APPENDIX F: EVOCATIVE

The basic difference between the didactic modes and the evocative modes is the method used in the learning process: the major means employed in the evocative modes is inquiry and discovery. Among the evocative modes, we discovered several major prototypes. If we analyze the teaching-learning process and divide it into its component elements, it is evident that there are basic—teacher, learner, and subject matter—skills being taught. The major prototypes of evocative teachers can be differentiated according to different views that professors hold about their relationships to the other two elements involved in the process—the learners and the subject matter. These relationships, between these three elements—what we might call their "fit"—are extensively varied. Typically, one of the elements moves to the center of the teaching-learning process, and the other two elements are expected to accommodate themselves to its demands and requirements. In the university classroom, it is the teaching style of the professor that determines which two of the elements are expected to make the greatest amount of accommodation and which one remains relatively stable.

Out of the major teaching prototypes focuses on subject matter, and it is therefore the other two elements—teacher and learner—that must undergo adjustment. Neither teachers nor learners are permitted to reshape the subject matter, except in quite minor ways. The subject matter is simply not expected to accommodate itself to them; no matter what their requirements or special conditions might be. Teachers who are subject-matter-oriented usually view with alarm any suggestion that the subject matter of a course ought to be changed. They protest that any altering of subject matter would be tampering with academic standards. They believe that changing the subject matter in any basic way in order to accommodate the special needs of students would be detrimental to society, to the university, and to the long run to the students themselves.

But those professors who take as their teaching model one of the other major prototypes in the evocative modes insist that such a view is based largely on an academic myth. What they ask is, "subject matter" anyway? They hold that the conventional boundaries and content of each field of knowledge are determined by historical accidents and are preserved (although often revised and updated) by the learned societies—those guilds which the professionals in each subject field have created to protect and nurture themselves. The prototypes followed by these professors, then, focus on other elements of the teaching-learning process.

The second major teaching prototype focuses on the second element—the professor himself. The instructor-centered teacher views the other two elements—students and subject matter—should accommodate themselves to him. He is, after all, the possessor of knowledge and a model for learners. He could hardly submit to alteration for the sake of the other two elements because that would be to surrender his ego to unknown and possibly hostile forces. When a nationally famous American professor of French was reproached by his department chairman for not teaching his sophomore French class at an appropriately elementary level, he replied: "When a restaurateur hires a Escorial, he does not ask him to make hamburgers." The instructor-centered teacher, when he is not reduced to such a defensive stance, however, builds his argument on a different basis: if the university teacher is to be pushed into a shape that is not his own, then the humanity and the individuality of the professor are lost and we might as well invest in more efficient types of programmed learning. Students and subject matter remain important for the instructor-centered teacher, but they must be adjusted to fit what he is.

The third teaching prototype places its emphasis on the student. Student-centered professors argue that the teaching-learning process will not be effective if conditions require the student element to be vastly reshaped before the process can get started. Their view is that if the student is expected to accommodate himself to the other two elements in the educational transaction, if he is pushed into a shape other than his own, the whole educational process is endangered. The student's requirements—the steps needed for his development—are what is important. In this view, the whole undergraduate enterprise—classes and courses and professors—exists to meet the student's needs as a growing human being.

These three prototypes are based, then, on the three elements of the teaching-learning process. Those teachers who focus on subject matter follow the Principles-and-facts Prototype. Their teaching is organized around their desire to help students master principles, concepts, analytic tools, theories, applications, and relevant facts. It is characterized by two main features: an emphasis on cognitive knowledge, and the systematic coverage of a given segment of that knowledge in each of their courses.

Those teachers who focus on themselves and their own ideas follow the Instructor-centered Prototype. These teachers organize class sessions around their desire to help the student learn to approach problems in a field as they themselves approach them. Like their colleagues who follow the Principles-and-facts Prototype, they concentrate on transmitting segments of cognitive knowledge, but unlike these colleagues they use the force of their own personalities and their own unique points of view to give shape to that knowledge.

It became apparent during our investigation and analysis of student-centered teachers that there are two student-centered prototypes. One type of professor emphasizes the personal development of the student but limits the scope of his endeavor to the development of the student's mind. Those professors follow the Student-as-mind Prototype. The class sessions of such a teacher are typically organized around his desire to help his students acquire a set of skills and abilities that are intellectual in nature. Students are taught to adopt reason and language as their major tools and to use problem-solving as the major means of investigating subject matter. The second type of student-centered professor emphasizes the personal development of the whole student—his entire personality and not just his mind. Those professors follow the Student-as-person Prototype. Such a teacher organizes his class sessions around his desire to help students develop as individuals, along all the dimensions—particularly the nonintellectual dimensions—where growth appears necessary or desirable. The student's peer group (his classmates in a given course, for example) is used as a means for accomplishing such development.


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