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Author: Legg, Catherine
Title: 'Diagrammatic Teaching': The Role of Iconic Signs in Meaningful Pedagogy
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Abstract: Charles S. Peirce's semiotics uniquely divides signs into: (i) symbols, which pick out their objects by arbitrary convention or habit, (ii) indices, which pick out their objects by unmediated 'pointing', and (iii) icons, which pick out their objects by resembling them (as Peirce put it: an icon's parts are related in the same way that the objects represented by those parts are themselves related). Thus representing structure is one of the icon's greatest strengths. It is argued that the implications of scaffolding education iconically are profound: for providing learners with a navigable road-map of a subject matter, for enabling them to see further connections of their own in what is taught, and for supporting meaningful active learning. Potential objections that iconic teaching is excessively entertaining and overly susceptible to misleading rhetorical manipulation are addressed.
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