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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

**Martin Gough**
Lecturer in Higher Education & Academic Practice
University of Kent
a.m.gough@kent.ac.uk
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
- Non-Discursive
- Thin Conception
- Thick Conception
Dimensions of (Knowledge) Practices

Discursive

QAA Descriptors

Thin Conception

Non-Discursive

Thick Conception
Dimensions of (Knowledge) Practices

Discursive

QAA Descriptors

Conference Discussion

Thin Conception

Non-Discursive

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

- **Thin Conception**
  - Paying attention

- **Non-Discursive**
  - Body Language

- **Thick Conception**
Dimensions of (Knowledge) Practices
- Footy

Discursive

basic rules

Thin Conception

Non-Discursive

Thick Conception
Dimensions of (Knowledge) Practices
- Footy

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thin Conception</th>
<th>Non-Discursive</th>
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<tr>
<td>basic rules</td>
<td>live commentary</td>
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</tbody>
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Dimensions of (Knowledge) Practices
- Footy

Discursive

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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thick Conception
Dimensions of (Knowledge) Practices - Footy

- **Discursive**
  - *basic rules*
  - *live commentary*

- **Thin Conception**
  - *goal celebration*

- **Non-Discursive**

- **Thick Conception**
  - *yellow card offence*
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

Subject content

QAA Descriptors

Publications and conference discussion

Thin Conception

Certain practical behaviours

Non-Discursive

Thick Conception

Primary
Dimensions of (Knowledge) Practices

Writing, Examining, Grading

Introductory level teaching practices, taking notes

Holding research conversations, Peer review

Paying attention in class

Exercising good (=professional?) Judgement

Thin Conception

Discursive

Non-Discursive

Thick Conception

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)