



UiT The Arctic University of Norway

## A Construction for the Transmission of Growth: On Metaphors in Education

Pål Anders Opdal, UiT – The Arctic University of Norway / NMH – The Norwegian Academy of Music



# Claim and Questions

- Metaphors are ubiquitous in education
- Question 1: Why?
- Question 2: Is this a happy state of affairs?

# Demonstration / backing

- Absorb, acquisition, agricultural, appropriation, artist, artistry, assembly line, attainment, banking, basketball game, bigger than Ben Hur, Bildung, billiard balls, boundaries, brain freeze, breadmaking, brick, broken system, budding minds, builder, building, business, candles being lit, care, catalyst, ceiling, child-centered, clay, climate, **clinician**, cluster, coaching, cognitive dissonance, collector, commodities, commodity, computations, conditioning, conductor, **construction**, consumers, consumption, container, contributor, cooking, cramming, creators, crossed, cultivating, cure, death and life, deer, deficits, delivery, dentist, dentistry, depositor, depositories, diagnostic testing, diagnostician, director, discover, dissonance, doctors, echo, ecology, educational pearls, encoding, engine, enlightenment, equilibrium, evolving bonds, exchange, facilitation, facilitator, factory, factory worker, factory workers, falling bridge, family, fertilizer, filter, fire, flipped classroom, **flowing waters**, fly, formation, frames of reference, friend, funnel, funneling, gardener, gardening, gelling together, goods, **grow**, growth, guide, guide on the side, guiding, healing, hospital, housework, improvisational dance, institution, instruments, **internalization**, journeying, ladder, lamplighter, left behind, legitimate peripheral practitioner, lights, machine executive, machines, manager of production line, managers, manufacturing, map, market, maturity, mechanical, melting pot, member, mental discipline, mental meals, mentor, mid-wife, modelling, molds, mortuary, narration, nurture, nurturing, objects of knowledge, off track, orange, orchestrating, oscillating, over the wall, participation, particles in a box, parts-catalog approach, path, peeling an onion, percolation, performer, persuasion, plant, plants, portkey, pottery, pouring water, practitioner, prescription, production, productive, products, products to be packaged, progressive, pulling, pupil, pushing, quilting bee, race, raw material, recapitulation, receiving, reception, recipe, recipients, recoding, reek, refining, regimens of treatment, regurgitation, remedy, researcher, resonances, respite, risk, sage on the stage, scaffolding, scholar, sculptor, search engine, seed, service, shaping, shepherding, shopping malls, showing, sick patient, sickness, sliding, continuum, solar system, sorting machine, specialty shops, spiral, social worker, sponge, spoon-feeding, sport, staircase, start fire, stir, stir the pot, stock, storytelling, strengthening, student-centered, surface, sweet and nourishing, system, **teacher centered**, team leader, technician, technocrat, teeming crowd, texture, therapist, threshold, threshold concept, **through the fog**, tough bitter covering, tools, tour guide, trainer, transaction, transfer, transformation, transformative, translation, transmission, transmit, transmitter, trouble-shooter, turbulence, umbrella, underlying, unified system, uphill battle, vessel, victims vision walk, war, wastelands, water, weakening, well-ordered machine workers, zone, zone of proximal development.

# Representation / recognition

- From sample to universe
- Assembling reminders of what we already know (Wittgenstein, PI §§ 127ff)

# Views on metaphor

- A metaphor is a «figure of speech in which a name or descriptive word or phrase is transferred to an object or action different from, but analogous to, that to which it is literally applicable» (OED, «metaphor»)
- **Eating an orange is having the sun in one's mouth**
- Sun → eating an orange
- How is this possible?
- Metaphor is substitution
- Metaphor is comparison
- **Metaphor is interaction**

# The interaction-view on metaphor

- «a borrowing between intercourses of thought ... two ideas which co-operates in an inclusive meaning» (285)
- Understanding a metaphor is to be «forced to connect two ideas»
- A system of **associated commonplaces**
- «A system of ideas, not sharply delineated and yet sufficiently definite to admit of detailed enumeration»
- Orange / sun
- **Generative metaphor** (D. Scön): new perspectives / new frames of understanding

# Construction

- Learning is construction: the interaction of learning and the commonplaces associated to construction
- Builders, foremen, construction-site, scaffolds ...
- ... for students, teachers, classroom and didactics ...
- We start understanding the world, in this instance **learning**, in light of the metaphor, in this instance **construction**

# Transmission


- Teaching is transmission: the interaction of teaching and the commonplaces associated with transmission
- Messages, senders, receivers, media, interference ...
- ... for content, teachers, students, lecture ...
- We start understanding the world, in this instance **teaching**, in light of the metaphor, in this instance **transmission**



# Growth

- Education is growth: the interaction of education and the commonplaces associated with growth
- Seeds, soil, sun, rain, gardener, weeding ...
- ... for students, background factors, learning-environment teacher, didactics ...
- We start understanding the world, in this instance **education**, in light of the metaphor, in this instance **growth**

# Why the prevalence of metaphor?

- Education is a young science
  - Education as interdisciplinary enterprise
  - Education is a weak (non-rigorous) discipline
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# Happy state of affairs?

- Not if the aim is scientific (semantic) precision
- On the other hand – is it possible to talk about human teaching and learning and growth without using metaphor?
- If not #1: Conceptual formation in education = tracing the associated commonplaces?
- If not #2: Interesting question: How different is what the metaphors express?