5 Teaching, integrity and the development of professional responsibility

Why we need pedagogical phronesis

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Introduction

The possession of a doctorate has long been seen as a sufficient qualification to teach at university coupled with the received wisdom that teachers are born, not made. These assumptions have tended to retard efforts to raise the status of teaching in higher education. Over the last 20 years, there has been an exponential growth in professional development for academic faculty in response to the massification of higher education and increasing competition between institutions for students, both nationally and internationally (Knapper 2010). This period has also seen the introduction of a wide range of reward and recognition schemes to promote interest in, and respect for, the teaching role. Considerable efforts have been made to promote the scholarship of teaching and learning in the wake of Boyer’s influential work (Boyer 1990). Yet, international survey data indicate that the proportion of university faculty whose primary interest is in teaching has actually fallen since 1992, while those indicating their primary interest is in research has risen by 9 per cent (Locke 2008). This is indicative of a shifting set of priorities that have important implications for the notion of professional responsibility.

Halsey and Trow’s study of British academics during the 1960s found that only 10 per cent were interested in research and a mere 4 per cent regarded research as their first duty (Halsey & Trow 1971). Writing in the late 1970s, Wilson asserts that the majority of American academics considered ‘teaching to be more important than research’ (Wilson 1979: 234). Hence, the prioritisation of research over teaching is a relatively recent trend and might appear strange, or even perverse, given the need to raise professional teaching standards in a modern mass system. This attitude, though, is consistent with the increasing fragmentation of the academic profession into the para-academic functions associated with teaching, research and service (Macfarlane 2011a). It is partly a result of the expansion of the higher education system worldwide and the increasing division of labour among academic faculty that has accompanied it. The proportion of faculty employed in ‘teaching-only’ positions has increased and the unbundling of the role means that academic life is now more differentiated into the ‘haves’ and ‘have nots’. Crudely, the ‘haves’ work in elite institutions, do
research and spend comparatively little time teaching. The ‘have nots’ work in access-based institutions, do little or no research, and spend most of their time teaching and assessing students (Sikes 2006).

The growth of higher education has split the academic profession more starkly than ever before. In this context, professional responsibility is under severe pressure, particularly in relation to teaching as a relatively disesteemed activity despite institutional efforts to reward good practice at the margin. Here it is important to note that such efforts rarely displace the pre-eminence of research and may even lower the status as a result of tokenism and the strengthening of bifurcation (Macfarlane 2011b). Faculty at elite institutions, in particular, are being encouraged to become enterprising income-generators committed to increasing their citation rating rather than professional and responsible teachers.

In this context, this chapter will focus on the role and function of initial professional development courses for academics with a teaching role and the importance of incorporating a focus on ethical issues in academic practice. It will explore the centrality of ethical issues to professional teaching practice and how integrity may be developed through a focus on practice dilemmas linked to virtue theory. This approach to professional ethics contrasts with compliance-oriented codes of practice. Drawing on an Aristotelian approach, I will argue that the most important quality of a ‘good’ teacher is pedagogical phronesis (McLaughlin 1999), one of several key intellectual and moral virtues – including fairness, authenticity, collegiality and humility – which are central to acting in a professionally responsible manner.

The growth of professional development

There has been a significant growth in initial professional development courses for teachers in higher education since the late 1990s across a number of national contexts. In the UK alone, over 100 such programmes have been accredited by the Higher Education Academy. Demands for higher professional teaching standards among academic faculty are growing. National professional teaching standards for higher education have already been developed in the UK and a recent government-backed report on university funding has recommended that all new academics with teaching responsibilities should take a teaching training qualification (Browne 2010).

In constructing the curriculum, teaching and learning certificate programmes face an uneasy tension between pressures to induct participants into institution-specific procedures and policies as opposed to more theoretically driven critical analysis of pedagogic practice, informed by the wider research literature. The academic interests and professional instincts of educational developers who organize and teach such programmes tend to lean toward the latter objective but significant institutional pressures can exist for greater attention to be paid to the advocacy and inculcation of policies and mission statements. Programmes are also predominantly based on a ‘psychologised’ understanding of teaching in
higher education and draw on concepts such as deep and surface learning, reflective practice and learning styles. The philosophy, sociology and history of (higher) education (Peters 1964) is largely excluded from this curriculum while there is a significant ‘pedagogic gap’ (Malcolm & Zukas 2001) between professional preparation programmes and the complex, uncertain and ‘messy’ reality of being a higher education teacher. Developing a theoretical and practical understanding of the ethical issues of academic practice is a part of developing a strong sense of professional responsibility. If practitioners can be encouraged to do so, this is one way of closing the pedagogic gap between teaching and learning theory and actual practice.

Postgraduate Certificates in learning and teaching in higher education are now offered by nearly all UK and Australian universities as a mechanism for ensuring that new academic faculty are prepared for the teaching role. Universities in other parts of the world, such as Hong Kong, also provide a range of ‘introductory’ or induction-type courses of between a day and a week in duration. While shorter in duration, these programmes face similar challenges in balancing content between academic and institutional-specific purposes. Many postgraduate certificates were derived from former induction programmes where the main focus was on inculcating policies and procedures rather than a broader form of professional development. They also derive from the largely practical focus of early educational development units in the 1960s (Land 2004). The work of the UK Staff and Educational Development Association and the Higher Education Research and Staff Development Association of Australasia has helped to support the gradual spread of such programmes from the early 1990s.

In the UK, a fresh impetus was given to the professional development of faculty in the late 1990s with the publication of the Dearing report on higher education which recommended, *inter alia*, the need to raise the status of teaching (NCIHE 1997). The report also led to the creation of the Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education, which became an accrediting body for postgraduate certificates in learning and teaching at UK universities. By 2007, the newly re-branded Higher Education Academy had accredited 168 such programmes (Kandlbinder & Peseta 2009). A series of similar reforms have been introduced in Australia, including the establishment of the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (formerly the Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education) in 2004 and a Learning and Teaching Fund designed to incentivize institutions to improve the quality of the student ‘experience’.

Hence, initial professional development for academic faculty has moved firmly into the mainstream in the space of little over ten years. In the UK, a range of system-wide forces contributed to this rapid growth including further massification, the introduction of professional teaching standards for higher education in 2006 and the increasing benchmarking of university standards through quality assurance measures and the publication of market-sensitive data on student satisfaction levels. In Australia, similar pressures exist with new academic
Underpinning assumptions

Training as teachers, not academics

Professional development programmes for academics are almost entirely concerned with their preparation as ‘teachers’ in higher education rather than academic practitioners who also research and perform service tasks (Blackmore & Blackwell 2006). While sometimes these courses are referred to as about ‘academic practice’, this phrase tends to be interpreted quite narrowly and in reality focuses almost exclusively on teaching and student learning. Where ‘research’ is included in the aims and objectives of such courses, this tends to be about encouraging participants to undertake research into their own teaching practice otherwise known as ‘pedagogic research’. Curiously, the nature of this commitment can potentially conflict, or lead to a change of focus away from, subject-based research more likely to benefit the career development of academic faculty (Stierer 2007).

Hence, programmes of ‘professional development’ for university teachers that focus on the teaching role look increasingly out of kilter with the emergence of research expectations in ‘new’ as well as ‘old’ universities (Sikes 2006). Increased competition among institutions for research funding in the wake of research audit exercises in the UK, Australia and New Zealand are having a significant effect on the re-shaping of academic practice but this is yet to be substantially reflected in the way postgraduate certificates are constructed. While the successful completion of a Postgraduate Certificate is often an espoused condition of probation at UK universities for inexperienced faculty, there is little evidence that this requirement is enforced in practice. In other words, while institutions are formally committed to new faculty becoming ‘competent’ teachers, their career chances are really shaped by a broader set of considerations increasingly focused on their research, publication and income generation activities.

Moreover, professional development courses in teaching are more firmly established in institutions that are predominantly teaching rather than research led. While this might appear consistent with institutional mission, faculty working in such institutions are more likely to possess a strong teaching background, possibly as a result of having previously worked in the schools or post-compulsory education sector rather than coming from a research background. Hence, the professional development needs of faculty in teaching-led institutions tend to coalesce around research rather than teaching. It follows that faculty working in research-intensive institutions may require relatively more teaching development provision, although their personal and professional objectives are unlikely to identify such needs.
The domesticating curriculum

Many postgraduate certificates originated as induction courses and expanded over a number of years until some form of formally accredited programme emerged (Land 2004). This background means that there is still an often unspoken tension between, on the one hand, induction into institutional procedures, cultures and modes of working, and, on the other, a more critical engagement with an academic body of literature concerned with learning and teaching in higher education. While most programmes seek to traverse these two aims, there is almost always an uneasy tension between them.

The role of Postgraduate Certificates in enculturalisation is reflected in the way that universities tend to regard educational development units as agents of institutional change and consequently link or align them closely with human resource and central management functions as a result (Bath & Smith 2004; D'Andrea and Gosling 2001). Most are located as part of central support services rather than in academic faculties. This location creates a tension between different types of course aims.

Postgraduate certificates are, by definition, a masters’ level qualification prompted in large part by the need to demonstrate that such an award for teaching has academic status. This status necessitates, or perhaps justifies, the construction of aims and objectives that are academic in nature and connected with examining a body of theoretical knowledge and associated ideas critically. Yet, in practice, another set of institution-specific aims tend to exist alongside these academic objectives. These are associated with inducting ‘students’ (who are often, in effect, colleagues) into institutional practices and ensuring that they conform to a variety of connected values. This can include their preparation to teach according to localized (and sometimes amateurish) definitions of ‘good practice’ assessed through observation by often untrained but ‘experienced’ senior faculty, and a preparedness to internalize and express implicit or explicit support for prevailing university policies and strategies. Indicative of this latter orientation is where programmes focus strongly on the inculcation of policies concerning, say, student diversity and inclusivity, and course approval and quality assurance processes with ‘expert’ teaching contributions from organizational postholders in these various areas. Hence, the institutional status and location of postgraduate certificates tends to result in a competing, and often conflicting, set of aims. This type of programme may be labelled as postgraduate but much of the learning can, in the worse cases, be essentially about the internalization of organizational practices.

Such practices are connected to what Trowler and Cooper (2002) would characterise as teaching and learning ‘regimes’ exacting in the process a substantial influence over the formation of academic identity in the context of teaching and learning programmes. Their analysis also draws on the distinction made by Agyris & Schön (1974) between espoused versions of these regimes and how they really operate in practice to argue that the extent to which the curriculum
is open to negotiation on the basis of practitioner needs is questionable (Trowler & Cooper 2002).

A strong institutional focus calls into question the extent to which such programmes are genuinely critical and academic in nature rather than a narrower form of context-specific training. The credibility of programmes can be adversely affected where they focus too heavily on seeking to disseminate institutional policies and priorities, particularly among faculty who see themselves as ‘cosmopolitans’ rather than ‘locals’ (Gouldner 1957). These ‘cosmopolitans’ identify more strongly with their discipline than the organization, tend to be more research-active and engaged with communities of colleagues beyond rather than within the institution. In this context, participation in and completion of a postgraduate certificate is about ‘toeing the line’ and possibly fulfilling a probationary requirement (Macfarlane & Gourlay 2009). Such programmes are predominantly aimed at young and inexperienced faculty who are rarely in the position to challenge the intellectual focus or the need to comply if they wish to fulfil their probationary requirements. In terms of professional responsibility, this means that such courses take as their main point of reference the institution rather than the profession. As a result, professionalism is presented through a narrow prism. While the espoused emphasis of such courses is often on the importance of critical engagement and contestation, the hidden curriculum is about domestication and the inculcation of institutional norms and values.

The ‘psychologised’ curriculum

Another underpinning assumption of postgraduate certificates is their theoretical basis. Most are heavily focused on a limited number of key concepts drawn principally from the psychology of education. According to a recent survey undertaken by Kandlbinder & Peseta (2009), the five most dominant concepts in such programmes are:

- reflective practice derived mainly from the work of Schön (1983);
- ‘constructive alignment’ derived from the work of Biggs (1996);
- deep and surface learning derived from the work of Marton & Säljö (1976);
- the scholarship of teaching and learning derived from Boyer (1990) and others;

These concepts are listed in order of their influence with reflective practice the most dominant. This finding corresponds with the similarly dominant role of reflective practice as the ‘underlying philosophy’ of teacher education for the school sector over the last 20 years (Whitty et al. 1992: 297). Arguably only the first three of the ideas identified by Kandlbinder and Peseta represent...
theoretically grounded concepts with the final two (the scholarship of teaching and learning and assessment-driven learning) embodying a broader grouping of socio-political stances, notably the ‘scholarship of teaching and learning’, which has been criticized for its anti-intellectualism and conceptual confusion (Boshier 2009). What the survey reveals is the dominance of what Malcolm & Zukas (2001) have identified as the psychologised curriculum for higher education teachers. Here, psychological approaches to teaching and learning tend to predominate, resulting in a reductive and more limited conceptualisation of pedagogy as an educational ‘transaction’ between individual learners and teachers, and an asocial construction of the learner. While the psychology of education has always represented an important strand of educational scholarship, it comprises only a small proportion of educational research as a whole (Crozier 2007). Thus, novice higher education faculty are only being inducted into a small segment of the relevant literature, which might more broadly include the sociology of the discipline (e.g. Becher & Trowler 2001), the history of higher education in the relevant context, and the aims of higher education (Barnett 1990). Nor do such courses introduce faculty to their potential wider social role as public intellectual acting as critics, commentators and advocates of particular causes (Said 1994). Here there is a tradition, particularly in some national contexts such as France, for academics to work in trying to influence attitudes in society drawing them into contestation beyond their own immediate academic specialism. To echo Trowler & Cooper (2002), there is a need for postgraduate certificate courses to ‘move beyond’ the psychological approach to one which more strongly encompasses sociological perspectives.

The evidencing of practice

A fourth underpinning assumption of postgraduate certificates is their mode of assessment. Most adopt some form of ‘reflective portfolio’ consisting of a mixture of evidence gathering and more academically oriented engagement with the literature. Portfolios are becoming increasingly popular as a means of evidencing the professional learning of a wide range of professions (Baume & Yorke 2002). In the UK, portfolios are often organised to demonstrate explicitly compliance with national professional standards. This makes it relatively straightforward for such courses to meet accreditation requirements since their learning outcomes are identical, in effect, to the professional standards.

However, assessment by portfolio raises a number of concerns around authenticity. Portfolios often purport to provide a mechanism for professionals to connect their working practice with theory but can encourage a compliance-based approach to values requiring participants to ‘evidence’ the way in which they meet these expectations. This tends to result in a defensive, anodyne and sometimes inauthentic description of critical incidents, where new professionals feel they must demonstrate their commitment to particular values such as ‘diversity’ or institutional managerial objectives, such as the use of a prescribed university virtual learning environment. Requiring participants to scratch around
for evidence of their ‘competence’ or ‘goodness’ in this way is both embarrassing and fundamentally flawed as a means of professional preparation. Even if encouraged to do so, participants will rarely reveal a great deal in such documents about their failures (or doubts) as a teacher preferring instead to focus on successes that demonstrate that they have ‘met’ various required standards. Such behaviour is about conforming with performative expectations rather than engaging meaningfully with the concept of professional responsibility. This raises a fundamental question about the extent to which assessing teaching development in this way can be considered authentic. The fear is that participants, who are often already skilled academic writers in their own right, may simply play the ‘assessment game’ (Stocks & Trevitt 2008).

The neglect of values

In the UK, the representation of evidence in reflective portfolios will often mirror the accreditation requirements of the Higher Education Academy, which identifies a series of areas of professional knowledge, areas of activity and professional values, the latter of which are expressed in the following terms (The Higher Education Academy 2010):

1. respect for individual learners;
2. commitment to incorporating the process and outcomes of relevant research, scholarship and/or professional practice;
3. commitment to development of learning communities;
4. commitment to encouraging participation in higher education, acknowledging diversity and promoting equality of opportunity;
5. commitment to continuing professional development and evaluation of practice.

In the context of the preparation of a higher education faculty, professional values are seen, in practice, as subsidiary to the areas of ‘knowledge’ and ‘activities’ which serve to define the professional capacities of a higher education teacher in the UK. Yet the portfolio method of assessment means that novice teachers are often required to evidence that they have ‘met’ or in some sense conform with this set of values. This can lead to statements, for example, that the novice teacher has taken particular measures to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities or sought to encourage greater integration of international students within class activities. While such initiatives are important, the requirement to report such activities in such self-justificatory terms is of dubious value. Also, the teaching-only nature of postgraduate certificate programmes makes it difficult for practitioners to develop an understanding of ethics and values connected to academic practice and identity more broadly.

Ethics and values in relation to professional practice more generally are often seen to be ‘covered’ by reference to a written code or set of principles or values. When such codes are used as the sole basis of professional development, this
tends to encourage compliance rather than an engagement with values. Moreover, the UK has adopted a set of professional values, which, while generally non-contentious, have limited specific relevance to teaching in a higher education environment as opposed to any other. Elsewhere I have suggested that commitments such as protecting student academic freedom or understanding the needs of adult learners would have had more resonance for many faculty working in higher education than this set of general teaching values (Macfarlane & Ottewill 2005).

Another difficulty in depending on a written code of practice is that, while such documents invariably contain a praiseworthy set of sentiments, they are often too generalized and de-contextualized to be of much value to the practitioner. Faced with a real, often complex situation, a professional academic would rarely find much comfort or use in relying on a code of practice. In teaching professionals about ethical issues, such codes tend to be arid, prescriptive documents that take little account of the ‘messy’ reality of practice. An alternative approach is to think of the ethics of academic practice as connected with everyday moral ‘virtues’. These refer to excellences of character that are required by professionals to carry out their role as teachers. The idea of virtue goes beyond the idea of ‘skills’ or techniques associated with being an effective teacher such as how to give a lecture or classroom control (Carr 2009). For Aristotle, virtues were things like courage, generosity and truthfulness (Aristotle 1906).

Virtues do not provide a step-by-step guide to action in the manner of an ethical algorithm, as they are essentially concerned with personal identity rather than action, although the assumption is that ‘good’ people are more likely to do ‘good’ things. Learning about virtue takes place on a continuous basis and is refined through experience and influenced by others, notably professional role models. This means that someone never really ‘acquires’ a set of virtues but spends their life striving to become a better person, a notion which fits comfortably with the modern mantra about professional self-improvement. Virtue theory also recognizes that emotion and human desires play an important role in the way people behave rather than trying to describe a rational and theoretical ethical position in the manner of utilitarianism or Kantianism (van Hooft 2006).

Pedagogical phronesis

Understanding the centrality of virtues in the everyday decision-making of academic faculty is critical to engaging teaching professionals. This is not the same as simply ‘going through the code of practice’. Such an approach fails to engage with the values which professionals hold as individuals, depending on their background and experience, and offers little context for meaningful discussion, which is generally accepted as essential for the teaching of ethics. Furthermore, postgraduate certificates tend to pay limited regard to the departmental or discipline context. This is the real arena in which professional
values are formed and the role of senior academics as role models is critical in
shaping them.

A number of writers have identified lists of moral virtues connected with life
in general and teaching more specifically. Virtues represent the mean position
between extremes of behaviour. Courage, for example, lies between the extremes
of cowardice and recklessness. Aristotle understood excellence of character in
terms of sincerity, right ambition, modesty and liberality among other virtues. In
relation to the teaching role, Hare (1993) identifies courage, humility, impartial-
ity, open-mindedness, empathy, enthusiasm, judgement and imagination.
Elsewhere, I have argued that a relatively similar set of virtues can be detected
from the application of practical reason (Macfarlane 2004). These include
respectfulness towards students; (proper) pride in relation to preparation
for teaching; courage to innovate; fairness especially in connection with the
assessment role; restraint in taking theoretical and ideological stances; collegiality
in working with colleagues and students; and openness in evaluation of our
teaching.

Clearly, however, there is a risk in simply presenting learners with a ‘list’ of
virtues. A more effective approach is to promote discussion of real life or real-
to-life scenarios where fundamental virtues can be identified and applied. Yet, it
is important to stress that appropriately complex professional scenarios rarely
lend themselves to ‘right’ answers. The ultimate ‘answer’ is in developing
teachers with the disposition to act with care and thoughtfulness in any particu-
lar situation (Pring 2001). Such scenarios should reflect ordinary, everyday
situations, such as a student requesting an extension for an assignment rather
than ‘extreme’ situations. The latter approach to case study design in the
teaching of business ethics runs the risk of reinforcing attitudes that unethical
practice is rife and also often fails to connect to more ordinary, everyday
dilemmas.

It might not be immediately obvious though how a list of virtues, with which
few would probably disagree, might translate into something real or concrete by
way of professional actions and responsibilities. A way forward in understanding
the link to practice is provided by Nixon (2008). He connects the virtuous
dispositions of truthfulness, respect, authenticity and magnanimity in academic
life with what he terms ‘virtuous orientations’ (Nixon 2008: 110). These rela-
tionships of virtue, as Nixon terms them, mean that the virtue of magnanimity,
for example, implies the virtuous orientations of autonomy and care. He argues
that the possession of a strong sense of professional identity or autonomy is a
precondition for someone to be able to ‘reach out’ to others, ‘accommodating,
what is unknown, strange and radically different (Nixon 2008: 99). Similarly, he
explains the virtue of authenticity as about exercising courage in relation to one’s
own agency and compassion in the role of ‘other-as-agent’. At the heart of
Nixon’s analysis is the concept of capability. Here he is strongly influenced by the
‘capabilities’ approach advocated by Sen (1999) and Nussbaum (2000) who
shows how the capabilities approach has a particular resonance for women. As
Sen argues, if someone is poorly educated, or perhaps illiterate, they will never
really be able to exercise fully their political freedoms since they will not enjoy the capability to participate fully. Practical wisdom or phronesis is an essential capability and a teacher in higher education who does not possess this quality will be less effective as a result. Without such a capability, anyone would struggle to function as a professionally responsible teacher.

Understanding what it means to teach ‘with integrity’ requires an integration of various virtues in professional practice, however these might be defined or identified. Most lists of virtues though are long and demanding. This creates a challenging proposition as personality differences between individuals means that teachers tend to be naturally disposed toward some virtues but not necessarily others. Some virtues are instrumental in nature and concerned with ‘getting things done’, such as courage or resoluteness, while others, such as respectfulness or sensitivity, are essentially non-instrumental (Pincoffs 1986). In other words, these virtues are about forming relationships with others and the exercise of softer interpersonal skills. Practitioners with strong non-instrumental virtues, for example, might be considered to make good personal tutors. A higher education teacher needs a combination of instrumental and non-instrumental virtues, although most will be aware of their own strengths and weaknesses in achieving such a balance. Promoting self-awareness in this way is helpful in preparing practitioners for the challenges they will face in their teaching role.

Here, it might be argued that equipping higher education faculty as ‘reflective practitioners’ provides an adequate means of preparing them for the moral and ethical challenges they will face as teachers. Yet, being able to reflect does not necessarily connect with action meaning that a reflective teacher is not automatically a good one (McLaughlin 1999). Despite the intuitive appeal of reflective practice, it does not quite so easily translate into establishing better or more appropriate actions as a teacher.

What is often lacking from the notion of reflective practice is judgement, or what Aristotle termed phronesis or practical wisdom. In many ways phronesis is a better means of understanding the challenges of being a teacher than reflective practice since it connects values with actions. While craft knowledge or skills, what Aristotle called techne, can help in responding to a limited number of specific situations, phronesis is about deciding what to do more broadly. It demands some conception of what it means to live a good life and, crucially, the capacity to do so (Nixon 2008). Yet, more generally, practical wisdom must be applied in handling the large range of challenges thrown up by managing a group of students. Techniques, in other words, will never be enough. Pedagogical phronesis is about having good judgement as a teacher. It is what ultimately makes a good teacher rather than technique or even, to some extent, knowledge, and takes a lifelong and sustained commitment. Technique and knowledge are necessary but they are not sufficient.

Relationships of virtue stretch well beyond the teaching role. They also determine how a teacher might meet a range of other professional responsibilities in relation to the research role, as a public intellectual or as an academic citizen more generally. Applying virtues to teaching does, however, sharply highlight
connections with other areas of professional practice in higher education, such as
research or service work. There are several virtues that are common to being a
teacher and a researcher. Examples might include respectfulness toward students
and research subjects, respectively, or courage to innovate in classroom practice
and in tackling unfashionable or highly challenging research questions.
Practitioners in higher education are also faced with difficult ‘trade offs’ between
the extent to which they devote time to research activities and in preparing for
teaching. Similarly, offering students support beyond formal teaching duties,
such as via personal tutoring or assessment feedback, rarely results in reward or
recognition beyond personal conscientiousness. Here, the use of time spent
on such service tasks might be more rationally spent on developing research,
publication or income generation opportunities. Hence, choices in the use of
time as an academic demand an ethical judgement. This is about maintaining an
ethical balancing exercise between meeting the needs of students and developing
a career where the rewards lie principally in individual achievement for research
and scholarship. Such ethical issues are not easily resolvable.

Conclusion
The assumptions and dominant principles underlying the preparation of higher
education practitioners are narrowly constructed in terms of a psychologised
curriculum that rarely connects with the dilemmas of teaching practice. What we
have, in effect, is a curriculum for the preparation and development of academics
as teachers that is too oriented toward knowledge and skills and neglects the
development of their practical wisdom or pedagogical phronesis. The politics of
postgraduate certificates is impacted by the politics of institutional ownership
and often results in insufficient attention to broader aspects of the study of what
it means to be a higher education practitioner.

What is needed is a curriculum for the preparation of new academic faculty
that reflects a much broader conception of their role in all elements of practice
including research, service activities as well as teaching. ‘Professional responsi-
bilities’ exist in relation to each of these roles, not just teaching. In relation to
the research role, it is unfortunate that ethical matters are seen as part of the
increasingly bureaucratic project approval process. This tends to militate against
a genuine engagement with professional responsibilities in research. Understanding
professional responsibilities in teaching in the same procedurally driven manner
will only serve to undermine genuine engagement. In the age of the unbundled
academic, it is important that we do not lose sight of the responsibilities that
traverse the functions of academic life.

Note
1 This phrase is intended to incorporate a range of similarly titled postgraduate pro-
grammes which aim to prepare academics predominantly for their teaching role. They
will be subsequently referred to as ‘Postgraduate Certificates’.
References


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