What Can We Gain By Conducting Disciplined Inquiry into Teaching Practice?

Deborah Loewenberg Ball

University of Michigan

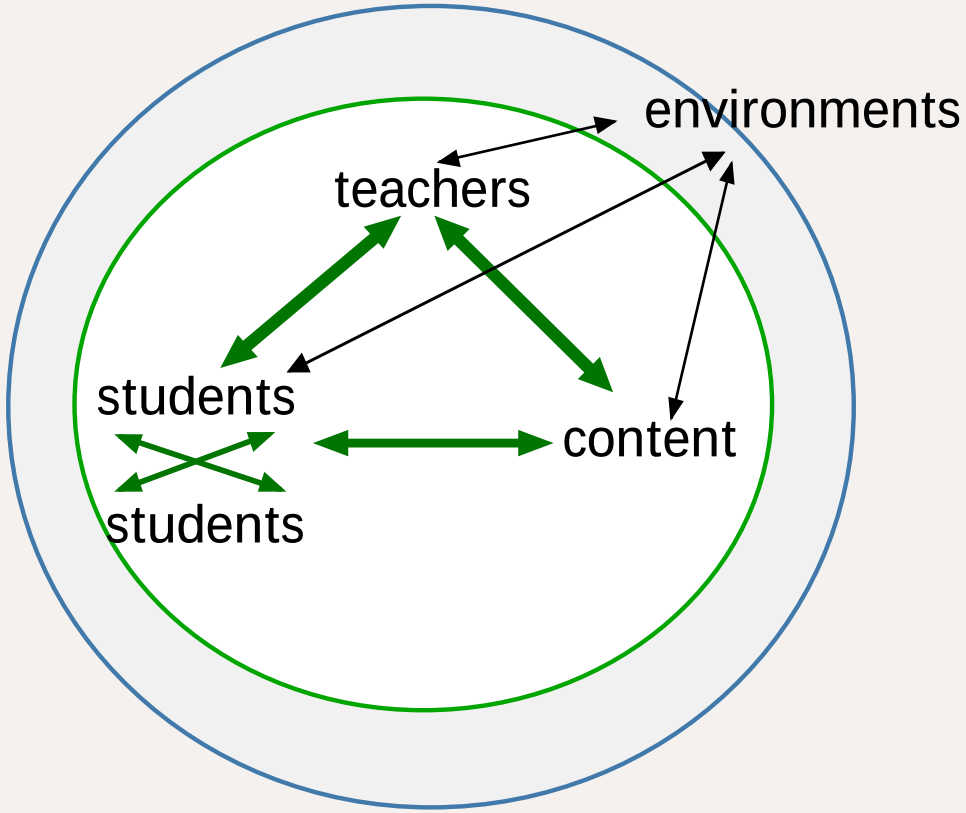
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A conception of teaching[1]



- A dynamic shaped by multiple interactions, interpretive
- Not just "what teachers do"
- Students learn anyway
- But teachers have a special role in shaping the dynamic to increase the probability that students learn

[1]Problems of (English) language; no good word: "Instruction"

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Studying the practice of teaching at the K-12 level

Seeking to understand, for example:

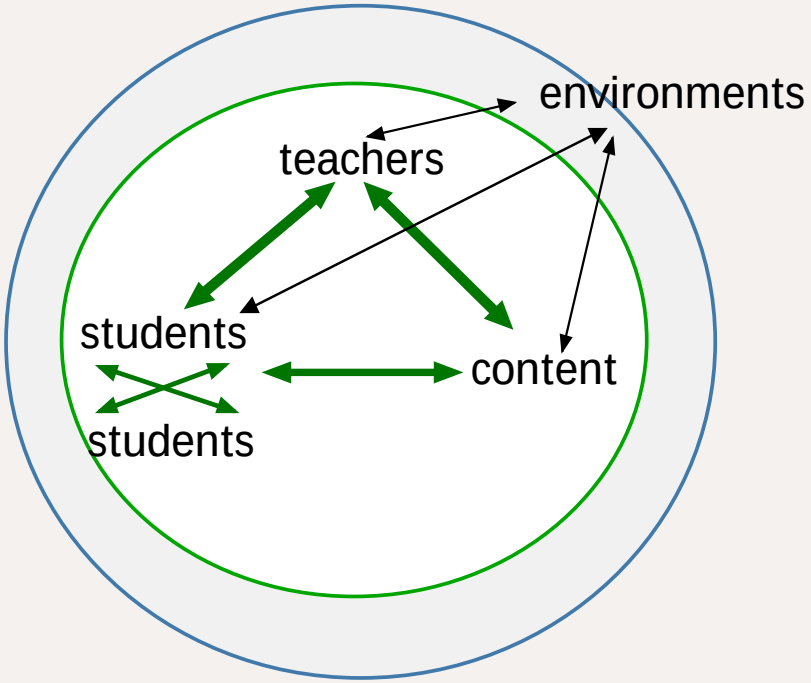
- How specific programs and approaches play out for students and teachers
- How issues of diversity shape students' opportunities to learn, and their learning
- The work of teaching, and what is entailed, useful for teacher education

What might studies of teaching afford at the post-secondary level?

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Three terrains of teaching practice[2]

1. Knowledge extended to learners
   a) How knowledge is extended
   b) The nature of knowledge
2. Instructional discourse
3. Teachers' familiarity with students' knowledge and resources



[2]David Cohen, *Teaching Practice and Its Predicaments*, to appear in 2010, Harvard University Press)

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One example: Large format teaching as a specific instructional "problem" or context

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Why does "large format" teaching present problems of effectiveness?

1. Knowledge extended to learners
   a) How knowledge is extended
   b) The nature of knowledge
2. Instructional discourse
3. Teachers' familiarity with students' knowledge and resources

1. The design and use of instructional tasks
2. Engagement of students in the work (not just "performance pedagogy"); attention to and use of diversity
3. Teachers' access to diverse students' ideas as a resource for instruction; "flying blind"

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A case: Undergraduate policy course

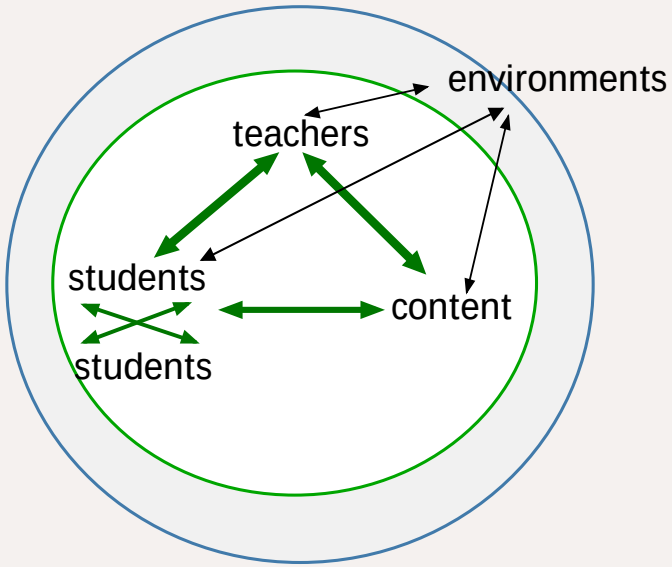
- Purpose: To learn to "think systematically about problems of the day" and how policy is made, interpreted, and how it affects practice[3] (e.g., education and the ""achievement gap"; intellectual property and filesharing; flu and health policy; national popular vote;
- 125 students
- Interdisciplinary course; different instructor for each policy problem

[3]Paul Courant, University of Michigan, course originator (pnc@umich.edu)

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Using the instructional triangle as a lens to examine "large format" teaching and learning

1. What is the task and how is it used?
2. How are different students working on it? How is the context organized for and how does it shape student engagement?
3. How does the instruction anticipate, learn about, and use students' knowledge?



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Michigan AYP Formula

YEAR	English Language Arts	
	Elementary	Middle
2005	49%	43%
2006	49%	43%
2007	49%	43%
2008	59%	54%
2009	59%	54%
2010	59%	54%
2011	69%	66%
2012	79%	77%
2013	90%	89%
2014	100%	100%

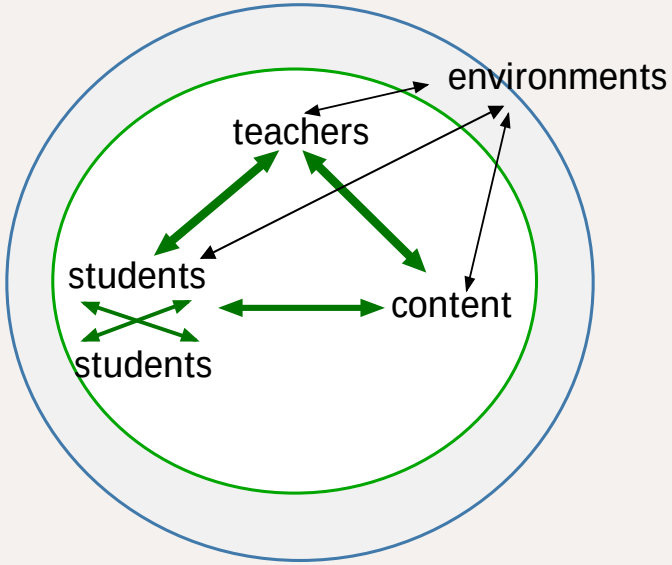
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- Three short videoclips from a college class working with a task about AYP

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Why it might be important to cultivate studies of teaching at the post-secondary level

- To improve the quality of students' learning in settings and contexts of higher education
- To tackle the problems of the "graduation gap"
- To shape the conversation about curriculum
- To probe how instructional and curricular innovations play out in practice
- To contribute to better instructor preparation and support for teaching

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Thank you!

Slides will be posted on my website

(search “Deborah Ball”)

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