Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.
A DESIGN-BASED RESEARCH STUDY TO PROMOTE CROSS-DISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION USING A CASE FROM THE NEW ZEALAND DISABILITY FIELD

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

At Massey University, Palmerston North,
New Zealand

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2014

“We are each of us angels with only one wing, we can only fly as we embrace each other”
Abstract

This study developed and evaluated an approach to promote cross-disciplinary collaboration when studying complex real-world issues. Complex real-world issues, such as inclusion for those experiencing disability in New Zealand, have been found to be difficult to resolve. This is due to both the nature of complex real-world issues that cross disciplinary boundaries as well as epistemological differences held by members of the cross-disciplinary groups brought together to study them. The eight-phase approach developed in this study was designed to address these issues and promote cross-disciplinary collaboration through the employment of a critical realist framework and activities based on Appreciative Inquiry and Future Search. The evaluation of cross-disciplinary studies has also been found to be problematic as they are often judged against contradictory disciplinary criteria. This study, therefore, also developed a multidimensional evaluation process that recognises the interactive nature of cross-disciplinary collaboration. Findings from this study show that this newly developed process was useful to evaluate the approach. They also show that the approach did promote cross-disciplinary collaboration as well as furthered the understanding of cross-disciplinary collaboration and the factors that promote and hinder its development. Based on the study’s findings recommendations are made as to how the approach can be refined and used in a range of settings and areas for further research are identified. In this way, the study contributes to a better understanding of factors that promote and hinder cross-disciplinary collaboration, and provides an approach and evaluation process that could be useful for other cross-disciplinary studies.
Acknowledgements

I wish to express my thanks to a number of people without whom this thesis would never have been completed. Firstly, I want to acknowledge my participants and assistants without whom there would have been no research. Thank you for your willingness to give up a weekend and time for preparation and your enthusiasm for the project.

I would like to thank my original supervisors for their support and encouragement in the early phases of my study, during the weekend event and my time of illness. However, I also want to pass on my heartfelt thanks to Dr Alison Kearney and Associate Professor Jill Bevan-Brown who agreed to take on my supervision at the last minute. Your trust in me and the amazing support and encouragement gave me the motivation to believe in myself and to keep on going. Thanks also to Philippa Butler for proofreading my thesis and all my friends who encouraged me along the way, believing in me when I didn’t believe in myself.

Finally, I want to acknowledge my very long-suffering husband Rick and my wonderful family, Helen, Matt, Jo and Kim and my adopted family Kim and Amber. Without your faith, trust and belief in me and your amazing love, patience and encouragement I would never have finished. You are all stars, I can never thank you enough!
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