The embodied Learner

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What is the embodied learner?
Oliver Sacks

• ‘One is not an immaterial soul, floating around in a machine. I do not feel alive, psychologically alive, except in so far as a stream of feeling – perceiving, imagining, remembering, reflecting, revising, recategorizing runs through me. I am that stream, that stream is me.’

The Research base
The self matures...
## Development of self

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Simplicity &amp; compartmentalisation</td>
<td>Differentiation and integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dualistic (right/wrong) thinking</td>
<td>Contextual conceptions of knowledge</td>
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<td>Passive learning from authorities</td>
<td>Active construction of learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-responsibility</td>
<td>Personal responsibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dependence</td>
<td>Autonomy and then interdependence</td>
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<td>Impulsiveness</td>
<td>Self-control</td>
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<td>External controls</td>
<td>Internal locus of control</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-interest</td>
<td>Fairness and responsibility</td>
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Disequilibrium...

Engagement is promoted by

1. Constructivist pedagogies
2. Integrative learning
3. Volunteering and placements


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Resources for Embodied Learners
Holistic approaches

• Learning requires personal commitment and courage
  – It proceeds from ‘being’, Barnett (2007)

• Learning is emotionally charged
  – Feelings can be the subject matter of learning and can also condition learning, Moon (2004)

• Learning is holistic
  – ‘...learning is holistic rather than segmented... multiple forces operate in multiple settings...cross[ing] the “cognitive-affective” divide... the product of ... Multiple influences each making a distinct, if small, contribution...’ (Pascarella, & Terenzini, 2005)
http://www.reading.ac.uk/careers/careertools/

- Diagnostic Teaching & Learning resource:
  1. Control philosophy
  2. Self-confidence
  3. Transitions
  4. Living in the present
  5. Uncertainty

**Gro: a free resource developed by Tania Lyden**

http://www.reading.ac.uk/ccms/

www.reading.ac.uk/careers/careertools
T. O’Brien:

“Stories are for joining the past to the future. Stories are for those late hours in the night when you can’t remember how you got from where you are.” (Berger & Quinney, 2005)
Student Stories

- 60+ audio interviews
- From 12 UK HEIs
- Honest accounts
  - Identity
  - Learning
  - Living
- Blogs and articles
- Curriculum materials

http://www.studentstories.co.uk/
Engaging embodied learners in the curriculum
Engagement Module

An example of a module that addresses the embodied learner
Leeds Metropolitan University
Responsible Engagement

- School of Applied Global Ethics PDP programme
- 60 students p.a.
- Sponsored by Engage Mutual Assurance
- Brings together value based reflective practice on:
  - ethics
  - enterprise
  - volunteering
  - careers
  - citizenship & global responsibility

- Paul Dowson & Prof Simon Robinson
  - p.a.dowson@leedsmet.ac.uk
Progression of Responsibility

3rd yr - global engagement with leadership skills & volunteering work placement

2nd yr - community engagement with professional skills

1st yr - engagement as individuals / students, plus learning skills
First Yr - Student Engagement

- The University Story:
  - the purpose of the student
  - the purpose of HE
  - the responsibility of the student

- Higher Ways of Operating
  - reflection & reflective practice
  - employability & skills
  - the virtues

- LifePlan HE
  - self-awareness
  - life balance
  - personal development planning
  - self-presentation
Student Engagement: Assessment

• 2000 word essay
  – ‘What are my reasons for coming to University and what in my view is the purpose and justification for HE’

• 2000 word Personal Development Plan
  – Accompanied by a rationale

• Class test (covers study skills)
  – Proofreading
  – Referencing
  – Summarising
  – Looking for meaning in texts
Second Yr.
Community Engagement

• Developing
  – cross-cultural capability
  – professional skills
  – Citizenship

• Values definition & differentiation
• Worldview articulation & mapping
• Working with others & across boundaries
• Diversity awareness & dialogue
• Conflict resolution
Community Engagement: assessment

• Personal Development Plan, reviewed and updated
  – At least one aim must related to career
  – Plus CV

• 1500 words Volunteering Guide
  – Group project
  – ‘Produce a guide aimed at fellow students to help prepare them for their placement

• 1500 word Personal Credo statement
  – How your practice reflects your values and relates to your life project
Third Yr. Global Engagement

- Using *Living as a Global Citizen* and *Working as a Global Citizen* as development platform

- Including globalisation and global issues
  - global citizenship
  - sustainability
  - climate change and environmental issues.
Global Engagement: assessment

• Group presentation
  – What it means to be a responsible individual
  – What this means for an individual

• Personal Development Portfolio
  1. Organisational matching
     – 3 organisations and jobs ranked in preference with reflective commentary
  2. Storying the self, Powerpoint
     – Presentation for employment interview
  3. My role as manager / leader
     – Write your own reference – in what ways do you see yourself as a leader?
Volunteering placement (3rd Yr)

- **Aim** = reflective practitioner
- **Placement of 150 hours**
  - Equivalent to 3 weeks) can be:
    - Block (summer term between 2nd and 3rd year)
    - Regular longer term commitment
- **Assessment:**
  - Around 3000 words
    - Reflective and critical evaluation
    - Annotated scrap book
  - Ten minute presentation to class
The Philosophy of Education
What is HE for?

1. Ancient
2. 16th C
3. 60s
4. Civic

Year:
- 1992
- Civic 60s

The ‘space’

Pre-HE  HE  Post-HE

‘The moving present’ - Dewey
• Who am I?
• Why am I here?
• Where am I going?
• How can I build on my HE experience?
• How can we help our students move into the future?
Conceptual connections

- Identity
- Narrative
- Social and cultural capital
- Agency and structure
- Space / privacy
- Ethics
- Globalisation

- Uses of knowledge
- Professionalism
- Physicality / body image
- Time

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Bildung Tradition

• Meaning ‘To Cultivate’
  – Originally Christian concept – Imago Dei

• Leibniz
  – Unfolding potential and Liberation through learning

• Herder
  – Totality of experiences that provide a coherent identity (personal and political)
  – Philosophy has practical application, to promote personal transformation
  – The proper study for humans is humanity

• Dewey

The purpose of HE is....?

• '... [to] strengthen the capacity of individuals to reflect upon their own learning and achievement

• and to plan for their own personal, educational and career development...

• and encourage a positive attitude to learning throughout life. '

QAA, Guidelines for HE Progress Files, section 9 and section 29
A. N. Whitehead

“There is only one subject-matter for education, and that is Life in all its manifestations…”

Whitehead, A. N. (1929)

Image: Library Kv Pattom CC
Characteristic of Embodied pedagogy

• Exploration of fundamental human experiences
• Multi-disciplinarity (arts & sciences)
• Acceptance of complexity
• Use of personal experience
• Private reflection and dialogue
• Theory to practice
• Space for silence and talk
• Wonder, reverence and respect

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Career Studies

• Modules that create space for students to reflect on the meaning of:
  – ‘Career’ in the context of their discipline
  – Their HE experience in the context of their life
  – Discipline, career & identity

http://www.reading.ac.uk/ccms/research/ccms-publications.aspx
Alfred North Whitehead (1929)

“… Each individual embodies an adventure of existence. The art of life is the guidance of this adventure.”
Further info


Dave will be based at the University of Essex from July, promoting employability and internationalisation – please keep in touch!

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