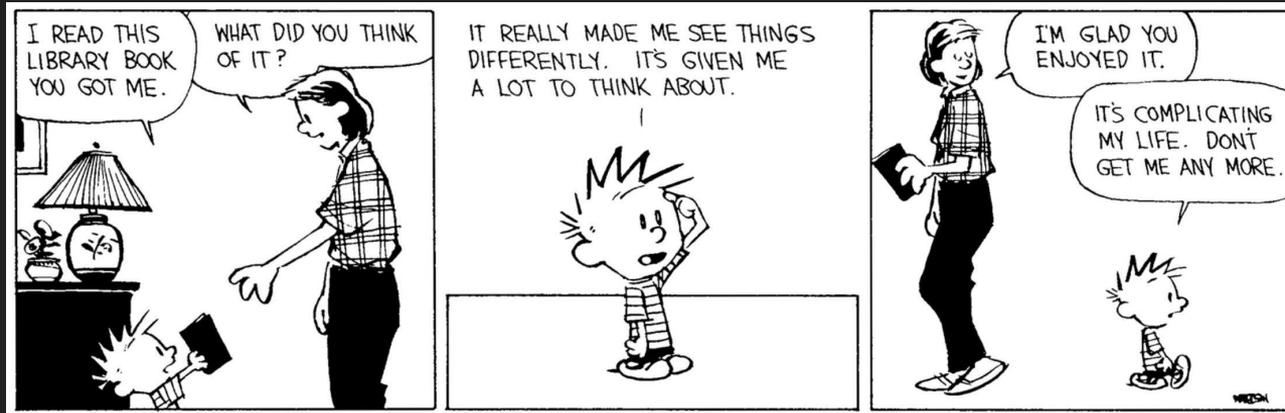


Teaching Philosophies



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What is Philosophy?

The practice of asking and answering philosophical questions:

Philosophical questions are those which a discipline or system of knowledge invites or raises

...but which can't be resolved using exclusively the techniques and resources provided by that system.

What is Philosophy?

“Philosophical questions are questions that are raised by some way of understanding life in the world that we're naturally drawn to use, but which can't be answered satisfactorily using that method.”

T. M. Scanlon, [interview](#) for *Conversations with History*



What is Philosophy?

Empirical sciences: how do experiments yield knowledge?

Psychology: what is the relationship between mind and body?

Religion: is there anything spiritual? (Is there a deity?)

Law: does the law have any authority? (On what basis?)

What is Philosophy?

Empirical sciences: how do experiments yield knowledge?

Psychology: what is the relationship between mind and body?

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Law: does the law have any authority? (On what basis?)

Philosophy: what is philosophy?

What is a teaching philosophy?

What questions does reflecting on YOUR teaching practice raise, which cannot be answered from within that context?

What is a teaching philosophy?

Some examples:

Why am I teaching?

How does learning occur?

How is my teaching technique supposed to bring about learning?

What responsibilities do I have to my students *as learners*?

What responsibilities do I and my students have to wider society?

What is (higher) education for?

How does my disciplinary research relate to my teaching?

What is a teaching philosophy?

Imaginative exercise:

Swap handouts with your partner. Assign roles.

Player One: Imagine you have just walked out of the best teaching session you have ever given. Imagine that Player Two is a friend who works in a different department. Tell Player Two all about it - focusing on what went well and why.

Player Two: Make notes on the front page of Player One's handout. Ask questions to help Player One explain what went well in their session. Give Player One back their handout, with your notes.

Swap roles after five minutes.

Teaching Philosophy Statements

	Personal	Professional	Pedagogical
Input	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Experience and reflection● Individual context	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Part of many (most?) job applications for academic posts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Involves careful analysis of teaching practice
Output	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Highly individualised reflection on experience, motivation and purpose● Point of reference during turbulent times	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Professional identity● Career trajectory● Identifying development needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Can be used to identify new opportunities (relationship to research, TEL, context, etc.)● Improved teaching● Can potentially be shared with students

Signature Pedagogies

What is distinctive about teaching in your discipline?

What does the practice of research in your discipline consist in?

How does teaching in your discipline support students in becoming subject experts, or members of an academic community?

i.e., what does research-based teaching in your discipline look like?

Signature Pedagogies

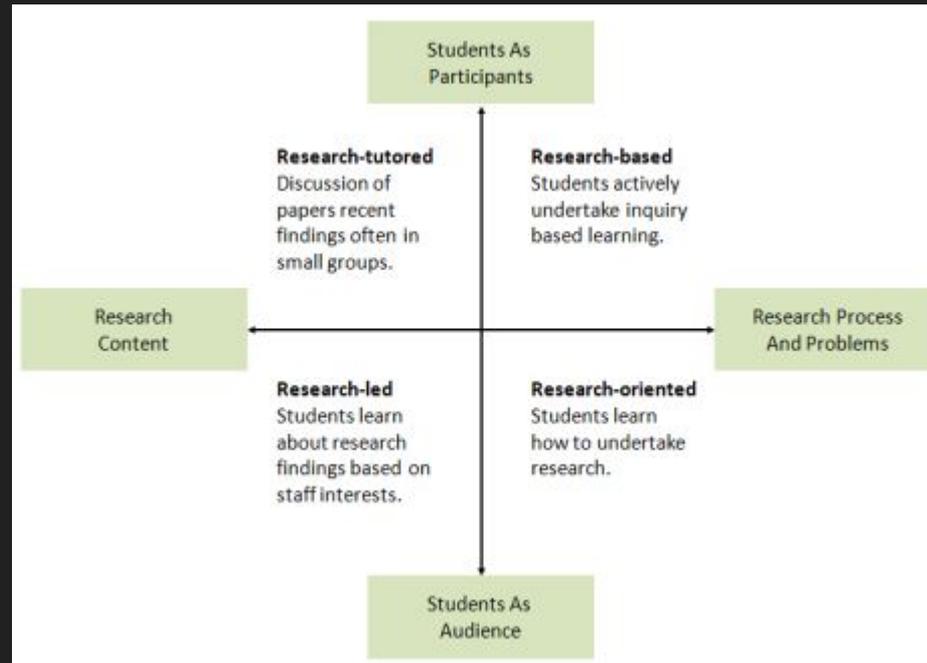


Diagram from [David's Adventures in the Classroom](#), based on [\(Healey 2005\)](#)

Signature Pedagogies

History:

“Can beginning students learn to do history the way professionals do it? Of course not. But my studies have found they can learn to execute a basic set of moves crucial to the development of historical mindedness. I want students to learn six such moves, or cognitive habits: questioning, connecting, sourcing, making inferences, considering alternate perspectives, and recognizing limits to their knowledge”

Calder, L. (2006) “Uncoverage: Towards a Signature Pedagogy of History Surveys” *The Journal of American History* vol.92 no.4, p.1358-1370

Signature Pedagogies

Economics:

“Ultimately, if economic education and its signature pedagogies aim to teach students to “think like an economist,” as most economists would argue, then the critical question becomes: What teaching practices, content, and skills are best suited to reach that goal? There is a lack of disciplinary consensus on the answer to this question. As a result, we argue here that there is currently no “signature pedagogy” in economics.

Maier, M.H. et al (2012) “Is there a Signature Pedagogy in Economics?”, in Chick et al (eds.) *Exploring More Signature Pedagogies* (Sterling, VA: Stylus)

Signature Pedagogies

Economics:

“[G]raduate students in economics are so narrowly trained to develop technical research skills that they are ill prepared to teach the broader “economic thinking” skills needed to address complex interdisciplinary problems facing the world economy.”

Maier, M.H. et al (2012) “Is there a Signature Pedagogy in Economics?”, in Chick et al (eds.) *Exploring More Signature Pedagogies* (Sterling, VA: Stylus)

Signature Pedagogies

Chemistry:

“Undergraduate laboratory research... has been viewed as a signature pedagogy for any STEM field for several decades [but] there are real constraints on how many students have these experiences.”

...

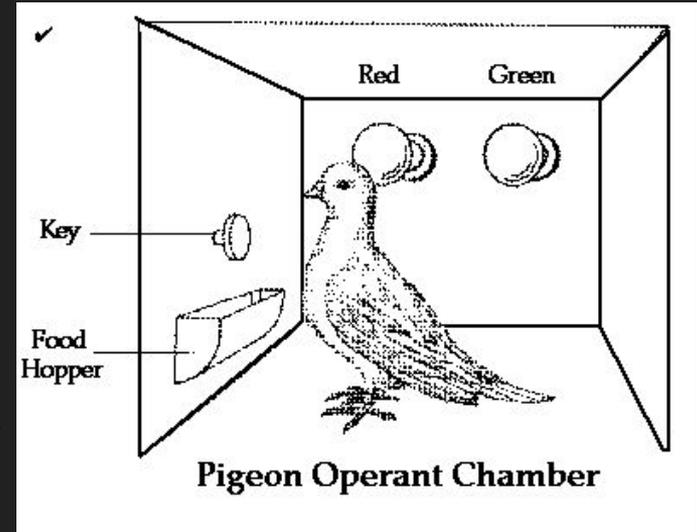
“Several pedagogies have the potential to bring the characteristics of undergraduate research to other places in the curriculum, increasing how many research-like courses students encounter in their undergraduate education”

Gravelle, S. and Fisher, M.A. (2012) “Signature Pedagogies in Chemistry”, in Chick et al (eds.) *Exploring More Signature Pedagogies* (Sterling, VA: Stylus)

Theories of Learning

Behaviourism

- Behavioural modification brought about by application of pos. and neg. reinforcement
- Operant conditioning - highly effective!
- Learning is learning to do
- No space for metacognition; no appeal to context or development
- Impact on education - classroom management and LOs



Theories of Learning



To learn is to understand new and more sophisticated scripts or models - i.e., ways to conceptualise and respond to stimuli.

Cognitivism, Constructivism - Piaget

- Psychologist, concerned with development in childhood
- Learning is a matter of acquiring more complex schemata
- Capacity to learn is governed by stages of development (sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational, formal operational)
- Early learning is driven by development, which is internal to the individual, and the outcome of biological processes
- Hence (actual) learning is relatively context-independent

Theories of Learning

Social Constructivism - Vygotsky

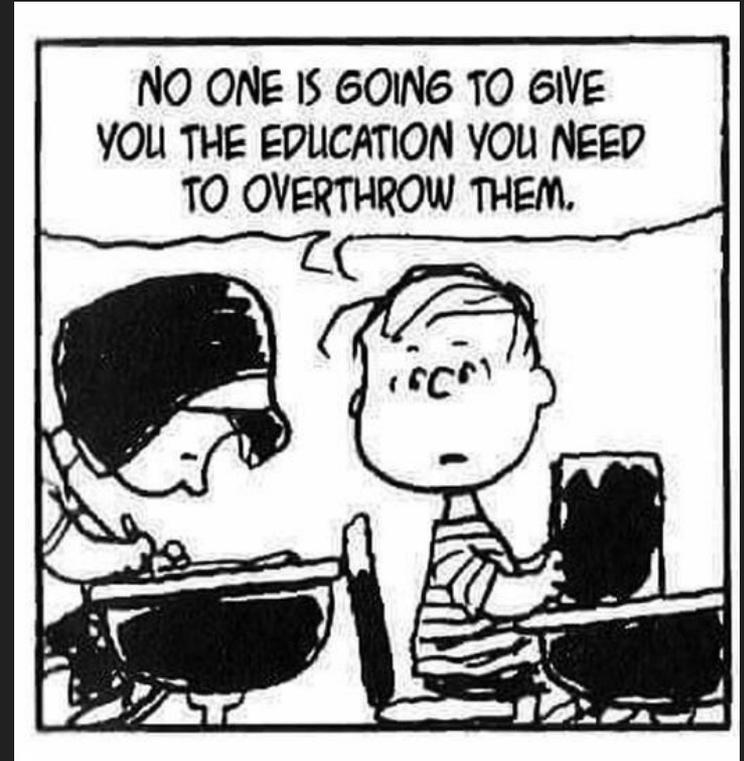
- Psychologist, concerned w. development in childhood
- Learning is a matter of being able to use more complex concepts
- Concepts are linguistic entities, and language is a social phenomenon
- Hence (actual) learning is irreducibly social, and heavily context-dependent
- Hence, learning has to be supported or “scaffolded”, and occurs in a Zone of Proximal Development



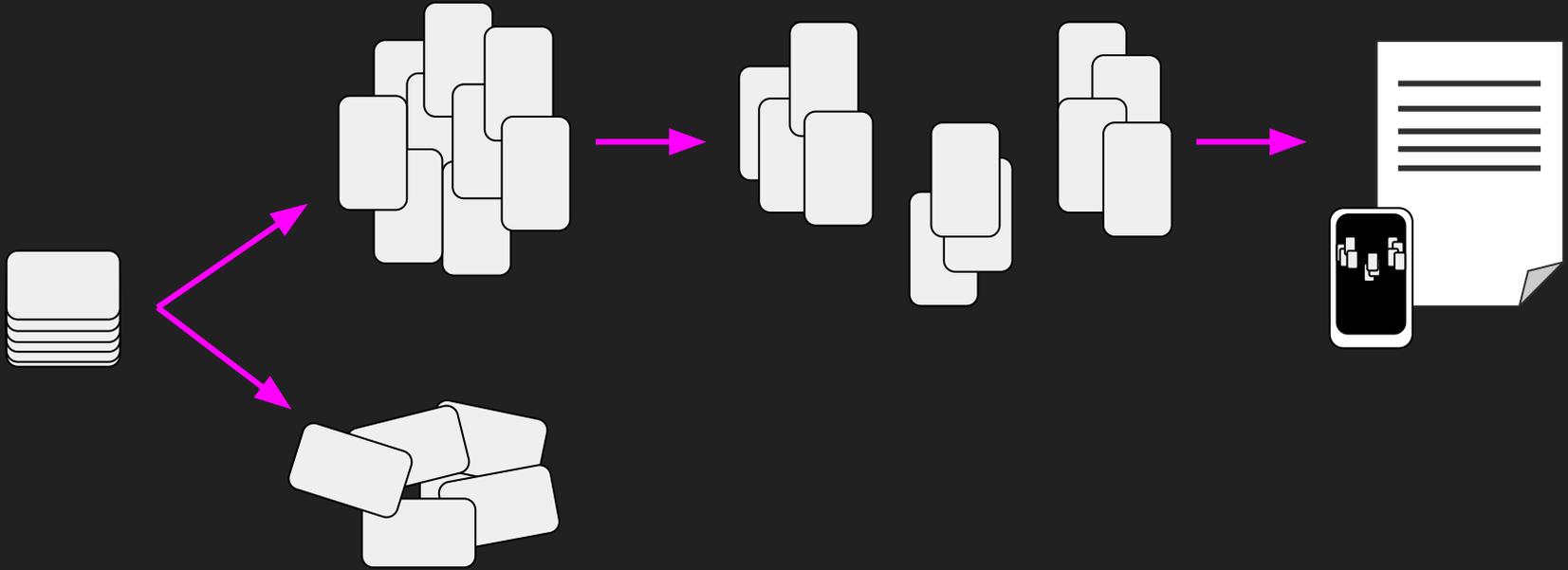
Theories of Learning

Critical Pedagogy - Paulo Freire, bell hooks

- Concerned with social role of education
- Preparing students to be able to orchestrate change, promote reform
- Progressive, concerned with social justice



Card Sort Activity



1. In/out sort

2. Cluster sort

3. Record