From Knowing to Not Knowing: An UnWorkshop on the Crucial Shift that Unleashes Real Learning

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Spend a few minutes writing in your journal or jotting reflections on a piece of paper.

What’s different, special, challenging, or otherwise interesting about teaching & learning at your school?
Debrief
Roadmap

- Larger program of the work
- Speech acts: Assertions vs. Assessments.
- Assertions-Assessments in stories.
- Thinking path analysis for story understanding & reframing.
- Thinking path analysis of imposter syndrome story.
- How imposter syndrome limits faculty authenticity and student engagement.
- The power of not knowing.
- Ways to make it safe to not know.
My intention, attachments & beliefs:

- **A central story.** I believe that there is central story that limits learning.
- **Interactive experiences, reflections, and practice steps.** We do this work with interactive experiences and practical steps.
- **No one right way.** I do believe this is the one right way to approach these concerns.
- **Power available to you now.** Using these ideas can make the power of not knowing available to you immediately.
Larger program of the work
5 Shifts in Polytechnic Education
**Shift** as small change in practice that gives great power in making change.
Practitioner’s way of knowing as ..

1. Technical rationality
2. Conversation-in-action
5 Shifts

1. Yogi-Schoen shift (Apply theory → CIA)
2. Brain-on-a-stick shift (Feelings allowed)
3. Wittgenstein’s shift (Language is generative action).
4. Sarasvathy’s shift (Planning to little bets)
5. The shift shift (Polarities are everywhere)
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• Ways to make it safe to not know.
Language Central to Tech!

- Technologists do math occasionally.
- Technologists design occasionally.
- Technologists build or construct (themselves) very rarely.
- **Technologists use language constantly** (in person, on paper, on computer or other electronic device).
- Takes many forms & purposes.
- Familiar with language as describing.
- Focus on language in creation and action.

John R. Searle (b. 1932)
Conventional vs. New View

Conventional
• We are thinking beings.
• Language separate tool we use from time to time.
• Language is descriptive and large passive.
• Language is merely an extension of thought.

New View
• We are linguistic beings.
• We are in language all the time.
• Language is generative & creative (not merely passive & descriptive).
• Language is action. To speak is to act.
Assertions versus Assessments

• **Assertions** committed to the truth.
• **Assessments** committed to expressing an opinion.

• Contrast
  – It’s 60 degrees C outside (assertion).
  – It’s very hot (assessment).
  – If in doubt, it’s probably an assessment.
Speech Acts in Practice

• 5 main speech acts:
  – **Assertions**: commit to truth
  – **Assessments**: give opinion
  – **Requests**: ask or direct to do
  – **Commitments**: commit or promise to do
  – **Declarations**: cause to exist

• Consider confusion of assertions and assessments.
Many academics suffer from imposter syndrome.
Outline of Imposter Syndrome Story

Imposter Syndrome Story

• I am an expert.
• Experts should know everything about their fields & a lot of other stuff, too.
• I don’t know everything, not nearly enough.
• I am an imposter.
• I am unworthy of being called an expert.
• I fear being discovered for the phony I am.
The Thinking Path

- Thought
- Action
- Feeling
- Result

Alexander Caillet
**Tablewise:** From given thoughts (story), map out feelings, actions & results that might follow from these stories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thoughts</th>
<th>Feelings</th>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Results</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am an expert</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experts know everything about</td>
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<td>their fields &amp; a lot of other</td>
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<td>stuff, too</td>
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<td>I don't know enough</td>
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<td>I am an imposter</td>
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<td>I am unworthy of being</td>
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<td>called an expert</td>
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<td>The fact that I am unworthy</td>
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<td>might be discovered by my</td>
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<td>colleagues or supervisor</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Debrief
Tablewise: In what ways can we change assessments of the imposter story to allow for more peaceful feelings, actions, and results.
Debrief
4 Personal Practices to Combat Imposters Syndrome

• **I don’t know quota:** Say “I don’t know” at least 3 times a day.

• **Answer-to-Ask person Jiu Jitsu:** When asked a question, respond with question: “What do you think?” at least 3 times a day.

• **You are not an idiot check in:** I don’t know and am I being gentle with myself!

• **Kitty-puppy-baby imagery:** As needed.
Debrief
The Power of Not Knowing
Georgetown Leadership Coaching Certificate
Georgetown story
2010-11: 3 pro-bono clients
Stuck
The Morning: 18 March 2011
Love
Breakthrough
Dave’s fundamental dictum of coaching: Not knowing is more helpful to clients than knowing.
Observations: Imposter syndrome arises from need to know. Value of not knowing is rarely explored. Importance in helping another never discussed in standard pedagogy training.
Another way to view: Polarility Management
Polarities as opposites that need other
We encourage you to edit your own map so the language and values work for you.

Action Steps

Life

Get oxygen

Clean out carbon dioxide

Inhale

and

Exhale

Too much carbon dioxide

Too little oxygen

Death

Early Warnings

Polarity Management Associates  www.polaritymanagement.com

*Thanks to John Siefers  **Thanks to The Strategy Academy, Rotterdam, The Netherlands  ***Thanks to Todd Johnson
In breakout, consider one of four polarities:

- Knowing & not knowing.
- Telling (Aristotle) & listening/questioning (Socrates/Plato)
- Teacher-led teaching & student-led learning
- **Moaching Polarity:** Mentoring (sharing knowledge) & coaching (pulling out knowledge within)

**Exercise:** Pick one of the polarities & fill in each of the four quadrants in a blank polarity map with your breakout table.
Polarity Map

Action Steps
How will we gain or maintain the positive results from focusing on this left pole?

Greater Purpose Statement (GPS)* - why balance this polarity?

Values = positive results from focusing on the left pole

Values = positive results from focusing on the right pole

Fears = negative results from over-focusing on the left pole to the neglect of the right pole

Fears = negative results from over-focusing on the right pole to the neglect of the left pole

and

Deeper Fear from lack of balance

Early Warnings***
Measurable indicators (things you can count) that will let you know that you are getting into the downside of this left pole.

Early Warnings
Measurable indicators (things you can count) that will let you know that you are getting into the downside of this right pole.

Action Steps
How will we gain or maintain the positive results from focusing on this right pole?
Debrief
Roomwise: Once it’s safe for staff to not be smarty pants know-it-alls, in what other ways can students be given really authority and responsibility over their own learning? How do we really turn over the keys to the learning car?
Debrief
Reflections / Closing
Spend a few minutes writing in your journal.

*What are your key takeaways action-aways from this workshop?
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