ENGAGING STUDENTS IN THE CLASSROOM: 'HOW CAN I KNOW WHAT I THINK UNTIL I SEE WHAT I DRAW?'*

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JUMPING IN...

- Critical thinking + complex reasoning productivity" (Arum & Roksa, 2011: 2) - "effective democratic citizenship and economic
- BUT, students not developing critical thinking/complex reason
- Vibrant democracy, engaged citizenry?
- Universities mass-producing status quo automatons?





WHERE WE COME FROM...

Business college

Do not subscribe to "managerialist management" (Grey & Mitev, 2003)

- Management morally and politically neutral set of technique Management education – enhancing organisational performan
- and effectiveness of managers



- Developing students as "critical beings" (Barnett, 1997) "capable of governing rather than simply being governed" (Giroux, 1997: 259)
- Develop disciplinary competence; master critical self-reflection; critical action > Contest disciplinary boundaries
 - Expose students to range of understandings → greater breadth of reflection
- Raise issues in probelamtising way
 Accept differences, tease through interests and agendas
- → Become active producers of knowledge
 Displace faculty as the "expert in knowing" (Raab, 2003) from "sage on stage" to "guide on side
 - + Position faculty and students on same epistemologic ground shared journey where everything is contestable
- Students assume responsibility for own learning unfolding process of inquiry
- How can spaces be created in the classroom that prompt students to:
 - 1) examine assumptions:
 - identify power relationships; and
 - participate in collaborative efforts with other students to critically reflect on embedded relationship



ENTER FREEHAND DRAWING...

- Practice in critical self-reflection to develop capacity to recognise own assumptive frameworks
 - Facilitate ability to "see" how we understand a topic and recognise multiple ways of understanding
 Question and challenge theories, orthodoxies and truths considered common
 - → Ponder other possibilities
- Facilitate building a multi-perspective take on the political, while encouraging maintenance of a skeptical, inquiring attitude
- Meet calls for "developing complicated understanding" and creating "richer conceptualizations" to question
- "the one true way" (Bartunek et al, 1983; Dehler et al, 2004; Stepanovich, 2009) Collaborative inquiry "doing research *with* people, rather than *on* them" (Bray et al, 2000: 7)
 - + Constructs shared sense of experience
 - Freedom to express in non-traditional manner
- Drawings rich with content Enjoyable, simple, yet deceptively revealing
- > Teaching part of the research process (Dehler et al, 2004) Students gathering and critically interrogating data
 - + Learning experience an unfolding collaborative process of inquiry



- First class, informed students engaging in drawing exercise
 Provided each student with an A4 sheet and re-printed instructions
 - "Through a drawing answer the following question: What is Irish Politics?
 - + "Now, in your own words, describe/explain what you have drawn and the second of the
- Use pens, pencils, markers or whatever available
- Answered questions, but did not prescribe
- Engage in drawing (10 15 mins)
- Describe/explain what had drawn (10 mins)
 Divide students into groups of 5 for discussion (25 mins)
 - Look at drawings and note what struck them
 Discuss each drawing in turn

 - + Rapporteur recorded discussion for feedback to class
- Collected drawings for review before next class
- Second class, facilitated debrief of class
 Rapporteur accounts noted on flipchart sheets
- Opened floor to reflection/discussion, asking what the exercise told us about perspectives and assumptions relating to Irish politics, about what we pay attention to and what we ignore, what we take for granted and do not question, etc.

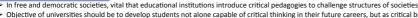
 Beginning process of engaging in critical self-reflection, a learning space where we were all on the
- same epistemologic ground





WHAT EMERGED...

- Different, negative, perspectives on politics
- Sense of powerlessness and inaction, which seemed to reflect mood of time
 - + Protest largely absent
 - + People resigned to status quo
 - ised questions about
 - Conservatism of Irish society
 - Elitism and cronyism in upper echelons of society In whose interest democracy functions



- > Objective of universities should be to develop students not alone capable of critical thinking in their future careers, but as critical beings capable of self-reflection and willing to question widely held beliefs
- > Challenge ourselves as academics to reflect on our roles in the power structures in society, how we reproduce these, and, along with our students, contest dominant social structures
- Ultimate objective of critical pedagogies to create "critical beings"