Wicked issues: higher education research, and institutional innovation for learning and teaching – a reflection on ‘emic research’. A showcase presentation at the HERDA 2013, The Place for Learning and Teaching, Research and Policy Strand, 1-4th July 2013, AUT University, Auckland, New Zealand.

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http://www.flickr.com/photos/shellysblogger/
About the presenters (click images to find out more)

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Preamble

• ‘Wicked’ does not equal “bad” ... or “cool”
• The research that triggered this reflection lead to great outcomes! (see slide 13)
• The research partners continue to warmly collaborate
• Our aim in this presentation is to foster critical reflection about research method in HE
• No Ewok was harmed in the making of this presentation!

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Some basics...

• The study: Was funded by DeHub

• The focus: Managing institutional change through distributive leadership approaches: Engaging academics and teaching support staff in blended and flexible learning at two Universities

• The partners: Charles Sturt University (NSW Australia) & Massey University (NZ)

• The method: eight case studies were developed through emic research

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Emic: of, relating to, or involving analysis of cultural phenomena from the perspective of one who participates in the culture being studied

Origin of EMIC
phonemic
First Known Use: 1954

Coined by Kenneth Lee Pike an American linguist and Anthropologist (June 9, 1912–December 31, 2000)

http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/emic
Some terms:

**Wicked problems** are characterised by the following:
- The **solution depends on how the problem is framed** and vice-versa
- Stakeholders have **different world views** and **different frames** for understanding the problem
- The **constraints** that the problem is subject to and the **resources** needed to solve it **change over time**
- The problem is **never solved definitively**

Origin: [Horst Rittel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horst_Rittel) and [Melvin M. Webber](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Melvin_M._Webber) formally described the concept of wicked problems in 1973
Our wicked problem in the context of the HE Sector’s wicked problem
Dimensions of wickidity#1: Emic research strengths

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Dimensions of wickidity#2: Emic research challenges

http://www.flickr.com/photos/st3f4n/8603052978/sizes/z/in/photostream/
Dimensions of wickidity #3: The mighty challenge of received, preferred wisdom.
Dimensions of wickidity #4: confirmatory research.

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Final Reflection: * wicked problems live, OK? *when framing: consider & explore the wicked problems *report the wicked problems so the HE sector remains critically engaged when doing emic research.

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Outcomes of the study


- A comprehensive set of findings, 3 key lessons and 5 take home messages available as a short report

- Eight richly described case studies of institutional approaches to fostering learning leadership

- Publications, links and other resources

- A wikiResearcher

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