



Beyond boundaries and edges in conceptualising disciplines.

Paul Trowler



Headlines

- It's time to review how we conceptualise disciplines and their power (and their borders)
- Because of changes in the world and developments in theorising
- This matters to higher education practices in relation to enhancement practices

Popping boundaries



Tribes and Territories, border raids, turf wars...





Discipline (?)

“a body of knowledge with a reasonably logical taxonomy, a specialized vocabulary, an accepted body of theory, a systematic research strategy, and techniques for replication and validity.”
(Donald, 2002: 8)



Donald says....

“Psychology professors talked of developing students’ capabilities through a series of courses which focus on different methods...In education, case studies are seen as important instructional methods to aid students in making complex situations coherent. English literature professors paid attention to the analysis of text to determine the underlying assumptions...and they were concerned with the development of argument in their courses.

A Social Practice Perspective



“forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, ‘things’ and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge.” (Reckwitz, 2002)



Power and disciplines



Ideology and disciplines





Context and disciplines

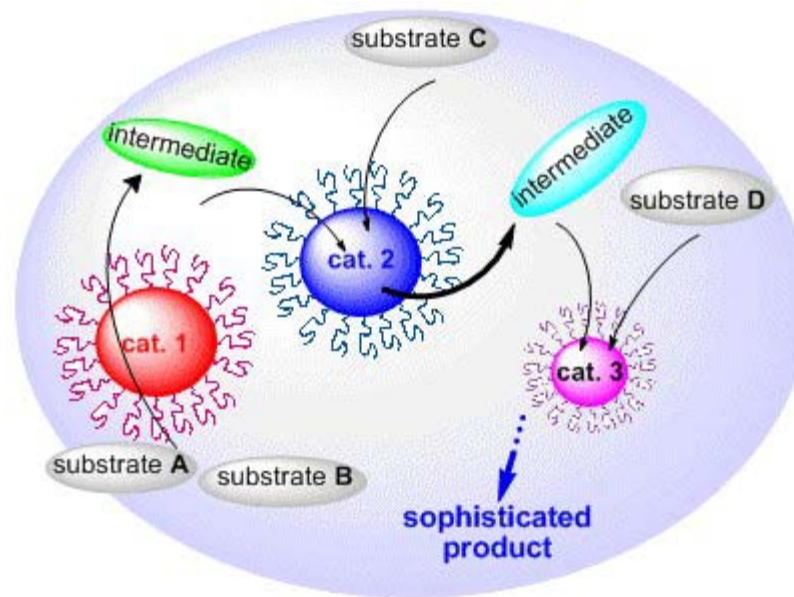


Subjectivities and disciplines





Catalysts





Consequences for enhancement initiatives

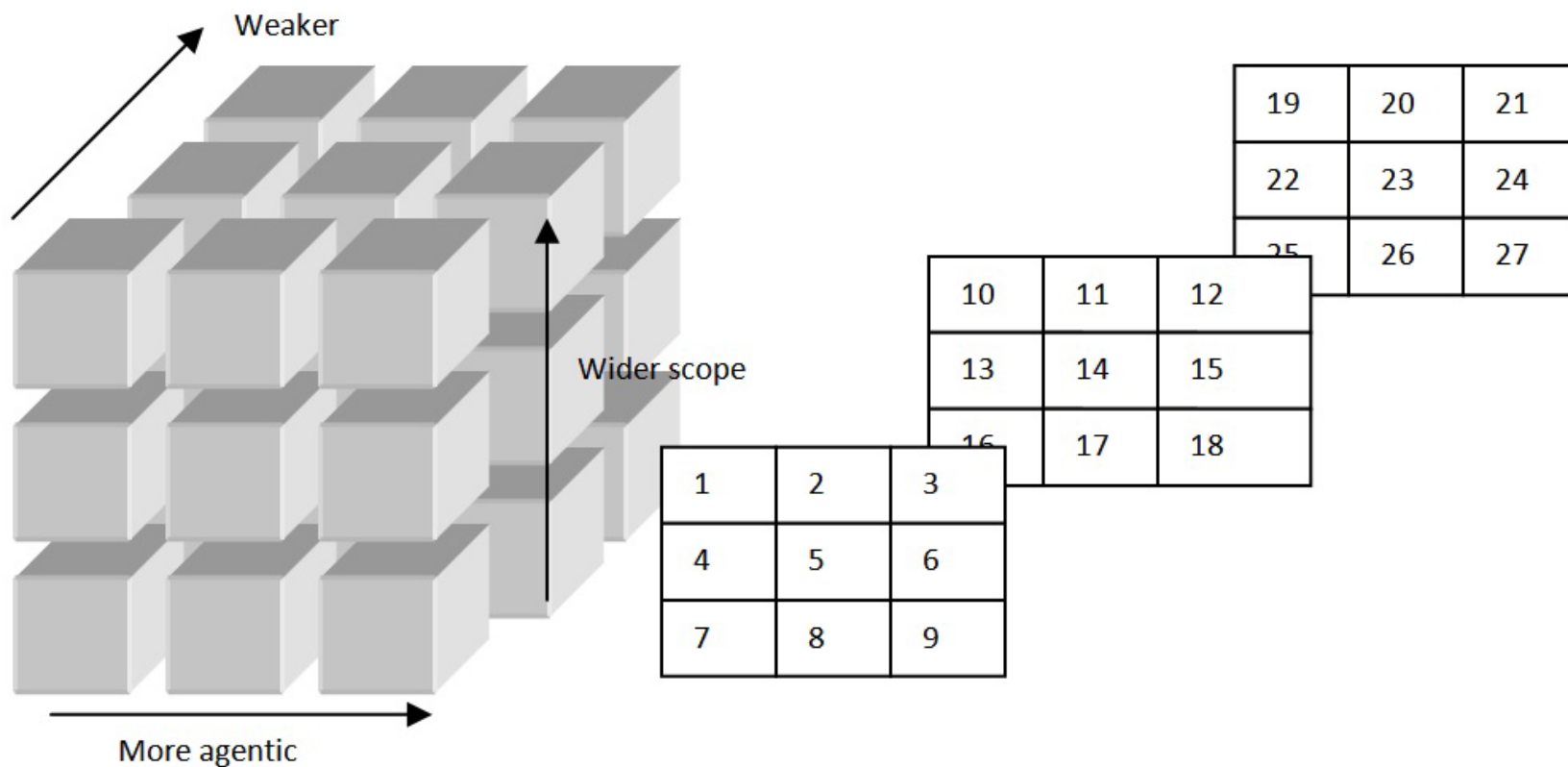
- Snapping back
- Significance of artefacts
- Emotions and codes within behaviours
- Discourses and discursive repertoires
- Subjectivities and power
- Anthropological familiarity
- Market gardening not agribusiness
- Differential outcomes - domestication



New metaphors



Theorising Tribes and Territories





Problems with interdisciplinarity..

- What *is* interdisciplinarity? Klein (2000): a methodological approach; a process; a way of thinking; a philosophy and/or as an ideology?
- The potential move away from criticality (Muller and Subotzky, 2001; Barry et al, 2008; Strathern, 2007)
- A way of disciplining academics – a move away from ‘donnish dominion’, management inspired rationalisation
- A central problem with the notion of interdisciplinarity is that people using it do not make explicit what they understand by the term ‘discipline’ or when a disciplinary ‘boundary’ is crossed, or with what consequences (Krishnan, 2009)
- Advocates tend to downplay the power dynamics of academics’ defence of disciplinary walls (Moore, 2003)



My definition

Reservoirs of knowledge resources shaping regularised behavioural practices, sets of discourses, ways of thinking, procedures, emotional responses and motivations. These provide structured dispositions for disciplinary practitioners who reshape them in different practice clusters into localised repertoires. While alternative recurrent practices may be in competition within a single discipline, there is common background knowledge about key figures, conflicts and achievements. Disciplines take organizational form, have internal hierarchies and bestow power differentially, conferring advantage and disadvantage.