

Towards a Sociology of Learning: Reflection on
Critical Realism and Archer's theory of social
change: as morphogenesis.

Paper for seminar presentation: Nanjing University
16th June 2014

Dr Martin Dyke

Introduction: today's aims

- About me
- Old and New Ideas in Education
- Learning from Experience
 - John Dewey
- Sociology and Critical Realism
 - Margaret Archer
- Sociology of Learning
 - Learning and Social Change

Compare Two Ministers of Education

“memorisation is a necessary precondition of understanding. Only when facts and concepts are committed securely to the working memory, so that it is no effort to recall them and no effort is required to work things out from first principles, do we really have a secure hold on knowledge.”

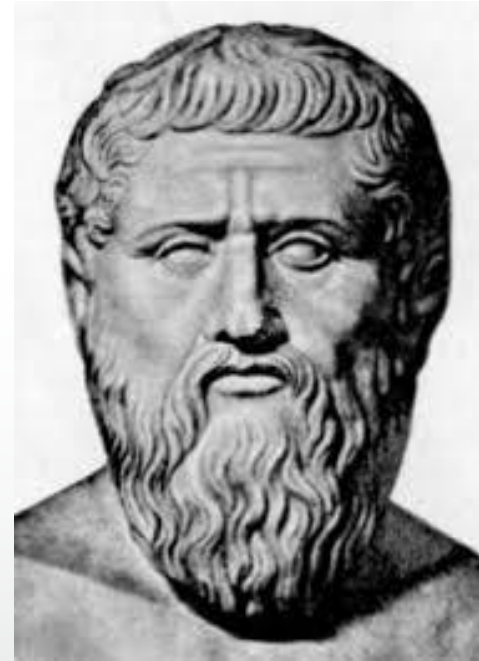
M.Gove **Conservative Minister**
2014 (Guardian 14th November 2012)

“Learning throughout life can build human capital by encouraging creativity, skill and imagination. The fostering of an enquiring mind and the love of learning are essential for our future success.”

D.Blunkett **Labour Minister** 1998
(Blunkett DfEE 1998:1)

Traditionalist - Plato's *Republic*,

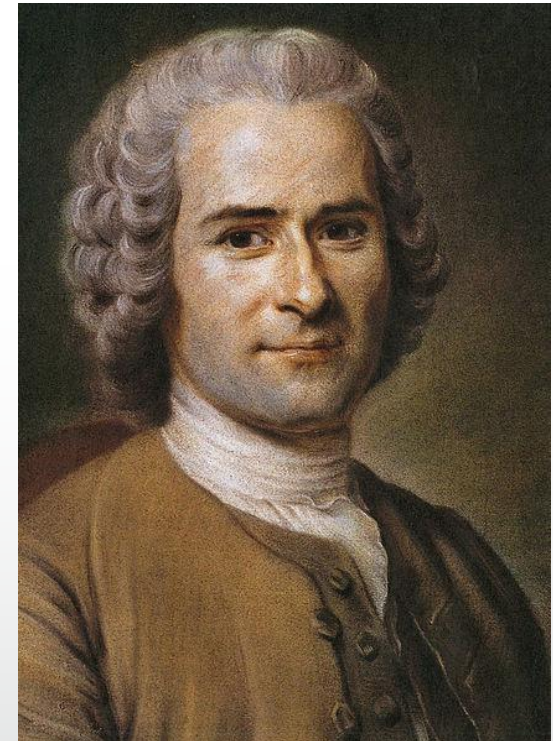
where education was seen as a product of a good society in which philosophers specified what would be taught, learnt and recited. Plato argued that people were to learn of the Gods through the study of the poets in order to 'mould minds and character' (Plato 1987, 72)



Conservative Minister ?

Progressive - Rousseau

- Let us transform our senses into ideas, but not leap all of a sudden from objects of sense to intellectual objects. It is by way of the former that we ought to get to the latter. In the first operation of the mind let the senses be its guide. No books other than the world, no instruction other than the facts. The child that reads does not think, he only reads; he is not informing himself, he learns words. (Rousseau 1764:168)



Labour Minister?

Social Theory and Education Parallel

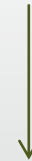
Social Theory

- Structures
- Social Economic Structures determine how we live
- Agency
- Our actions in the world alone determine how we live



Education

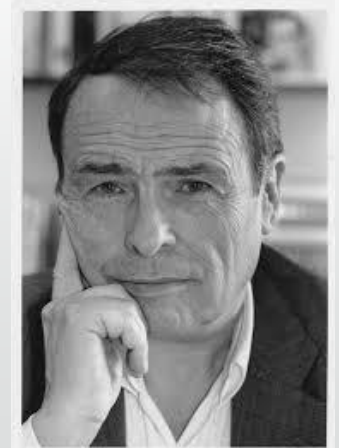
- Traditionalist idea of knowledge?
- Progressives ideas of learning



Example: Structures determine us

The relationship between social agent and the world is not that between subject (or consciousness) and an object, but a relation of ‘ontological complicity’ – or mutual ‘possession’ as Bourdieu recently put it – between habitus, as the socially constituted principle of perception and appreciation, and the world which determines it. (Archer 2007, 40-41)

Pierre Bourdieu



Example:

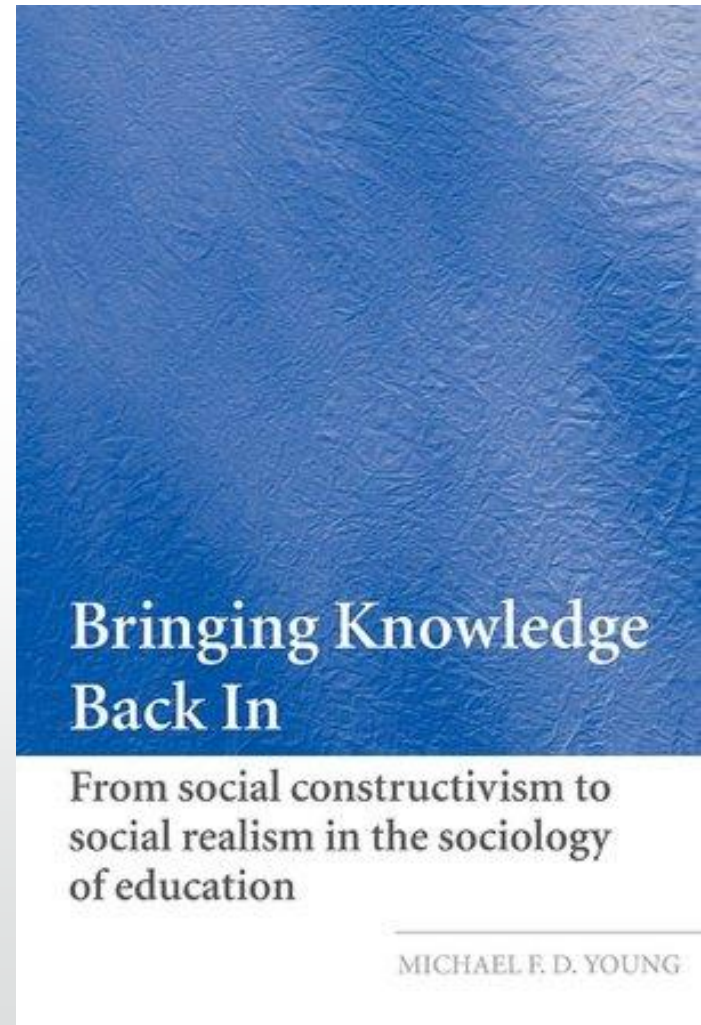
Individuals Action is all Powerful Constructivism and Relativism?

Guba and Lincoln Qualitative Research:

- Evaluation data derived from constructivist enquiry have neither special status nor legitimation; they represent simply another construction to be taking into account in the move towards consensus. (1989:45 Pawson 2006:21)
- All views knowledge and perspectives are equal, no truth or warranted assertions.

Michael Young (2008)

- Relativism and Constructivism in Education
- Challenged by Young
- Called for Social Realism



Margaret Archer - Critical Realism

- People make history but not in circumstances of their own choosing
- Reflexivity
 - Reflection
- Morphogenesis
 - Change
- Morphostasis
 - No change

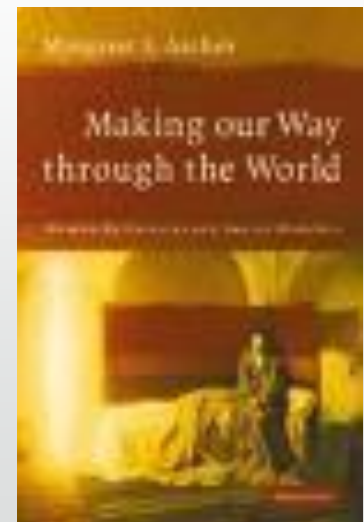


Margaret Archer (2007)

Reflexivity as:

‘the regular exercise of the mental ability, shared by all normal people, to consider themselves in relation to their (social) context and vice versa’ (Archer 2007:4).

- Archer stresses that such reflexivity forms the, potentially fallible, basis of people’s decisions and actions; it has as a mediating influence between the social structure and human agency.



Margaret Archer - Critical Realism

- Reflexivity mediates between structure and action
 - Situations and structures shape peoples'
 - Our Concerns which shape
 - Our Projects which produce
 - Our Actions and Practices
- These are all related



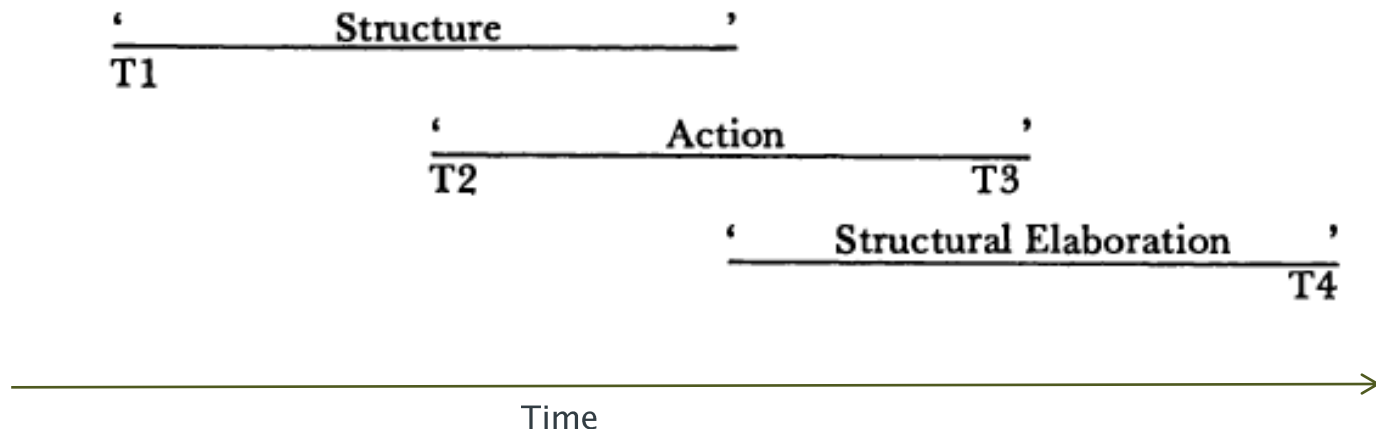
Margaret Archer 1982

The morphogenetic argument that structure and action operate over different time periods is based on two simple propositions:

- that structure logically predates the action(s) which transform it,
- that structural change or elaboration logically postdates those actions

238 *Margaret S. Archer*

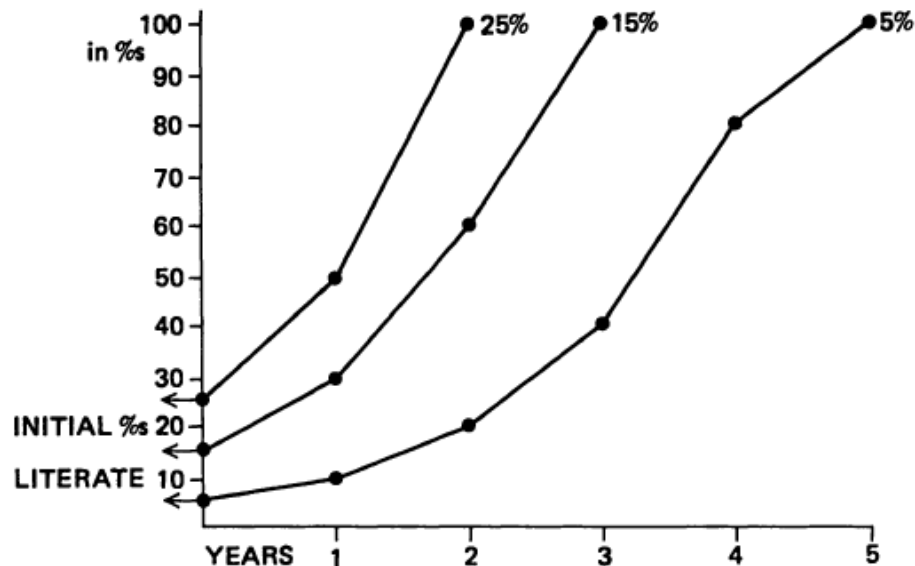
FIGURE I



Cuba Literacy Example

- One literate person teaches one illiterate person each year
- It takes a year to become literate
- Aim is 95% of people literate (100% is unrealistic)
- 3 start points: a literate population of 25%, 15% & 5%

FIGURE II: *Total population*

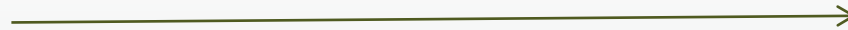


Pawson (2013): Realist Approach for Policy Evaluation

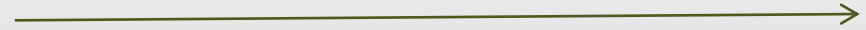
Context



Policy



Outcomes

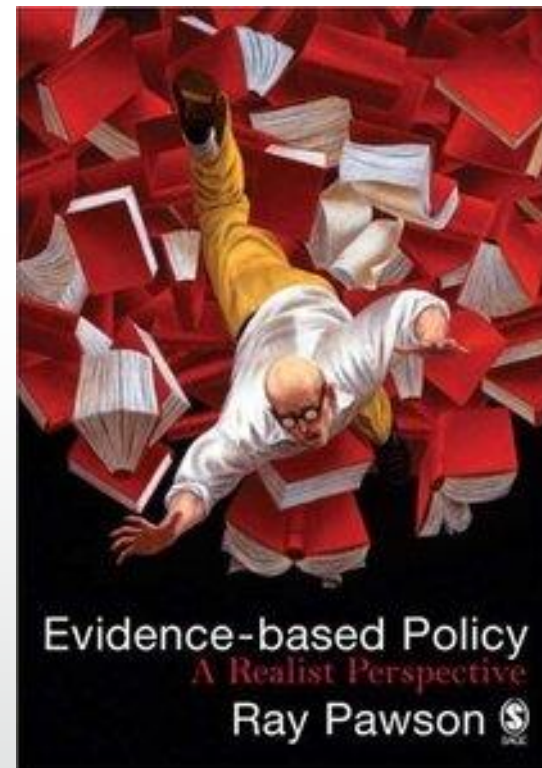


Context + Policy = Policy Outcomes

Context + Policy = Policy Outcomes

“What works for whom in what circumstances and why?”

Pawson (2013:15)



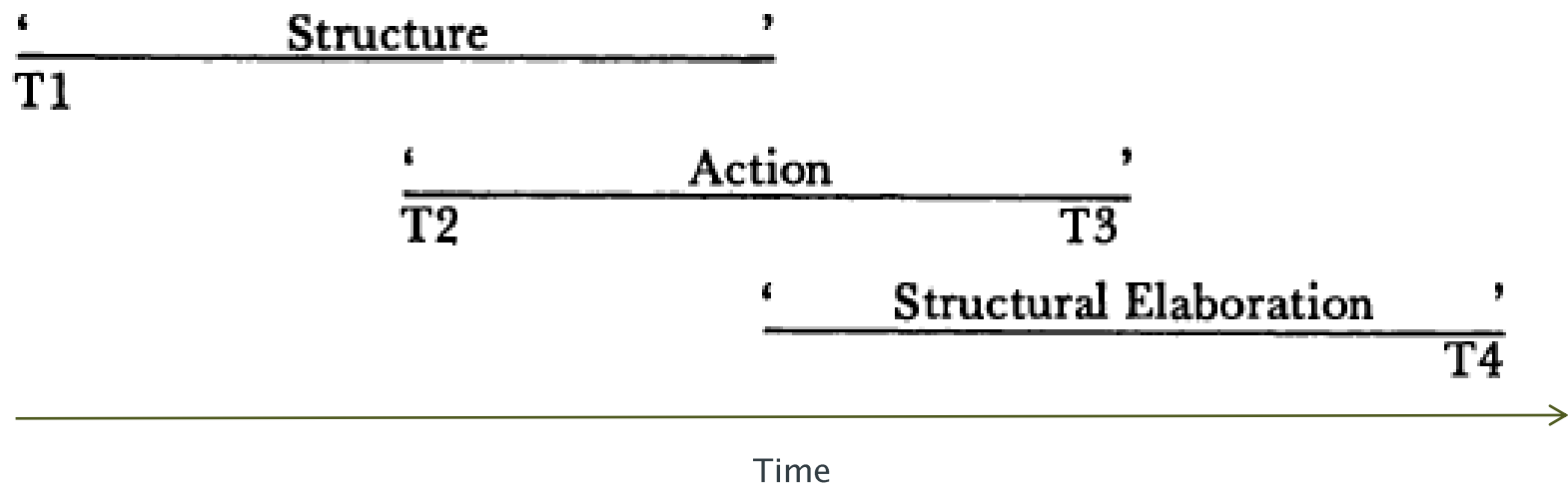
My thinking:

- Can we adapt Archer to Education?
- Think differently about role of:
 - Knowledge (traditionalist)
 - Learning (progressives)
- Can develop a more relational approach between knowledge and learning?
 - What we do with it knowledge How we use it is the key
 - Develop a Social Theory of Learning
 - Sociology of Learning

Summary of Archer (1982 -2013)

238 *Margaret S. Archer*

FIGURE I



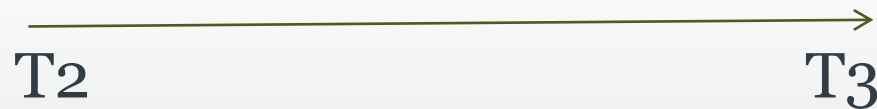
Martin Dyke (Today)

Elaboration on Archer's morphogenetic approach as learning and education

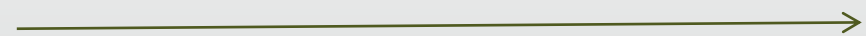
Knowledge (Knowledge System)



Learning as Transformation



Knowledge Elaboration



(Education?) T4

Study and Knowing

学而不思则罔，思而不学则殆

Study and thinking can not live
without each other

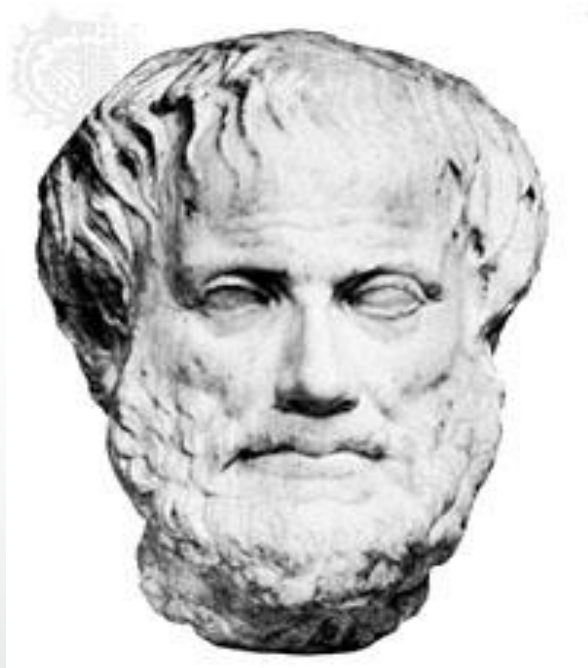
Study without reflection is
futile, reflection without
study is dangerous

(Confucius Analects)



Confucius

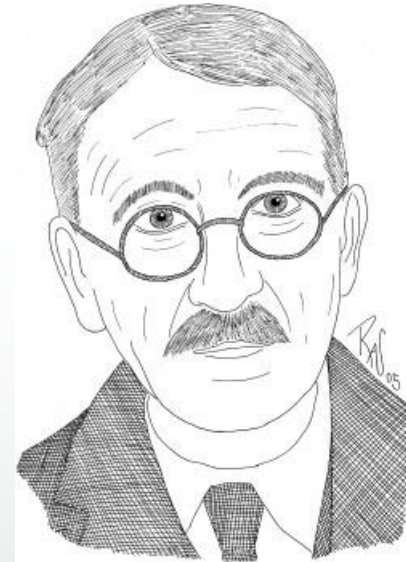
Aristotle – How we know



- But theory must be tested in practice ... and if it harmonizes with what we do, we should accept it, but if it conflicts we should count it [mere] words.

John Dewey – Experimental Approach

- Not simply Knowledge or Learning
- Need to understand how we transform knowledge in to learning.



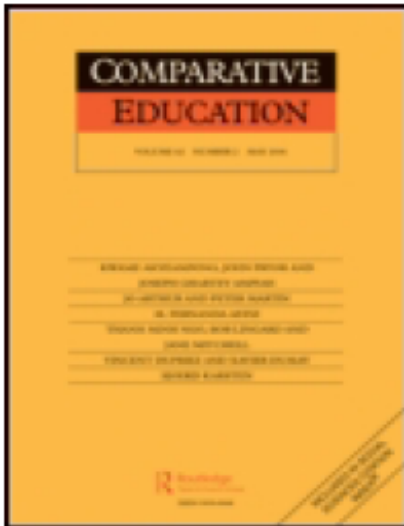
Dewey (1896) similar to Archer (2013)

Dewey argued that learning is always placed in context that experience is laid down over time, it is transformed and mediated:

‘we do not have the replacing of one experience by another but the development (or as it seems convenient to call it) the mediation of experience.’ (1896:360).



Peter Jarvis 2013



Comparative Education

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/cced20>

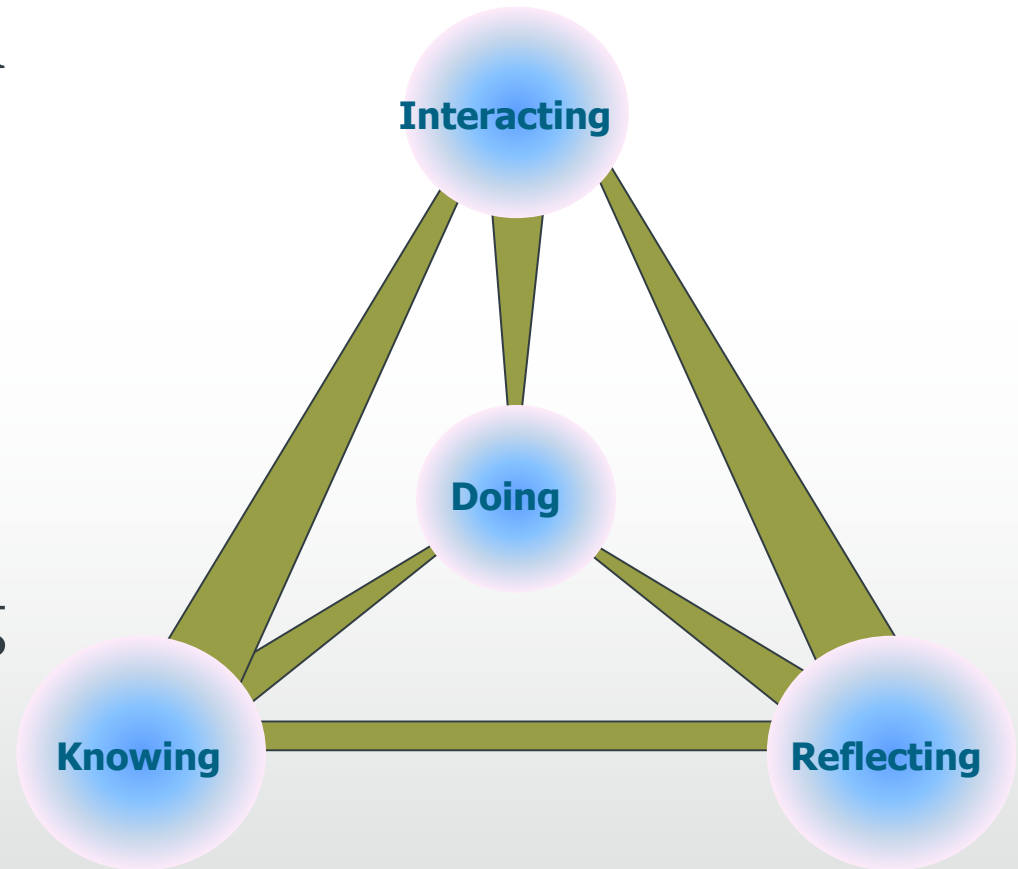
Learning to be a person - East and West

Peter Jarvis^a

^a Emeritus Professor, University of Surrey, UK
Version of record first published: 29 Jan 2013.

Dyke 2009, 2013, and today!

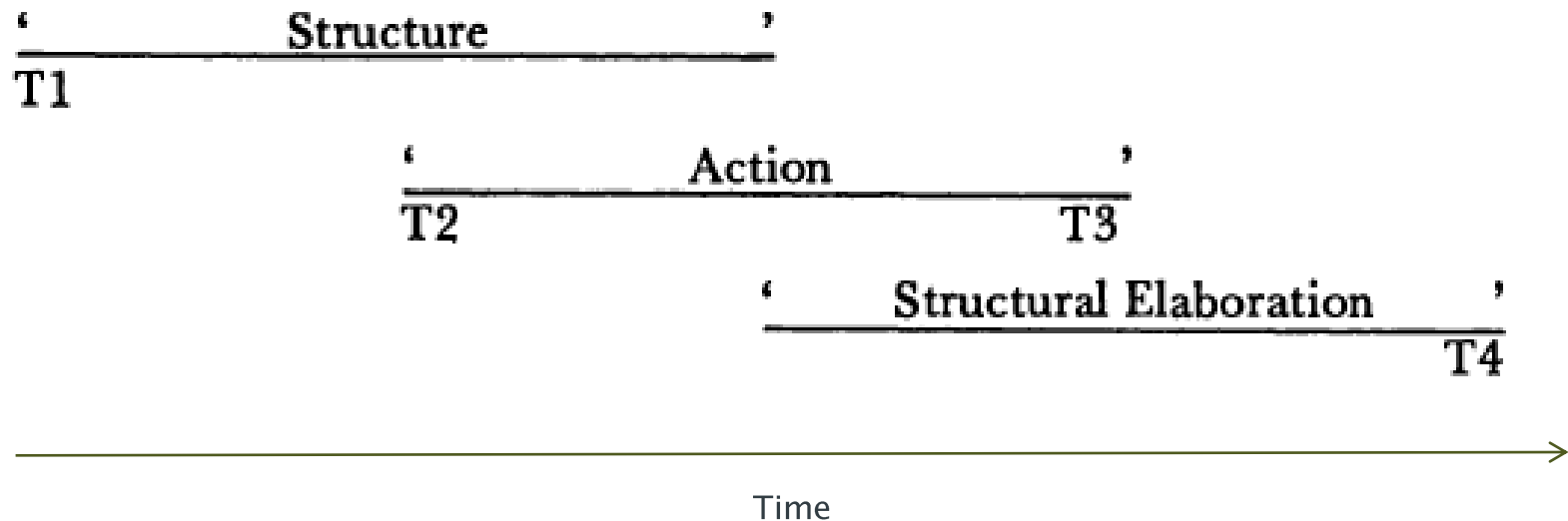
- Relationship between knowledge and learning
- Social Change as a Learning process
- Sociology of Learning



Summary of Archer

238 *Margaret S. Archer*

FIGURE I



Conclusion

Learning a morphogenetic approach

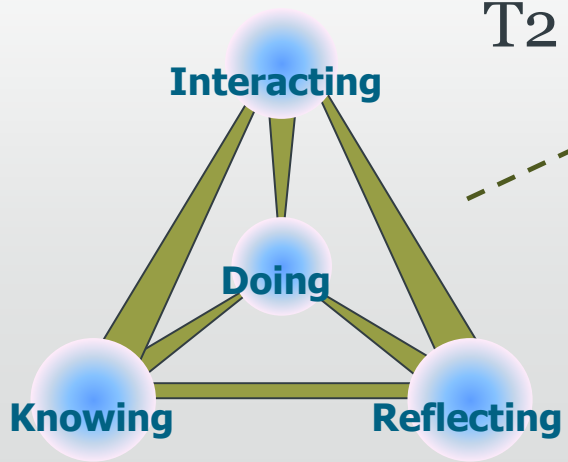
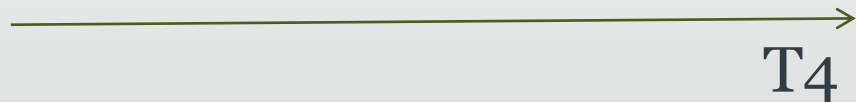
Knowledge (Knowledge System)



Learning as Transformation



Knowledge Elaboration (Education)



Questions and Discussion

Thank you

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Peter Jarvis 2013 Learning to be a person East and West

- Learning to be me - Reactive learning (I-Me)
- Learning from others – interactive learning (I – Thou)
- Learning to do – being active agent in world (I the agent)

He argues the above is a very Western approach to learning, that in the East there is a much more collective approach focused on learning to be in harmony with the world around you.

He also argues culturally we learn to be different, but the above processes still apply.

Aware of conscious, pre-conscious and unconscious learning

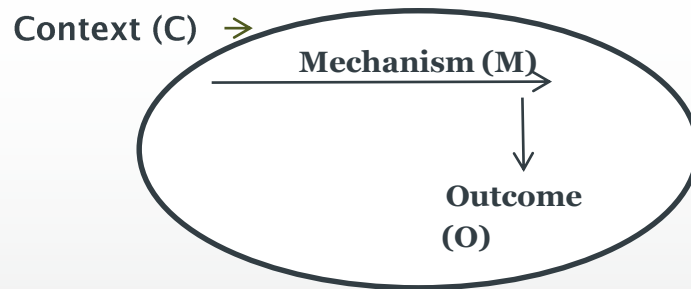
Archer (2007)

- Globalisation
- Structures important
- Situations dynamic not static
 - Speed of Change: & Morphogenesis
- More pressure on individuals to be reflexive, to think
- Reflection and reflexivity growing



Critical Realism in Sociology

Context + Mechanism = Outcome



Pawson, R (2006) Evidence-based policy: a realist perspective. Sage

Margaret Archer: Morphogenetic Approach

- Morpho-genesis
 - Change, transformation, adaptation
- Morpho-stasis
 - Status quo, reproduction
- Framework for understanding
 - Contextual Structural Influences
 - Agency and Action
 - Outcomes

Reference

The British Journal of Sociology 2010



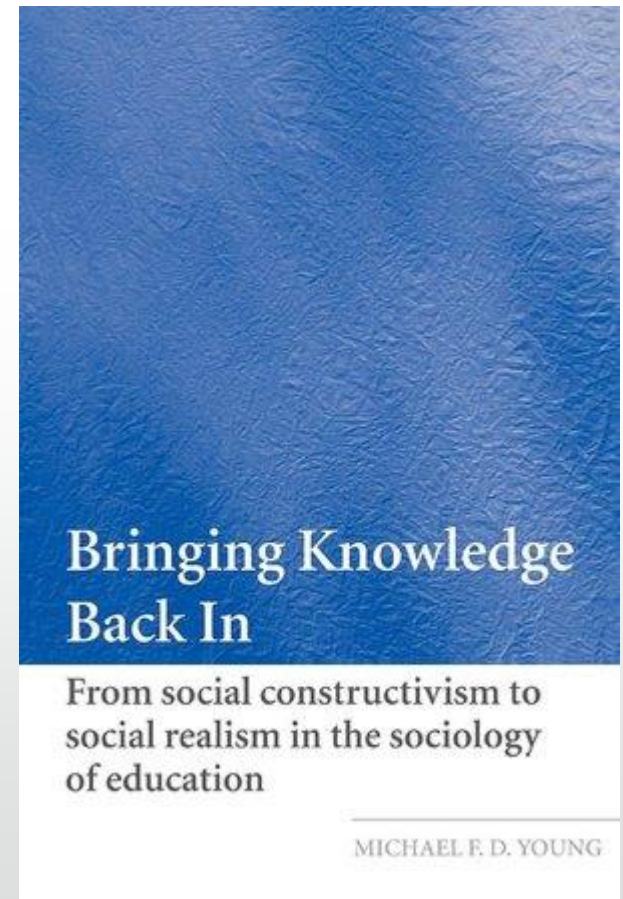
Morphogenesis versus structuration: on combining structure and action¹

Margaret S. Archer

Michael Gove

Gove argues that "memorisation is a necessary precondition of understanding". He says: "Only when facts and concepts are committed securely to the working memory, so that it is no effort to recall them and no effort is required to work things out from first principles, do we really have a secure hold on knowledge (Guardian 14th November 2012)

Michael Young

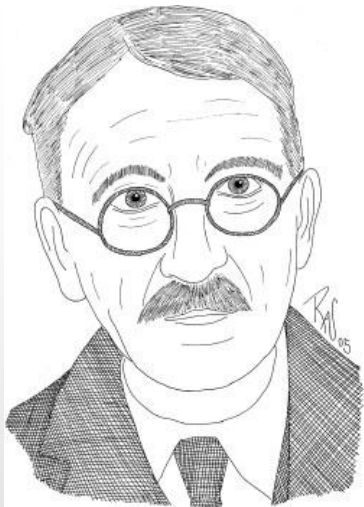


We Learn from Experience?

- Do we?
- What is experience?
- Does it change over time from place to place?
- Is it enough to learn from experience?
- Do we need something else?

Quest for Certainty

A physician, for example, is called by a patient. His original material of experience is thereby provided; it requires a stretch of useless imagination to fancy that the ill man is a mass of sense data organized by categories. This experienced object sets the problem of inquiry. Certain clinical operations are performed, sounding, tapping, getting registrations of pulse, temperature, respiration, etc. These constitute the symptoms; they supply the evidence to be interpreted. The philosopher or logician, looking on, sees they are that part of the original object which is capable of being presented in observation as that is sensibly present. The results are not all that is or can be observed, but are those phases and portions of the experienced whole that are judged to be relevant to making an inference as to the nature of the ailment. The observations mean something not in and of themselves, but are given meaning in the light of the systematized knowledge of medicine as far as that is at the command of the practitioner. He calls upon his store of knowledge to suggest ideas that may aid him in reaching a judgment as to the nature of the trouble and its proper treatment.



Dewey 1934:174

Martin Dyke

*Reflective
Inquiry*

Quest for Certainty

out, while connective conceptions are supposed from within the understanding. As to connection, synthesis takes place not intentionally and by means of the controlled art of investigation, but automatically and all at once.

From the experimental point of view, the art of knowing demands skill in selecting appropriate sense-data on one side and connecting principles, or conceptual theories, on the other. It requires a developed and constantly progressive technique to settle upon both the observational data and the idea that assist inquiry in reaching a conclusion in any particular case. But in Kant's view, the distinction and the connection between the two, while necessary to anything which may be termed cognition, have nothing to do with the validity of the particular enterprise of knowing. Illusion and



*Reflective Inquiry as
testing theory in practice*

From the experimental point of view the art of knowing demands skill in selecting appropriate sense-data on one side and connecting principles, or conceptual theories, on the other. (Dewey 1934:172)

Martin Dyke

Definitions of Experiential Learning

- "Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the *transformation of experience*" (Kolb 1984:38)
- "The process of *transforming experience* into knowledge, skills and attitudes, values and emotions" (Jarvis 1995:20)

Kolb (1984)

- Derives from work of John Dewey and Kurt Lewin
- Four key elements

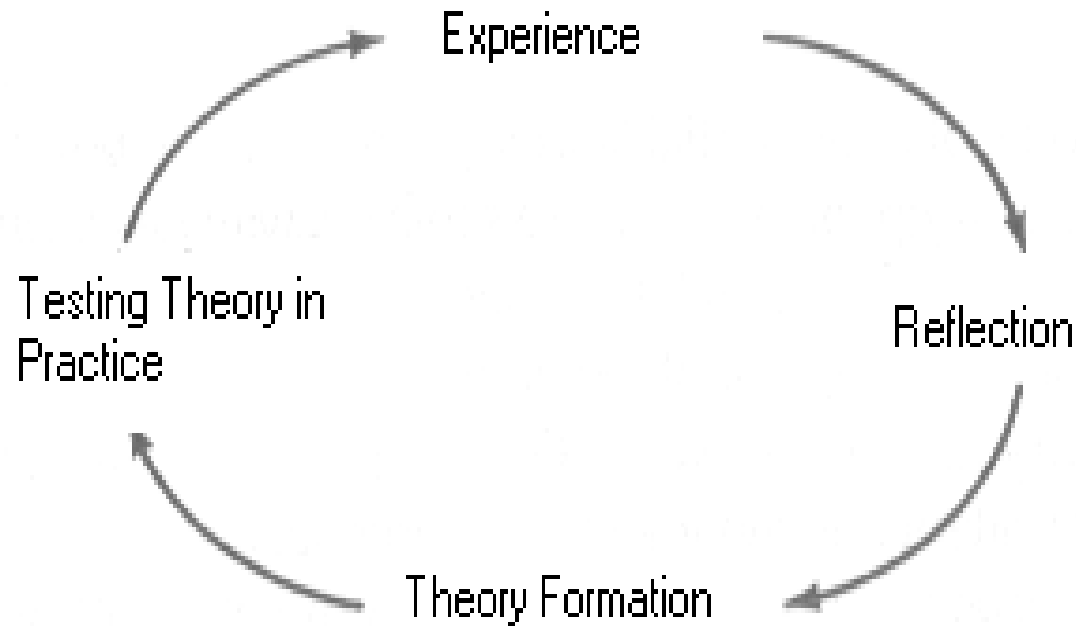
Experience

Testing Theory
In Practice

Reflection

Theory Formation

Kolb (1984)



The Lewinian Experiential Learning Model

Kolb (1984)

Kolb (1984)

- Is it too linear?
- Can successful reflective learning follow a different pathway?
- There is no acknowledgement of the social context in which learning takes place. Learning is situated experience.
- The Jarvis model below addresses these problems and has many learning pathways.
- Pure Reason?
 - *‘I think therefore I am’*

Jarvis Definition (2009)

The combination of processes throughout a lifetime whereby the whole person – body (genetic, physical and biological) and mind (knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, emotions, meaning, beliefs and senses) – experiences social situations, the content of which is then transformed cognitively, emotively or practically (or through any combination) and integrated into the individual person's biography resulting in a continually changing (or more experienced) person.

Jarvis's Thinking 2010

“Learning is the processes whereby a being consciously experiences and responds to the wider environment.”

- Learning as way organisms relate to environment and adapt to change.
- Key elements
 - Re-Action to Environment
 - Harmony
 - Pro-Action on World
 - Contemplation

Jarvis lecture:

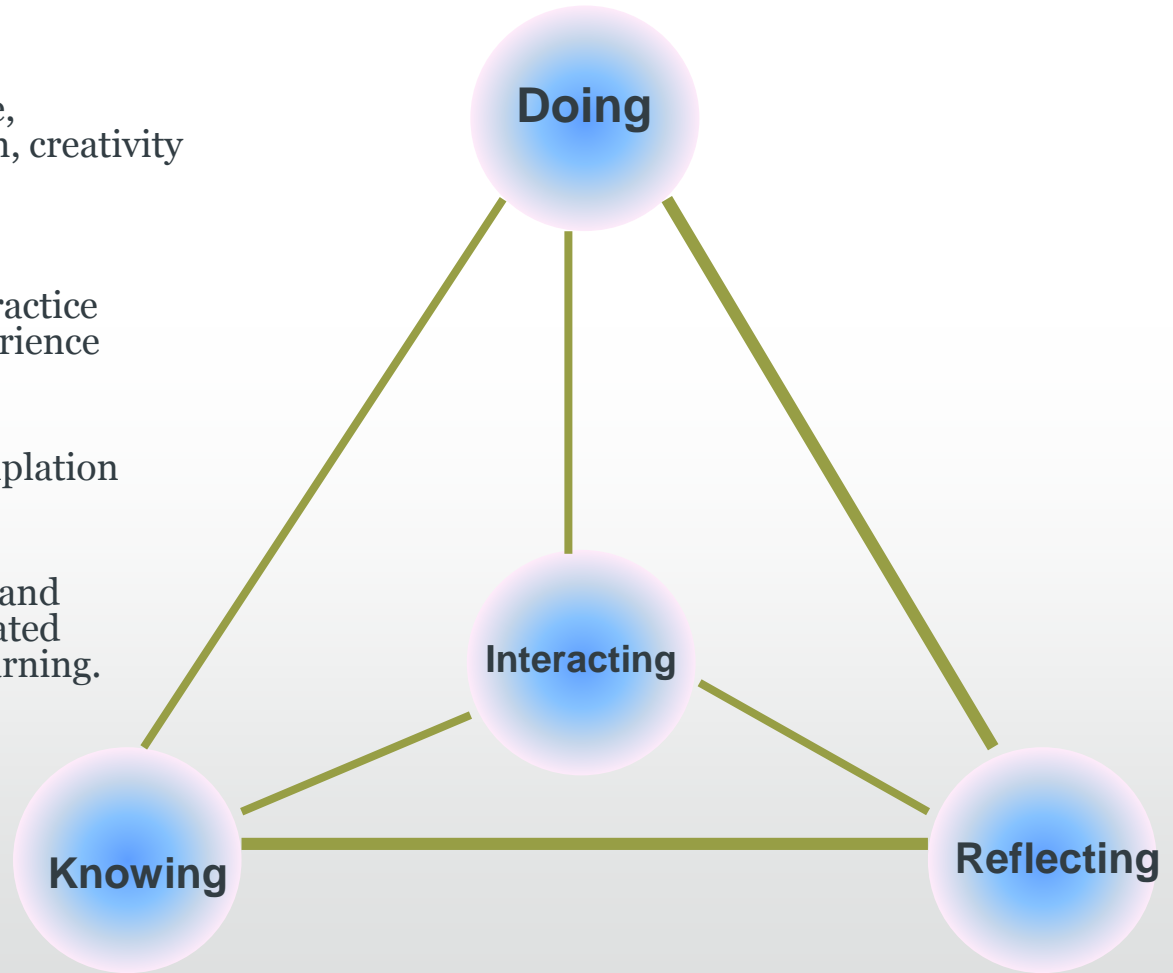
Alternative Models

- I have simplified the Jarvis model.
- Reflexive learning one is an interpretation of Usher and Bryant (1989)
- Why Reflexive learning not reflective?
 - Generative
 - Forward looking
 - Anticipate consequences
 - Sociological concept in Archer (2008)
 - Thinking mediates the relationship
 - between structure and Action
 - theory and practice

Key Elements of Experiential Learning

- **Doing**
 - Practice, primary experience, experimentation, application, creativity and expression
- **Knowing**
 - Formal Theory/Research/Practice Knowledge, Secondary Experience
- **Reflecting**
 - Reflection, thinking, contemplation
- **Interacting**
 - Engagement with the Other and different social context, situated learning, communities of learning.

Martin Dyke (2009)



Reflection

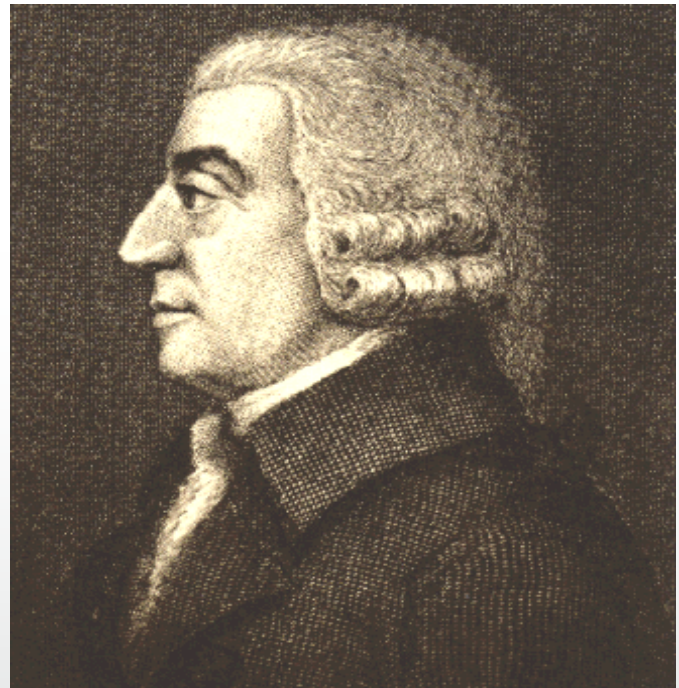
- Critical Reflection is a Recurring Theme in Theory
 - How do we enable it in practice?
 - What kinds of activities can nurture reflection?
 - What makes reflection productive?
 - Is it an individualised process?

Donald Schon: Reflective practitioner

- An artful teacher sees a child's difficulty in learning to read not as a defect in the child but as a defect of his own instruction. So he must do a piece of experimental research, then and there, in the classroom. He must be ready to invent new methods and must endeavour to develop in himself the ability of discovering them.
(Schon 1983:66)

Learning from others

- In order to make a judgement about our own views of the world:
- *“we can do this in no other way than by endeavouring to view them with the eyes of other people, or as other people are likely to view them.”*
- Smith, A (1774 p.133) *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. London. Penguin Classics



Adam Smith (1774)

Study and Knowing

Study and thinking can not
live without each other

Study without reflection is
futile, reflection without
study is dangerous

(Confucius Analects)



Confucius

Quest for Certainty

out, while connective conceptions are supplied from within the understanding. As to connection, synthesis takes place not intentionally and by means of the controlled art of investigation, but automatically and all at once.

From the experimental point of view, the art of knowing demands skill in selecting appropriate sense-data on one side and connecting principles, or conceptual theories, on the other. It requires a developed and constantly progressive technique to settle upon both the observational data and the idea that assist inquiry in reaching a conclusion in any particular case. But in Kant's view, the distinction and the connection between the two, while necessary to anything which may be termed cognition, have nothing to do with the validity of the particular enterprise of knowing. Illusion and

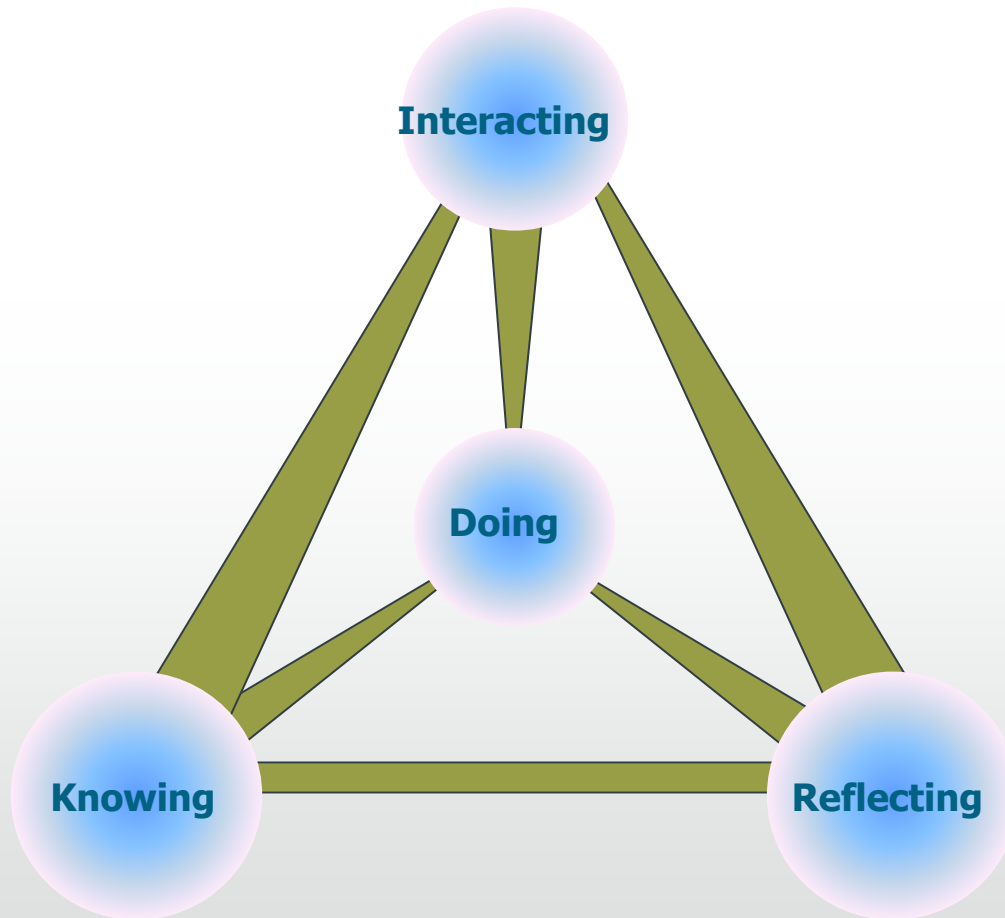


*Reflective Inquiry as
testing theory in practice*

From the experimental point of view the art of knowing demands skill in selecting appropriate sense-data on one side and connecting principles, or conceptual theories, on the other. (Dewey 1934:172)

Martin Dyke

Key Elements of Learning...



The Wright Brothers Legacy: Orville and Wilbur Wright and Their Aeroplanes

by Walt Burton and Owen Findsen

- The Wright brothers came to aviation on hearing of the death in 1896 of Otto Lilienthal, the civil engineer and author of *Birdflight as the Basis of Aviation* (1889), from injuries sustained during a crash in one of the gliders he had fashioned after a falcon. "The brief notice which appeared in the telegraphic news at that time aroused a passive interest which had existed from my childhood," wrote Wilbur, "and led me to take down from the shelves of our home library a book on animal locomotion by Prof Marey which I had already read several times... we soon passed from the reading to the thinking stage, and finally to the working stage."

Saturday November 29, 2003
The Guardian



Next

Thank you

Examples Teacher Education

- Case studies and case conferences
- Assignments that
 - Produce and create encourage practical activities
 - Include Conferencing and working with others
 - Encourage critical reflection
 - Based on sound knowledge base
- Bringing people and places together who otherwise would not meet?

Video Learning Environment

- Videos of lectures
- Videos of practical activities
- Video-Conferences (Skype) with
 - Experts
 - Practitioners
 - Tutorials at distance
- Online learning resources
- Assessment tasks that reflect model

*Real and Realistic
not Virtual and Animated*

More YouTube than PlayStation

Some Questions

- What do you make of Archer's approach to reflexivity?
- Why might the concept of reflexivity be important to the educational researcher?
- What role might it play in making sense of data in educational research?