

**There is Always Hope...**  
**The Future of Knowledge and Knowing in Higher Education**  
**Michael Kompf, Brock University**

**Summary**

Information and communications technology (ICT) have changed how knowledge is produced, judged and acted on. Relationships between knowledge and knowers have also changed in ways that foster epistemological confusion as new generations of consumers fail to critically evaluate the distinctions between knowledge and mere information. The role of those in higher education has traditionally been the production and dissemination of knowledge in ways protected by academic freedom and tenure. Shifts in the roles, functions and purposes of the professoriate brought about by institutional and social pressures are gradually redefining the definitions and practices of teaching and learning and what education and knowledge is deemed worthwhile. Questions addressed in this paper consider whether such shifts represent an inexorable paradigmatic movement or responses to an increasingly lucrative globalisation of education.

**Preamble and Orientation**

To some extent, all of the academic work we do is autobiographical. We become interested in topics because they have importance and meaning for us. Many in the world of employment find differences between the works they do to make a living and who they are as individuals. A reflective academic life bridges that gap somewhat by providing the luxury of thoughtful opportunities – for which most of us are well paid. Responsibilities for thoughtfulness evolve as experience and age accumulate in the academy. From a personal perspective, I have been drawn beyond subject specific knowledge and into the context of learning and teaching and the terms and conditions under which it takes place. This paper is an opportunity to explore some of the observations and connections I have found to be of interest and concern. Changes in higher education around the globe over the last 25 years have led to unanticipated opportunities, circumstances and practices that have given rise to growing tensions between the *what* and *how* of knowledge and teaching and the *what* and *why* of learning and knowing. *How* and *Why*

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questions about knowledge and its role in teaching and learning have traditionally reflected individual beliefs of teachers conveyed to students as both substance of thought and idea as well as guideposts for the quality of future intellectual life. Central to this issue is a personal lament that form has triumphed over function (instead of the architectural mantra that form follows function) as the terms, conditions and possible outcomes promised by educational service providers determine the value and worth of educational life for students and faculty to a greater extent than does the search for knowledge.

These circumstances of education have direct implications for consumers of educational services, formerly known as students and increasingly referred to as clients or customers<sup>1</sup>. Expectations of educational consumers determine the durability of programs, courses and instructors in changing times. Exponential increases in accessibility of information and rapidity of communication sparked by technology seem inversely related to the acquisition of critical thinking skills that discern between information and knowledge. The world for which education prepares its charges is shifting rapidly and fluidly with transitory, built-in serial obsolescence as a feature of objects, modes of thought and language that grow in distance with each generation. In illustration, texting (e.g., LOL = laugh out loud; BTW = by the way; RUOK = are you OK?) such as occurs on personal communications devices is creeping into student papers and assignments. Writing and other communication skills expected of students have been

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<sup>1</sup> For students a typical four-year full-time undergraduate program at my university consists of twenty courses of 72 contact hours each in the form of lectures and seminars usually taken during 12-week fall and winter terms. Timetables, classroom locations, examination schedules and so on are processed by the registrar's office. Classes are mostly face-to-face with blended and distance learning becoming more popular among students who expect web pages to be in place for courses with syllabus and resource materials posted. Last year approximately fifty percent of those in a class of 90 had laptops open on their desks for note-taking, web-reference or perhaps playing solitaire. Over 70 percent of students are female and most in third year have accumulated between \$40,000 and \$60,000 in debt. Approximately thirty percent of students come from away as a result of marketing campaigns, image branding, and the development of popular programs. Education is firmly linked to income and promoted as a vehicle to social improvement and increased ability to consume goods and services.

transformed by the medium of communication into acronymic shorthand that falls short of traditional academic expectations and yet manages to reflect the essence of academic jargon.

These terms, conditions and expected outcomes also have direct implications for the professors, or those who profess knowledge, who are increasingly referred to as intellectual or human capital<sup>2</sup>. Academic life is busy with an ebb and flow often determined by the beginning and ending of academic terms. Opportunities for perspective-taking seem set aside for sabbatical leaves or anticipated retirement. Changes in the medium of instruction changes the ways in which teachers appreciate that which they teach. Conversion of a face-to-face course of study to an electronically facilitated mode of delivery requires re-learning materials in ways that conform teaching and expectations to the new medium. The work of Marshall McLuhan (1967) and others concerned with communication provides a convincing demonstration that changing the medium changes the message. It might be further argued that change would also occur in the messenger and her or his construction of knowledge, knowing and communication.

For society and the institutions who offer educational services, the implications are more indirect and of longer consequence. Education is an agreed-upon pathway to social improvement and global economic positioning for individuals and groups. Variations in academic standards of

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<sup>2</sup> In most western countries, the baby boomers who bulged population distributions are retiring in large numbers opening doors for a new generation of scholars and opening a crack for the thin edge of a wedge of ideological shift in educational philosophy, policy and practices. Faculty encouragement for electronically resourced courses is argued to provide ease of student interaction and information management as well as creating the possibility for full distance delivery. Some pursue this ICT option, while others resist, citing copyright law and a case at York University in Toronto where new probationary faculty transformed their course materials to electronic delivery. Contracts were not renewed and the university claimed ownership of the materials and were able to hire teaching assistants to deliver courses at a lower salary while building the university's course bank. Litigation has shown this practice to be an infringement of copyright. Research that produces grants and patent-able or marketable applications seems of greater value for purposes of promotion and tenure than does other types of research or even exceptional teaching. Unionisation of faculty and the development of collective agreements have strained relations between administration and faculty and are narrowing the parameters and expectations of scholarship to contractual obligations subject to grievance or complaint. In Canada, unionisation of universities began in the 1990s and has resulted in much significant disruption of studies and completion of academic terms in pursuit of more favourable terms and conditions of employment for academic workers. Quantification of workload in terms of teaching research and service and the relation of same to reward has caused a turn from teaching as a vocation into a careerist quest more expected in the corporate world.

practice have led to an implicit and seldom discussed hierarchy in the comparability of qualifications. A part goal of the impending General Agreement on Trade in Service (GATS) agreement brokered through the World Trade Organisation (WTO) is to standardise educational services for the purposes of trade. Its effect will establish grounds of acceptable and unacceptable practices. From one perspective, benchmarking educational services will allow easier transportation of certification in the professions across borders<sup>3</sup>.

While now mildly attracted to the sharing concept as part of collaborative marketing and niche development for educational services, only a few institutions in North America have transfer credit agreements and policies such as are in the Bologna Accord. Furtherance of the latest round of GATS negotiations will see the first step of including educational service, specifically higher education, as part of a bundled package including financial and transportation services between and among signatories where access, equivalence and transportability are legislated matters of trade rather than products of in-house or national academic policy. The advent of the idea of a *knowledge economy* might be better examined as an economy of knowledge in which the currency of ideas and programs is determined by its international exchange rate.

### **The Roots of Knowledge and Knowing in the Academy**

The various forms of higher education currently enjoyed owe their existence to an uneasy and protracted birth at which religion and science acted as competing midwives. While the shifting grounds of influence and authority make for interesting studies of the roots and traditions of knowledge and knowing, more compelling are questions about where all of this has led and how

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<sup>3</sup> A current problem in Canada has to do with the immigration of qualified professionals, e.g., engineers, physicians and nurses, wishing to practice in their adopted country. Few are allowed to do so unless significant re-qualification is undertaken. Implied in this stance is that the education candidates received is sub-standard to the expectations of the host country. Chronic shortages of qualified personnel are a more likely impetus for change in acceptance than understanding and a collaborative approach to developing equivalency.

the academic grounds we now occupy provide an authoritative contemporary basis for thought, understanding and action.

The academy has traditionally represented a superordinate authority of learning and knowledge production originating as local hubs of further learning and loosely coupled centres of scholarly achievement during formative times. Higher education provides a record of feat and folly throughout its history that has germinated social understanding and scientific progress reflecting the times in which they occurred. Some, mainly faculty, argue that critical debate over the quality and implications of past accomplishments is sufficient to justify the existence of the academy as a place of education and a self-sustaining knowledge community because of critical review and invoked academic freedom. Others, mainly administrators, disagree and are successfully arguing for measuring sticks of key performance indicators (KPIs) and fiscal accountability to justify or promote change in focus and management.

Education is an expression of hopefulness for humanity, especially so in higher education because it represents moments in the flowing state of knowledge. Knowledge, the process of knowing and the attributes brought by successive generations of knowers change with time, circumstance and available resources. Change in expectations, content and the context of learning and teaching have become complex, interwoven strands braided by technology, commerce and globalisation. The terms and conditions under which knowledge production takes place affects focus, epistemology, method of knowledge production and attitudes towards teaching, learning and research. Then and Now comparisons as will be shown illustrate the conceptual and practical distance travelled by educational institutions and stakeholders but cannot provide reliable direction for the future.

A question worth asking (PP2) has to do with whether the academy's conception of an orderly march towards further knowing has been compromised, complemented or both by information and communications technology.<sup>4</sup> The roles of learned professor as academic and professional gatekeeper if replaced by knowledge workers representing human and intellectual capital poses a metaphor of practice that has moved a great distance in a short time bringing with it the idea of students or learners as clients or customers. The dynamics of teaching and learning relationships between professors, students and administration have responded to altered environments with the advent of public interest in effectiveness and accountability. Effectiveness is measured mainly by program attractiveness demonstrated through enrolment and post-graduate employment statistics.

Accountability pertains to individual and institutional evaluation, academic review and fiscal matters. In many universities, including my own, faculty are evaluated proportionately on teaching (40%), research (40%) and service (20%). Taught courses are evaluated by students and those evaluations are reviewed by Department Chairs and Faculty Deans. Research, traditionally determined by presentation of scholarly papers and publication of articles, books and monographs, is more recently measured by successful grant applications and other forms of capital generation. Service consists of committee work at department, faculty and university levels with some attention to service in the larger community. Should a faculty member attract a significant grant, teaching assignments can be relaxed, forgiven or filled by hiring a replacement on a limited term appointment. Should insufficient research activities occur, many collective agreements allow for the assignment of extra teaching responsibilities. As the nature of "good"

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<sup>4</sup> Note that (PP#) refers to PowerPoint slides which are included in text as figures where appropriate and not fully addressed in text. PowerPoint slides available on request from the author at: michael.kompf@brocku.ca.

research is under debate (e.g., electronic publications, journals weighed and tiered for prestige, performance arts etc.) the safe course chosen by faculty seeking tenured appointments leads to not only (PP3) “publish or perish” but “get grants or grovel”.

Few university professors have had any teaching preparation. Most tend to either replicate the teaching they received as students or teach in a way that parallels their own learning preferences. The only teacher preparation available in Canada is for elementary and secondary education and takes place in a professional school such as a College or Faculty of Education deemed *professional* because certification is attached to successful completion subject to the standards or practice and performance as set by an external governing body such as Ontario’s College of Teachers. Professional standards are distinct from academic standards and members of such faculties (e.g., law, medicine, psychology, engineering etc.) essentially stand with one foot in practice and the other in theory. For faculty members the distinctions are not particularly helpful as priority and loyalty issues between profession and institution may collide as knowledge *of* practice meets knowledge *in* practice.

Accommodations have been made in the promotion and tenure criteria for members of faculties of education to include “special circumstances” such as curriculum development and field work and activities not usually considered as academically worthwhile activities. Increasingly, those who teach in faculties of education lack backgrounds in the practice of teaching but have rather focussed on the theories or components of teaching as might be found in sound research programs. As faculty appointment committees rank applicants by level of degree (PhD) completion status, research programs, publications and level of engagement and experience with tertiary education, an increasing fragmentation between faculty purpose and practice seem to have cart leading horse from the lecture hall to the school classroom. The

distinction between (PP4) theories *of* practice and theories *in* practice applies here as does the distinction between knowledge *of* practice and knowledge *in* practice.

By way of illustration, the study of how individuals learn crosses over many disciplines. (PP5) Learning can be meaningfully addressed from perspectives of: cognitive function - reading and information processing; affective and social components – esteem and economic issues; and physical aspects – race, gender, and learning environment. The diversity of interests and perspective are like the multi-faceted eye of a fly in which each facet presents a different view, which for fly or faculty member results in a most confusing perspective. The range of issues in the study and practice of teaching and learning is becoming fuzzily distinct, inclusive and multi-disciplinary as overlaps between variables and factors that have traditionally defined and separated fields of study become more visible. For example, the act and associated consequences of reading would not be out of place as a topic of study in any university faculty. Cross-disciplinary studies such as sports psychology, economic demography, and others not only bridge disciplines by creating sub-fields but also lead to shifts in knowledge and ways of knowing. For faculty members, niche development that satisfies both professional and academic masters, layers choice-making regarding short and long term direction and focus in knowledge production.

While research ideally attempts to produce knowledge in the researchers' discipline, teaching responsibilities may or may not be related to their field and are increasingly seen as burdensome. Diverting the long term course of a billiard ball, iceberg or comet requires only a nudge at some point with the deflection off-course increasing over time. Alterations in academic purpose seem affected by the same dynamic as career paths that are diverted in conformity to larger institutional purposes. I also see a tendency to differentiate between vocation and career.

The idea of vocation carries a commitment or calling to a higher purpose as might be associated with religion and the helping professions. The idea of career has a harder edge in which publicly demonstrable accomplishment and success aggrandise individuals in a competitive environment. In a traditional educational ethos, vocation trumps career for time attention and fulfilment. However, a career ethos is required for tenure, promotion and positions of stature.

The *worth* of produced knowledge has been traumatised by practicality in that knowledge for knowledge's sake has become a hit and run victim of commercialisation. Worthwhile knowledge generates income streams through patent-able products and associated entrepreneurial spin-offs, increased enrolments in programs that can be delivered at low costs through ICT, public-private partnerships in design and delivery of educational services that facilitates product placement (e.g., Microsoft, Dell, Apple, Coca-Cola etc.) and enhances institutional branding that builds client (student) loyalty and donor attractiveness. The latter point needs some emphasis as a walk through the hallways of many North American higher education facilities finds a "donor wall" or some similar display of funding acknowledgement. New complexes of buildings are often named after donors rather than the past practice of dedication to outstanding academic achievements. A notable debacle in this trend was at The University of Texas USA where Enron donated \$3.5 million in addition to other moneys to the law school. Hasty revisions on the donor wall seemed in order following the scandal and led to well-articulated policies of the practice in many North American universities.

### **The State of Epistemology in Education**

While fundamental questions as might be derived from philosophical inquiry are sufficient to generate broader understanding of life and existence, their combination with the quest for

certainty established by the sciences led to three main epistemological orientations in education accepted as legitimate forms of knowledge production: logical positivism, hermeneutics and critical theory (See Figure 1. - PP6).

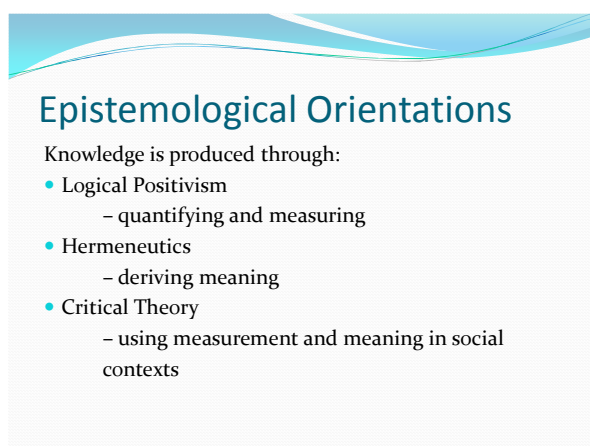


Figure 1. Epistemological Orientations

Depending on whether an event is measured, interpreted or placed in social context, the knowledge derived varies in perspective, primacy of findings and derivation of meaning. Imagine the differing research methodologies that characterise statisticians, philosophers and social scientists – or the perspectives of a conservationist, a housing developer and a politician when viewing a virgin tract of land. Ways of knowing, or epistemological orientation, create lenses for seeing that may be limiting or liberating.

The 1970s saw the beginning of much heated methodological debate between adherents of quantitative and qualitative methods in many branches of the academy resulting in such praise or pejoratives as hard or soft science (See Figure 2. - PP7). Grudging movement in the social sciences and humanities gave equal footing for previously contrary methodologies derived from critical theory, feminism and such other aspects of study that were better pursued through the extensive use of stories, (auto)biographical materials, case studies and the like. Softening the ideological edge of inquiry outside of the mainstream sciences seems to have fostered more

cross-disciplinary work, yet entrenched some further in the hard science domain with its principles used as benchmark or scholarly rigour and accomplishment.



Figure 2. Hard and Soft Science

A state of détente or at least civility seems to be in place where new ways of producing and communicating information have fostered increased interest and a shift in determining the worth of what is known making the "So What?" question of critical thought the rallying cry of practicality. (PP8) The "So What?" question while edged with vernacular glibness, asks about the consequences of knowledge and acts as an epistemological barb and practical measuring stick for funding agencies, educational consumers and the popular media. By putting knowledge claims to a practical usefulness test requiring simplicity and applicability, the substance of what is claimed is examined as separated from the *how* by which that particular bit of knowledge was produced. The criterion of useful knowledge begs the question of "Useful to whom?" (See Figure 3. - PP9) – which in turn asks the further operational questions of: "Why is this particular piece of knowledge useful?" "Who will benefit?" "What will benefits be?" "How will it be acted on?" "Where and when will it be demonstrated?" "At what cost and consequence will it be demonstrated?"

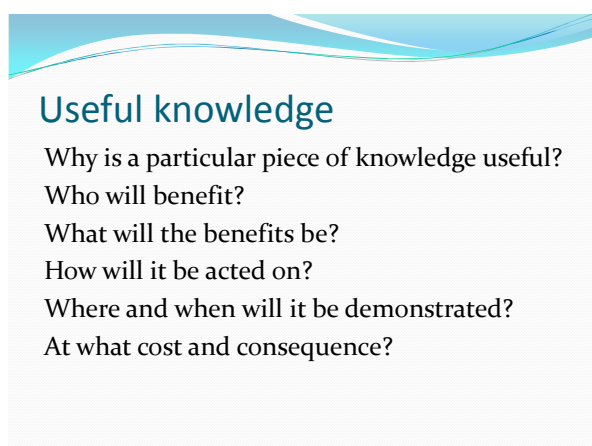


Figure 3. Useful Knowledge

These questions have mainly been dealt with by the traditional academy whose existence serves its own traditions of knowledge and knowing. The academy is best understood through the dynamic of social reproduction with reinforcement of mission and worth established through such devices as peer review – a process whose acceptability is currently under an administrative accountability microscope. Accountability to stakeholders has become supreme carrying with it problems of definition of not only who those stakeholders are but whose visions and knowledge interests in the academy are dominant. On occasion, elements of false accountability, masked as reviews of acceptable practices in need of minor adjustments, such as a program reviewer might provide tacitly endorse minimally acceptable practices as reasons for approval are sought.

A loosely defined idea of academy exists with the university as its home. In that domain, tenure and academic freedom exist as part of the rights and responsibilities of membership in the collegium. Exercising freedom in the pursuit of knowledge is a privilege of relatively unfettered inquiry often accompanied by teaching and the concomitant task of intellectual gatekeeper. Time, population circumstances and technological change have brought about fundamental changes in what the responsibilities of the academy are and how those responsibilities are discharged. In fact, stakeholder forces have redefined and refocused academic responsibility

from outside. This sort of paradigmatic shift was anticipated by Thomas Kuhn (1970) and given wings by the information and technological evolutions that have characterised post-industrial society. The effects of information and communications technology (ICT) combined with the commoditising of education inexorably lead to a globalised academy and transformation in the nature, acquisition and importance of knowledge and ways of knowing.

Schools and the public are the ultimate recipients of knowledge produced by the academy. The “So What” question puts knowledge to practical test especially when scientific and populist views collide. Such a collision is evident in the North American debate regarding the teaching of evolution science from the Darwin and Wallace perspective of natural selection versus the creationist view of intelligent design. Supporters of either side invoke principles to buttress well-publicised arguments ultimately reducible to the divergence of science and religion. While this dispute rages in the media-driven public forum, its consequence plays out as practical epistemological debate in the home, classroom and church.

In education, the philosophical foundations of teaching and learning face divergence in the search for a useful, meaningful and durable epistemology. On one side, the search for truth or Veritism, writers such as Goldman (1995) have firm stances toward purpose: (PP10)

I remain unmoved by the tides of postmodernism and social constructivism that are trying to wash away all vestiges of truth and objectivity. I believe in truth -- "absolute" truth as it is sometimes called -- and I believe that a great variety of human endeavors are dedicated, quite properly and understandably, to the discovery and dissemination of truths. (p. 1)

Goldman's position contrasts sharply with Siegel's view of critical thinking or rational belief (2005) (PP11):

...education should strive to foster, not knowledge or true belief, but rather the skills, abilities and dispositions constitutive of – and so belief generated and sustained by – critical thinking. (p. 3)

Whether these tensions merely divide and entrench or whether they lead to reasoned debate and sensible direction can only be judged when the changes which have been brought about are fully visible and understood. While both views may be supported or argued as ideal, other paths to knowledge and knowing seem to have emerged that render these positions somewhat moot.

### **Shift Happens**

Occurrence of change in knowledge, knowing and thinking are captured by the basis of Thomas Kuhn's (PP12) notion of paradigmatic shift. In education, the practical delivery, acceptance and usefulness of teaching and learning have been challenged and changed by the combined forces of Information and Communications Technology, Spiralling Costs in Education, Global Market Competition and what is called the post-modern condition. Societies and individuals undergo the consequences of change as the transition from industrial to post-industrial society affects individual knowledge and knowing in intellectual, physical, emotional and spiritual matters.

The mobility of shift causes cross-pollination ((See Figure 4. - PP13) of the principles and practices of knowledge and knowing across academic disciplines and ways of thinking. Knowledge and ways of knowing seldom remain confined within disciplines. Kuhn noted that much of paradigmatic shift begins from outside sources. Physics sets the benchmark for good science and its principles are evident in the practices and metaphors that guided psychology,

which in turn guide educational practice. An overall orientation characterises the rationale for knowledge and knowing. By way of illustration, the ideas and roles of Isaac Newton in physics, Rene Descartes in psychology, and the church and state in education arose from an orientation of mystical realism and curiosity about identifying important issues in the life and existence. Those views and paradigms shifted in turn through the ideas of Albert Einstein, Sigmund Freud and John Dewey as the 19th century gave way to 20th century constructivism. Modernist understandings now give way to what is called postmodernism and the ideas of Stephen Hawking, George Kelly, social control of education and a more holistic orientation.



**Paradigmatic Cross Pollination**

<u>Science</u>	<u>Psychology</u>	<u>Education</u>	<u>Orientation</u>
Newton	Descartes	Church/State	Mystical Realism
Einstein	Freud	Dewey	Constructivism
Hawking	G. A. Kelly	Society	Holism

Figure 4. Paradigmatic Cross-Pollination

Were the pattern to hold, educators might develop more familiarity with science, physics and psychology in order to anticipate twists and turns in orientation. However, the upcoming battleground seems to have different players. (See Figure 5. - PP14) On one side and the possible extension of the previous framework might be called Environmental Postmodernism with Rachel Carson's conservation and protection awareness (see *Silent Spring*, 1966), embracing durable Aboriginal orientations to understanding humans, and the self-directed learner that ICT has spawned. Ironically, buried within all of this is somewhat of a social return to the Mystical Realism that began it all replete with multiple virtual realities and the shock and awe of the

uncritical *more* demanded by consumers. The grease or grit in this movement might be characterised as Corporate Realism with science defined by the likes of Bill Gates, psychology as practiced by Dr Phil or Oprah and knowledge and knowing determined uncritically by what is available on the Internet... all with the goal of increased consumerism.



<b>Grease or Grit in the Gears of Knowledge and Knowing?</b>			
<b>Environmental Postmodernism</b>			
<u>Science</u>	<u>Psychology</u>	<u>Education</u>	<u>Orientation</u>
Carson	Aboriginal	Self	Mystical Realism
<b>Corporate Realism</b>			
<u>Science</u>	<u>Psychology</u>	<u>Education</u>	<u>Orientation</u>
Bill Gates	Dr Phil/Oprah	Internet	Consumerism

Figure 5. Grease or grit in the gears of knowledge

Consumerist epistemology is utilitarian in that it transcends the history and logic of knowing into the here and now “So What?” realm. Immediacy of use and the practicality of instant information gratification have substituted “knowing of” for “knowing”. Such ways of knowing are vicarious and virtual alternatives prizing breath of knowledge over depth. In practice, this way of knowing may be likened to reading a book’s Table of Contents and inferring actual content, or students who rely on web-based instructor notes instead of attending classes. A *knowing-about* epistemology carries a less critical and grounded filter than a *knowing* epistemology crying out for the need of what (PP15) Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner (1969) called “critical, shockproof crap-detectors”. The following section deals with aspects of education currently under change which have received little critical attention for epistemological consequences. While not discussed in depth in this paper, a basis for comparison is provided.

While a discussion of knowledge and knowing may take many forms, five aspects capture its essence for the purposes of discussing education: Principles, Practices, People, Privileges and Prospects (PP16). The first four aspects are illustrated in point form from a Then and Now perspective for contrast indicating shifts, followed by likely Prospects or outcomes. Figure 1. provides examples and is not intended to be inclusive or exclusive to any particular end except illustration of shift. The Prospects section leads, as constructivists would say – to anticipations about what will happen next.

## Principles (PP17)

### Then

Knowledge for the sake of knowing and discovery  
University stability through public or private funding as part of charter  
Academic freedom and tenure ensured  
Scholarly activities defined by research and writing  
Scholarly value demonstrated by progress through ranks and peer review

### Now

Knowledge is flow-through and product-oriented  
Funding shortfalls and accountability measures  
Increased use of limited term faculty  
Scholarly activities defined by number and value of grants  
Scholarly value determined by fundable or patent-able research

## Practices (PP18)

### Then

Focus on development of learning and thinking skills  
Discipline-based principles of practice  
Skill set requiring depth of knowledge  
Primary delivery mode face to face  
Student attraction by reputation and proximity

### Now

Focus on performance with criterion-based norms  
Administration-based principles of practice  
Skill set requiring breadth of knowledge  
Multiple hybridised delivery methods  
Student attraction by recruitment and niche marketing

## People (PP19)

### Then

Undergraduate gender ratios equal in 1985  
Homogeneous student body  
Age normally distributed across faculty  
Administration by academics  
Faculty Associations  
Fiscal and academic policy independence

### Now

2007 - 72% female -increased through all disciplines  
Cultural diversity  
Age distribution skewed by Baby Boomers  
Administration by professionals  
Collective bargaining and unions  
Corporate partnerships

## Privilege (PP20)

### Then

Population and market growth – more jobs than grads  
Gateway to professions and vocations  
Member of intelligentsia

### Now

Population- market diversification: niche finding & self marketing  
Gateway to careers and increased consumption  
Member of consumer-ocracy

## Prospects (PP21)

Institutional corporatisation in operating principles  
Public private partnerships  
International standardisation and competition  
Market-based programme development with diversified and flexible modes of delivery and evaluation  
Adjustments in expectations and demonstration of competencies and achievements  
Increased direct and indirect costs through GATS  
Continuous and continuous learning and re-certification  
Flowing reconstructions of truth, knowledge and knowing

The Prospects section begs the “What’s Next” question and is in part dependent in unknown ways on past events and derived meanings. George Kelly (1955) offered hopefulness in his claim that no one should be victimised by her or his biography and that while past events cannot be changed the meanings derived from them can. Such is also true for societies and institutions. Hopefulness characterises educational and learning pursuits. Hopefulness, as a companion to knowledge and vision, mixes real and ideal in proportions related to individual or social aspirations.

### Visions - Deconstruction (PP22)

Visions, dreams, goals and idealisations whether about life, curriculum, administrative structure, or the brand of knowledge offered use facts, information, opinion and infrastructure (real and virtual) for sound planning and increased likelihood of reaching fruition. Several perspectives and areas of information provide necessary questions which in turn provide context affording anticipation. Deconstruction of this process is illustrated in Figure 5..

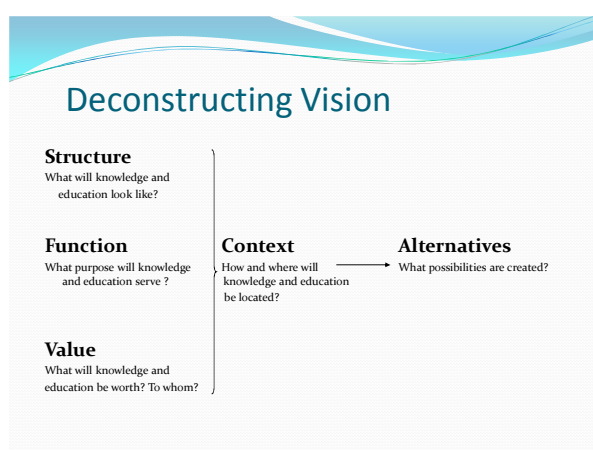


Figure 5. Deconstructing Vision

The first concern with appearance or structuralist perspective is addressed by asking “What will knowledge and education look like?” Second, a functionalist perspective asks the question

“What purpose will knowledge and education serve?” followed by a value-based perspective asking the question “What will knowledge and education be worth and to whom?” Data, information and opinions derived from these three perspectives leads to a question of outcome or context asking “How and where will knowledge and education be located?” Juxtaposing these perspectives in context leads to alternatives and a bridging question of “What possibilities are created?” As information available indicates shift has already happened and alternative practices are already at play (PP23) including:

- More rapid, visible and diverse sources of knowledge leading to market and practice-based paradigmatic shifts
- Ripple shifts in the worth and learning consequences of personal knowledge in a social consumption paradigm
- Preference for pre-competent individual critical thought about truth, knowledge, information and opinion

The pursuit of knowledge for the sake of knowing has largely gone out of fashion. From an organisational perspective, fiscal orientation towards fundable or patent-able product-oriented research seems to have spawned a competitive, quick and dirty approach to teaching and learning as the primary dissemination modes of knowledge without social conscience or responsibility for consequence. This shift in ethos comes about as institutions find themselves in a competitive local – global marketplace where fiscal restraints have seen less direct government support with increasing private sector concerns over and interest in growth and the commodification of intellectual capital. Conspicuous consumption of educational services has not escaped the notice of business and industry as the inclusion of higher education as an aspect of the current round of talks by the World Trade Organisations GATS negotiations indicate.

A shifting ethos has also crept into the academy as collective bargaining and employment activism has overtaken past negotiations of the terms and conditions of work. Shifts in role, image and status combined with shifts in professorial demographics have met changes in mediums of instruction and epistemological re-visioning. Shifts in teaching, learning and evaluation seem more of a response to KPI's than the anticipation of a knowledge-based and knowing society. As economic forces embrace education *what* is known or at least accessible will outstrip the importance of *how* giving rise to an uncritical epistemological appreciation of information tempered only by transitory utilitarianism and the generic university. (Figure 6. - PP24)

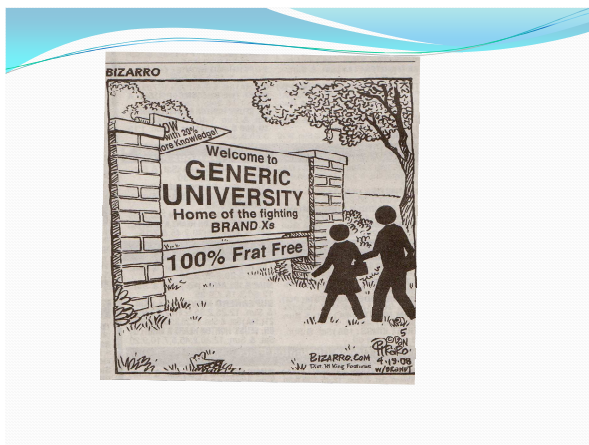


Figure 6. Generic University

The legend of Pandora's Box tells how whimsical curiosity caused a host of troubles to be set loose. The less-remembered part of the story tells of how Hope was all that remained in the box after all else was released. Hope and its companion hopefulness characterize the quest of humans for species survival and a striving to further the grasp on individual and group purpose, meaning and knowing. Hope and hopefulness are cornerstones in many social and belief systems that cause advocates and acolytes to do great works of good and evil in the interest of betterment and movement towards core ideals, or at least interpretations of idealizations. Betterment of

humanity is uneasily defined and actualized through conflict, consensus and sometimes coercion stemming from shared individual and group vision.

Hope is expressed through the transmission of knowledge and meaning, and provides the *raison d'être* for education systems in general, reaching the height of hopefulness in formal tertiary or higher education. This hopefulness is acknowledged through explicit (i.e., conferring of degrees, rights and privileges) and implicit (i.e., social perceptions of expertise and authority) ways. The foundations of hope and hopefulness are actualized in a variety of ways as numerable and diverse as humans themselves<sup>5</sup>. With successive generations that which is hoped for has had *form* – symbolic or real representations; *expression* – activities based on level of need or investment; and *consequence* – increased chance for survival of that hope itself and those who share it. An historical perspective of recent humanity could support arguments that the vagaries and affordances of what we have come to know as post-modernism represent the chaotic complexity of consequences accrued since the industrial revolution.

The uneven transition from agrarian aboriginal tribalism to post-industrial societies exponentially shuffled possibilities for surviving and thriving. Agrarian societies have all but disappeared as corporate feudalism combines with consumerism and fickle economics to serve increased demand and divergent need in a near hunter-gatherer metaphor concerning knowledge acquisition *versus* knowledge construction. Aboriginal peoples and their understandings, once considered savage and primitive and early casualties of technology, are increasingly

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<sup>5</sup> In *The Nature of Hope and its Significance for Education*, David Halpin offers an analysis of the nature of hope and its significance for and relation to education by distinguishing absolute and ultimate hope. Absolute hope is an orientation of spirit without conditions or limits on potential without goal, and ultimate hope is directed and involves naming and fighting for improvement for self, others and society. Ultimate hope, despite efforts to undermine it prompted by despair, relativism, cynicism and fatalism, is a crucial aspect of the educational process while absolute hope, along with enduring love of teaching acts as an important personal resource in managing the special demands of teaching. (*British Journal of Educational Studies*, Volume 49, Number 4, December 2001, pp. 392-410(19) London: Blackwell Publishing)

acknowledged for wisdom in stewardship and harmonious coexistence with the environment and all it contains. Tribalism derives from affiliation, identity and culture and defines society for individuals and groups. The prime directive for any tribal grouping is survival. Through the *Ubuntu* ethics of “all share”, groups may become established and grow... or not. Such wisdom is evident in a Medicine Wheel depiction of how visions turn into action. (Figure 7. - PP25)

Moving from vision to action requires the meaningful building of knowledge and relationships otherwise the substantive basis for moving forward is built on an unreliable foundation.

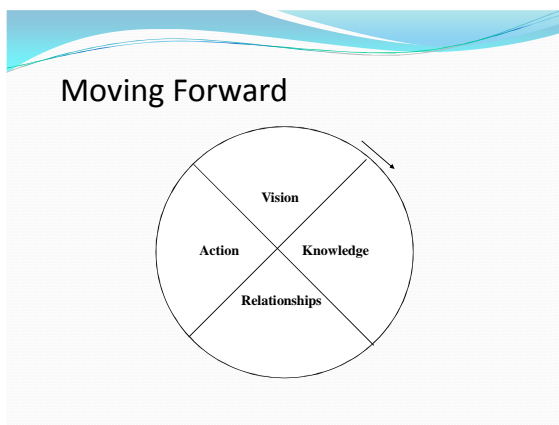


Figure 7. Moving Forward

Failure to adapt to change in ways that anticipate circumstances results in extinction of species and organizations. By *right* or *might* however the footprints of successive conquerors and conquered in such domains as geographic locations, politics, science and religion are steeped in penultimate confounds, coercions and conflicts between and among stakeholders; a dynamic which is sometimes called progress. As successful adaptations in Darwin’s model were biological responses to selection processes determined by competition and availability of niche, successful tribal adaptations for humans or organizations often create their own niche through innovation, enterprise, force or guile.

Teaching and learning are important aspects of hope and adaptation and occur in many ways. Informal teaching and learning are embedded in all interactions in ways that facilitate interest, opportunity, challenge or upset. Mores and folkways of cultures provide (im)permeable boundaries of possible thoughts and actions. The more inclusive a culture, the more permeable are its boundaries for moving beyond stasis. Cultures are social constructions of their members, and because cultures are made up of individuals, impermeable constructions of personal reality, according to Kelly (1955) leads to a “hardening of the categories”, reduced anticipatory prowess and reduced usefulness of those constructs. Adaptive permeability would seem to be a condition for tribes or social groupings to move upwards in a Maslovian type of hierarchy while impermeability seems a sure path to extinction.

Relationships exist between higher levels of hopefulness and the establishment of successively higher levels of education. As societies mature, print and cultural literacy define communication needs and possibilities between and among members. Any nation with an established system of education knows the origins of that system and works to continue the cycle of social reproduction. Hegemony occurs through the reflection of local needs, concerns and ownership against the backdrop of awareness and emancipation<sup>6</sup>. Fledgling systems, i.e., those from economically developing countries, often derive the principles of what it means to be well-educated from elsewhere and elsewhen. Formal teaching and learning, defined as education, is a hopeful expression of social reproduction and cultural production brought on by a tribal

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<sup>6</sup> In *Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy and Civic Courage* Paulo Freire (1998) describes his vision of an effective progressive teacher in highly reactionary times by advocating a utopian vision and critique of educational decline at the hands of 'neoliberal pragmatism', info-capitalist agendas for 'globalization', and a fatalistic, uncritical, and unbridled embrace of technology as the basis for future progress. Freire maintains hopefulness by holding on to possible dreams of what education can be: coherent, substantial and grounded in an ethic of human being and becoming. Building on learners' 'epistemological curiosity' through 'methodological rigor' and other necessary aspects of 'professional teacher competence', Freire disapproves of practice that buys into a market-driven ethos and relieves the teacher of responsibility for discussions about freedom and authority, creativity and discipline, curiosity and rigor, and spontaneity and method.

groupings' survival desire. Revised hopefulness derived from responses to change in availability of resources, needs or niche creates confusion in stories and cultural locations. "We're not lost... we're right here. We just don't know where we are in relation to everything else." So goes the punch line of a story about travelers who have strayed from the map.

Such hope as can be mustered focuses on the inexorable nature of shift. By way of example, consumerist epistemology has been greened lately with environmental concerns colouring product and service advertisements. Whether such efforts are a product of fad, fiction or marketing ploy, environmental message, messenger and medium seem affected. Consumers believe in belief in ways similar to teenagers falling in love with love. Educational consumers have been led to believe in education and the cachet of power and prestige it carries for life pursuits. Research and media reports link income to education, which is a fair assumption, but one that may be wrongheaded as a personal or social panacea. Education without learning or underpinnings of critical thought is as hollow as a politician's pre-election promise.

Once educated and included in the degreed community, graduates, especially those who pursue further education, come face to face with what might be called the Oz syndrome. In the film *The Wizard of Oz*, (PP26) Dorothy embarks on a quest to return home and is led to the wisdom and powers held by the wizard. Along the way she picks up travelling companions who are searching for courage, heart and brains. Together they discover that the power and knowledge held by the wizard are illusions as home, courage, heart and brains exist in the searchers already and only want acknowledgement. (PP27) Disappointment in the wizard's façade fades as the searchers' quest is realised and product triumphs over process. (PP28) The learning part of the quest seems secondary to outcome.

Where then is hope and hopefulness? As with the story of Pandora's Box, hope remains. (PP29) We can be hopeful because shift happens, because the realisations of accumulated wisdom, whether on the trip to Oz or the convocation ceremony, lay like hidden treasures waiting for discovery. As educators we can only hope that critical epistemology can distinguish between information and knowledge in ways that provide further destinations once Oz has been encountered.

A new hallmark for Oz survivors (Figure 8. - PP30) might be contained in a painting by John Langdon, whose work was featured in the ambigrams in the book *Angels and demons* by Dan Brown. This graphic epitomises the Maori word "Ako" which means both teaching and learning. One cannot exist without the other and both activities mean the same things. Hopefulness lies in social, cultural literacy and the need to learn, know and teach.

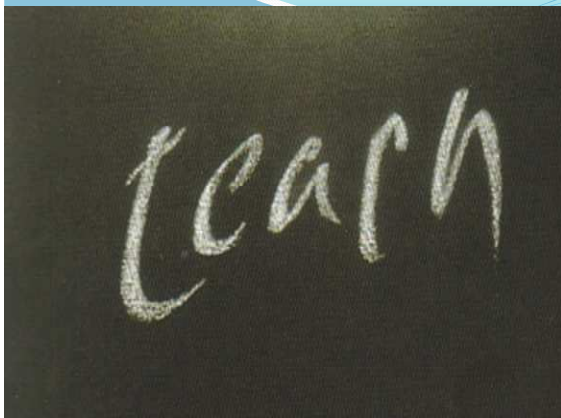


Figure 8. Teach/Learn

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