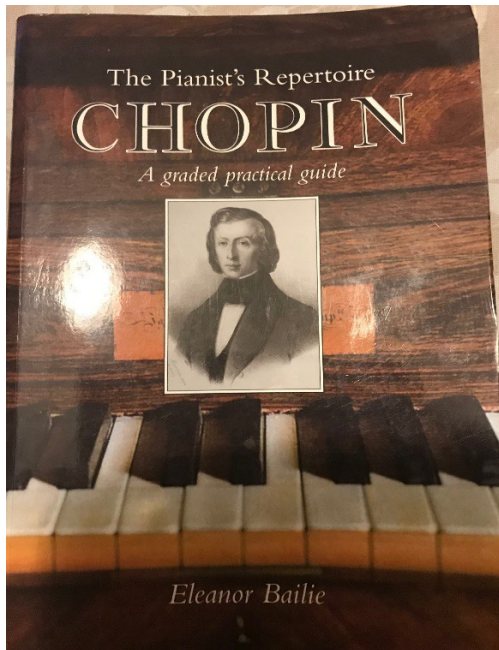


Theory of Knowledge Exhibition

Are some types of knowledge more useful than others?



My first object that I have chosen is one of my books - a practical guide giving the reader insight into how to play the extremely complex piano works composed by Frédéric Chopin.

Traditionally books tend to be associated closely with content-based knowledge. In everyday life and popular culture, the term “book learning” is usually used to mean academic knowledge from books, as opposed to practical or procedural knowledge. This academic knowledge is often seen as the most important and useful type of knowledge to have. However, sometimes being “book smart” is also used to refer to being traditionally academically clever as opposed to being savvy or “street smart”. In this case, the association with books can sometimes be used in a negative way to suggest that the person does not have practical knowledge of real life, or only has knowledge that lacks practical usefulness.

I chose this particular book to include in the exhibition because whilst the author gives me much background and content-based knowledge about key elements of the pieces, she also gives practical tips and aids me with how to develop and execute my procedural knowledge in the context of the piece (e.g. the practical fingerings). In this way, this book is both an important way of storing and spreading content knowledge but also of sharing procedural knowledge that the author garnered through decades of experience.

This book brings together content knowledge and procedural knowledge into one source, just as I bring my academic interest and my knowledge of how to play the piano. I believe that my enjoyment of the book is much higher as a result of being able to play the piano and try out the techniques suggested in the book. In this way, my having the procedural knowledge of how to play the piano enriches my enjoyment and understanding of the academic knowledge about Chopin.



My second object in my exhibition is four fishing spears, which are about 250 years old, and are from an exhibition at the Australian museum in Sydney. These spears were used by the aboriginals in Australia to fish. In the harsh and dry conditions of Australia, finding food on land will not have been easiest for the indigenous aboriginals, so those living near water will have made them resort to fishing with these spears, to garner food for them and their families. It was reported that these types of spears could reach up to six metres in length.

I chose this object carefully to help show that both content-based and procedural knowledge are important and useful depending on the situation, and that sometimes actually procedural knowledge is far more useful. Often content-based knowledge is seen as the most valuable and important type of knowledge. However, this does not mean that this type of knowledge is always the most useful. The spear is a great example of the usefulness of procedural knowledge, because if the tribe did not have the knowledge of how to fish in this way then they would probably have died.

These spears show an example where the implication of not having this practical type of knowledge would be very severe, or even fatal, and the tribe could go extinct. In this situation, no amount of content-based knowledge would be helpful to them if they didn't have the procedural knowledge of how to actually fish using the spears. They highlight that it is a mistake to dismiss procedural knowledge as not as important or useful as content-based knowledge, as sometimes the implications of not having procedural knowledge can be far more immediate and dangerous for us than the implications of not having content knowledge.



The third and final object that I am using for this exhibition is a photo of a person being awarded their PhD certificate. Receiving a PhD degree is the highest degree attainable in a given academic discipline, proving that one has expert content knowledge in their specific AOK. It is included in this exhibition as the classic and highly-respected example of achieving at the top level within the framework of traditional content-based knowledge.

Someone who has a PhD has proven themselves to possess the personal, content-based knowledge of the topic, but this does not mean that they necessarily have any practical, procedural knowledge related to that topic. In some fields, such as medicine, the person needs both content and procedural knowledge. But in some areas a PhD degree might not involve any procedural knowledge. For example, in philosophy or history.

A PhD degree can be very useful to people to help them get a job. If a person wants to get a job as an academic or professor then it is likely to be a necessary requirement to have a PhD. According to a 2016 article in *The Economist*, in some subjects having a PhD can also makes you more likely to earn a higher salary, on average 14% more. However, in some AOKs such as mathematics and social sciences this is not the case and in these areas people with a PhD earn the same salaries as people with a master's degree (*The Economist*, 2016).

This object shows that whether you see having this level of in-depth knowledge of one area as being useful will often depend on what that knowledge is needed for or will be used for. If I want to be a historian then having a PhD degree in history would be very useful. But in many other situations that type of highly specialised knowledge is not needed or useful.

Works Cited

Source for image 2: *Australian Museum*. australianmuseum.net.au/prongs-of-an-indigenous-fishing-spear-pre-1884.

Source for image 3: *LinkedIn*. www.slideshare.net/Wandrews963/phd-degree-certificate-50319910.

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