

Dr Elizabeth Dobson
Intercultural Interests:

Theoretical framing

I have been exploring interdisciplinary collaborative creativity through a sociocultural lens (Vygotsky, Wertsche); to understand how cultural references, physical tools and language are used to resource the development of understanding in co-creating. Inspired by Keith Sawyer's work on distributed creativity and collaborative emergence (Sawery and DeZutter) I've become especially interested in the ecology of long-term collaborative improvised trajectories; especially in how interactions mediate and constitute an ecology of practice through 'possibility thinking' (Craft) and explorative co-creating. As tools are appropriated for meaning-making, I am interested in how physical tools and digital technologies frame and constitute co-creating, when present, but also through memory, knowledge and imagination. This interest extends to situations where new tools are created and then appropriated for building understanding in joint effort, especially in interdisciplinary and intercultural settings where the foundation of knowledge can be remarkably diverse.



Analytic framing

With a focus on naturally occurring human action, I have been analysing long-term collaborative processes through sociocultural discourse analysis. Adopting an ethnographic perspective, this approach foregrounds dialogue to examine the views expressed, and resources used by the participants as they are engaged in meaning-making and joint creating. It incorporates a number of socioculturally framed discourse analysis methods:

- Guided by Sawyer and DeZutter's research in improvised theatre, interactional turns are coded to draw out characteristics of talk. Drawing on Neil Mercer and Karen Littleton's work on talk types, analysis is concerned with exploring the relationships between different qualities talk, in relation to the moment-by-moment emergence and development of ideas.
- Using another sociocultural discourse analysis method developed by Arvaja, the social, cultural, physical, psychological and imagined resources are also identified. As collaborators reference concepts, creative practitioners, shared memories, their immediate tools and their imaginations about what is possible, one can see how these resources constitute, frame and mediate what is accomplished moment-by-moment and over time, in the creative work and a collaborative process.

Personal framing:

I am a composer, music technology lecturer and educational research with a keen interest in understanding the impact of interdisciplinary collaboration on undergraduate enterprise and creativity. My interest in understanding journeys of collaboration emerged through my own collaborative experiences, and observation of the difficulties first year undergraduates often display. In my PhD I observed the evolution of collaborative understanding where students from different disciplines devised their final piece in a fluid context, made up of different social groupings and environmental choices. I have also set up an interdisciplinary collaboration, a 'CollabHub', where students are invited to pitch ideas and explore their interest in collaboration.

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