

Models of Intellectual Development: My Biggest A-ha Moment

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Bang for the Buck—High Impact Teaching Strategies

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The Challenge I Faced

- I was teaching macro at UMass Amherst at all levels
 - Intro to 300 people
 - Intermediate to groups of about 30 people
 - Graduate to about 15 people, all skeptical of mainstream econ
- My intermediate course was fabulous! It sang!!!
 - The other two, not so much
- What was I doing wrong?
- Attended a conference, 1989, and learned about “models of intellectual development”
- **Aha!!!**

Models of Intellectual Development

(also listed in handout on ED discussion page)

- Perry's Model
 - Perry, William. *Forms of intellectual and ethical development in the college years: A scheme*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1970.
- *Women's Way of Knowing* model:
 - Mary Field Belenky, Blythe McVicker Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger, Jill Mattuck Tarule. *Women's ways of knowing: the development of self, voice, and mind*. New York: Basic Books, 1986.
- These are models. Bring your social scientist mindset along. Abstractions. Helpful but not absolute.

Stages of Intellectual Development

- Stage 1. Dualism (Perry) or Received Knowledge (*Women's*)
 - Knowledge = set of Truths. Faculty = authority with right answer
- Stage 2. Multiplicity (Perry) or Subjective Knowledge (*Women's*)
 - Knowledge = collection of (educated?) opinions
 - Faculty (and students, too) = people with opinions.
- Stage 3. Relativism (Perry) or Procedural Knowledge (*Women's*)
 - Knowledge is contextual, situational, affected by assumptions
 - Faculty = teaching from their experience with ways of reasoning
- Stage 4. Commitment in Relativism (P) or Constructed Knowledge (W)
 - Students becoming creators/producers of knowledge

Implications for Teaching

- The students in any one class will be at a variety of stages
 - But the median/mean/mode will differ.
 - Intro is different than intermediate, which is different than grad
 - Not in amount of content, but in how they engage with content
- I viewed my job as nudging them out of their comfort zone and into the next stage
 - People don't like being nudged out of their comfort zone
- The Thoma article (see “ed” discussion board for link) has lots of specific suggestions for helping students move from one stage to the next

Teaching “how to do economics”

The Olney Method: 5 steps to critiquing an argument

- 1) Replicate the argument
- 2) Identify assumptions
- 3) Change an assumption
- 4) Argue to conclusion

Same conclusion? Go to #3

New conclusion? Go to #5

- 5) Verify or argue the validity of the alternative assumption