

# **Teachers as knowledge creators**

**CESI Conference 2007**  
**Connect, Create, Integrate**

Margaret Farren (Higher Education)  
Teresa Hennessy (Post-Primary)  
Joanne Keane (Primary)  
Donal O'Mahony (Post-Primary)

## Conference Theme

- Explore how teachers are *connecting* with each other through use of online learning technologies.
- Demonstrate how teachers are *creating* learning artefacts for use in their own practice contexts.
- Show how teachers are *integrating* their educational values in practice by asking, researching and answering the question, 'how can I improve my practice?'

## **Context**

- **M.Sc. Education and Training Management (eLearning Strand) at Dublin City University (DCU)...**
- **Participants – education, corporate training, industry, nursing, government departments and other state agencies.**
- **Enhanced learning environment provided to encourage dialogue and knowledge building.**

# Outline of Presentation

Margaret Farren

- Key themes in literature
- M.Sc. eLearning programme

Programme participants

Joanne Keane

- Primary teacher in area of learning support

Teresa Hennessy

- Post-primary Business studies teacher and ICT Coordinator

Donal O'Mahony

- Post-primary Religion and History teacher

## Key themes in literature

- Schön (1995) advocated the need for a new epistemology of practice, and suggested that this new scholarship would take the form of action research.
- Whitehead's and McNiff (2006) refer to the need to re-conceptualise educational theory.
- A 'higher education' must embrace three dimensions of being: knowledge, self-identity and action, in its pedagogies (Barnett, 2000).

## **Living educational theory**

Whitehead (1989) - Education as a value-laden activity and refers to values as those qualities, which give meaning and purpose to our personal and professional lives.

In asking questions of the kind, 'how do I improve what I am doing?' practitioners can create their own theory by embodying their educational values in their practice.

In the process of clarifying the values in the course of their emergence in practice, they are transformed into living epistemological standards of judgement.

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## **Living standards of judgement**

The following living standards of judgement were developed by Margaret as she carried researched her own practice as higher education educator.

- **Pedagogy of the unique** refers to the unique contribution that each practitioner-researcher makes to a knowledge base of practice. It involves systematic processes of action and reflection. The values in my pedagogy include the following:
  - **Learning as relational;**
  - **Creating narratives of our own learning;**
  - **Developing a dialogic education;**
  - **Communicating teaching as a scholarly activity;**
  - **Using ICT in a creative way.**

## **Living standards of judgement**

**Web of betweenness** ICT can bring us closer to the meanings of our educational values as they are lived in practice.

P.hD research: [How Can I Create my Pedagogy of the Unique through a Web of Betweenness?](http://people.bath.ac.uk/edsajw/farren.shtml)

(<http://people.bath.ac.uk/edsajw/farren.shtml>)



## References

Barnett, R. (2000) *Realizing the University: in an Age of Supercomplexity*. Bucks: Open University Press

Schön, D. (1995). Knowing-in-action: The New Scholarship requires a New Epistemology. *Change*, November/December, 1995. pp. 27-34.

Whitehead's and McNiff (2006). All you need to know about action research. London: SAGE.

Whitehead. J. (1989) Creating a Living Educational Theory from Questions of the Kind, How do I improve my Practice? *British Educational Research Journal*, **15**. pp. 3-17.

## **Joanne Keane: Learning Support**

- Primary School Learning Support teacher, ICT Coordinator.
- How to improve my use of ICT to help my students learn?
- How to promote use of ICT with the teachers in my school?
- 'Interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of learning and the creation of meaning' (Vygotsky 1978).

## **Use of online technology during M.Sc programme**

- Connecting with the learning theories through the dialogues on Moodle.
- How do the theories make sense to me and my work? Getting deeper into the discussions and creating connections.

## eLearning Support website

- Projects carried out in line with values and connecting with theorist.
- Open the dialogue.
- Scaffold the learning (Vygotsky).
- Facilitate sharing of resources & good practice.
- My colleagues are making use of the website in their learning and teaching.
  
- Artefacts
- eLearning Support Website  
<http://homepage.eircom.net/~elearningsupport/index.html>
- eLearning support Blog <http://elearningsupport.blogspot.com/>
- Multimedia project  
<http://homepage.eircom.net/~elearningsupport/echallenge.html>
- Video

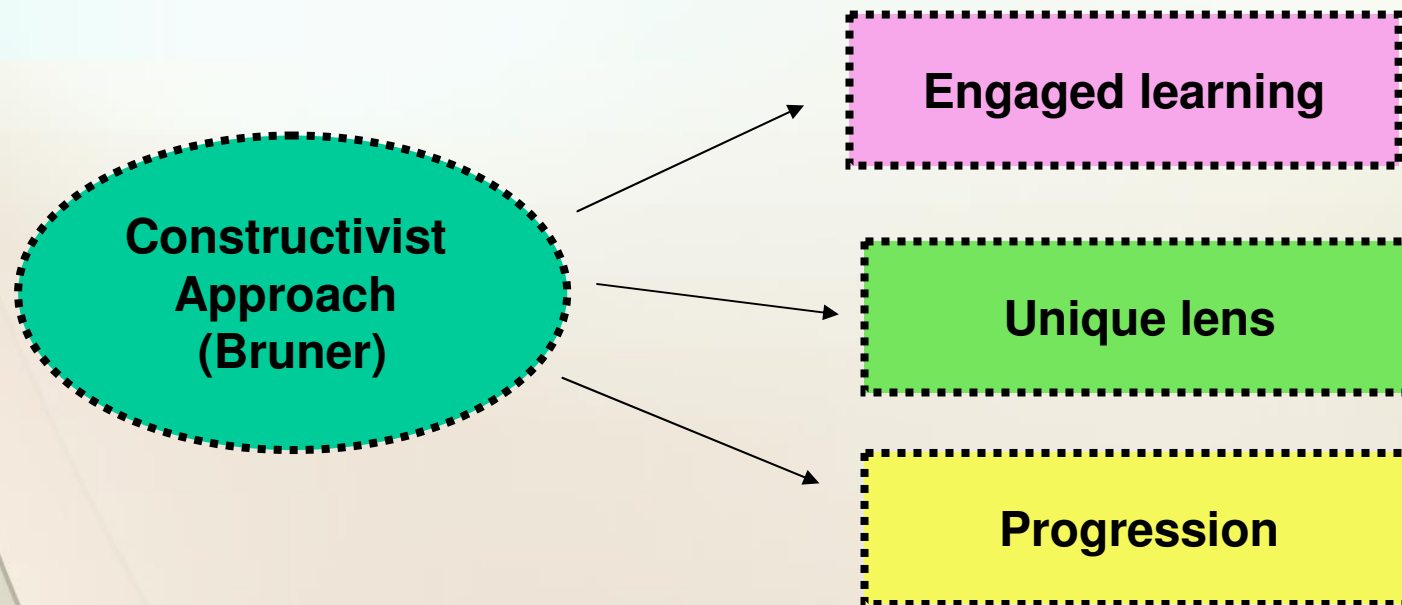
## **Teresa Hennessy: A Learning Journey**

- **Teacher – business subjects – all levels.**
- **ICT Co-ordinator.**

**Started M.Sc. Programme as needed to regain focus in teaching.**

# A Learning Journey

- How do I use technology in learning?
- How do I learn? How do others learn?



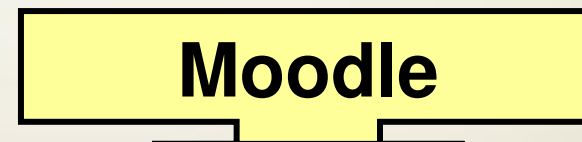
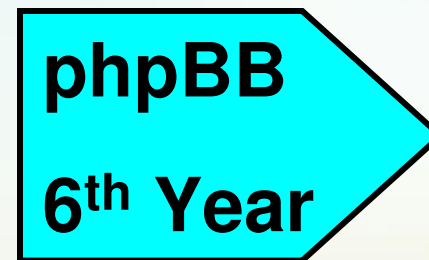
## **A Learning Journey**

Getting connected on Moodle – interacting with others.

Getting into stride - technologies I engaged with.....XAMPP, phpBB, Moodle.

# A Learning Journey

It's a long way from there to here.....



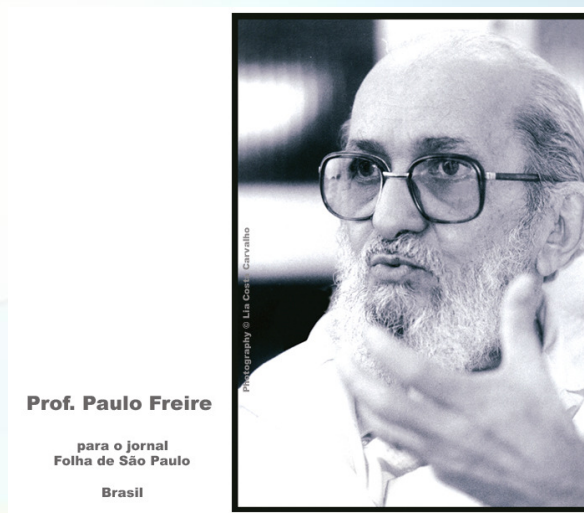
The Journey continues.....[Learning artefact](http://student.dcu.ie/%7Ehennest2/index.htm)  
(<http://student.dcu.ie/%7Ehennest2/index.htm>)



## **Donal O'Mahoney: eLearning and values**

- **Secondary school teacher RE / History.**
- **No background in IT – interested in exploring e-Learning in an environment not dictated by my school.**
- **Fascinated by a reference in one of the discussion forums to Paolo Freire – not a person I expected to engage with on an e-Learning course.**

# eLearning and dialogue



**Teaching is a dialogue. Dialogue encourages curiosity.  
Curiosity is rigorous.**

**He speaks of educators “who dare to teach” who encourage students to “live a critically conscious presence in the pedagogic and historical process”.**

## **eLearning and dialogue**

- **Fascination with posting on Freire.**
- **What has this got to do with e-Learning?**
- **Forced me to ask the Question.....What am I designing e-Learning for?**

# eLearning and dialogue

- **My learning**
  - Engaging again with ideas from Freire.
  - Relating to my own values.
  - Broadening out through Moodle discussions with peers.
- Integrating technology into teaching.
- Developed a WebQuest
- Interacting with Leaving Certificate History students through Moodle.
  - [Project work](http://www.dcuprojects.blogspot.com/) (http://www.dcuprojects.blogspot.com/)



Thank You.

Questions welcome