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Tactical enacting: A grounded theory

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements

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Abstract

This research uses classic grounded theory methodology to produce a grounded theory of **tactical enacting.** Forty two participants were drawn from the population of learning advisors working in a variety of tertiary education organisations in New Zealand. Data consisted of field notes and transcripts from observations, interviews and a group workshop/discussion and were analysed using all procedures that comprise classic grounded theory methodology.

The thesis of this thesis is that learning advisors express a concern for role performance and continually resolve that concern through **tactical enacting.** In **tactical enacting**, learning advisors are working tactically towards a variety of ends. These ends include a performance identity and a role critical to organisational agendas. A role critical to organisational agendas is one which makes a significant contribution to student success outcomes and organisational performance. Making a strong contribution to student success and organisational performance helps learning advisors construct the desired professional identity for themselves and establish their role as valuable in the eyes of others and the organisation. **Tactical enacting** means advisors perform their role tactically in order to meet their own professional standards as well as the needs and expectations of students and the organisation and to help secure their place within tertiary education. However, in **tactical enacting,** learning advisors constitute themselves as the performing subject, subject to and subjecting themselves to the performativity discourse of the contemporary tertiary education organisation. At the same time, in **tactical enacting**, learning advisors constitute themselves as the ethical subject in an effort not to be governed by performativity alone and to enable them to meet organisational, student and their own expectations of how they should behave.

This research contributes to knowledge in three main areas. Firstly, to knowledge and practice in relation to professional roles and organisations; specifically, the learning advisor role in the contemporary tertiary education organisation in New Zealand. Secondly, to research; specifically, to the scholarship of learning advising, and, lastly, to research method; specifically, to classic grounded theory methodology, and to an

approach that applies a Foucauldian analytical framework to a discussion of an emergent grounded theory.

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