

private experience / empirical / concrete

interaction with artefacts: identification of persistent features and contexts
 practical knowledge: correlations between artefacts, acquisition of skills
 identification of dependencies and postulation of independent agency
 identification of generic patterns of interaction and stimulus-response mechanisms
 non-verbal communication through interaction in a common environment
 directly situated uses of language
 identification of common experience and objective knowledge
 symbolic representations and formal languages: public conventions for interpretation

public knowledge / theoretical / formal

An Experiential Framework for Learning (EFL)

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Understanding backwards

Kierkegaard:
'we live forwards, but we understand backwards'

William James:
 "Understanding backwards is, it must be confessed, a very frequent weakness of philosophers, both of the rationalistic and of the ordinary empiricist type ..."

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"Understanding backwards" and the EFL

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James on Kierkegaard

Kierkegaard:
'we live forwards, but we understand backwards'

William James:
 "Understanding backwards is, it must be confessed, a very frequent weakness of philosophers, both of the rationalistic and of the ordinary empiricist type. [RE] alone insists on understanding forwards also, and refuses to substitute static concepts of the understanding for the transitions in our moving life."

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How RE regards knowledge

- RE sets out to relate all knowledge and understanding to its origin in personal experience
- contends that all knowledge is ultimately rooted in the perception of conjunctive relations
- puts the primary focus on personal, private and subjective activities

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Conjunctive relations

connections between experiences that are directly given in personal experience

cf. there is an unavoidable discontinuity in my experience "when I seek to make a transition from an experience of my own to one of yours ... [I] have to get on and off again, to pass from the thing lived to another thing only conceived"

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Examples of conjunctive relations

"connections between experiences that are directly given in personal experience" – as is the relationship:

- between an object's location and its shadow
- between notes of a musical score and keys on a keyboard
- between a name and a pet animal
- between two experiences of the same place at different times
- between experiences of two places on the same journey

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Nature of conjunctive relations

- highly personal in nature
 - dependent on context and observer
 - operating in the realm of the pre-articulate
 - in need of no additional explanation
 - having extremely broad semantic content
- ... qualities particularly relevant to learning activities outside the scope of closed learning

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