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Education as Philosophy and Philosophy as Education:
lessons for disciplinarity from running a philosophy course within an academic development programme

‘Foundations for the future’, HEA Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies conference, 13-14 July 2011

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Philosophy as Education: insertions in Academic/Professional Development programmes

UCL:

- Research Methods
- Issues in Research Practice
- Issues in Higher Learning

UoK:

- Educational Research Methodology
- Philosophical & Theoretical Issues in Higher Learning
But what does it add?... the double-bind (even for Locke’s “under-labourer”)

(1) Philosophy as making another subject more well-rounded?

a) Problem: if beyond the ‘Education’ curriculum…
   • Hifalutin, etc.…
   • If it should be done, how if no-one qualified?

b) Problem: if naturally part of the ‘Education’ curriculum…
   • No need to change anything
   • Or, if it should be done explicitly, don’t need anyone especially qualified – why should one who is be superior?

Also (2) Philosophy as meddling:
   • Making issue more complicated than it really is (for “getting on with it”)
Dimensions of (Knowledge) Practices

- Individual vs Group vs Social (=societal) vs Institutional
- Discursive vs Non-Discursive
- Thin vs Thick (Luntley)
- Primary vs Secondary (Keith Hoskin)
Dimensions of (Knowledge) Practices

Discursive

Non-Discursive
Dimensions of (Knowledge) Practices

Discursive

Thin Conception

Non-Discursive

Thick Conception
Dimensions of (Knowledge) Practices

- Discursive
- Non-Discursive
- Thin Conception
- Thick Conception

QAA Descriptors
Dimensions of (Knowledge) Practices

- Discursive
  - QAA Descriptors
  - Conference Discussion

- Non-Discursive
  - Thin Conception
  - Thick Conception
Dimensions of (Knowledge) Practices

Discursive

QAA Descriptors

Conference Discussion

Thin Conception

Paying attention

Non-Discursive

Thick Conception
Dimensions of (Knowledge) Practices

- **Discursive**
  - QAA Descriptors
  - Conference Discussion
- **Non-Discursive**
  - Thin Conception
  - Paying attention
  - Non-Discursive
- **Thick Conception**
  - Body Language
Dimensions of (Knowledge) Practices - Footy

Discursive

- Thin Conception

Non-Discursive

Thick Conception

basic rules
Dimensions of (Knowledge) Practices - Footy
Dimensions of (Knowledge) Practices
- Footy

Discursive

Basic rules

Live commentary

Thin

Conception

Goal celebration

Non-Discursive

Thick

Conception
Dimensions of (Knowledge) Practices - Footy

- Thin Conception
  - basic rules
  - goal celebration
- Thick Conception
  - live commentary
  - yellow card offence
- Discursive
- Non-Discursive
Dimensions of (Knowledge) Practices

Primary level of practice:
• What defines what your discipline is about uniquely, e.g. explicit subject content

Secondary level of practice:
• What you do which underpins the primary level, relatively generic and more disciplining aspects
  – Hoskin: writing, examining and grading
Dimensions of (Knowledge) Practices

- **Discursive**
  - QAA Descriptors
  - Publications and conference discussion
- **Non-Discursive**
  - Certain practical behaviours

- **Thin Conception**
- **Thick Conception**

Primary
Dimensions of (Knowledge) Practices

Writing, Examining, Grading

Discursive

Introductory level teaching practices, taking notes

Holding research conversations, Peer review

Thin Conception

Paying attention in class

Exercising good (=professional?) Judgement

Thick Conception

Non-Discursive

Secondary
Re-conceptualising disciplinary relations

Hoskin: Education not a discipline
- Not because Teaching & Learning sub-disciplinary under-labouring
- Education is supra-disciplinary
- Ditto for Philosophy

Knowledge as transdisciplinary? (c.f. Gibbons et al.)

Rather.... individuals become transdisciplinary
('connective specialists' – Young)