

Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: Developing Different Approaches for Teaching and Evaluating Based on a Constructivist Methodology



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Abstract This chapter discusses whether and how students are prepared to evaluate teaching based on Bloom’s taxonomy of learning outcomes. It shows how this taxonomy can be used to create syllabi and to improve teaching evaluations. Next the chapter discusses different approaches to teaching as well as different approaches for evaluating teaching. It compares the “traditional” way of teaching with a “constructionist” way. It shows consequences for evaluating “teaching”. Ten guiding principles are discussed to support student-oriented design of learning environments. Constructionist learning environment is evaluated against “traditional” ways of teaching with an indication of superiority of a constructionist environment. Finally, opportunities of applying Service Dominant logic lens to teaching and evaluation of teaching are discussed briefly. It is argued that SDL’s abstract language on the one hand can be used to discuss HE as service but that on the other hand this language may be too abstract to help improving teaching, learning or evaluation of teaching.

Keywords Learning and teaching in HE · Constructionist pedagogy · Taxonomy of educational objectives · Course design · Enabling evaluation

1 Introduction

This chapter discusses a different approach to teaching as well as different approaches for evaluating teaching. When we think about higher education or education in general, we have to be aware of several issues having an impact on the educational process. One important question here is, who is part of the process? Here we find two main agents the teacher and the learner. Why are they in the process? They want to reach some learning outcomes or learning goals. They both do it with respect to a specific content in a specific learning/teaching environment.

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2 The Learner and Her Goals

It is obvious that the learner’s goals may be different from the teacher’s learning goals. In any case looking at educational science, we find a taxonomy of all these learning outcomes or learning goals. This taxonomy was originally developed by Bloom and colleagues (1956) and then further developed by Krathwohl (2002). This taxonomy of educational objectives is a hierarchical ordering of skills in different domains whose primary use is to help teachers teach and students learn effectively and efficiently. Bloom’s taxonomy can be understood by exploring its three learning domains—cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. Each of these domains further consists of a hierarchy that denotes different levels of learning.

The fact that each domain is hierarchical means that learners need to move through these domains one step at a time. “...the original Taxonomy represented a cumulative hierarchy; that is, mastery of each simpler category was prerequisite to mastery of the next more complex one (Krathwohl, 2002, pp. 212–213). The revision of the original Taxonomy is a two-dimensional framework: Knowledge and Cognitive Processes. The former most resembles the subcategories of the original Knowledge category. The latter resembles the six categories of the original Taxonomy with the Knowledge category named Remember, the Comprehension category named Understand, Synthesis renamed Create and made the top category, and the remaining categories changed to their verb forms: Apply, Analyze, and Evaluate. They are arranged in a hierarchical structure, but not as rigidly as in the original Taxonomy (Krathwohl, 2002). The taxonomy is summarized in Table 1. I cannot discuss the details of the taxonomy here; however, I use it because it is a common tool in pedagogy and because I found it helpful in organizing and communicating my teaching.

This or similar taxonomies have been introduced during the last decade in many universities following the Bologna process from 1999. I do not go into details here.

It is important to understand that learners cannot proceed to a new level of the process dimension without completing the previous one. If so, how are students

Table 1 The revised taxonomy. Objective categories in the cognitive area

The knowledge levels	1. Remember	2. Understand	3. Apply	4. Analyze	5. Evaluate	6. Create
A. Factual knowledge	Objective 1					
B. Conceptual knowledge		Objective 2				
C. Procedural knowledge					Objective 3	
D. Meta-cognitive knowledge						

Source Based on Krathwohl (2002), p. 217

prepared to evaluate? How are they prepared to evaluate the teaching process with respect to the factual, conceptual, procedural, and metacognitive knowledge level? The usual answer is they are not prepared. At least they are not formally prepared during the educational process.

As an example, see “Best Practices and Sample Questions for Course Evaluation Surveys at University of Wisconsin–Madison the office of the provost (<https://assessment.provost.wisc.edu/best-practices-and-sample-questions-for-course-evaluation-surveys/>): “The instructor was well prepared for class”. When is an instructor well prepared for class? How can a student identify whether the instructor is well prepared? What is a good preparation for class? Did the students have an opportunity to observe the instructor when she prepared for class? How then can students assess the instructor’s preparation? My answer is: they can’t. Although, they give their answers based on their impressions, perceptions, and limited knowledge (understanding, application etc.) about the instructor’s preparation. We find similar questions in many metrics and evaluation forms.

An important lesson is: please use questions that students can genuinely understand and judge. These are usually student-centered question like “I did learn a lot by instructor A.” However even this student-centered question is a bit fuzzy as it leaves open what “a lot” is. Furthermore, it is not clear whether the answer has something to do with the specific instructor or much more with the learning capabilities of the specific student. Here one needs to know more about the learners and instructor combined in the specific learning-teaching situation.

The taxonomy is a helpful tool to organize learning goals and outcomes. It also can be used to communicate these goals and outcomes to or with the students. That enables both sides to see how their learning goals and outcome are congruent or if they differ. The teacher’s or syllabus’ learning goals and outcomes are not necessarily the same as those of the students. Why not starting a course with this discussion? Since the students learn for their lives, they should probably have an influence on the learning goals and outcomes.

This indicates already that there is an overlap between teaching and learning as well as between learning and teaching. We probably may agree that there is no teaching without “students”. However, this is not necessarily the case. One can imagine delivering a lecture in front of a camera (only) and then putting it online. There are not necessarily students. To go a step further we may agree that there is no teaching without learning. However, we find a lot of “exceptions” where there is “teaching” without learning. This depends also on what we understand/define as learning. I do not want to go into a terminological debate about these terms; my main point is that there is no (“real” or “good”) teaching without learning. In this sense, teaching means to support learning. Those who teach and those who learn do not necessarily need to be different persons. In the vein of Richard Feynman’s statement: “If you want to master something, teach it. Teaching is a powerful tool for learning,” we can say “if you want to learn something teach it”. We all have our experiences. Teachers learn while teaching. As soon as it comes to different persons teaching is in one place and learning is in another place. If we agree that teaching should support learning of others why should learners support learning goals and outcomes which

are not their own? It leads us to the broader question: who should govern the learning process?

In classical business education the learning process is very often governed by teachers and their syllabi. This approach is greatly challenged by e.g. entrepreneurship education and others. "The question for educators faced with ensuring students mastery is not, "What am I going to teach today?" but "What am I going to have my students do today?" (Fiet, 2001, p. 102). The reasoning is also mentioned: "For students to master a competency in the classroom, they must be fully engaged in activities that will teach it to them." (Fiet, 2001, p. 107). This does not mean to hand over the steering-wheel totally to the student, it only means that the teacher is accepted by the students because "..., the most effective method is to establish a student-approved system for class meetings that require students to practice specific skills until they become competencies" (Fiet, 2001, p. 101). Going further in the students' direction it was argued by Krueger and Brazeal (1994) as well as by Kourilsky and Walstad (1998), that if education is constructed in a learning-oriented way instead of teaching oriented way, it would promote desired characteristics like independent thinking, self-motivation and others. This does not necessarily mean that the students govern the teaching process. The teacher could also govern it, according to the students learning progress, but 'as educators move away from tests in favor of self-directed "project" centered educational techniques ..., it makes sense to create a class structure that facilitates this form of learning'. (Solomon et al., 2002) In this way, teachers would put students into the 'driver's seat' and let them play a more self-governed role. The more the students take over a self-governing role the more it changes the role of the teacher. The teacher will become the 'assistant' or coach of the student in the learning process whereas the student will become an active producer of knowledge and skills while governing the learning process.

In the classical business education, the teaching process is mainly transferring knowledge from teacher to students. Students should gather a broad and deep base of knowledge that they then can apply to their work. If business schools want to educate responsible managers and executives, students must build a sense of community and learning to live as a part of a community that is disperse, asynchronous and diverse. A way to support these learning goals is to start early but carefully during the learning process by exposing the students to an uncertain and unstructured learning environment. For example, in one of our courses (a major in Marketing for MBA students) entitled 'Visions for our city' the students came up with their own vision 'our city inspires'. They organized and structured their project and learned what was necessary to govern the project.

They convinced our city's mayor to become the project's patron. They recruited their own sponsors to supply office equipment and PCs and began an advertising campaign. They even persuaded BMW to provide a Mini for them for the project. The course finished in February 2005 but informal it was still running in fall 2005. Whenever the students asked for support, we supported them, but they had to ask first. We never supported them when it was not really needed. At the beginning they had a lot of questions, but we never gave them an answer. We only opened opportunities to figure out an answer that then became their own answer and with that their own

conviction. In the feedback sessions students pointed out that they learned much more compared to classical courses. They were more involved and enthusiastic and worked much harder because it was their own project driven by their own goals that they worked toward in their own way. The support we gave had therefore a different quality.

This all is based on the simple insight that learning cannot be delegated to someone else. Like eating and drinking, it has to be done by yourself. Hence leaning has to be the starting point for teaching and its evaluation.

3 The Background

At the end of the last century, I asked myself how to become a good teacher? I first need to know (much) more about learning, therefore, I dived into the constructive pedagogic literature starting with Piaget, the father of constructive pedagogy (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969), traveling to those countries that had best PISA-Results to understand what they do differently. We then developed this approach for being applicable to adult students also using insights from neuroscience studies on learning (Löbner, 2006). Based on that we designed an entrepreneurship education program in 2006. Finally, we evaluated this program; results (see Löbner et al., 2021). We have also applied the guidelines (Löbner, 2006) to marketing education.

With the risk of oversimplification, we can contrast two approaches in teaching. The first is what I call the transmission approach. The basic assumption here is that knowledge can be transferred from a well-informed instructor or teacher to a student. With this assumption hand in hand goes to the assumption that if the teacher or instructor teaches well enough, she can transfer or transmit her knowledge to the students. The second approach is based on the constructivist pedagogy (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969). Table 2 summarizes both approaches. For details see Löbner (2006).

I am not saying that all universities are doing teaching fully based on the transmission approach. However, it seems to be the main paradigm for teaching in many universities. This holds particularly for social science and business. It is quite different if it comes to higher education in sports or music and probably architecture is somewhere in the middle. If we look at a piano player or at a sportsman, we would never expect them to be a good piano player or good sportsman if they would only read books and, maybe, give some presentations on playing piano or exercising sports. What we expect them to do is practicing and reflecting. During the reflection process the teacher comes into play and can play an important role in supporting the student's learning process.

For example, in sports, No one would expect you to become a good athlete just by reading smart books. Everyone knows that an athlete needs to train hard and practice smart to become a top athlete. To do this, she generally has a trainer. However, this trainer differs significantly from a university lecturer in a social sciences or humanities. While the lecturer has to master the material much better than the students do, this is not necessary for a good trainer. On the contrary, many coaches are nowhere

Table 2 Comparison of constructivist approach and transmission approach

	Constructivist approach	Transmission approach
Teaching	Supporting learning	Transferring knowledge
Goal of education	Autonomy, the ability of self-governing	Broad knowledge
Role of learner	Active producer	Passive consumer
Role of teacher	Assistant of learner	Transmitter of content
Inducement for getting information	Student's demand	Curriculum
Who is governing the learning process	Student	Teacher
Knowledge	The end of a constructive process	Transferable good
Information	Process	Good
Task of tests	Test the teacher	Test the learner
Sources of information	All sources available	Teacher; textbooks
Interaction between	Students	Teacher, student
Activities	Doing, thinking, talking	Listening, reading, memorizing

Source Based on Löbler (2006), p. 29

near as good as the top athletes they coach (I am well aware that there are exceptions here too). But what does the coach do if he is no better than his athlete? Well, he helps the athlete to get better. The trainer does this by carefully observing the athlete, giving him appropriate exercises, and working with him to think about how the athlete can become even better. The doer is essentially always the athlete and not the trainer, rather the trainer is an adviser to the doer. Therefore, the athlete gets the skills by practicing what he wants to be able to do. He practices it and the trainer accompanies and advises him.

Another similar example is in music, where nobody expects a top musical performance without practice. On the contrary, anyone who has learned an instrument and has dealt with etudes and the like knows that the vernacular is right when it says: "Practice makes perfect".

Imagine a top athlete or musician being trained the same way most business schools claim to educate future managers and executives. First of all, intelligent lectures would be provided so that the musician or athlete would have the necessary background information for his or her discipline and specialization. Then bibliographical lists would be distributed to the top athletes and musicians so that they can deepen and broaden their knowledge, because it is undisputed that deep and broad

knowledge helps. One would also be able to explain why this reading is important to become a top athlete or a musician, because how can you do something without having the necessary knowledge? In the logical continuation of this approach, one would then also write exams to check whether the musician or top athlete has really acquired and understood the knowledge that he needs to become a top athlete or musician. Finally, students would be asked to complete term papers to contrast and discuss different approaches that the literature has to offer. Neither the musician nor the athlete has seen a piece of sports equipment or a musical instrument. Of course, progressive business schools will offer group work and ask students to make presentations of what they have learned. The learners will then use slides to show and explain how the sport is practiced or how the musical instrument is played. The sports learners will be able to give excellent lectures on the laws of levers, muscle groups, speed and much more, as can music learners on music history, the Pythagorean comma, well-tempered moods and much more. However, one thing is clear: neither the person interested becomes an athlete, nor does the music-interested person become a musician. That is why students at business schools are not educated to become businesspeople, managers, or executives. They learn to talk, think and to discuss about business, managers, and executive. Those who learn in this way know a lot, but what skills (abilities to do something not just to know it) do they really have?

4 The Outcome

Based on all these insights we designed courses in entrepreneurship and market research based on a constructivist approach. We first developed 10 guiding principles for designing such courses (Löbler, 2006).

Principle 1: *As a general direction it is useful to have an image of a piano tutor or a driving instructor rather than that of a lecturer. Help the student to develop their abilities into competencies.*

As already said, we would never expect a piano player or driver to be competent just through reading books and making presentations. We would expect them to practice and to reflect. In the constructivist perspective experience plays an important role. So, we think that undergoing an activity is a good starting point for creating experience and a basis for reflection. We found, that starting with an activity/experience helps students to ask good questions. If these questions are discussed in an open discourse, the students can reflect on their experience and create new knowledge. During the reflection process the teacher can play an important role in supporting the student's learning process. During that process teachers should not give answers but they should address questions so that students can create answers. Students not only learn to create answers they also learn to defend their answers and to argue for them. Creating answers will support ownership of thoughts and development of own concepts, more than accepting the answer the teacher has given. So putting the students in the driver's seat typically creates a self-governed learning process. The

more passive the role of the teacher is, during the experiential phase, the more the students can ‘assemble and disassemble’ and develop own ideas and concepts.

Principle 2: Let students develop their own learning goals. Give them support.

A self-governed learning process also covers the development of learning goals. The student will not do it as an isolated individual but based on their experience and relationships with others.

If the student develops their own learning goals, we found that they are more motivated, more interested and feel more responsible for reaching their own goal.

Often students at first have some difficulties in defining their learning goals because they are not used to doing that. Some students however have probably an idea what they really want to do after finishing university. For example, one student of mine said at the beginning of an MBA marketing courses: I want to become a successful influencer what do you have to offer to support me? That was an excellent question and we could really make an interesting case out of it to be developed with other students. Through that process the students, working in that group, learned a lot about marketing and social media.

Principle 3: Derive the content to be covered from the problems and learning goals identified by the students.

If the content is offered ‘on demand’, the students are more interested in it than if they had to read it on the syllabus. If the students demand content, it is their content and not the teacher’s content.

Principle 4: Do not assess students in the classical way.

If one thinks about the relationship between an athlete and their trainer, nobody expects the trainer to conduct an examination for his protégé. They both prepare the athlete for a real competition that serves as a test. Therefore, the athlete and the trainer can fight together against the competition. The athlete’s point of view is never one of fighting against the trainer’s test. If teachers want to become their students’ coach, they should have the same ‘foe image’ and fight the same challenge. If the student gets the impression that they are preparing for a test in which they fight ‘against’ the teacher’s knowledge, it dilutes the relationship between the teacher as a coach and the student. In that sense it is better to set up a competition with clear rules between the students as an external evaluation an “external assessment” so to say.

Principle 5: Design activities that require interaction and socio-cognitive conflict.

When we usually conduct group work, we want the students to work cooperatively and harmoniously. If students have to argue their thoughts, ideas and opinions against others, this interaction and talking helps them to get a precise idea of their own thoughts. Socio-cognitive conflict is shown to be important for sharpening thoughts and ideas in explaining and arguing. It is not a conflict between the students but between their opinions and thoughts.

Principle 6: Ensure an open information flow between everybody in the classroom.

Do not control the information flow between students; do not even monitor it. Open access to all kinds of information. Do not restrict it to a special content area. Be aware that student use all sources to get insights if they feel a need.

Principle 7: Information that can be used and combined in different ways encourages students to consider the world of opportunities.

Reframing information can lead to new solutions or new ideas. That is especially helpful if it is taken out of the box that is typically used for specific knowledge.

Principles 6 and 7 should not be a problem nowadays. When we developed the ten principles in 2006 it was a bit different. If there is an open flow of information in the classroom, students can discuss the information to get an individual and mutual understanding.

Principle 8: *Do not show how to solve problems and do not say that an answer is correct or incorrect. Support them to find their answer.*

I am not saying leave the students alone with their problems. However, governing the reflection process with questions will lead the students to their answer. In doing so, they will be able to argue their answer because they have developed it on their own and have not taken it from the teacher. If students realize a problem in their solution, the most important issue is to address the problem from different perspectives. Here the teacher's role is to open ways of 'new' thinking with addressing the problem from different perspectives and to even question the problem as stated by the student.

Principle 9: *Support autonomy. It supports ethical thinking and behavior as well as responsibility.*

First, autonomy is usually understood as a right of an individual or group. According to Piaget understands autonomy as an ability to self-govern (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969).

If we feel self-confident, we think that we do not need moral rules from others because we feel ethically good. If on the other hand we realize we lack self-confidence, we are susceptible for any kind of guidelines. People feel more responsible for what they have created themselves compared to that what they have taken from others. Morally autonomous people can be less manipulated with reward and punishment (Kamii, 2000).

Principle 10: *Have fun in working with the students and light the fire of learning and thinking that is in them.*

In our teaching group these principles we used to design an entrepreneurial program and for marketing courses. This was evaluated the entrepreneurial program from the student's perspective as is shown below.

5 Evaluation

In order to figure out whether a constructivist approach is used to conduct an entrepreneurship program we compared the entrepreneurship course designed by using the 10 principles above with for other teaching methods mainly based on the transmission approach. The other learning environments that students had to evaluate were, lecture, exercise course (doing exercises defined by the teacher), seminar (all students presented a literature-based coursework to the others), lectures by practitioners. The content in all five courses was "Challenges in entrepreneurship particularly the business-plan".

We used the students' experiences they made during the learning process on motivation, enjoyment of learning, engagement, workload, intensity of learning, effectiveness and sustainability. Things they can really judge. The students were asked to evaluate the five different courses according to the above-mentioned criteria using Likert scale that ranks from 1 (excellent) to 6 (very poor). While most of the criteria evaluate the learning process, sustainability goes beyond the learning process, because it can be seen as a learning outcome. This evaluation may be different as time goes by. The first four learning environments are very common in German universities and all students were familiar with all these types of environments. We had to exclude case studies as a learning environment, because not all students were familiar with it. Three months after the end of the course, we sent questionnaires to all students who participated in the entrepreneurship course. Sixty-eight students participated in the program within the last two years. Because of missing data we had 50 fully completed questionnaires for the analysis (Table 3).

We are aware that this is not an evaluation of teaching. It is an evaluation of a whole learning environment with the issues having an impact on learning and education I mentioned at the beginning. The students did not only work harder and more motivated, but they also enjoyed the learning process significantly more compared to classical environments.

The results give strong support to our design of the program comparing the variables concerning the learning process. It also supports the ten general principles used to design the course. Having a superior learning environment does however not necessarily mean a better learning of specific contents here new insights into

Table 3 Means and (Variances) of learning process items

	Constructivist environment course	Lecture	Exercise	Seminar	Practitioners' lecture
Motivation	1.5 (0.6)	3.6** (1.5)	3.1** (0.9)	2.7** (1.0)	2.0** (0.6)
Effectiveness of learning-process	1.8 (0.9)	3.8** (1.5)	2.7** (1.0)	2.4** (0.6)	2.9** (1.4)
Sustainability	1.8 (0.6)	4.2** (1.2)	3.2** (1.4)	2.8** (1.2)	2.8** (1.2)
Enjoyment in learning	1.8 (0.9)	4.1** (1.5)	3.5** (1.6)	3.0** (1.4)	2.4** (1.1)
Intensity of learning	1.7 (0.7)	3.7** (1.5)	2.6** (0.9)	2.4** (0.9)	2.8** (1.0)
Engagement	1.4 (0.3)	4.1** (1.9)	3.0** (1.3)	2.4** (1.1)	3.4** (1.7)
Workload	1.4 (0.7)	4.0** (1.3)	2.9** (0.8)	2.6** (0.9)	3.6** (1.5)

** $p \leq 0.01$, indicating that the particular learning environment is significant different to the constructivist approach. The lower the number the better the evaluation. Source (Löbler et al., 2021)

Table 4 Means and (Variances) of the content-based items

	Constructivist environment course	Lecture	Exercise	Seminar	Practitioners' lecture
Discourse on entrepreneurial behaviour	1.4 (0.45)	4.2** (1.80)	3.7** (1.55)	3.0** (1.28)	2.0** (1.00)
New insights on entrepreneurs	2.0 (0.69)	4.1** (0.96)	3.8** (1.32)	3.0** (1.70)	2.1 (1.08)
New insights on entrepreneurial process	1.9 (1.32)	4.2** (1.58)	3.8** (1.77)	3.0** (1.75)	2.4** (1.42)
New insights into business plans	1.9 (1.08)	3.8** (1.78)	3.3** (1.95)	2.8** (1.97)	2.8** (2.19)

** $p \leq 0.01$, indicating that the particular learning environment is significant different to the constructivist approach. The lower the number the better the evaluation. Source (Löbner et al., 2021)

entrepreneurship particularly business plan. We used four variables shown in Table 4.

By using a constructivist approach to design a student-oriented learning environment and by using student-oriented question to evaluate that design we offered an alternative to mainstream teaching and evaluation. It became clear that teaching is just a small aspect of the whole learning situation and learning environment. The hierarchy of learning outcomes shows that students are not really prepared to evaluate teaching. However, the students' perspective can be an important and informative contribution to improve higher education. Furthermore, I tried to show that the pedagogical knowledge and literature is very helpful to design courses and evaluate them.

I fully agree with the editors "that current methods used by universities to measure teaching quality based on students' evaluation surveys hinder the value co-creation process within the dyad teacher-student. If we accept that value is the leitmotiv of any institution, then we are dealing with a serious problem" (Díaz-Méndez et al., 2017, p. 775). I also agree that student and teacher are in some sense co-producer or to use their terminology co-creators of HE. But are they co-creators of learning? Of course, learning and teaching in higher education goes hand in hand. However often learners do not need teachers to learn. To use the idea of value co-creation in the service ecosystem HE, as Díaz-Méndez and colleagues did, may seem tempting. It is not too difficult for us.

We find living actors, resources and institutions and we are probably right when saying the value is cocreated. Let us now assume we describe HE or a car repair service in the terminology of Service Dominant Logic (SDL) (Vargo & Lusch, 2018). We find living actors, resources and institutions and we are probably right when saying the value is cocreated. However, despite all that we get not many insights about how the people doing that repair service are educated, what they are taught

and what they learn and need to learn and how they learn it to do their job. It does not really help to understand what to improve or how for example medical doctors, car repairing people, etc. learn. Further to that patients and customer themselves are also somehow involved in the service i.e. they are cocreators. In my view SDL does open a different view compared to the classic transmission approach in teaching and evaluation. However, looking more deeply into the “substance”, i.e., the pedagogic literature and the knowledge and practices developed there, may be more informative for improving HE. The SDL approach offers a nice new *simulacrum* (Baudrillard, 1994) that is taken for a specific “truth”.

According to Baudrillard, the hallmark of a simulacrum is that original and copy, model and image, reality and imagination can no longer be distinguished from one another, and signs and images have given way to a general “referencelessness”. Looking at HE through the lens of Service dominant Logic suggests to an observer that she understands something about HE. In fact, it allows her to talk about education in a certain way and by use of the Service Dominant language, but without getting into the actual processes by use of pedagogical language created to describe these processes in detail. It is comparable to a music critic who describes, evaluates, discusses, and criticizes a performance of a musician without ever having made music. Here the simulacrum appears detached from the actual musical performance on a linguistic level and is thus able to become independent and create the impression of reality. This music critique if communicated through newspaper for example it creates a reality about the musician and her music so that other people can use it to form their images about the music and the musician. The description of the music and the musician becomes an independent “reality” for many people who have never listened to the music or met the musician. The sound of the music is a different reality compared to the words of the music critic. As soon as people think that they have a real impression about the music just by reading the music critique they become a victim of a simulacrum.

It is similar with the use of language of the service dominant logic, which is detached from the actual educational processes in HE due to its strong abstraction and thus appears as a separate reality, but which no longer has anything to do with the actual reality of the educational process in HE. To present HE in the language of service dominant logic means e.g. to say that different actors (mainly teachers and learners) in institutional arrangements cocreate value. Because these statements are so abstract, they say little about the actual educational processes in HE as it is done by use of pedagogical language, but at the same time, since they are not wrong, they are “true” and appear as a simulacrum of their own reality. Even the pedagogical language is an abstraction from doing education and we never know whether we describe what we do; in any kind of language. The more abstract the language however is the more there is a danger to create a simulacrum, a narrative independent from doing. A narrative without being able to describe a specific concrete reality. The more abstract a language is the more “realities” fits under its umbrella.

Therefore, I do not see how it helps to support learning or teaching directly. If we do not include pedagogical knowledge we are lost in a simulacrum, and I think we have enough of them around HE.

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