass and Coles 2014; Delacruz and Bales 2010; Robinson et al. 2011). So, are all sketchbooks inherently reflective? My answer is yes, to some extent. However, making a distinction is necessary because I wish to refer specifically to *pedagogical* reflection: reflecting on matters of teaching and learning. My baked bean images illustrate pedagogical reflections.

Inspired by Paul Klee's (1968) seminal text, *Pedagogical Sketchbook*, I have coined the term 'Pedagogical Reflective Sketchbook'. I regard this as a personal and professional artefact and a versatile tool of artist-teacher practice. More than just about art-making for art's sake, a (pedagogical) reflective sketchbook provides a dialogic space for professional learning (Moate et al. 2019); 'a site to interrogate the interactions of theory and practice' (Power 2018: 209). I have employed brackets around the word 'pedagogical' as this is my own addition.

Figure 5: E Hall, *Are the beans actually needed?*, 2019. Digital image.

Figure 6: E Hall, *Are the beans actually needed?*, 2019. Digital image with annotations.

For teachers of the visual arts, does it not make good sense that image-creation forms part of the reflective process? We know that 'educational research has traditionally been ruled by an economy of words' (Quinn and Calkin 2008: 1), but we also know that 'reflecting through words alone may not allow the expression of deeper levels of emotion that might be possible via other modes such as through images, sound and/or gesture' (McKay and Barton 2018: 358). Visual art teachers, me included, are especially well placed to understand this.

To summarise, my proposal is that the Pedagogical Reflective Sketchbook has a trio of interrelated purposes:

1. to explore personal art interests
2. to model techniques to students within lessons
3. to reflect professionally (on teaching and art-making).

Here I have only touched upon professional reflection. In order to do full justice to all three purposes of the Pedagogical Reflective Sketchbook, one must engage with its practice longer-term. I will continue to work with the baked beans analogy.

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i **Note:** The title plays with a marketing slogan of a famous baked bean manufacturer:

'Beanz Meanz Heinz' (see: https://www.dezeen.com/2017/04/07/beanz-meanz-heinz-

baked-beans-slogan-50th-anniversary-limited-edition-cans-packaging-design/)