

Philosophy of Teaching and Learning

In my research and practice of teaching and learning in higher education, I ground my work in several broad principles related to ontological (who we are), teleological (what we do), and epistemological (how we know) perspectives.

Who We Are

Ontological perspectives are primary and can be summarized in the statement:

All people have inherent value and have the right to dignified and respectful interactions with others.

This principle is expanded in the 5Rs of Indigenous education (Tessaro et al. 2018): respect, responsibility, relevance, reciprocity, and relationships. The 5Rs serve as a set of values grounded in the inherent value of all people and the importance of intentional work to foreground the perspectives of equity-deserving groups, and the ultimate goal of education is to empower learners to fully realize their value and to flourish in who they are.

What We Do

Teleological perspectives flow from who we are.

Learning is idealized as a cognitive apprenticeship.

We know from Bloom (1984) that the most profound learning experiences occur in the context of sustained discourse between the learner and the instructor (who can sometimes be a peer or other interested observer). This sense-making process must include the learner actively exercising evaluative judgement (Tai et al. 2018) through the comparison of their own work to the work of both novice and expert others.

How We Know

Epistemological perspectives flow from who we are and what we do.

If there is an end, it is when the teacher has become unnecessary.

Coming to know something (learning) is a result of what we do. When learners strive for a cognitive goal, they iterate based on their past knowledge combined with feedback they receive regarding their performance in relation to the goal (Carless 2019; Hattie and Timperley 2007). Consequently, learning is inextricably tied to the process of assessing learning. When a learner is able to generate their own feedback on performance, they no longer need the instructor and can sustain their own learning (Boud and Soler 2016).

References

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