Practice is embedded in paradigm: exploring the submerged parts of the iceberg

Barbara Class

Open, Micro, digital Platforms – Hype or the Future of Higher Education?
ZHAW - 6 September 2023

Synopsis

Positionality
Framework
  • Jacobs’ 2 moral value syndromes
  • Sterling’s 4Ps

Defining concepts
  • Platform / Learning dispositive
  • Badges / Micro-credentials
  • Open Education

Openness: a lever to avoid monstrous hybrids?
Positionality

➢ Teacher and researcher in educational technologies and qualitative research methods with current interest in Open Education

➢ Consider Openness as a lever to think about our practice
Framework
Learning governance and moral syndromes

Stewarding governance
- Keeper of a process

Emergent governance
- Distributed system of interactions

Guardian syndrome
- Shun trading
- Respect hierarchy

Commercial syndrome
- Shun force
- Compete

Monstrous moral hybrids?

Monstrous moral hybrid

Monstrous hybrids occur when you mix values of both syndromes.

Examples:

- An institution involved in trading that is given special privileges by the state => compete without honesty and support of power.
- In a governing body, corruption can be used through economic interests => loyalty is breached through trading.

Jacobs, 1994
From paradigm to practice

- Paradigm = underlying set of perceptions, assumptions, values, and concepts with internal consistency
- Paradigm determines purpose and shapes practice and policy
- Two major paradigms: mechanistic (post 1700, focus on parts) and holistic (pre 1500, focus on the whole)

Sterling, 2007, 2021
Think differently!

➢ “It is so much easier, and thus pervasive, to deal with unfamiliar issues in a familiar way than it is to deal with familiar issues in an unfamiliar way” (Bawden, 1991)

=> Address familiar issues, i.e. practice and policy, in an unfamiliar way, i.e. changing the underlying paradigm!

Example of issue to address:
➢ knowledge: object of power? object of trade?

Sterling, 2007, 2021
Williamson 2020
Defining concepts
Platforms or learning dispositive?
Digital platforms, learning dispositive

Why focus on the digital platform? It is only the technical part of a learning dispositive (dispositif d’apprentissage)

Learning dispositive:
• used in society with different uses and patterns of use
• Requires mediatisation process and results in mediation

Peraya, 2014
Learning dispositive: synthesising

Effects of the learning dispositive on learning and teaching

Peraya, 2014
From badges to micro-credentials
Defining concepts: Micro-credentials

Badges
Roman armies: aloft
6th cent: embroidered
14th cent: metal embossed

Digital badges
Mid-1990, images displayable on the Web

Digital learning badges
~2012 Mozilla, P2P university, Mc Arthur Foundation: Open Badge Framework

Micro-credentials
~2012, shift from implicit trust to explicit markers of trust on-line

### Badges and their value loaded history

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Badge type</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Honor, authority and privilege</td>
<td>Signal group <strong>membership</strong> (military)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Create rapid rapport and trust (religion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Make <strong>authority</strong> explicit (police)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement, qualification,</td>
<td><strong>Identify excellence</strong> or at least competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>experience</td>
<td>Shape behavior (martial belt)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expression</td>
<td><strong>Indicate prestige</strong> (pilgrims Middle Ages)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advertise a particular site</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Halavais, 2012
Learning badges: make intention clear

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Guardian values</th>
<th>Commercial values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reward a process requiring significant time and effort</td>
<td>Reward specific behaviour extrinsically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design</td>
<td>Point to deeper documentation to show process, time and effort</td>
<td>Assessment and issuing process must be open and documented</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Halavais, 2012
Micro-credentials: early scholarly definitions

Khan (2013): Indication of expertise within a narrow area related to a course rather than a curriculum
Crotty (2013): Formal vision of less formal badge
Olneck (2012): “Insurgent credentials” that break the traditional institutional hold on knowledge production and recognition
Elkordy (2012): Established performance criteria

=> Make community endorsement (i.e. emergent learning governance) possible beside authority endorsement (i.e. stewarding learning governance)

Halavais, 2013
European Commission definition 2022

“a) “Micro-credential” means the record of the learning outcomes that a learner has acquired following a small volume of learning. These learning outcomes will have been assessed against transparent and clearly defined criteria. Learning experiences leading to micro-credentials are designed to provide the learner with specific knowledge, skills and competences that respond to societal, personal, cultural or labour market needs. Micro-credentials are owned by the learner, can be shared and are portable. They may be stand-alone or combined into larger credentials. They are underpinned by quality assurance following agreed standards in the relevant sector or area of activity. (… => i))”

EC, 2022, pp. 13-15
European Commission definition 2022

“h) ‘Stackability’ means the possibility, where relevant, to combine different micro-credentials and build logically upon each other. Decisions to ‘stack’ or combine credentials lie with the receiving organisation (e.g. education and training institutions, employers, etc.) in line with their practices and should support the goals and needs of the learner. Stacking does not create an automatic entitlement to a qualification or a degree. Such decisions are made by regional and national authorities or institutions in line with their awarding processes.”

Emergent learning governance + Stewarding learning governance

EC, 2022, pp. 13-15
Open Education
Open Education

➢ Umbrella term
➢ Focus of interest:
   ➢ Bologna & Paris models of universities in the Middle Ages, teaching focused, and either student or faculty led
   ➢ OE = a diverse and complex compound entangling practices, concepts, scholarships, disciplines, etc., all driven by Openness (e.g. Weller, 2011)

Peter & Deimann, 2013
Cardoziere, 1968
De Meulemeester, 2011
Openness: two philosophical underpinnings

Open = common good in the Middle Ages = shared, non-enclosed

Open = open and free in the 20th & 21st century = legal rights

=> Address a familiar issue, e.g. knowledge, in an unfamiliar way rather than address it in a familiar way
• Familiar way: replacing copyright by copyleft material
• Unfamiliar way: explore Openness in the Medieval understanding and study the underlying paradigm

Pomerantz & Peek, 2016
Class, 2023
Leverage Openness to avoid monstrous hybrids and consider two non-mixable routes
### Openness: a lever?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guardian</th>
<th>Commercial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Holistic</td>
<td>Sharing Non-enclosed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monstrous hybrid?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanistic</td>
<td>Monstrous hybrid?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Open, free, legal rights</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Knowledge is an object of trade

=> Respect commercial values!

Knowledge is an object of power

=> Respect guardian values!

Two different routes!
Thank you for your attention!
References


Class, B. (2023). Epistemic Considerations of Open Education to Re-Source Educators’ Praxis Sustainably. Open Praxis. https://doi.org/10.55982/openpraxis.15.3.560


Additional slides
Interplay between the 3 concepts

Pardigmatic alignment / Openness

Philosophy

Open Education

Learning dispositive

Means to make teaching and learning a reality

Micro-credentials

Means to certify knowledge and competences
# Table 1

Two moral syndromes from Jacobs (1994).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The guardian moral syndrome</th>
<th>The commercial moral syndrome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shun trading</td>
<td>Shun force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exert prowess</td>
<td>Come to voluntary agreements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be obedient and disciplined</td>
<td>Be honest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adhere to tradition</td>
<td>Collaborate easily with strangers and aliens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect hierarchy</td>
<td>Compete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be loyal</td>
<td>Respect contract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take vengeance</td>
<td>Use initiative and enterprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deceive for the sake of the task</td>
<td>Be open to inventiveness and novelty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make rich use of leisure</td>
<td>Be efficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be ostentatious</td>
<td>Promote comfort and convenience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dispense largesse</td>
<td>Dissent for the sake of the task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be exclusive</td>
<td>Invest for productive purposes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show fortitude</td>
<td>Be industrious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be fatalistic</td>
<td>Be thrifty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasure honor</td>
<td>Be optimistic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jacobs 1994 cited by Halavais, 2012, p. 365
Synthesising micro-credentials

Micro-credentials come with the value-loaded history of badges

Represent two value systems

Guardian syndrome  Commercial syndrome

Same system used to exert different interests, potentially mixed in stewarding learning governance?
Example

5 ECTS - micro-credentials continuing education course

=> Commercial or guardian syndrome: reward a process requiring significant time and effort; programme, “diploma” supplement, portfolio, etc. or reward specific behaviour extrinsically; documents assessment and issuing process?

5 ECTS - programme development for a company with confidentiality constraints

=> Commercial or guardian syndrome?

«CAS in Software engineering» awarded by UNIGE ?

What about mixing micro-credentials across vocational training, HE and continuing education? Different regulations and logics in Switzerland

https://www.unige.ch/formcont/cours/docker-kubernetes-avance
Triang model

Figure 1: Dimensions of paradigm—key domains in relation to the university. Sterling, 2021, p. 7
Sterlings’ model: What it means for HEIs (1)

Purpose

➢ Current state: Income, financial sustainability, status and positioning, ranking and reputation in a competitive market

➢ Challenge: Conscious re-purposing and expanding the system of concern to take full account of context (precarious state of the world, planetary limits) and reposition the university in alignment with its ethics, e.g. explore the Magna Charta Universitatum different versions

Sterling, 2021
Sterlings’ model: What it means for HEIs (2)

Operationalisation

➢ Current state: Legacy of mechanistic tradition overlain and reinforced by neo-liberal conception of knowledge

➢ Challenge: Change the pattern from compartimentalisation to connection, building distributed leadership, participative and transparent culture, etc. to ensure the university is dynamic, open and permeable to its community

Sterling, 2021
Sterlings’ model: What it means for HEIs (3)

Practice, Policy

➢ Current state: Effects of HEI research on the community and the wider world; values, competencies & skills of graduates

➢ Challenge: Re-orientation and integration within planetary boundaries

Sterling, 2021
A postmodern conception of HEIs?

«Postmodernists argue that a "postinstitutional" society is inevitable, as "thick" medieval institutions such as the university, are replaced by "thin" modern or postmodern structures that resemble flexible, global networks (Zijderveld, 2000, pp. 20, 36)".

Purpose led
Pardigm-aware

2050
T, R & S
GS CS

Zijderveld, 2000
Scott, 2006
History of the European University

University of Bologna
Foundation – student led. Teaching focused.

Bologna model
Does not exist anymore. Only Paris model

American model
Teaching, research and service to the public, democratisation of knowledge

SNSF created
To react to lagging of CH in science and technology vs countries involved in War II

University of Bologna
Foundation – student led. Teaching focused.

University of Berlin
Von Humboldt model
Teaching & research

US: Perform research for the war
As part of service to the public + federal funding

Civilian techno-science
Shift from military to techno-science to serve post-industrial needs

1088 1150 1500 1809 1862 1945-80 1952 1980-90 1999

Scott, 2006
Wagenaar, 2022

Universities used for nation-states mission=> bureaucracy
Uni Berlin: Pre-nation-state
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEIs’ evolution?</th>
<th>Middle Ages</th>
<th>XIXth Century</th>
<th>1860 USA</th>
<th>After 1945</th>
<th>1989</th>
<th>2050</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching only</td>
<td>Teaching &amp; research</td>
<td>Teaching, research &amp; service to the public (T, R &amp; S)</td>
<td>WWW</td>
<td>Revive medieval practices of sharing</td>
<td>T, R &amp; S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student led</td>
<td>(Bologna &gt; 1500)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty led</td>
<td>(1150, Paris)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardian syndrome (GS)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial syndrome (CS)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Guardian syndrome (GS)? → Commercial syndrome (CS)?