

*Locked Doors: Threshold Concepts as
Guardians of the Discipline*

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On Negotiation and Tribes

Writing about co-operation and solidarity means writing at the same time about rejection and mistrust

– Mary Douglas *How Institutions Think* (1986), 1

Overview

- Threshold Concepts as ‘enabling’
- Interdisciplinarity also as ‘enabling’
- Disciplinary skirmishes
- Scenarios of Engagement
- What next for interdisciplinary teaching?

On Knocking Down Walls

Scenario 1 'Surrender your passport'

'I just don't want them to blow up the plant: it's messier than blowing up a lab.'

Scenario 2. 'Here be Dragons'

A physiologist wrote:

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A historian responded:

Who makes that judgement . . . The brain? How does the brain do so? Automatically, presumably. . . Or are you implicitly distinguishing 'brain' from 'self'?

Here be More Dragons

And a pharmacologist continued privately to that historian:

If the brain is not a machine, then what is it? The only other possibility seems to be start talking about souls or some other form of mysticism. I'd prefer not to do that myself.

Scenario 3. 'Cattle-raiding'

The interesting question is not whether Derrida and his peers were correct but why they backed themselves into a corner where it was almost impossible to say anything about anything.

What about Students?