

Hedgehogs or Foxes? In Pursuit of Educational Equity

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Agenda

- An African proverb & story of an immigrant youth
- Metaphor of hedgehog and the fox
- Pluralistic policies/ practices – way forward in pursuing educational equity



An African Proverb

“Until the lion has his or her own storyteller, the hunter will always have the best part of the story”



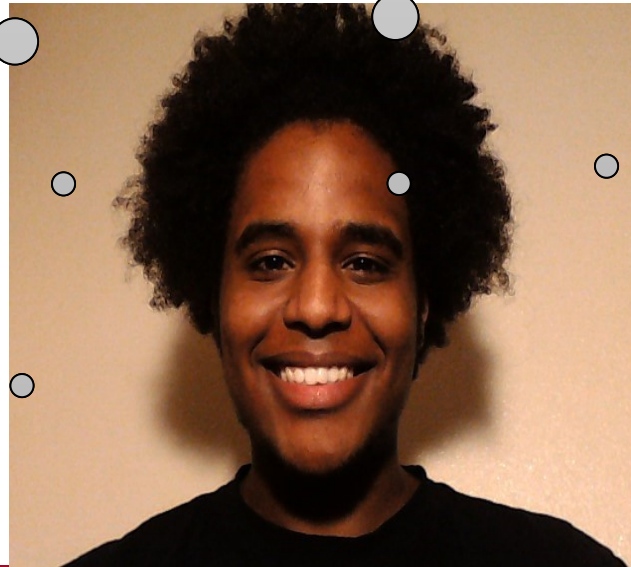
**Different
teaching and
learning styles**

**Teachers did
not care or
show interest
in him**

**His
contributions
not given
sufficient
attention by
teachers/peers**

**Europe
centric
curriculum –
Did not
understand
what teachers
talked about**

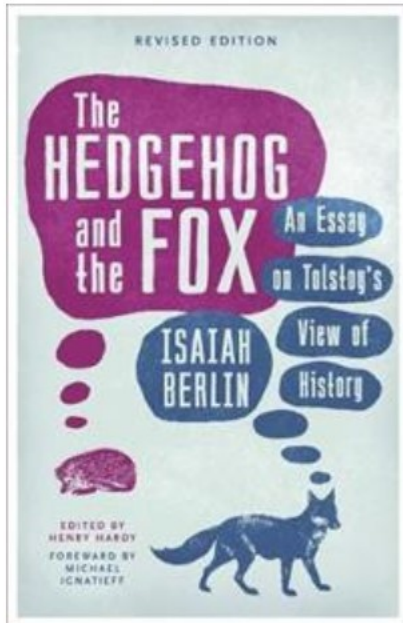
**Webpages,
important
documents,
emails and
important info
all in Finnish**



Tom's teachers' concerns

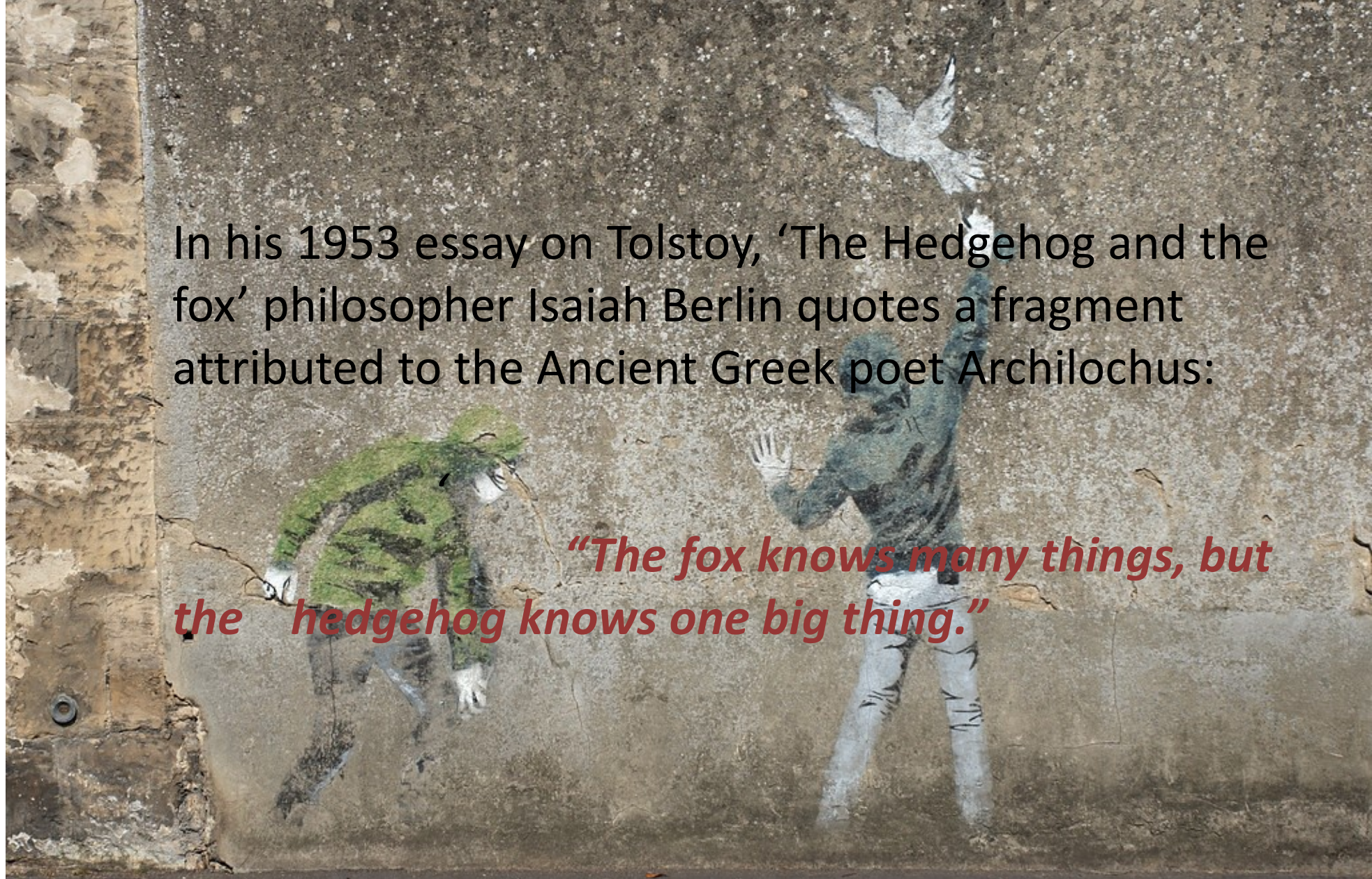


- Didn't pay attention in class, quite noisy
- Lacked initiative
- Didn't contribute to class discussions. When he did, his contribution deviated from topic
- Lacked basic ICT skills



In his 1953 essay on Tolstoy, 'The Hedgehog and the fox' philosopher Isaiah Berlin quotes a fragment attributed to the Ancient Greek poet Archilochus:

"The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing."





A hedgehog has a singular defensive mechanism – rolls itself up into a very effective spikey ball

Foxes know many things – they can run and dart and hide and pounce



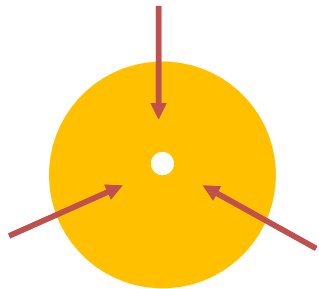
Berlin employs the analogy of the Hedgehog and the Fox to illuminate two fundamentally different types of thinking

‘There exists a great chasm between those, on one side, who relate everything to a single central vision, one system, less or more coherent or articulate, in terms of which they understand, think and feel – a single, universal, organising principle in terms of which alone all that they are and say has significance – and, on the other side, those who pursue many ends, often unrelated and even contradictory, connected, if at all, only in some de facto way, for some psychological or physiological cause, related to no moral or aesthetic principle.’

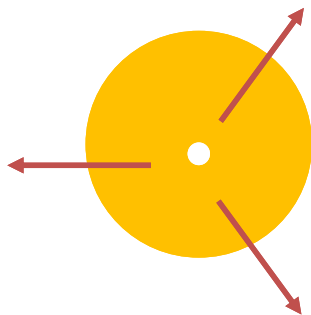
Berlin (1953, p 2)



Two fundamental types of thinkers



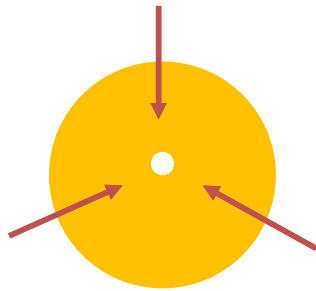
The hedgehogs are monists, stick to overarching laws. Their enthusiasms and enquiries converge, centripetally, on singular visions, value focus, best practice, order and specialism



Foxes are pluralists. They explore the infinite possibilities of life. Their interests and opinions spin off, centrifugally, cherish diverse skillsets, complexity, adaptability and speed

Features of Monist ideology

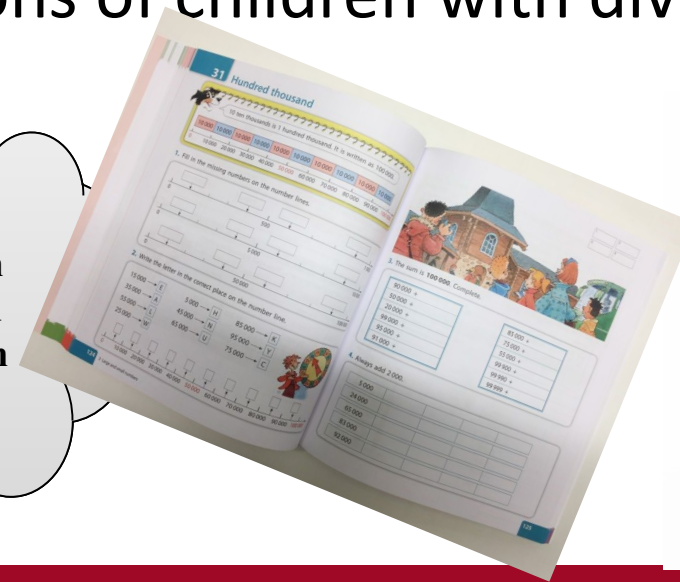
- Uncritical monolingual practices
- Uncritical monocultural practices
- Deficit perspectives
- Lower expectations of children with diverse background



- Europe centric curriculum



No
representation
in content and
visualization in
teaching
materials



Monist teachers treat all students equally and blame outcomes on individual characteristics and not the system



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Monist approach can have dire consequences

	PISA 2003				PISA 2012			
	Difference in mathematics performance between immigrant and non-immigrant students		Difference in mathematics performance between immigrant and non-immigrant students AFTER accounting for socio-economic status		Difference in mathematics performance between immigrant and non-immigrant students		Difference in mathematics performance between immigrant and non-immigrant students AFTER accounting for socio-economic status	
	Score dif.	S.E.	Score dif.	S.E.	Score dif.	S.E.	Score dif.	S.E.
Australia	3	(4,1)	-1	(3,5)	-26	(3,6)	-29	(3,4)
Austria	60	(5,5)	37	(5,3)	59	(5,2)	33	(4,9)
Belgium	100	(7,0)	67	(6,0)	75	(5,0)	52	(3,9)
Canada	1	(3,9)	2	(3,6)	2	(4,4)	-2	(3,9)
Czech Republic	36	(13,8)	24	(14,1)	26	(11,8)	20	(11,4)
Denmark	68	(8,0)	44	(7,6)	66	(3,6)	40	(3,2)
Finland	73	(10,6)	68	(9,4)	85	(5,0)	65	(4,6)
France	54	(7,0)	22	(5,7)	67	(6,9)	37	(6,4)
Germany	81	(6,9)	38	(6,4)	54	(6,0)	25	(5,6)
Greece	43	(6,2)	28	(5,9)	51	(6,4)	28	(6,4)
Hungary	5	(10,2)	4	(8,7)	-31	(13,3)	-13	(13,2)
Iceland	35	(13,4)	29	(14,6)	52	(8,6)	31	(8,4)
Ireland	4	(10,3)	18	(9,3)	2	(4,8)	4	(4,5)
Italy	22	(11,9)	17	(11,3)	48	(3,5)	32	(3,3)
Luxembourg	38	(2,8)	15	(2,9)	40	(3,3)	10	(3,3)
Mexico	92	(12,1)	75	(11,5)	73	(5,5)	66	(4,3)
Netherlands	66	(9,0)	41	(7,4)	57	(7,1)	35	(7,2)
New Zealand	14	(6,0)	9	(4,8)	0	(5,4)	-2	(4,4)
Norway	52	(7,6)	38	(6,9)	46	(6,6)	29	(6,6)
Portugal	61	(19,1)	62	(17,1)	44	(7,2)	39	(7,8)
Slovak Republic	64	(20,0)	58	(19,5)	-5	(21,1)	-6	(18,8)
Spain	45	(10,5)	38	(9,4)	52	(4,3)	36	(4,3)
Sweden	64	(8,3)	44	(7,4)	58	(5,1)	40	(4,9)
Switzerland	76	(4,5)	51	(4,2)	63	(3,2)	42	(3,0)
Turkey	33	(24,7)	38	(19,0)	-3	(31,1)	5	(27,3)
United States	28	(6,3)	6	(4,9)	13	(5,9)	-15	(4,9)
OECD average 2003	47	(2,1)	33	(1,9)	37	(1,9)	23	(1,7)
Hong Kong-China	12	(3,6)	-2	(3,6)	8	(4,4)	-11	(3,8)
Latvia	3	(5,7)	10	(5,2)	6	(7,8)	10	(7,7)



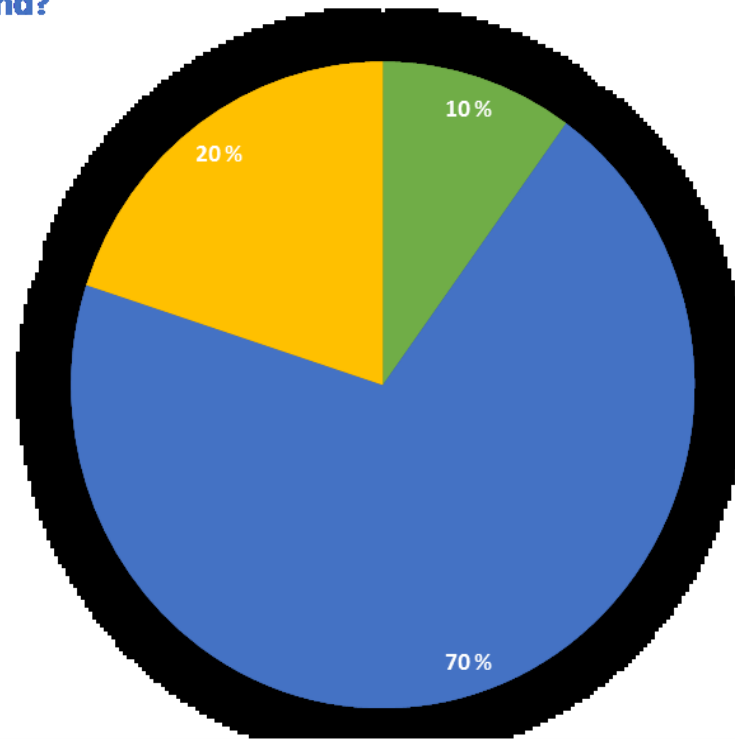

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Minna Suni
Jouni Vettenranta



Opetus- ja kulttuuri-ministeriö




Thematic analysis: You have chatted with an MLL in your school and have found the student to speak finnish fluently. However, when the student is in your class, you notice that the student struggles academically. How would you respond?



■ awaareness ■ Lack of awareness ■ Provide occasional support





In order to tackle
structural injustices in
education, we need
pluralist vision, policies
and practices





**We need pluralist
classrooms where diversity
is a resource/productive**

**We need inclusive
classrooms**





In the USA, Ladson-Billings (2009) has distinguished characteristics of teachers successful with African American students:

- They hold specific conceptions of self and others (e.g. the teacher is part of the community, believes in all students)
- Maintain social relations (e.g. the teacher connects with all students, encourages collaboration and community aspects)
- Co-construct knowledge with students, view knowledge critically and diverse aspects are taken into account)
- Build bridges between students' experiences at home and their learning experience in the classroom, in this way validating cultural diversity

Pluralist teachers in Ladson-Billings' study, "in conjunction with their students, critiqued the knowledge written in the textbooks.... They wrote letters to the editor of the local newspaper to inform the community of the situation" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 162).





Pluralists teachers develop Positive Social Identities

- Students develop language, as well as historical and cultural knowledge, that affirms and accurately describes their membership in multiple identity groups (such as identities related to race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, nationality, language, ability, religion, socioeconomic status, age, and geography)

[The Geordie symphony school](#)



Social Justice Consciousness

- Students recognize unfairness on the individual level and injustice at the institutional or systemic level, locally, nationally, and globally, analyzing its harmful impact on themselves and others
- Link their own well-being with that of people who differ from themselves and understand that one's well-being may result from the marginalization of others

[Students created this video illustrating how teaching and learning about injustices works in Marisol Moreno's fourth grade classroom](#) Video credit:

Developed by Christine Sleeter, California State University Monterey Bay





To Conclude

- Pluralist pedagogies are humanizing pedagogies – it's all about connecting us
- Learning is not = monitoring or compliance
- Move away from essentialist list of what to do – it's all about attitudinal change





**Are you a
Hedgehog or a
Fox?**



Thank you!

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