PRODUCTIVE LEARNING

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’Productive learning’ –
a widespread and slippery concept

- Google (2007): 160,000 hits
  - Another word for ‘good’ learning?
  - A consequence of accountability culture (productivity and outcomes)?
  - A reaction towards process focus in progressive ped?
Our perspective on ’productive learning’

• Socio-cultural theory: Dewey, Vygotsky, Bakhtin, Engestrøm

• Processes (practices)
  – How do we define ‘productive learning processes’?
    • Affords appropriation
    • Generates new understanding and new knowledge
  – What are important characteristics of such practices?
    – General and contextual
    – NB: Good practices do not necessarily produce good products!
  – What role can technology play?

• Products
  – How do we secure the quality of products?
  – What role can technology play in this?

• Productive vs. reproductive, unproductive, counter-productive
### Characteristic aspects of productive learning processes

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<th>Productive</th>
<th>Reproductive</th>
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<td><strong>Fostering curiosity in students</strong> (Sarason, 2004)</td>
<td><strong>(Passive) acquisition of external knowledge, values and skills</strong> (Biesta, 2001, 2002)</td>
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<td><strong>Motivation</strong></td>
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<td>• Inquiry</td>
<td>Textbook-driven</td>
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<td>• Disequilibrium</td>
<td>Test &amp; exam driven</td>
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<td>(Dewey 1910; 1916a; 1916b)</td>
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<td>• Problems, questions (Matusov, Biesta)</td>
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<td><strong>Prod participation and interactions</strong></td>
<td>Relying solely on (teacher) authority</td>
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<td>• Multivoiced</td>
<td>“the authoritative word”</td>
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<td>• Tension between divergent voices</td>
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<td>• “inner persuasive word” (Bakhtin, 1984, 1986; Wertsch, 1998)</td>
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<td><strong>Inner contradiction and expansion</strong> (Engeström, 1987)</td>
<td>Agreement and consensus as the ultimate goal</td>
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How to study the role of technology in prod. learn.?

Jones et al (2007): Necessary to study the activity system

- Example: case study of innovative law education Uni Bergen
  - Productive outcome: better grades, dramatic reduction in failure rate

- MACRO level
  - Strong pedagogical tradition in law: individualistic & reproductive
  - New pedagogy: problem oriented, technology supported social learning
• MESO level
  – Total reorganization: strict structuring, compulsory writing, sharing, electronic feedback, all texts public

• MICRO level
  Crucial questions:
  – To what extent and how do students utilize the learning potential of divergent voices and conflicting opinions?
  – How do students utilize the potentials of the e-network?
  – How does this influence the quality of text products?
How technology affected the quality of texts in law edu

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<th>- technology dependent</th>
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<td>Strictly structured study cycles: Students submit texts in VLE every week – open access</td>
<td>Provides students with models of high (and low) quality texts - genre requirements</td>
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<td>E-feedback from peers required + feedback from Teacher Ass.</td>
<td>New public arena – dialogic space Multiple voices – divergent views: improves argumentation</td>
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**Counterproductive aspects**

| Strong socializing tools | - foster conformity? |
| - colonize learners’ & teachers time? |
Law students’ weekly study rhythm in year 1

MONDAY
- Auditorium lectures
- Preparation for work group meeting

TUESDAY
- Workgroup meeting (10 students + TA)
- TA comments on student texts

WEDNESDAY
- Individual/group submission of written texts
- Multi-group meetings every third week
- Discussions between 3 student groups lead by one law teacher/PhD-student

THURSDAY
- Two students comment on peer texts
- Family and succession law

FRIDAY
- TA comments on student texts
- Contract law
- Legal method
- Administrative Law

Take-home exam

Sit-down exam

Vines & Dysthe, 2007