IT'S ALL ABOUT THE PROBLEM! PRAGMATISM AND THE TEACHING & LEARNING EXPERIENCE

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WHAT DETERMINES (NOT JUST ENHANCES) GOOD TEACHING?

- Aim: to present some "conceptual mechanics" of good teaching
  - Or, philosophical reflections on "experimental instruction"

WHAT DETERMINES (NOT JUST ENHANCES) GOOD TEACHING?

- Performative features (mode of delivery)
  - The stage and the actors (resources, instructors, learners)
  - The form of delivery (lectures, seminars, flipped-classroom, blended learning)
  - *Highly context dependent*

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WHAT DETERMINES (NOT JUST ENHANCES) GOOD TEACHING?

- Organizational features (principles of education)

  - The curriculum: the *why* and *what* (in that order!) of teaching and learning

  - *Systematic* and *systemic* (there may be even very general or universal principles of education)

THE ORGANIZATION OF EDUCATION

- Some basic principles of programme and curricula design
  - *Clarity of the educational* aim of the programme and its courses
  - *Connectivity* of the curriculum to the educational aim
  - *Continuity* of the curriculum with life-experience

THE EDUCATIONAL AIM: AGENCY RESPONSIVENESS

- We need a model of agency: Purposive agency
  - We have goals and can also develop self-chosen goals
  - We can plan and implement strategies to achieve our goals
  - We can learn and consciously adapt our behaviour

THE EDUCATIONAL AIM: AGENCY RESPONSIVENESS

- The model in normative concepts: 3-Triple-R
  - We are *reasoning* agents (individual)
  - We are *reflective* agents (individual)
  - We are *responsible* agents (individual and social)

THE EDUCATIONAL AIM: AGENCY RESPONSIVENESS

- Example: Philosophy & Economics (U Bayreuth)
  - The programme aims to train the ability to deal with complex decision-making problems. Students learn to structure complex social, economic, and political problems, to separate descriptive from normative features, to reveal underlying assumptions, and to develop solutions. Students are also trained to communicate clearly and moderate public discourse.

THE EDUCATIONAL AIM: AGENCY RESPONSIVENESS

- Example: Philosophy & Economics (U Bayreuth)

  - *Future (professional) perspectives*
    Policy-making in public and private sector, communication professions, development assistance, etc.

  - *Key feature* (guidance of agency)
    Harnessing utopian motivations of young adults and giving them opportunity to develop skills to focus and apply this motivation

THE EDUCATIONAL AIM: AGENCY RESPONSIVENESS

- As purposive agents we seek the good life

  - *Connectivity*
    We can explicitly organize teaching and learning as institutionalized enquiry into the practical problems of living (this does not rule out pure theory – I am a theoretician)

  - *Continuity*
    How can we promote the good life for ourselves and our community?

IMPLEMENTING 3-TRIPLE-R: THE PRAGMATIST MOVE

- ## Task-oriented *reflective thought* (enquiry)

  - Pragmatism: replacing doubt with settled belief in an experimental and experiential way

  - We need to integrate two forms of knowledge in our curricula design: propositional (or declarative) knowledge (knowledge *of*) and procedural knowledge (knowledge *how*)

  - The formulation and sequence of the epistemic categories of a problem is important in this integration: first, procedural; then declarative.

EXAMPLES FROM PHILOSOPHY

- Epistemology

  - Not, "What is the correspondence theory of truth?" (propositional, declarative) but, "How do we investigate the world?" (procedural). We answer the question by examining *how* a particular theory – the correspondence theory – generates *an* answer.

EXAMPLES FROM PHILOSOPHY

- Moral and Political Philosophy

  - Not, "What is Rawls's theory of justice?" (propositional, declarative) but "How can policy *p* be just?" We answer the question by examining *how* a particular theory –Rawls's – theory generates *an* answer.

EXAMPLES FROM ECONOMICS

- Microeconomics
  - Not, "perfectly competitive markets maximize social welfare" (propositional, declarative) but "how can we organize economic activity to improve life as much as possible?" (procedural). We provide *an* answer to the question by learning how to build an economic model.

EXAMPLES FROM ECONOMICS

- ## Macroeconomics

  - Not, "there's only one household in the macroeconomy" (propositional, declarative) but, "do we need to model the complete set of consumers in the economy?" (procedural). We provide an answer by learning *how* a model of the representative consumer can be a justified modelling simplification.

SUMMING UP

- Facilitating good teaching

  - We can facilitate excellence in teaching by creating programmes and curricula that stimulate learning (making bad or average teachers better)

  - The programme and curricula structures to create enquiry-based teaching and learning (this is not to be left to individual instructors)

THANK YOU
FOR LISTENING AND — HOPEFULLY — THINKING ALONG WITH ME