

***'Learning from Spontaneity'***  
***exploring the potential for improvisational play as an educational tool***

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If there is anything certain about the future it is that it is uncertain. We are stepping into an unfolding future of climate change, rapid successions of technological change, financial instability (due to an economic model requiring constant growth in a finite world), the end of the era of cheap energy on which our civilizations are built... Models of education focusing on intellectual forms of knowledge and competency based skills alone are not equipping our societies in the fullest sense to forge creative solutions in such a rapidly changing, complex and challenging environment. Currently, the swing in education is towards standardisation, delivering universal knowledge with uniform competency assessments. However, from the more holistic perspective, the model of universal education delivers abstracted learning, makes people feel separate from the world around them and reinforces the 'mechanistic' thinking which has contributed many of our current problems.

This dissertation explores the role of the improvisational arts within education as a tool for connecting people to more holistic ways of seeing and knowing, and for making meaning of knowledge in a constantly changing, dynamic world (with focus on a form of improvisation called InterPlay [www.interplayaus.com.au](http://www.interplayaus.com.au)). The nature of spontaneity is explored, and compared to theories of holistic science such as those found in the complexity sciences and the phenomenological approach of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. A review of literature around 'holistic' education is included, and the opinions of trained improvisation facilitators and participants sought as to whether such activities help facilitate a more holistic learning experience. The author has also engaged in her own spontaneous painting process to explore the ideas of her writing.

The results of these enquiries indicate that the improvisational arts may play a key role in the facilitation of holistic learning, especially those techniques that involve body movement. Results also showed potential for using such techniques as a hermeneutic tool. These enquiries could be thought of as a preliminary investigation into the use of improvisational practices within learning environs. They have adopted a broad scope, as the topic of enquiry was relatively unexplored. Opportunities exist for more focussed research leading on from this paper.