The Metempsychosis Method: A Framework for Self-Adaptation

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Introduction: Finding a Problem

Script development is an essential part of a writer's process. However, adapting to different platforms and having the freedom and confidence to allow ideas to evolve beyond their initial inception can be a daunting task. When I began my career as a screenwriting tutor and script consultant in the late 2000s, feature films were the staple calling card for new and emerging writers. Today, fledgling screenwriters and students are initially introduced to structures that support the resolved and self-contained screenplay with a single protagonist character arc. As a learning foundation for screenwriters, the classical Hollywood structure is often given primacy over nonconventional narrative structures. These are important early tools that a writer should look to master when they first begin to study screenwriting. The linear self-contained narrative has been at the core of course curriculums in higher education and is reflected in many graduate portfolios. Over the past 10 years, there has been a superabundance and demand for serialised drama, and we are currently experiencing what is hailed as the golden age of 'TV'. However, for students that are transitioning from traditional self-contained film structures to expansive episodic storytelling, new methods are needed to support the writer's process. Drohan et al offer that "future [educational] programmes must provide graduates with sufficient domain-specific technical knowledge and transferable skills essential to succeed in their future profession's" (2011, p. 97). Given that the industry has had such a seismic shift towards long-form narratives, as educators it is necessary to consider the creative pedagogical strategies that motivate and encourage students to tackle the repurposing of their own stories across forms. To support students to diversify and to be prepared should they want or need to adapt their work across platforms, it is necessary to update teaching modules to reflect both industry needs and real-world challenges.

The Metempsychosis Method that I am developing through my ongoing Ph.D. research offers writers, learners, and educators a creative and flexible framework to support self-adaptation. This process enables students to find new ways to envisage their feature film scripts into a TV series. In this paper, my method of self-adaptation will be introduced as a Problem-Based Learning tool to identify ways to generate Authentic Assessments that reflect the transferable skills the industry demands. It will underline the importance of assessments that mirror challenges in practice and respond to changes within the industry. Offering Authentic Assessments has been shown to enhance and support deep learning and in turn

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improve engagement (McCarthy, 2013). The method of self-adaptation and the outputs will speak to a range of learners with different goals. What is 'authentic' about the task will very much lie in how it resembles students' future professional ambitions (Gulikers, Bastiaens, & Kirschner, 2006). This paper highlights the creative opportunities available to students and educators when they grapple with the abstract nature of identifying the 'essence' in their work. This process proffers a departure from typical adaptation exercises often based on published source material and instead promotes the autonomy and lifelong learning that working through an adaptation process triggered by the originator's work can provide. I should at this point clarify that the Metempsychosis Method is suitable only for final degree year and postgraduate students due to the scaffolding of learning that they will need to have in Film and TV structures and the writing experience they will have gained in their previous years' study. Savin-Baden introduces that "project-based learning often occurs towards the end of a degree programme after a given body of knowledge has been covered that will equip the students to undertake the project." (2003, p. 18). This method of exploration requires the student to have a project that they have completed. In this study, it is a feature film that acts as the source material. However, these findings on the subject of identifying the essence of one's own work could be relevant to art, design and media education (in HE). The potential problem of self-adaptation introduces the following research questions that this paper will look to address; how within script development can a facilitator support creative and explorative adaptation into episodic long-form narratives? How can self-adaptation further support a learner's understanding and practical application of threshold concepts? How does a focus on problem-based learning link to authentic assessment support and enable student success and maximise lifelong learning for a range of learners?

When opening up a feature film script to develop it as a series, it may seem obvious that additions would need to be made. However, to take a project in a new direction or with a fresh perspective may be uncomfortable as students can feel like they are being unfaithful to their original ideas. Dudley Andrew discusses that "it is assumed that the task of adaptation is the reproduction in cinema of something essential about an original text" (2000, p. 31) and although many arguments around fidelity relate to theatre or literature adaptations, the same can be true across screenwriting platforms or other platforms. Rather than looking simply to extend a writer's feature film narrative through episodic storytelling, the exploration of the essence can be incredibly beneficial as an adaptive tool, for it can act as an axis for adaptation.

Self-Adaptation and Changes in Industry

My fascination with this distinct shift in storytelling has been prompted by the diversification in how we as an audience consume film and TV and a growth in demand for episodic long-form narratives. The context for the increased call for episodic storytelling has been propelled by the introduction of streaming services such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, Apple TV, Disney+, and Now TV. In addition to the emergence of these streaming platforms, the small screen over the past 10 years is experiencing its own 'peak' with a continued call from audiences and production companies wanting quality television drama. My study was prompted by the change in industry and my interactions with writers as I have regularly found myself asking writers when they present their ideas, "is this a film or series?" to which they would often reply "it could be either". However, the process of adapting a feature film script isn't simply a case

of breaking up the story into episodes with an extension of moments and plot points. It is a far more involved and intricate storytelling conundrum.

Screenwriting guru Syd Field highlights that 'adaptation is defined as the ability "to make fit or suitable by changing or adjusting - modifying something to create a change in structure, function, and form. [...] That is the source material, the starting point - nothing more" (2005, p. 259). The process of adaptation is typically reviewed and critiqued using a wide range of intertextual and subjective interpretations (2012, pp. 7-9). This is true of any creative practitioner approaching an adaptation. However, when adapting one's work, it can be very personal, and the creator can often hold a deep connection to the material that can be debilitating in terms of acquiring critical distance. It can also be extremely rewarding for a writer as they already have an abundance of material such as back story and world building that they have yet to mine due to the restrictions of time in a feature film script. There are many guides on how to approach adaptations that act to support the writer's process, examples of this are Ben Brady's, *Principles of Adaptation for Film and Television* (1994) and Richard Krevolin's*, How to Adapt Anything into a Screenplay* (2003). Joseph McBride suggests adaptation as a tool for new writers so that they can learn the skills necessary to write a screenplay without having to find a story. He outlines how to 'break' a book (2012), this generally means re-reading and pulling out the main threads, characters, and themes. However, much like Adaptation Studies, these guides typically focus on the novel, or the stage play being transferred to screen. The perceived problems often inherent in adaptations are based on how the new artefact is received in comparison to the original and the transition to the new form. Adaptation theorist Linda Hutcheon states that "the act of adaptation always involves both (re-)interpretation and then (re-)creation; this has been called both appropriation and salvaging depending on your perspective" (2012, p. 8). The self-adapter has the unique opportunity to revisit a creative artefact to breathe fresh life into it and to look at innovative strategies of adaptation.

Metempsychosis Method and Problem-Based Learning

The Metempsychosis Method acts to support writers to interrogate the essential dramatic elements of their original script and to break down and explore how the essence of their feature film can be seen in new ways. Through my study, I have worked with 11 new and emerging writers over several months to adapt their feature film scripts into a series (The participants have been anonymised during this paper and will be referred to as Writers 1-11). Although my study was not within a HE context, later in this paper I will outline a variety of ways that this process can be used to enable learning within a Higher Education setting. I did not initially set out with the goal to create a methodology through a PBL model, however, I have since begun to re-evaluate how many of the methods, experiences and the way tasks were framed to support Problem-Based Learning. The writers wanted to adapt their projects for a variety of reasons; creative, commercial, and for new approaches to view their ideas. The study began for me with a clear problem 'how do I develop a flexible framework to support writers?'. My response was driven by personal experience and a real need that I could see within the writing community. I also couldn't see how to bridge the gap between these two modes of screenwriting, often taught separately with writers developing new projects for each. Once I began to test and experiment with the framework, I started to realise that beyond developing a methodology for self-adaptation, the process was embedded in a Problem

Based Learning (PBL) model. PBL is known for challenging students to build on their prior knowledge using problem-solving, creative solutions, self-directed learning, and collaboration (Hmelo-Silver, 2012). Maggi Savin-Baden states that:

> 'Designing a curriculum based on content and disciplinary knowledge and then trying to make it problem-based usually ends in disaster. So, whether it is a module or an entire programme that is designed to be problem-based, the starting point should be a set of problem scenarios that will equip students to become independent inquirers, who see learning and epistemology as flexible entities and perceive that there are other valid ways of seeing things besides their own perspective.' (2003, p. 16)

The participants needed to see the potential problems associated with self-adaptation across the two forms for it to be tackled and explored rather than being provided with a methodology from me that serves to provide the answers. This became the initial challenge in my design and communication of the process.

Throughout this study, I was mindful that my own assumptions might hinder or mould the writer's process. To better serve the writers and avoid driving the process by predicting their goals or perceived challenges, I asked the participants to complete an introductory questionnaire in advance of the first workshop. They were asked questions about their film, aims, and their concerns regarding adapting their feature film script. The participants mainly enquired about the mechanics of writing a series rather than the challenges of adaptation. The act of adapting at this point didn't seem significant to them as they had the source material, rather they wanted to gain knowledge about tackling multiple plot lines. During the process, this was a consistent tension for some of the writers who simply wanted to learn how to write a series rather than critique their personal challenge of adaptation or look for alternative approaches to their source material. This aim lay very much with me. Students of screenwriting know at some level the difference between writing a feature film and writing a series. Some of the participants did have an awareness of the inherent problem with self-adaptation. One commented that they were unsure if they could be 'objective' about their own script and then be able to determine whether there was 'scope for further growth beyond the original story material' (Writer 9). This writer identified the potential dilemma, highlighting the possible emotional and critical challenges. Rather than attempting to answer any questions the writers had, I asked them to log their queries, challenges, and their process, which we then reviewed during the development period.

Beyond the design of learning materials and the structure of sessions, I have since reflected on my role as a facilitator working in a PBL model - what was my place within the process? There are arguments around how the role of the educator within this type of scenario should function and whether they should give any kind of lectures, as this may undermine the goals of independent learning in a PBL Model. Initially, I was posed with the challenge of where to even start. Therefore, when preparing for the first workshop I outlined the key areas that the writers needed to have a solid comprehension of, for example, modes of adaptation, the differences between film and TV structures, and the variations of the character development for long-form storytelling. These vast areas of theory and practice could easily be included in a 12-week module, but the framework needed to support self-directed learning triggered by creative problem-solving. The writers had stated what their aims for learning were, but it was clear they were expecting a more traditional exchange of information. As the sessions

continued, for some this became an area of frustration, with one writer stating, 'just tell me what to do' (Writer 11). I couldn't, not because I was so firmly in the role of a PBL facilitator but ultimately there wasn't an answer. There were options, potentially infinite options, which can be overwhelming and limiting to a learner, I will later highlight some of the techniques we used to address this. The design of the sessions included a three-hour group online workshop followed by online one-to-ones'. The workshop introduced key areas such as questions and problematic scenarios. I encouraged the writers to discuss and consider the differences in forms and what would the development of a long-form character be in comparison to a protagonist in a feature film? Rather than overload the writers and tell them what each of them must do to develop their adaptation, as a group they began to slowly see the necessary shifts in storytelling methods they might need to employ. Throughout the guided process, at various points, the participants were given recorded aids and exercises. The are many diverse roles of facilitation and the ways that theory is introduced to students varies. C.E Hmelo-Silver, discusses this in detail and includes distributed 'scaffolding' of learning as can be useful tool. (Hmelo-Silver, Duncan, & Chinn, 2007). Giving the writers autonomy to consider, and later articulate, when and how they accessed and employed the resources supported the unique nature of their process. The independent interpretation of the teaching aids did pose some interesting challenges and discoveries. Some writers chose to engage with the materials and for others if it didn't suit their methodology they chose to disregard or reimagine the material in new ways. For others, there was a miscommunication, and they tackled the exercises in totally different ways than I had imagined. This initially felt problematic but highlighted that this flexible framework was far more rigid than I would admit as I felt they then had missed an important step. However, with hindsight, I can see how valuable these detours and exploratory routes if used in a group setting, would have been useful learning opportunities for all involved. They provided further critical and creative approaches that have since emphasised the value in reviewing the range of responses to the 'open' task.

Ultimately, framing it as a Problem-Based scenario encourages the screenwriting students to engage in a "journey of discovery instead of directed to a predetermined destination" (Furedi, 2012). The problem-based scenario should be introduced at the very start of a programme. For example, the problem could be introduced as 'you have been asked to produce a pitch for an long-form narrative adaptation from your feature film script, that promises longevity beyond one series.' How the problem is framed should encourage and motivate the learner to consider their process beyond the outcome. Biggs and Tang offer two models to support students in 'professional thinking', which include "declarative knowledge first, the application of knowledge follows. Another model is just-in-time-learning: the student's declarative knowledge is built up as the need arises." They state that "(PBL), [is] where professional knowledge is rooted in the practice from the outset" (2011, p. 161). There isn't an answer to how they should adapt. Each writer and project will have individual needs. However, the investigation and critique of their source material and the group work will provide vital learning points. Problem-Based Learning typically involves a group working collectively. The writers that I worked with only met during the first online workshop and then worked with me on an individual basis. Later in the paper, I will offer how this model can be adapted for group work. First, I will outline some of the key tasks and challenges that we encountered throughout the process.

Identifying Essence and Threshold Concepts

The group workshop began with the participants identifying their specific challenges and worries about adapting their work. Their responses included anxiety around the 'strength or the idea' (Writer1) and 'That there [wasn't] enough depth to the protagonist beyond the self-contained feature story.' (Writer 10). Biggs and Tang discuss how Declarative Knowledge, when a learner can express their understanding verbally is very different to Functioning Knowledge, "that informs action by the learner" (2011, p. 81). Exploring these personal obstacles was essential as it provided vital reflective material that we returned to in one-to-one's once they began testing their ideas. However, it would have been useful to have formalised this further including themed headings and questions in their logs as writers would forget to journal challenges or not be sure what was important to capture in their process (Poikela & Moore, 2010, p. 106). Logging their breakdown of what they considered to be the essence of their original work was a powerful tool for reflection. Especially when the writer was considering their choices and the next steps of their process. It allowed them to continue to question what the essence was, and to keep revisiting what they would or wouldn't let go of and why. Their prior knowledge, assumptions, and reservations only began to truly be put under the microscope by me and the participants themselves when we started the essence exercises and unpacking of their work.

 During the early part of the first session, I asked the participants how they would see their film as a series. Each writer proposed their series would be between 4-6 episodes and gave an overview of what that would look like. Following this, I asked what they had added, and all but one said nothing. Writer 7 commented, "No, [I] just expanded the amount of time needed to develop the back story and allow relationships time to blossom". This was very interesting. When we had discussed adaptations, the group agreed they could see the necessity for changes in other produced adaptations and why these were essential for a new form, but it was apparent that when adapting their work, they weren't yet applying this thinking. The writers were beginning to consider storytelling tools to expand or lengthen their stories by focusing on relationships and the depth of plots and characters. I used the next stage of the process to explore methods with the writers that would encourage them to see their feature film scripts with new perspectives that would potentially further support the fertilisation of episodic long-form storytelling.

At the core of the Metempsychosis Methodology, I encourage a discourse with the writers around essence. The word essence is defined as "the intrinsic nature or indispensable quality of something, especially something abstract, which determines its character" (OxfordLanguages, 2022). Defining essence can be conceptual as it may allude to tone, aesthetics, character, story world, or even emotion. Sometimes essence is referred to as the soul of the project; the indescribable and potentially indeterminate elements that can be transposed from the original form into a new body of work. What determines the essence of a creative project is unique and nuanced depending on the creator. The Identification and articulation of essence empower writers in retaining recognisable and essential qualities of the original script. However, it also importantly acts to create distance from which they can become more confident and considered when embarking on adaptative changes that support the growth of their feature film script into a long-form narrative. In adaptation studies, the term fidelity is used to assess how faithful an adaptation is in relation to the original source material. Interestingly, arguments regarding fidelity highlight the barriers that writers encounter emotionally and practically, depending on whether they chose to be faithful in

terms of mirroring the content found in their original script or whether they are to attempt to make significant changes. Cousins suggests that "grasping a threshold concept is transformative because it involves an ontological as well as a conceptual shift" (2006, p. 4). Introducing essence as a threshold concept challenges learners to explore their understanding of essence and introduces them to the arguments around fidelity and the different approaches to adaptation.

The introduction of essence as a creative tool is an integral Threshold Concept that this methodology navigates. During this stage in the process, writers were thinking about expansion in terms of exploring moments and characters further rather than the development of the story units for the new form. McBride outlines the importance of unpacking the source material, "So when you're breaking the back of the book, you must figure out what the story is about (i.e., find the spine), and then study and analyse how that works" (2012, p. 82). The aim was to get the participants to engage with opening up their original script and to explore boiling it down. We worked through a variety of exercises to explore the essence and to examine where they saw the possible longevity in their storytelling. Writer 4 responded when asked what this process gave them, that it 'Helped me realise I had material for 4 episodes based on [the] film and [this] could expand to 6 episodes.' By working through a process, students can showcase "performances of understanding", whereby a student will act out their learning through their attempts of adaptation (Biggs & Catherine Tang, 2011, p. 81). As the writers moved through the process, they had the opportunity to safely experiment with their work. Joseph McBride claims 'It is only testing, bending and yes breaking the spine of the story that you find out where it is strongest and how to reassemble it in a playable drama.' (2012, p. 91). Although the writers engaged with the essence exercises, several continued to break down their film and focus on the narrative as it worked within the original film script. The writers started to see the potential for further story development, however, they weren't yet looking for new perspectives.

Adaptive Lenses and Divergent Thinking

Through my research into film to TV adaptations, I have identified three key lenses; World, Character, and Time which act as tools for adaptive freedom. To highlight the creative opportunities for self-adaptation, I gave three examples of Film to TV adaptations that did not aim to simply reproduce the film in a long-form narrative. The series Fargo (Hawley, et al., 2014-) is a leading illustration of the use and application of the World lens. The series is hailed by its creators "as their benchmark, citing its tone and setting as inspiration for creating a new world around the best parts of what came before" (Nguyen & Travers, 2017). The film Fargo (CoenBrothers, 1996), was adapted into an anthology series, which presents a different narrative with new characters each series and now boasts four seasons. Fargo (Hawley, et al., 2014-) has created a franchise series that employs characteristics of the original film without retaining the same plot or cast. The anthology has offered the showrunner, Noah Hawley, the opportunity to sell and explore all-new characters, timelines, and problems to avoid the audience getting tired of the plot or the protagonists. The series Westworld (Abrams, et al., 2016-) was introduced as it plays with the point of view to tell the story of robot's vs humans and employs the lens of Character by shifting the narrative focus from the humans in the feature film to the glitching robots in the series. The lens of Time encourages a 'what if'

scenario, for example, what if we went back in time and explored the characters' early life? The film *Psycho* (Hitchcock, 1960) was adapted into the series *Bates Motel* (Wolper, et al., 2013-2017) exploring the teenage years of Norman Bates and his Mother before the events of the film. It ended of its own design after 5 seasons to become the cable channel A&E's longest-running scripted series (Goldberg, 2016).

Building from essence and introducing the three lenses acted to develop the learners' divergent thinking and further develop their critical appraisal of their choices. The lenses also functioned to focus on the infinite possibilities available to the adapters, whilst promoting creative opportunities. The writers were set the task to write three 1-page treatments each with a different primary lens to see what they discovered. Armed with three potential different approaches, writers were encouraged to articulate the dramatic functions of their choices and the possibilities that they opened up. Stimulating new perspectives for students to see their work can support lifelong learning by enabling the students to see multiple potential creative possibilities. Educationalist Ken Robinson offers that "divergent thinking is an essential capacity for creativity to see lots of possible questions to answers" (2019). H&M Ianniello summarise this particular viewpoint by highlighting the critical work of Craig Batty (2012) (who himself identifies the earlier work of Nik Mahon, (1996), as an inroad to an important starting block, "Divergent thinking (intuitive), as thinking outside the box and looking in all directions for alternative ideas, and convergent thinking (critical), where one evaluates and assesses the viability of ideas that come out of divergent thinking" (2022, p. 344). Through this exploration writers were able to test their interpretation and application of these lenses and found some interesting discoveries. The lenses took them in a variety of directions. Some were dead ends, but the writers were able to articulate why they didn't offer them further story potential. We reflected on what each lens opened up for the writer and the new material or ideas that it had generated. Some of the writers had concerns that they might have to commit to these new variations, and some were dubious that this might just be wasting time when they could be focusing on the story they already have in place. However, for some, they were able to merge lenses, and their pool of creative and viable options began to broaden. In looking at the fertility within each of their outlines the writers had to return to essence, ensuring that they weren't simply creating new ideas but that they were still harnessing the soul of the source material. William Goldman is adamant that "in any adaptation you have to make changes. You simply must", yet he adds, "While you are altering, you must remain faithful to two things: the author's intention and the emotional core of the original as it affected you" (1996, p. 324).

After the first workshop, one of the writers stated, "Unpacking the story made me see greater potential in the multiple avenues you could explore, reconsider and expand" (Writer 6). I initially left the workshops positive that the group had grasped the key concepts and were managing their way in revisiting their source material with the adaptative lenses. It wasn't until after the workshops and in the one-to-one's that I started to realise that essence was a Threshold Concept that some of the writers had struggled with that was hindering their engagement with the exploration of the lenses. The essence exploration did have a mixed response. Some writers stating they could see their material going beyond one series: "[It] feels like I see the essence of the piece again" (Writer 7). Others however claimed it was 'disorientating' (Writer 11) or that they felt the process sometimes 'takes [out] the nuance and complexity' (Writer 5). This feeling of being lost with all the pieces in the air or the sense that it had become too simplistic was a genuine concern for the writers. Leah Shopkow suggests that 'affective issues such as 'maintaining emotional distance' and 'dealing with ambiguity' are

troublesome areas for students when navigating Threshold Concepts (2010, p 328 as cited in Land, Meyerm Flanagan et al, 2016, p5). Not all learners feel that methods or processes support their work initially and may be resistant and through my experience, I certainly experienced both. The introduction of essence was problematic for some of the writers and something throughout the programme that writers had difficulty grasping. There was confusion about what was meant by the term essence and whether it was referring to theme or premise. During the tutorials, we would spend a lot of time returning to the essence and attempting to clarify the writer's understanding of these terms in relation to their own work. At first, I felt that I should have spent more time explaining the differences at the start of the workshop and this was wasting time in the sessions. However, I later observed how the process of them breaking down their understanding of essence by articulating it through their practice enhanced their deeper understanding of these concepts and in turn the choices they made in their work. This highlighted for me how important it is to define terminology early on, but also to explore ways for the learners to find/create definitions throughout the process. This type of enquiry would also aid the facilitator to understand the individual learner's prior knowledge and their understanding of the key foundations of the process. Reflecting on Threshold Concepts at various stages of their adaptation supports the learner to consider, identify and articulate their challenges and comprehension in greater depth.

The Metempsychosis Method encourages writers to view their work through different vantage points to support critical distance. However, it should be noted how this was not an aim for the participants and the task of Self-adaptation doesn't suggest that you must move away from the source material in a new direction to create longevity. Nonetheless, engaging participants to experiment with a range of adaptive avenues, supports a process that can be underpinned by threshold concepts in screenwriting theory. As the learners explored new possibilities, through world-building and character development for long-form narratives and genre, they began to look back on the theoretical material, redefining their understanding by applying this to their own work. Cousins offers that 'the threshold concept perspective refreshes the critique of a simplistic, linear, learning outcomes approach' (Cousins, 2006, p. 5). This process was never straightforward, the materials that I gave and the exercises that we experimented with were returned to at a variety of points unique to each individual. Every writer had their own agenda of further enquiries to develop their knowledge and understanding, whether that was looking at a series with similar structures, character development, or research into a topic now that the series was taking a new direction. The different story requirements, character arcs, and structure when writing a self-contained film compared to an episodic narrative superficially are clear yet problematic. At this point in the process, the writers began to investigate the "Central Dramatic Question" (2012, pp. 30-31) and examine how this could propel their series using the new material but also in the salvaging and restoration of material that they had previously discarded. The writers were continuously flexing their critical evaluation of their work and investigating a multitude of creative conundrums. These challenges were both for me as the facilitator and for the learner. There was sometimes a tension between my knowledge and understanding of fidelity and adaptation as this meant I was keen for the participants to experiment with the adaptive lenses. There was one writer who found these lenses as superficial creative writing exercises. However, in hindsight, I believe it was the framing of the lenses that caused conflict. If they had offered the task of identifying threshold concepts in adaptation, what could be three potential lenses of adaptation as seen in other adaptations? This could have supported the

writer to tackle the task independently through their own research and observations. The terminology did become a hindrance at points and the ambiguity of terms concerning Threshold Concepts and the writer's articulation of essence. This did require the facilitator (me) to revisit and interrogate the terms. For example, Writer 4 used words such as 'family' as part of their essence. At first, we skimmed past this but with a closer examination of the specificity of this and the questions that this opened up narratively we were able to delve much deeper into the heart of their source material. Through the investigative nature of PBL, the focus on learning becomes very much underpinned by Threshold Concepts identified by the facilitator and the participant during the process.

Group Work

Often when teaching screenwriting the focus can be on the technical skills of writing and the individual pursuit of story development. Savin-Baden offers that;

> "Project-based learning is seen by many to be synonymous with problem-based learning because they are both perceived to be student-centred approaches to learning. Indeed, some have argued that they are the same (Boud 1985). There are others who believe that problem-based learning can only be undertaken in small groups (Barrows and Tamblyn 1980), whereas many believe that project-based learning can be undertaken individually, as well as in small groups" (2003, p. 17).

During my process of working with writers, they didn't meet again after the first group workshop and instead tackled their project individually without a facilitated support network. They did however ask at several points about the other writers, keen to know how they were developing their work, and what stages they were at for comparison. They also often turned to me for feedback or answers on whether they were 'getting it right' (Writer 6). Within a HE classroom setting "peer-to-peer learning is nowadays firmly embedded in the undergraduate teaching context," (Batty & Sinclair, 2014, p. 335). A scenario such as Metempsychosis Method could be seen as problematic to be framed as PBL due to the personal nature of script development. By widening and formalising their development network it gives the group the opportunity to start to design their learning outcomes beyond typical feedback activities (Savin-Baden, p. 18). Their choices can be self-assessed and peer reviewed. "This meaningful learning happens as learners present their thinking to others, get challenges and feedback from others, explore multiple points of view objectively and subjectively, and practice using new information in many different ways" (Westeberg & Hilliard, 1996, pp. 152-3). The range of approaches, influences, and research that the different learners will have to tackle could be extremely valuable to a group, expanding what could be seen as a single experience to a diverse collective of creatives. It would motivate the writer to consider industry models and the collaborative world of script development.

It is important to highlight the potential changing roles during the process. Traditionally in PBL, roles may be defined. However, in the process of supporting the development of each other's work it could be encouraged to ask the groups at what stage they consider their role to switch from writer, to script editor, producer or educator when providing feedback, designing activity, and sharing practices. Commonly, "this means they have to learn to work together as a team and overcome the challenges of being part of a committed learning team

and not a short-term project team" (Savin-Baden, p. 18). Students often give peer-to-peer feedback in the form of table reads by creating a group. They collectively have agency in the arc of the learning process. They could share case studies, theory, and develop a discourse around self-adaptation tackling the essence of their work. However, group work does pose its own problems, unlike the individual writers I worked with there isn't the same potential for the group to disband, yet I did lose writers at varying points in the process. Changes within a group could be framed as reflective of industry, Savin Baden, discusses the fluid nature of learning environments, offering it is important to highlight to students "the relationship between staff's espoused theories and theories-in-use, in conjunction with students' perceptions of the formal learning context, is key to facilitating students' ability to manage team learning effectively" (p. 15). The role of the facilitator, the group, and the individual could be discussed with the class. The educator should consider the ways in which they 'place' themselves with and alongside the group to encourage 'student to be autonomous' (p. 38). It is important to articulate the facilitator's role to participants early in the process so that they better understand how they can use them to aid their learning. During my process, this would have been beneficial to signpost as many writers attended one-to-one tutorials expecting to get typical specific notes on their work. This was challenging both for them and me as I was conscious of their frustration or what might be considered a lack of interest in their creative work, especially as I aimed to understand their process, which contrasted with their output-focused aims. What is especially key for this model to be framed as a PBL, is that solving the problem will be part of the solution. The solution is not limited to the individual output, but the process and the support offered by the group will aid the individual's journey as a writer and the group in their learning.

Conclusion: Authentic Assessments and Real-World Creative Challenges

A student/writer requires a range of developmental tools to support their learning, Ian McDonald explores the notion of the 'screen idea' through "three facets of screenwriting – the practices, the texts and the discourse" (2013, p. 1) . Screenwriting learning can be a problem-solving cycle, moving between these three areas. John Baer and James C. Kaufman, describe four components of divergent thinking; fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration, which I would argue that the Metempsychosis Method supports (2011, p. 21). Fluency is applied and tested through the introduction, exploration, and application to the practice of Threshold Concepts. Flexibility is embodied within the problem-based learning model, through collaboration, the investigation of the essence, and the independent design of learning. Originality is encouraged through adaptive lenses and generated through divergent thinking. The plethora of options, variations and interpretations allows the students to find new and innovative ways of seeing their work and others. Through reflection and discourse with other learners during the process, learners can elaborate on their choices and confidently critically review their ideas.

The Metempsychosis Method process of self-adaptation could be utilised across art, design and media education (in HE) contexts. Focusing on self-adaptation is a process that imbues the learner with critical thinking around their work in the context of the field they are transposing to. For example, this could be used across a variety of creative platforms from art to gaming or prose to digital art. It has the potential to promote interdisciplinary collaborations. "Academia calls for all graduates, irrespective of discipline, to possess better

critical- thinking, problem- solving, and communication skills" (Skilbeck, 2001 as cited in Barrett, Moore, 2010, p 88), working through a PBL model typically encourages learnings to engage with these key areas. Furthermore, examining the essence of one's work and developing a distancing tool that supports investigation into the functioning spirit of the work, engages a learner to question, experiment and articulate their creative choices. Cahir states "The term "to adapt" means to alter the structure or function of an entity so that it is better fitted to survive and to multiply in its new environment" (2006, p. 14). Working with students to consider adaptive lenses that challenge the principle features of the form that they are working within can open up creative possibilities which can drive the design of their learning whilst considering the ever-changing creative industries that they are working towards entering. "Employers regularly highlight the importance of key skills, which include: communications, teamwork, information literacy, critical and creative thinking, and problem-solving, together with self- awareness, self- assessment, ethical behaviour, reflection, and responsibility for continuous development" (Moore & Barrett, 2011, p. 8). As educators, we can't predict the future. However, developing authentic assessments and PBL models that support learners to be agile, and reflective, can support students to leave with a body of work that showcases both their skills and also provides them with a deeper understanding and mastery of Threshold Concepts.

The Authentic Assessments offered through this process provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their functioning learning through action-based assessments such as presentations on their process, journaling, treatments, and pitches that celebrate the creative screenwriters' journey. Biggs and Tang offer that "a valid or an authentic assessment must be of the total performance, not just aspects of it" (2011, p. 213). I would suggest that the assessment should demonstrate both the journey and application, demonstrating their functioning knowledge and in particular a critical awareness of choices, self-regulation, and their understanding and their exercising of Threshold Concepts. Kathryn Millard discusses the versatility adaptation gives a writer. She highlights that "adaptation is an increasingly dominant trend in popular culture as fictional and nonfictional worlds can be dispersed across ever more media and platforms" (2014, p. 79). Writers of tomorrow need to be supported through flexible educational frameworks that focus on independent learners' journeys linked to changes within industry. The Metempsychosis Method has not answered the questions of how to self-adapt. Instead, it invites learners to consider the core of their writing whilst experimenting with a range of fundamental practices, concepts, and theories that can be adapted across platforms.

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