

The Power of Research: An exploration of critical dialogue as a model for the development of professionals

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Context

- The multi-professional structure of the professional doctorate programme incorporating three degrees:
 - A doctor of education (Ed D),
 - A doctor of legal practice (D Legal Prac),
 - A doctor of social practice (D Soc Prac)
- The programme is expanding to include a further three degrees
- The programme incorporates a common framework of research and underlying philosophy
- This framework provides a context for the production of knowledge within the professional doctorate

Conference Themes:

- Facilitate sharing of experience with approaches to training & profession development:
- Illustrate a range of good practices in the development / delivery of generic and transferable skills for Professional Doctorates in different national and professional contexts

Approach

- Possibilities afforded by the particular categorisations of research made at this conference
- Opportunity to add theoretical weight to the way in which we structure the multi-professional environment for research
- Gloss the theory as a critical dialogical approach to the development of a doctoral programme of research

The Production of Knowledge and Power

- In Michel Foucault's writings the exploration of 'the material conditions of thought' whereby something becomes established as a particular form of knowledge, invites readers to reflect upon and to challenge the *capillary power* of the abstract *institutional processes* at work in founding such understandings.
- 'Developing knowledge – improving practice':
power

Power of Panopticism

- 'Panopticism', cannot be identified with any one discipline of knowledge, or institution more generally, because it is *a social technology and a type of power that traverses every academic discipline and every institution.*
- 'The Panopticon must not be understood as a dream building: it is *the diagram* of a mechanism of power reduced to its ideal form'
- Foucault's genealogy.... 'a category of power exists as a pure disciplinary function'. He named this strategic function as 'the diagram of the mechanism of power', 'a figure of political technology', a function that 'must be detached from any specific use'

Power to Research

- The incorporation of disciplines within a single research programme may be, therefore, similarly structured by panopticism...
- Professional doctorate -*the diagram*- constitutes a series of overlapping maps, each mediated by the professions incorporated within the programme and by our developing relationships with bodies who are supporting the development of the programme, and each including points that remain relatively unbounded
- As our political technology for the programme – the diagram – this series of overlapping maps which continue to develop through our exploration of power - mediate a disciplinary structure

Power to produce new knowledge

- Benchmark for doctoral research – an original contribution to knowledge
- Foucault had suggested, we should 'abandon a whole tradition that allows us to imagine that knowledge can exist only where *power relations* are suspended and that knowledge can develop only outside its injunctions, its demands, its interests' (1977: 27)
- The truthfulness of such an object of knowledge being understood as a series of defined and ordered procedures for the 'production, regulation, distribution and circulation of such object of knowledge'
- Supposedly such procedures remain uncontaminated by power

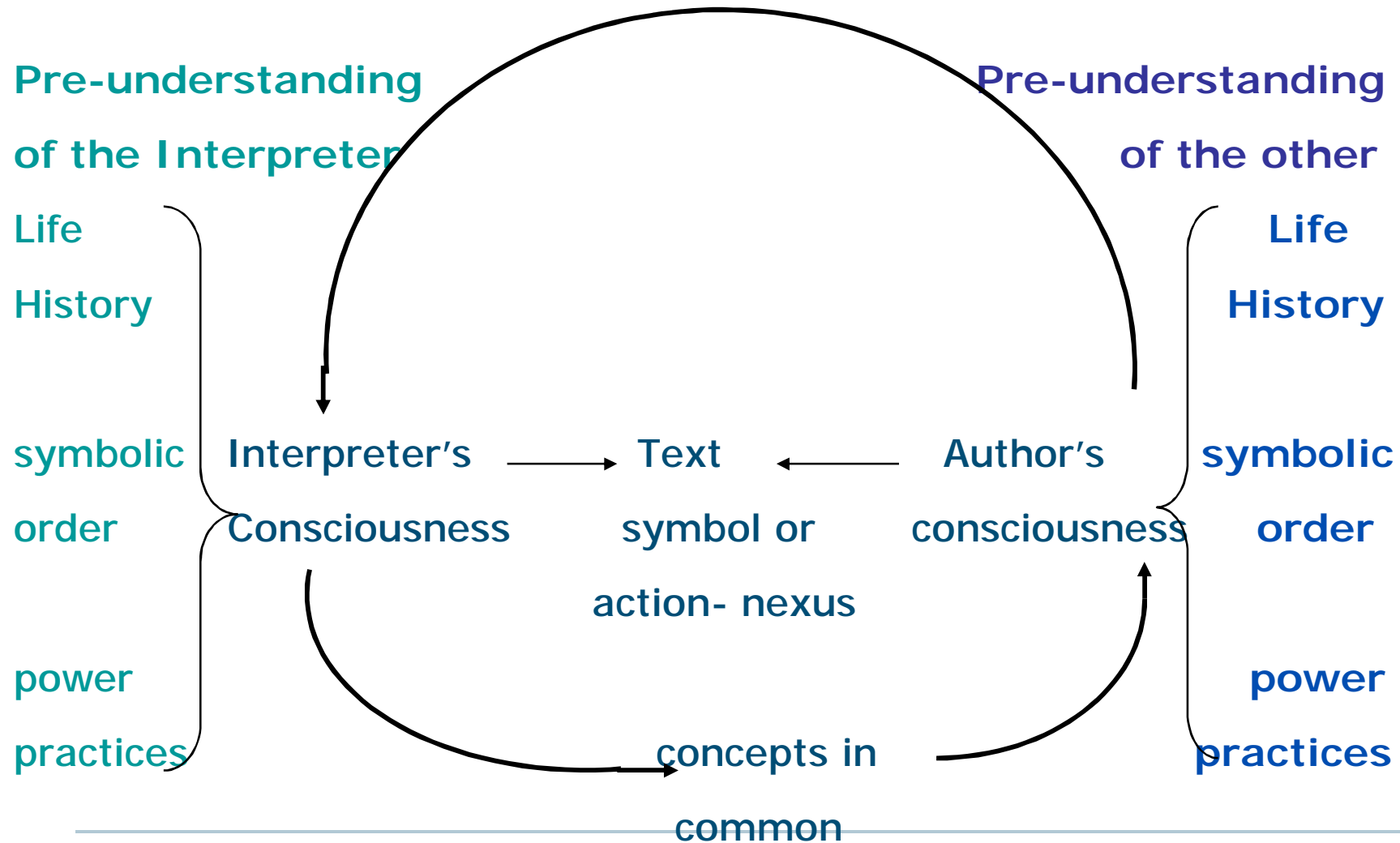
Play of Power

- In being reflexive and in structuring the professional doctorate programme around reflexivity and reflection we are attempting both to encourage our students to continue questioning the play of power in the production of knowledge
- More broadly we wish to open further debate about the interplay of power–knowledge.
- Professional practices... knowledge–power is manifest in both the much debated phenomena of ‘work intensification’ and ‘deprofessionalisation’, which have been explained in terms of classical labour process theory.

Power of Repetition

- The ubiquity of power itself opens further questions regarding a model of good practice for the professional doctorate, which no longer treats the production of knowledge as if it were somehow disconnected from any practices of power
- The pedagogic model for the programme is a structure for the repetition of a series of hermeneutic circles mediating practice
- Reflexive and research oriented

Power of Dialogue



Power and Practice

- Practice is constituted as a series of workshops designed to encourage discussion and reflection about the process of undertaking research at doctoral level
- Developing our programme has been located in the space opened up for critical enquiry between power and the domination of extant power practices, including those associated with the process of research itself

Power *in* Practice

Module 2:

Epistemology and Identity

Initial reflections...

- Who am I? How many different identities do we negotiate for ourselves each day? How do I know who I am? What do I believe about myself?
- What perceptions do others have of me? Has "I" always been the same person that I am now? What am I conscious of at this point in my life?
- What justifications do I have for knowing that I am a particular character?

- Workshop I
- What is research design?
- What is imputed by the term critical research design?
- What identities are ascribed to the word 'design'?
- Workshop II
- What is involved in thinking methodologically about research?
- Plenary
- An exploration of the inter-relationship of methodological thinking with identity, epistemology and ontology in research

Power of Domestication

- There is always a danger that we might become secure in our own docility and domestication into accepting such identities without the need for any questioning
- Critical inquiry is our way of resisting any such possible domestication from the habitual reproduction of extant identities found in particular traditions
- The research model occupies that abstract space between the capacity to be able to do something in research and what is done in practice, as reflected in the discourses by those professions represented within the professional doctorate

Power of Possibilities

- Multiplicity of possible framings of research for the professional doctorate programme is given by the structure of bricolage
- Seeks to avoid reductionism and closure in inquiry, and open rigorous research to a multiplicity of framings by creating what, in effect, we now regard as *the diagram* for researchers.
- This diagram incorporates a series of maps which gather together philosophical standpoints, theoretical perspectives, multiple methods, narrative techniques, and so on... that can be used as complementary forms of framing for social research.

Power of Dialogue

At issue in the development of the practice of research through the professional doctorate is the question of rigour; namely, the question of those law-like principles disciplining the production of identifiable points of knowledge through research within an open-ended field of power, and the application of such a form of rigour in the multiplicity of professional practice

The question is not about the hospitality given to these ideas but the opening of critical dialogue that mobilises the transformative potential of power practice without losing the rigour of complex inquiry.