Chapter 20
Encouraging the scholarship of learning and teaching in an institutional context

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The chapters in this book have demonstrated what happens when individuals, course teams, faculties and the university as a whole systematically ask questions about teaching and students' learning and then set up ways to investigate them. Chapter 1 set out a number of institutional strategies for the development of scholarly activities in teaching and learning, and this has been followed by a series of chapters demonstrating how academics have been investigating their teaching and their students' learning. The book has also explored actions taken to develop courses and curricula and improve students' learning as a result of these investigations. Institutional strategies have been reflected in the various responses of individuals, teams and faculties throughout this book, and continue to be a key influence on the development of teaching and learning and the enhancement of students' course experiences within the university. Indeed, the success of targeted funding and strategic initiatives to develop a scholarly approach to teaching and learning has been largely due to the variety of ways in which disciplinary communities, academics, together with their leaders and managers, have embraced the integration of research and teaching as integral to a research-intensive institution.

We are a group of academic developers, located in the Institute for Teaching and Learning (ITL), a central academic department reporting directly to the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Learning and Teaching). We are charged with an institutional responsibility to encourage and support the development of the scholarship of teaching and learning. We are, then, a key element in the university's strategy. Beginning with Paul Ramsden's (2003, p.5) internationally recognisable epithet that 'the purpose of teaching is to make student learning possible,' our overall remit as developers is to help the university community to improve teaching and learning.

The scholarship of teaching and learning is, in our view, about infusing pedagogical work with a new spirit; perhaps even a new moral spirit. On the one hand it works to develop the status of teaching and learning through recognising its capacity for scholarship. It seeks to revalue teaching and learning through promoting its intellectual character. It is also a movement that feeds a distinctly performative agenda (Ball, 2000) allowing a university to make claims about teaching performance and teaching quality. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the scholarship of teaching and learning goes beyond encounters between individual teachers and learners. At its best, a focus on the scholarship of teaching and learning encourages both a critical questioning and a conceptual re-organisation of the ways that teaching and learning are considered. It is a movement that asks: what is the university for and how is teaching and learning to enact that purpose? This raises challenging questions about the identities of teachers and the sort of learners the university desires its students to be. Yet this suggests changes in how academics are to think and enact themselves as teachers; how they are to respond to the expectations of their students and the ways they might work together. To be engaged in the scholarship of teaching and learning demands a renewal of the professional identities of teachers. If our responsibility as institutional facilitators of the scholarship of teaching and learning is to provide fresh insight or new ways of working, then we must exercise care in doing so, for it is also our responsibility to challenge existing views.

As facilitators of this institutional change process, our work with the university community to progress the scholarship of teaching and learning travels across a range of contexts–often at very different levels, and with different kinds of outcomes. In some cases, we work to engage academics in the scholarship of teaching and learning within the suite of graduate programs we offer (from our Foundational Program to Doctoral level study). At other times we work through our Strategic Working Groups structured around Research-enhanced Learning and Teaching, e-Learning, Evaluation and Quality Assurance, or Generic Graduate Attributes, to provide opportunities for sustained conversation about how to advance teaching and learning in more scholarly ways. At other times we work in collaborative projects alongside individuals perhaps to implement tutor training programs, or within course teams, or faculty teaching and learning committees, to help introduce a scholarly approach. The scholarship of teaching and learning also has resonance in our own everyday corridor conversations about how to improve aspects of student learning. University teaching and learning in each of these contexts is often the subject of intellectual contest and scholarly debate. As in any robust academic community, we argue about what it is and what it can be because we are invested in its success.

In this chapter, we aim to give voice to some key challenges that emerge in our work as institutional facilitators of the scholarship of teaching and learning. We seek to make visible some of the ethical and conceptual tensions that arise for us in making decisions about shaping, responding to, and then supporting a program of institutional change such as the scholarship of teaching and learning. We focus on three dimensions in particular. The first of our challenges results from an explicit focus on academics' learning; specifically, their learning about university teaching and student learning within our graduate programs. The second relates to the state and status of educational research as a context for developing the scholarship of teaching and learning itself. In encouraging academics to consider their teaching and students' learning as potential sites for research, there is often a shift in the terrain of what it means to inquire, how to go about it, together with the proper ethics and values involved in an educational inquiry process. The third challenge for us in developing the scholarship of teaching and learning is about the ethics of change and the politics of transformation; both individually and institutionally. How far should we push an agenda of change when we see our academic colleagues under pressure? How far should we encourage them to question the structural and organisation arrangements of teaching and learning in their departmental or disciplinary contexts; ones which may have made putting scholarly teaching practice in place difficult?

When academics become learners again
Engaging in the scholarship of teaching and learning may require the academic teacher to become a learner; to see learning quite differently and to see oneself as a different sort of learner to the one who successfully negotiated university study in the past. In many disciplines, the democratic practices of problem-based learning and group-based, collaborative learning, for example, are managed carefully in adult learning contexts that depend on respect, trust and openness. Many of our colleagues are in fact already developing and managing student-centred, democratic curricula, but without necessarily understanding in any critical sense why what they are doing is truly worthwhile from a student learning stand-point. For the academics comfortable with a traditional lecture-based unit or course, patterns of control and authority are well established. Regardless

of their practices, university teachers frequently come to our programs with unchallenged ideas about teaching. Each semester they may present themselves to their students as highly respected international researchers, as knowledgeable didacts, as experienced tutors and lecturers, and as facilitators and managers of student learning. Their authority as teachers is recognised as a consequence of their scholarly reputations and publications, their disciplinary research profiles, and/or their years of experience in university teaching. Authority is also invested in them by the university management and its statutory bodies, which rely on teachers to make judgments on, and report back the results of, their students' learning.

Yet, a good many of our colleagues want to learn how to teach better. They may seek a set of tips, techniques and strategies that will help to alleviate a problem immediately. They may see the relation between teaching and learning as relatively straightforward; as cause and effect or input and output. In order to extend ideas of the scholarship of teaching and learning we may first challenge academics' conceptions of teaching and learning. This can be quite demanding. It can sometimes result in difficult learning, particularly when one must confront years of practice. While graduate programs in higher education ought to provide opportunities for academics to engage anew in different kinds of learning experiences where they are challenged to see its application and possibility within their own teaching contexts, and with their own students, the question of how these programs are 'relevant' suggests that their success depends largely on the extent to which academics bring themselves to their learning as teachers. In the learning contexts that we have designed to develop the scholarship of teaching and learning, we sometimes observe that academics themselves can appear to opt for quite passive modes of learning. They do not always take responsibility for their own learning, even when there are opportunities to do so. Sometimes we experience initial resistance to our efforts to engage in cross disciplinary group-based inquiry, or to our suggestions to try out new forms of assessment. Perhaps this is not altogether surprising. As participants learning in a course such as the Graduate Certificate, they are subject to the same sorts of pressures that we know strike any learning situation.

In our courses and programs, the focus of our efforts in developing the scholarship of teaching and learning is on students. Our emphasis is about making an argument that demonstrates why it is important to understand the way students experience and perceive their learning. A student-focused conceptual change approach (Prosser & Trigwell, 1999) puts the student's learning rather than the teacher's teaching at the centre of the pedagogical encounter. As the chapters in this book have shown, understanding the students' perspectives in order to better focus teaching to student needs and ideas appears to be central to engaging with the possibilities afforded by the scholarship of teaching and learning. Changing a person's conception of teaching and learning can involve a shift in power relations and a subsequent shift in their world view. We are of the view that unless a person has had their own conceptions challenged and changed, it is difficult, perhaps impossible for them to imagine what this might be like for their students and how much of a revelation it can be. In other words, we suspect that before anyone can think about changing students' perceptions or approaches to learning, they themselves need to have experienced the sort of learning being implemented. Yet this can be troubling. It can take a long time to come to terms with such ideas. This raises a range of dilemmas for our work as facilitators of the scholarship of teaching and learning, inasmuch as it also presents us with an ethical responsibility to attend to the effects of changing conceptions.

Further, in the context of encouraging the scholarship of teaching and learning, the pedagogical relationship is such that we are teaching our academic colleagues. In a different way, they are also teaching us. We learn about how their departmental discourses position the scholarship of teaching and learning. It is a relationship that requires a great deal of thoughtfulness, particularly when we are expected to model good practice. Since we are teaching about the scholarship of teaching and learning, we endeavour to become the living embodiment of what scholarly teachers are meant to do. Yet like them and many teachers, there are times when we falter. There are moments of sheer exhaustion that affect our capacities as teachers to teach according to the ideals we espouse. Teaching our academic colleagues means that they see that of us too. So there has to be a degree of care and trust involved in the way we go about negotiating the conditions for learning. It is sometimes expressed through the way we provide feedback, or through our invitation to academic participants to consider their peers in the course as part of a learning community. While they have both their own personal learning outcomes as well as the ones we set to work through, they also have commitments to each other; to give and receive challenge with honesty and to bring themselves fully to the contexts of their learning. Any or no previous experience of this kind of collegial activity, learning or responsibility, will tend to affect how academics see what kind of learning community is possible amongst their own students.

When academics become learners again, it is not just the encounter with students that is the subject of learning about teaching. Teachers bring longstanding traditions and habits of academic 'being' that emanate in part from the cultures of disciplines and departments. Whether we are disciplinary academics or academic developers we bring with us views about what can be changed, about what is both possible and impossible. We bring with us a set of ideas and understandings about how teaching and learning operates in our particular contexts, how decisions are made and their sometimes hazardous effects. We might even carry a view that we are at arms-length from processes of academic decision-making. When academics learn with us, they might even suggest that we developers have made things that way; that these are *our* pedagogical in(ter)ventions, that it is *our* agenda for teaching and learning change with which they are grappling. Whatever our offering, whatever our expertise, whatever our evidence-base, and whatever the contexts our academic colleagues come from, signals about what it means to be engaged in the scholarship of teaching and learning are interpreted. Academics read clues about its value. In the absence of evidence, they may engage in speculation about its worth, whether it is time well spent, whether it makes a difference when it comes to making a case for promotion, or in an application for a teaching award. In this book, we have witnessed a number of different ways that our colleagues from many different areas of our university have engaged with the scholarship of teaching and learning. These are colleagues who have fully embraced the possibilities offered by research on students' understanding and experiences for curriculum change. We have an important role in our graduate programs in persuading colleagues who have not yet taken on the scholarship of teaching and learning in this way of its value and purpose. We have a responsibility to demonstrate that student learning improves as a result of a teacher who cares about the scholarship of teaching and learning (Brew & Ginns, forthcoming).

Responses to an invitation to revisit and replenish their work as teachers will depend largely on the extent to which academics engage systematically in critical reflection; not only on their roles as teachers, but also in the contexts that influence the sort of

teachers they want to become. But in order to engage in critical reflection on practice, teachers need first of all to have an idea of critical reflection. Kreber, Castleden, Erfani and Wright (2005) have suggested that an individual's discipline might influence significantly the amount and type of self-regulated learning they do. So in areas where there is not a strong tradition of critical reflection or academic participation, one's ability to influence the organisational structures of teaching and learning so that they might be re-shaped to take account of the scholarship of teaching and learning may be limited. This poses particular challenges for those like us who have a role in facilitating academics to develop their teaching and learning scholarship. We encourage our academic colleagues to ask questions about the structural conditions that will allow the scholarship of teaching and learning to flourish at the same time as they are subject to mixed messages about its merit. Such mixed messages come for example, from university procedures that reward the scholarship of teaching and learning on the one hand, and pressures to concentrate on disciplinary research that may come from senior colleagues or faculty workload policies on the other. Such tensions are inevitable in an environment where research achievement is highly prized and teaching excellence is also expected.

Much of our work across the university tells us that it is challenging for our colleagues to think about teaching and learning in new ways. What seems really central is the realisation that academics' own learning as teachers appears to be mirrored in the way they teach their own students, and in turn, in the way their own students assume responsibility for their learning. For the teacher whose experience of university teaching and learning has been predominantly of a traditional lecture and tutorial type, engaging in the scholarship of teaching and learning provides new experiences of being a learner in uncertain territory. The pedagogy is unfamiliar. These experiences often problematise the sense of security that may have been inherent in previous teacher-learner relationships. They can be experiences which suggest new curriculum structures with innovative forms of collaboration and assessment. At their extreme, these experiences can trouble ideas of power, authority and responsibility precisely because they demand a new kind of teacher and a very different sort of learner. Our work in encouraging these more scholarly approaches is to be mindful of the consequence of engaging too much in this work without appropriate resourcing and collegial support.

The messy business of educational research
When an academic begins to inquire into their own teaching, the first thing with which they are confronted is the sort of questions they can ask. These can often be of a very different order to those in their own disciplinary area. One early challenge that our colleagues face is in recognising that there is a relationship between the sorts of questions asked and the resulting truth claims in respect of the outcomes. In educational research, the researcher needs to establish not only the findings of the research, but also to make a claim about the status of those findings as truths, facts or as knowledge. In order to be able to do educational research, teachers therefore need an appreciation of not only the methods of inquiry but also the particular methodological traditions in which those methods are situated. They also need to have developed some understanding of the epistemological assumptions of the particular methodology.

When a group of experienced academics from very different disciplinary areas engages in a new paradigm of inquiry, their identities as researchers may also come into question. What they know to be true about teaching and learning, and how to develop

and improve it, may undergo transformation. Learning about the scholarship of teaching and learning raises methodological debates about epistemology and ontology, about how to locate an inquiry within a field, together with the constitution of data and evidence. And all this new learning happens at a time when the authenticity of evidence-based practice in education is increasingly under strain (Davies, 1999; Davies, 2003; Elliot, 2001). This process can also challenge those like us–academic developers–whose job it is to support academics to take up a desire to research their teaching and learning practice. As higher education researchers and scholars ourselves, schooled and often re-schooled in traditions of social science, the academics that learn with us test our expertise. And rightly so. They query the theoretical perspectives about teaching and learning that we bring from our field. They query the language we use to describe the scholarship of teaching and learning. It can be both too complex, but also, not complex enough.

The teacher who seeks to engage in the scholarship of teaching and learning has to come to terms with the idea that questions of methods and methodology are questions about the nature of knowledge within education. For many of the academics who hitherto have not had the opportunity to reflect on the contested nature of knowledge (Brew & Phillis, 1997), this can open up new ways of thinking. As a consequence of encouraging academics to engage in the scholarship of teaching and learning, a new space appears. Teachers are challenged to change their conceptions when they come to realise that there are different ways of looking at knowledge. Engaging in the scholarship of teaching and learning can challenge some colleagues' notions of a verifiable, correspondence view of truth. Indeed, the idea that there might be different truths can be confronting. Even if teachers persist with the idea that, for example, the scientific method is the 'right' way to generate knowledge, the likelihood is that they can never return to the idea that it is the only way. For academics with backgrounds in disciplinary areas where theories about the nature of knowledge and reality are assumed rather than debated, these realisations can be unsettling. The flow-on effect is that engaging in the scholarship of teaching and learning can also challenge how an academic views their own discipline and their disciplinary research. As they begin to familiarise themselves with these intricacies, their reflections about what needs changing in their own teaching and their students' learning becomes richer, infinitely more interesting and challenging. Inquiring into approaches to teaching and learning can turn out to be far more complex than even the literature on the scholarship of teaching and learning acknowledges.

A key focus in discussions about the scholarship of teaching and learning in the North American context has been on how academics can be encouraged to adopt methods and approaches that arise from, and build on, the methodological traditions in their own disciplinary areas. Huber (2000), Diamond and Adam (1995) and others have argued that it is important for different disciplinary communities to define the scholarship of teaching and learning for themselves. In this book there are many examples where academics from different disciplines have done that.

Disciplines differ in the extent to which pedagogy is an integral part of disciplinary thinking or a distinct field of activity with its own specialist scholars (Healey, 2000). They also differ in the way that ideas about teaching and learning have built on existing research and practice in higher education or have developed in isolation. There are dangers in holding steadfastly to either of these approaches. The first may lead to the perception that the language of teaching and learning scholarship is too generic; the

second suggests a disciplinary preoccupation with technique that is disconnected from broader theoretical issues. Weimar (1993) for example, following a review of disciplinary journals on pedagogy, concluded that these publications discussed issues which were transferable across fields, but that the journals included very little material from other disciplines. She also found that disciplinary journals were concerned mostly with teaching techniques rather than broader matters of education.

While it is a useful starting point, it is not enough to focus scholarly work in teaching and learning exclusively within a particular discipline, or on the questions and methods that arise from just one disciplinary context. In areas where views of the scholarship of teaching and learning are limited by teacher-focused conceptions of teaching or a conception of the scholarship of teaching focused on recognition or reward (Lueddeke, 2003), there is no necessary impetus to translate that work to an understanding of student learning. Furthermore, Huber and Morreale (2003) have argued teaching development can occur most readily at the borderland of the discipline, where cross-disciplinary exchange takes place.

So the discourses which support the scholarship of teaching and learning are coloured at all times by pre-existing notions of what constitutes research and scholarship and the nature of teaching within particular disciplines. The scholarship of teaching and learning is radical in part because it asks what needs to change in order for students' experiences of learning to be enhanced. In some instances, these are changes that disturb the very core of what is known and sacrosanct in the organisation of disciplinary communities. The challenge for individual disciplinary areas is to be able to communicate across disciplines to build up a shared understanding of teaching and learning practice building 'on the shoulders of giants' as it were, rather than 'rediscovering wheels' in local communities. Academics' ideas about the rigour of teaching and learning scholarship are likely to be read against what is valued in the discipline and the rewards it brings. They are also likely to be influenced by perceptions regarding the scholarly quality of pedagogical research. Sometimes work is only considered scholarly if it is quantitative, objective, and presented as if it is independent of the researchers who are studying it. The view that education research is waffly, vague, long-winded, subjective or unscholarly is not uncommon. If a strong and convincing tradition of the scholarship of teaching and learning is to continue, we need to think carefully about how to ensure its quality. We also need to test accepted wisdom regarding the authority of disciplinary ways of knowing. We need to continue to ask questions about the possibilities and limits in situating the scholarship of teaching and learning within disciplinary formations.

All these challenges manifest themselves in various ways in our work across the university community. As the academics that learn with us become increasingly conversant in the field of university teaching and learning, they learn there is a healthy but fractured literature around any one research question. They learn to locate the literature, and they are encouraged to evaluate it in terms of its claims, arguments, evidentiary bases and conclusions. They learn to position their research question within that literature. They wrestle with a new language; they question its relevance and applicability. They learn what it means to write convincingly about their teaching practice so that it moves on from description to theorising and problematising. They ask why inquiring into their own teaching and learning is so hard–why it often lacks the rules of clear definition and precise measurement. And they learn about themselves as teachers, their values, ethics and the sorts of relationships they have made with their

students. Rowland (2000) argues that sooner or later, inquiring into teaching will lead to an examination of values, and specifically the values that underpin teaching. Our values are at the core of our teaching whether we recognise them or not. Yet realising that teaching is value-laden can be very challenging for teachers who assume that it is an objective, value-free, or even a values-neutral activity. What academics frequently learn from engaging in the scholarship of teaching and learning is that they hold a set of values and that sometimes these are inconsistent with what is practised. This is another context for profound learning because its power goes far beyond a set of expectations that academics will merely become competent teachers. Engaging seriously in the scholarship of teaching and learning demands the articulation of a pedagogical framework, or a philosophy of teaching. Often, the necessity of this work can prove troubling.

The ethics, politics and direction of pedagogical change
The scholarship of teaching and learning movement has appeared at a time when the autonomy of universities is being challenged and when academic freedom is more often than not framed in the context of discussions of academic responsibility or duty (Nixon, 2001; Nixon, 2003; Barnett, 2003b, 2004; Kennedy, 1997). Teaching, like research, is being made accountable. In doing so, teaching and learning is becoming increasingly visible. The emphasis on students' experience of learning, together with the professionalisation of university teaching has generated a momentum for treating the scholarship of teaching and learning seriously.

The notion of authenticity in teaching is one that concerns us in this context. It is one thing to bring the messy issues of teaching scholarship and educational research to the surface in our academic development interactions with our colleagues; however, the responsibility for teaching approaches will always rest with the individual teacher. Berci (2006) has argued convincingly for a linking of personal growth and development with pedagogic and professional development. Our work therefore must always be mindful of this interplay. More importantly, it must respect that individuals are at different places in their development – both as teachers and as people and that these places might not be congruent with institutional or our own perspectives and agendas.

As a group of academic developers, we are aware of the effects of encouraging our academic colleagues to think in new and unfamiliar ways about their work as teachers. Sometimes that challenge is welcomed, at other times it is considered a burden; the worst kind of encroachment. We are charged with a responsibility to help our colleagues understand the teaching and learning requirements of the university, but in doing so we harbour a desire for them to learn in ways that encourage them to go beyond the current university system, to ask difficult questions of it, armed with evidence and thoughtful deliberation (Nixon, 2004). Our job in part, is to present the evidence about the improvements generated by the scholarship of teaching and learning yet we know only too well that our colleagues are working in contexts and with time pressures that hinder its inherent possibilities. This raises questions about what responsibilities they have to teach well, and to whom they are responsible. Is it to themselves, students, the disciplinary community, or the university? What obligations have they to shape the policy terrain which enables them to make the scholarship of teaching and learning part of their normal academic practice? These are easy questions to ask but difficult ones to answer.

Conclusion

The chapter authors in this book have successfully found ways through many of these challenging issues. This has taken time and persistence. We do not claim credit for their achievements. However, we have found supporting our academic colleagues to view university teaching and learning as scholarly work to be challenging and also rewarding. This is because teaching and learning change always entails a movement between personal learning and transformation, and between academic responsibility and institutional performativity. The focus on teaching and learning itself can often interrupt years of habitual and accepted academic practice. The scholarship of teaching and learning prises open both practice and theory, and the questions it raises can generate forms of disquiet and resistance. We hear it all the time: 'Yes, teaching and learning is important, but it is not what constitutes academic *gravitas'*. That kind of response is often the most difficult to contest, especially where there is a teacher-focused information transmission view of university teaching and learning (Prosser & Trigwell, 1999). Consistent with this view, a movement such as the scholarship of teaching and learning may be experienced as no more than an institutional imposition designed to make academics over into certain kinds of professionalised teachers (McWilliam, Hatcher & Meadmore, 1999); teachers who lose their academic freedom to decide how best to teach, or teachers who are told that the way they have taught is no longer enough. Yet in other instances, as we have seen throughout this book, the very notion of a scholarship of teaching and learning can act as an intellectual revelation. It can be experienced as a way of bringing research and teaching into closer alignment. It can provide a meta-framework in which to develop an evidentiary basis for teaching practice, development, improvement, reward and recognition. It can generate new ideas about how to solve curriculum challenges. It can raise questions about the methods and methodologies we employ to inquire, research and evaluate teaching and students' learning and it can provide a new community in which to support, discuss and contest the labour of university teaching and learning. Disciplinary based teaching and learning networks and pedagogical research groups have been flourishing across the university for some time. This book is a testament to that growth. The next logical step in the scholarship of teaching and learning movement will be to extend the opportunities within which students themselves can become practising scholars too.