

What is Para- ? A Paragogic Approach

This is a short Learning Module that comprises an introductory learning resource that you can follow on your own.

The short Learning Module will focus on the peer production of artistic learning that we will, henceforth, know as **paragogy** and on the educational culture of **para-academia**.

What do you need to do?

You simply work your way through the learning resources on this WordPress page.

Paragogy/Peeragogy, Paragogues/Peeragogues...

You are already paragogues. In this course, you are going through an interactive process in which you are learning how to learn as a peer-group. The 'learning theory' that informs this process is called **paragogy**

Let's start with a quick overview of paragogy, or, as virtual community pioneer Howard Rheingold calls it, 'peeragogy'.

Please watch this first:

Rheingold refers to an ongoing peer produced book, the Peeragogy Handbook (2016)

The Peeragogy Handbook

is peer produced by swarming authorship. It represents the collective experience of its authors on paragogy.

The Handbook below is version 3.0 beta 3. The Handbook is regularly updated, so, by the time you read this, the copy below might be out of date.

It explains how to establish a paralogy to learn pretty much anything! This book is a 'handbook'; this means it's intended to be put to use.

https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/secure.notion-static.com/7e1eaab2-b27c-41b1-8692-37419cfe106d/Peeragogy_3.0.pdf

Swarming Peeragogy 3.0 (link)?

Don't feel that you have enough time to do all this reading? Remember that if you read the Peeragogy Handbook on your own it would take 7-8 times as much time as it will to read it as a basho. Moreover, swarm reading the book and meeting to jigsaw it back together will greatly enrich each of your readings of it. If someone in your group takes notes, you can quickly map out the whole book (eight heads are faster than one). This process is even easier if everyone has made their notes in the same place.

In the spirit of the Handbook, your Basho *may* wish to read the whole Handbook by swarming a peer reading. You can do this easily in your Basho. Follow this link to the information on how to do this (link)

Paragolics

Peeragogy Handbook (2016) develops a set of principles that were first published by Joe Corneli and Charlie Danoff while teaching at Peer 2 Peer University P2PU (2009-) in the early 2010s. Their P2P Foundation paper – [Corneli, J. and Danoff, C. J. (2011). Paragogy: Synergizing individual and organizational

learning]([https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikiversity/en/6/60/Paragogy-](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikiversity/en/6/60/Paragogy-final.pdf)

[final.pdf](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikiversity/en/6/60/Paragogy-final.pdf)](<https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikiversity/en/6/60/Paragogy-final.pdf>)) – is essential reading. Herein, Corneli and

Danoff propose five paragogical principals:

1. **Context as a decentered center.** For learning design in a peer-to-peer context, understanding the learner's self-concept in particular, whether they see themselves as self-directed or not may be less important than understanding the concept of 'shared context in motion'.
2. **Meta-learning as a font of knowledge.** We all have a lot to learn about learning.
3. **Peers are equals, but different.** The learner mustn't seek only to confirm what they already know, and must therefore confront and make sense of difference as part of the learning experience.
4. **Learning is distributed and nonlinear.** Side-tracking is OK, but dissipation isn't likely to work. Part of paralogy is learning how to find one's way around a given social field.
5. **Realize the dream, then wake up!** Paralogy is the art of fulling motivations when this is possible, and then going on to the next thing.

Again, this set of principals are something you could explore as a Basho. For example, you might assign two of the principals to each member of your Basho and ask that they are examined in relation to how you are forming as a basho. You could investigate two principals independently, then convene to discuss each of them in turn. Along the way you might develop a degree of consensus around the principals. You can then revise the principals themselves...*

Which paragogic principals work as they are currently formulated?

Which ones would you change?

How will you change them and to what ends?

*This is how I have approached the five principals : See: Mulholland, N., 2019. 'Chapter 5 Paragogy and Chapter 6 Five Observations', in Re-imagining the Art School Paragogy and Artistic Learning 1st ed. 2019., Cham: Springer International Publishing : Imprint: Palgrave Pivot.

Equally, the five paragogic principals can be used as benchmarks towards the end of this course in your Week 13 | Summative Submission. They are a very useful way of critically reflecting on your own contribution to your basho's work.

Peer Production

P2P Foundation <https://p2pfoundation.net/> is useful as a resource both on paragogy and a platform for a P2P learning.

Paragogy is built upon peer production foundations laid by the P2P Foundation. In this respect, this is a useful interview with the P2P theorist, Director and Founder of the P2P Foundation Michel Bauwens:

https://youtu.be/_2GbEJdpbTU

See also: Michel Bauwens, (2005-12-01) "The Political Economy of Peer Production" *Ctheory*

Michel Bauwens (2005-06-15). "Peer to Peer and Human Evolution" *Institute of Network Cultures*.

What is "horizontalisation"?

Michel Bauwens frequently discusses a shift from vertical to horizontal methods of production and distribution in P2P as a 'horizontalisation'. In this, he refers to vertical distribution (mass production / broadcasting) and horizontal distribution (customisation / narrowcasting).

It's important to note that mass production (vertical distribution) is still very much with us. In growing economies, it's really the dominant economic model. However, horizontal distribution has become an increasingly important component of the GDP of developed economies. In some of the world's 'creative cities', it *appears* to be the dominant economy. In particular, tech industry centres, such as Silicon Valley, tend to universalise the importance of horizontal distribution. This worldview is part of a broader Californian Ideology that, due to the ubiquity of computing, has swept the globe.

We find this particular emphasis on horizontal distribution echoed in the work of other P2P enthusiasts in the Californian maker and tech communities, notably Chris Anderson's *The Long Tail* (2006), a book that emerged from his *Wired* article of 2004 <https://www.wired.com/2004/10/tail/> (link)

Here is Anderson in 2004 presenting then discussing the Pareto Principle ('long tail'). This is a full lecture, and is now something of a period piece, but worth it is worth watching:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x0h0FP6QWHA>

What does this have to do with P2P and paralogy?

Peer-produced horizontally distributed open educational resources are scalable forms of media that can proliferate without having to first demonstrate that there is a (potential) mass demand for them.

In a horizontally distributed mediascape, the 'scarcity' / command-control model that has dominated education since the 11th century is replaced by a culture of abundance. As Anderson puts in the (above) lecture, 'everything gets out'.

This has profound implications not simply for educational

institutions such as museums, art galleries, art schools and universities but for the production and curation of knowledges *per se*. (See: 38mins in > <https://youtu.be/x0h0FP6QWHA?t=2299>) Peer producers (such as paragogues) are at the forefront of this transformation.

Example of Peer Production

This may all still seem abstract and hypothetical. It's worth examining what is, arguably, the most famous and widely used example of peer-production, Wikipedia. Wikipedia is an exemplar of the impact that peer-production has had on the creation and curation of knowledge. It's a great example of P2P methods and ethics in action.

It's helpful to consider how paralogy relates to this most established example of peer-production. A good place to start is Benjamin Mako Hill's lecture "When Peer Production Succeeds".

Wikipedia Academy – "When Peer Production Succeeds", Keynote by Benjamin Mako Hill

Further Research

More paralogy resources are on the Resource List ([link](#))

You can read all of Stephen Downes' open access books via this [link](#) ([link](#))

If you want to read something that is set in a studio environment, try:

...reading BFAMFAPHD's 'Making and Being'. This is a book that opens up BFAMFAPHD's own (quasi-paragogic) learning practices. This book is also a 'Handbook'; this means it's intended to be put to use much like the Peeragogy Handbook. The 'Making and Being' Handbook is another useful body of practical advice that could benefit from a swarm reading by your Basho.

- ...reading Desvoignes, O. (2015). Blackboards were turned into tables: questioning horizontality in collaborative pedagogical art projects, ProQuest Dissertations Publishing. *Blackboards were turned into tables ... Questioning 'horizontality' in collaborative pedagogical art projects is research based on the practice of the collective microsillons, which is developing collaborative pedagogical art projects in different contexts. The aim of the research is to explore the possibilities offered by 'horizontal pedagogical exchanges' and to question the very notion of 'horizontality'. It interrogates the possibility to challenge, through artistic projects in educational contexts, the traditional master-pupils (or artist-participants, or gallery educator-public) relationship. After a presentation of microsillons' position in the cultural field, in particular regarding gallery education practices, collaborative art practices and the Educational Turn in Curating, a series of five collaborative pedagogical art projects realized by the collective between 2009 and 2011 are presented. Inspired by methods such as thick description and Participatory Action Research, situations in those projects are studied where a more horizontal pedagogical exchange is sought. Paulo Freire's reflection about dialogical pedagogy serves as a starting point in this reflection. Anarchist and libertarian pedagogies, as well as the critical pedagogies discourses following Freire, are used to discuss the various strategies used by microsillons. Through those case studies are discussed the ideas of the classroom as a laboratory for democracy, of content co-generation, of network-like organization, of unpredictability and of constructive conflicts. Drawing from poststructuralist and feminist perspectives, key terms of critical pedagogy (such as empowerment) are then rethought and the idea of 'horizontality' questioned, complexified, presented as a*

utopian horizon rather than a practicable concept. Shortcomings and paradoxes in the projects' attempts toward more egalitarian exchanges are identified and the limitations of the term are discussed. Thoughts about ways to overcome those reservations and to avoid romanticizing 'horizontality' are proposed, opening to microsillons' future projects.

If you'd like to read more about 'organisational learn' (how organisations learn / how we learn within organisations) please read the following:

Chapter 7 'Mockstitutions' in Dark Matter: Art in Age of Enterprise Culture (Sholette, 2010)

and

Learning/becoming/organizing (Clegg, Kornberger and Rhodes, 2005)

Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International @Neil Mulholland 2021-23



Paragogic Practices

In this next section, Dr Jake Watts will outline a few ways that he uses and develops a paragogics within his own artistic practice.

How I use Paragogics... Dr Jake Watts (15mins)

https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/1_46js2y8u

<https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/secure.notion-static.com/a7>

41fa7a-c973-417a-

b9a3-5e8a31f64d2e/How_I_use_Paragogics.pptx.pdf

In this video I discuss how I apply paragogic principles within my own work.

The case study I present is *Shift/Work: Speculations* (2017).

More information and resources regarding this work are available at <http://www.shift-work.org.uk/>.

This talk provides additional context for the assignment for this week's assignment 'Make Gold'.

How would I respond to the provocation... "Art Cannot be Taught" Dr Jake Watts (c.10 mins)

https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/1_9oyqz0f6#t=4:42

Please watch the video above from 4mins 42secs through to 15mins 44 seconds.

The video discusses some key texts and ideas surrounding whether art can or cannot be taught, specifically what we mean by Art in an higher educational setting. All the texts mentioned are available via Discover.ed.ac.uk

The texts include:

https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/secure.notion-static.com/f2467d0e-043c-4ccc-be56-c7e30f5b7e56/Art_Cannot_be_taught.pdf

Beech, D. (2014) Teaching the unteachable: what should art schools teach asks Dave Beech. *Art monthly* . (377), 8–.

Elkins, J. (2001) *Why art cannot be taught : a handbook for art students*. Urbana, University of Illinois Press.

For additional reading in this area I recommend:

Corris, M. (2014) Reply to Dave Beech “teaching the unteachable.” *Art monthly* . (379), 15–.

Shiner, L.E. (Larry E.. (2001) *The invention of art : a cultural history* . Chicago ; London, University of Chicago Press.

Michael Wayne Cole & Mary Pardo (eds.) (2005) *Inventions of the studio : Renaissance to Romanticism*. Chapel Hill, N.C., University of North Carolina Press.

Wouter Davidts & Kimberly Paice (eds.) (2009) *The fall of the studio : artists at work*. Valiz, Amsterdam, Antennae.

Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International @Jake Watts 2020-23



What is Para-academia?

Prof Neil Mulholland

I want to book-end this short module by turning out attention to “para-academia”, a term that emerged in the early 2010s. I want to quickly address two key questions here:

- What is para-academia? Definitions.
- What’s the relationship between para-academia and what, in the artworld, is called ‘The Educational Turn?’

Two Definitions

There are really two different definitions of para-academia emerging, separately, at the same time:

1. Para-academia is a term coined by Bruce Macfarlane in 2011 to describe the uberisation of higher education. (Macfarlane, 2011).
2. Para-academia was, independently, used by Eileen Joy and Nicola Masciandaro at the 'The Para-Academic Series' organised by The Public School, New York in 2012.

The term 'para-academic' captures the multivalent sense of something that fulfils and/or frustrates the academic from a position of intimate exteriority. Para-academia is that which is beside academia, a place whose logic encompasses many reasons and no reason at all (para-, 'alongside, beyond, altered, contrary,' from Greek para-, 'beside, near, from, against, contrary to,' cognate with Sanskrit para 'beyond').

While Macfarlane, Joy and Masciandaro were focusing on different phenomena within higher education – Macfarlane on support services such as Edinburgh's Institute for Academic Development ([link](#)), Joy and Masciandaro on academia's 'marginalia' – they were equally concerned with something that enjoys/suffers a parasitical relationship with academe.

This is the recurring theme of *The Para-Academic Handbook: A Toolkit for Making-Learning-Creating-Acting* Bristol, England, HammerOn Press. Edited by: Alex Wardrop and Deborah Withers (2014)

http://hammeronpress.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/PHA_Final.pdf

There is a name for those under-and precariously employed, but actively working, academics in today's society: the para-academic.

Wardrop and Withers' book is an invaluable insight into the genesis and lived experience of the para-academic written by para-academics. Please download the Open Access version and read.

I'd also highly recommend that you visit and browse #Alt-Academy <http://mediacommons.org/alt-ac/>

#alt-academy: Alternative Academic Careers

Para-academia makes it difficult to distinguish the boundaries of academia. It also makes it difficult to distinguish learners from teachers by inventing a hybrid of both – the prosumer or the paragogue. For a fuller account of Para-Academia, please read my book chapter:

Mulholland N. (2019) Para-Academic. In: Re-imagining the Art School. Creativity, Education and the Arts. Palgrave Pivot, Cham.

For a succinct theory of para-academia, I'd highly recommend reading this:

Boshears, P. (2013). "Open Access and Para-Academic Practice." *tripleC* 11((2)): 614-619. DOI: 10.31269/vol11iss2pp614-619

Further Reading on para-academia:

- Fradenburg, A. (2013). *Staying Alive: A Survival Manual for the Liberal Arts*. New York, Punctum.
- Boshears, P. (2013). "Open Access and Para-Academic Practice." *tripleC* 11((2)): 614-619. DOI: 10.31269/vol11iss2pp614-619
- Joy, E. (2012). "PARTY! Or is It a Panel Discussion on Para-Academic Publishing, or BOTH?". from <https://punctumbooks.com/blog/party-or-is-it-a-panel-discussion-on-para-academic-publishing-or-both/>.
- Calo, R. R., Alex (2017). "The Taking Economy: Uber, Information, And Power." *Columbia Law Review* 117(6):

1623-1690.

- Macfarlane, B. (2011). "The Morphing of Academic Practice: Unbundling and the Rise of the Para-Academic." *Higher Education Quarterly* **65**(1): 59-73.
- Engeström, Y. (2007). From Communities of Practice to Mycorrhizae. *Communities of Practice: Critical Perspectives*. J. Hughes, Jewson, N., Unwin, L. London, Routledge**:** 41-54.
- Keen, T. (2014). The Pros and Cons of Para-Academia. *The Para-Academic Handbook: A Toolkit For Making-Learning-Creating-Acting*. A. W. Wardrop, Deborah. Bristol, England, HammerOn Press**:** 243-249.
- Smith, J. W. (2016). "The Uber-All Economy of the Future." *The Independent Review* **20**(3): 383-390.
- Collini, S. (2012). *What Are Universities For?*, London: Penguin.
- Rifkin, J. (2001). *The Age Of Access : The New Culture Of Hypercapitalism, Where All Of Life Is A Paid-For Experience*. New York, J.P. Tarcher/Putnam.
- Rolfe, G. (2014). We are all Para-Academics Now. *The Para-Academic Handbook: A Toolkit For Making-Learning-Creating-Acting*. A. W. Wardrop, Deborah, HammerOn Press**:** 1-5.
- Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Homo Academicus*. Paris, Éditions de Minuit.
- Rothblatt, S. (1997). *The Modern University and its Discontents : The Fate of Newman's Legacies in Britain and America*, Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.
- Miller, J. H. (1995). "The University of Dissensus." *Oxford Literary Review* **17**(12): 121-144.
- Wardrop, A. W., Deborah (eds). (2014). *The Para-Academic Handbook: A Toolkit For Making-Learning-Creating-Acting*. Bristol, England, HammerOn Press.
- #Alt-Academy (2018). "#Alt-Academy." #Alt-Academy. Retrieved 15.8.18, 2018, from <http://mediacommons.futureofthebook.org/alt-ac/credits-founding-contributors>.

'What's the relationship between para-academia and what, in the artworld, is called 'The Educational Turn?' e.g. 'Independent' Art Schools

In an artistic context, para-academia would describe attempts to set up new art schools or informal art educational institutions.

Such organisations can also be said to be para-academic vis a vis established art academies.

It's worth investigating this on your own. There are many examples to choose from. Try to apply the para-academic theories explored in Wardrop and Withers' book. Do they 'work' in the context of artistic learning?

A few examples of these schools were mentioned in Week 0 | Marginalia | Researching The Educational Turn in Art & Curating (link).

There are many, many more.

- A good place to start here is The Mountain School of Arts' *the TEACHABLE FILE (tTF)* which lists current and defunct **Para-Academic schools.
- <https://artschoolalternatives.tumblr.com/post/2131819004/the-teachable-file> (link)
- Original resource (broken link?)
<http://www.teachablefile.org>

Each example listed in *tTF* is a rich resource for artistic learning in its own right.

A long list of global para-academic art schools can be found here:

- The Alternative Art School Fair at Pioneer Works, NYC 2016 curated by:

<https://pioneerworks.org/programs/alternative-art-school-fair/>

▪ Podcasts:

<http://clocktower.org/series/the-alternative-art-school-fair-radio>

Two useful critiques of independent art schools are:

- Sternfeld, N. (2010). "Unglamorous Tasks: What Can Education Learn from its Political Traditions?" *e-flux*(14).

<https://www.e-flux.com/journal/14/61302/unglamorous-tasks-what-can-education-learn-from-its-political-traditions/>

- Malik, S. (2011). *Educations Sentimental and Unsentimental: Repositioning the Politics of Art and Education*. *Redhook: Journal of Curatorial Studies*, 1(n/a): n/a. <https://ccs.bard.edu/redhook>

For a fuller account of Para-Academia in art schooling that focuses on Residential Schools and Virtual Schools, please read my book chapter: Mulholland N. (2019) Independent Programmes. In: *Re-imagining the Art School. Creativity, Education and the Arts*. Palgrave Pivot, Cham.

You should also try to read Thorne, S. (2017). *School: A Recent History of Self-Organized Art Education*. Berlin, Sternberg Press.

https://eu01.alma.exlibrisgroup.com/leganto/public/44U0E_INST/citation/26573708020002466?auth=SAML

Some further reading on independent art schools:

Arts, T. M. S. o. (2017). "the TEACHABLE FILE." Retrieved 30th October, 2017, from <http://www.teachablefile.org>.

Association, C. A. (2008). MFA Standards. <http://www.collegeart.org/standards-and-guidelines/guidelines/mfa>, CAA.

- Cameron, S. (2017). "Broken Toilet: BHQFU is Dead." Brooklyn Rail.
- Collective, F. (2014). "FLAG Collective: Praxis between the educational turn and the art school." *Art, Design & Communication in Higher Education* **13**(1): 57-71.
- East, O. S. (2017). *Open School East Year 4 2017*. O. S. East. Margate, England, Open School East.
- Golia , P. W., Eric. (2007). "Basin Climbing: An Interview with Mountain School of Arts." *Fillip 6* **6**(Summer 2007).
- Graham, J., et al. (2016). "The Educational Turn in Art." *Performance Research* **21**(6): 29-35.
- Kennedy, J. (2011). "School's in: contemporary art and the educational turn." *C Magazine*(109): 16-23.
- Mahony, E. (2016). "Opening Interstitial Distances in the Neoliberal University and Art School." *Performance Research* **21**(6): 51-56.
- Pereira, G. (2016). *DIY MFA, Writer's Digest Books*.
- Radio, C. (2016). *Alternative Art School Fair Radio*. P. Works. New York City, USA, Pioneer Works. **2017**.
- Rogoff, I. (2008). "Turning." *e-flux journal* **00**(0).
- Satinsky, A. (2012). "Are residency programs the new PhD? An interview with Sara Knox Hunter from Summer Forum." Mar 11, 2012. Retrieved 17.8.18, 2018.
- Satinsky, A. (2014). *Support Networks: Socially Engaged and Artist-run Initiatives in Chicago*. Chicago, Ill. USA, University of Chicago Press.
- School, T. B. A. (2018). "Correspondence Course | September 2018 – August 2019." Retrieved 16 July, 2018, from <http://turpsbanana.com/userfiles/correspondence Programme-Sept>

18(1).pdf.

Sharratt, C. (2017). "New Era For New Contemporaries As Submissions Welcomed From 'Alternative Learning' Programmes." Retrieved 6.8.2018, 2018, from <https://www.a-n.co.uk/news/new-era-new-contemporaries-submissions-welcomed-alternative-learning-programmes/s>.

Snowden, S. (2010). "Free Thinking: Is the Mountain School of Arts in Los Angeles the ideal art school?" Frieze(134).

Sternfeld, N. (2010). "Unglamorous Tasks: What Can Education Learn from its Political Traditions?" e-flux(14).

Timebank, L. C. (2018). "Leeds Creative Timebank." Retrieved 6.8.18, 2018, from <https://leedscreativetimebank.org.uk>.

Works, P. (2016). "Alternative Art School Fair." Retrieved 1.5.17, 2017, from <https://pioneerworks.org/programs/alternative-art-school-fair>

Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International @Neil Mulholland 2021-23



Return to Open Learning Sprint 1