Chapter Three

Pedagogies in Higher Education

Introduction

In this chapter, I explore the literature on the nature of teaching and learning in higher education. I suggest that new ways of teaching and learning need to be found that critically engage students in rich learning environments. As mature and more diverse types of students enter higher education, it is vital that the traditional role of the educator as one who offers content knowledge is broadened so that teaching is aimed at developing students' capacity to create their own understandings and insights through participation, negotiation and dialogue. Zukas and Malcolm (2002) highlight five identities of the educator in their review of the literature on pedagogy in higher and adult education. I intend to use these five identities as a framework to explore a range of understandings of pedagogic work in the literature on higher education. I argue that current versions of pedagogy in higher education have separated teaching from research and that a new form of pedagogy that involves practice-based research needs to be promoted. I will briefly explore what the literature has to say about professional development of teachers in higher education.

Pedagogy in higher education

Pedagogy is often referred to as the activities of educating, or instructing or teaching, the activities that impart knowledge or skill. The Oxford English dictionary (2002) defines pedagogy as the profession, science or theory of teaching. Watkins and

Mortimore (1999, p. 1) refer to 'pedagogy' as derived from French and Latin adaptations of the Greek word for 'boy' and 'leader', meaning a man having oversight of a child. Defined in this way, pedagogy is seen as the art and science of teaching children. To distinguish between adult learning and child learning, Knowles proposed a new theory of adult learning, which he termed andragogy. 'Andr' means 'man' thus andragogy is a suitable term for the science and art of helping adults to learn (Knowles, 1995, p. 82). Knowles cast doubt on the appropriateness of applying the term pedagogy to the teaching of adults. As for the more commonplace term, pedagogy, Simon, in his article '*No Pedagogy in England*?' deplores English unwillingness to use a word that he claims, holds an honoured place, in the educational tradition of the European Continent. Simon believes that this stems back to the work of Comenius in the seventeenth century. Simon, (cited in Leach & Moon, 1999, pp. 34-35) places the responsibility for English unhappiness with the idea of a science of teaching on the elitist, class-dominated private school tradition, which he believes to be a peculiarly English characteristic. Simon asserts that this is why education, as a subject of enquiry and study, has had little prestige in England. Levine makes the same point without entering into any comparative historical explanation.

> *"In this society we certainly did not, still do not, grant the study of teaching [pedagogy] either the standing of a science or the practice of an art form. Indeed historically we have defined the study and practice of teaching narrowly and even if unconsciously, we have arranged things so that the profession and its practitioners have every possible kind of low status conferred upon them".*
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> (Levine, 1992, p.197)

A dialogue with the literature on pedagogy in higher education

Although higher education is beginning to include a wider and broader range of students, Zukas and Malcolm (2002, p. 1) assert that adult education is still regarded as belonging to a separate sphere from higher education proper even when adult education is provided through universities. They found that the new specialism of teaching and learning in higher education had developed without reference to adult education. Neglecting the strongly self-motivated adult learner has tended to impoverish many current approaches to teaching and learning.

In their review of the literature, Zukas and Malcolm focus on the pedagogic 'identities' or versions of the educator, which represent the range of understandings of pedagogic work in 'mainstream' higher education literature. They focus on pedagogic writings in adult education and other established sectors of education, and the pedagogies emerging in the field of higher education. Their study was mainly UK based but also included sources from throughout the anglophone world, and to a lesser extent from European writings originating in the UK.

They identify five pedagogic identities in the literature surveyed:

1. The educator as critical practitioner.

2. The educator as psycho-diagnostician and facilitator of learning.

3. The educator as reflective practitioner.

4. The educator as situated learner within a community of practice.

5. The educator as assurer of organisational quality and efficiency; deliverer of service to agreed or imposed standards.

The educator as critical practitioner

Zukas and Malcolm (2002) emphasise the political roots of adult education whose promotion has so often been imbued with a strong sense of social purpose. By contrast they claim that the focus of higher education pedagogic writing is on 'teaching and learning,' as if it was a subject in its own right. They are nevertheless alive to the emergence of commentators holding a broader view and point to such writings on critical practice as Barnett's (1997) work on higher education and on 'critical being'. They also refer to writers such as Webb (1996), Walker (1999) and Rowland (2000), each of whom considers the 'why' of higher education rather than only the 'how'.

Ira Shor and Paulo Freire are well known critical pedagogists and their views on pedagogy are quite relevant to this discussion on teaching and learning in higher education. Shor and Freire's 'A Pedagogy of Liberation' (1987), emphasise the importance of dialogue in our learning. Freire believes that the openness of the dialogical educator to his or her own relearning gives dialogue a democratic character. He believes that through dialogue, "*we each stimulate the other to think, and to re-think the former's thoughts*". Furthermore, he points out that "*dialogue belongs to the nature of human beings, as beings of communications*" (Shor & Freire, 1987, p. 3). Shor contends that critical education has to integrate the students and the teachers into a mutual creation and re-creation of knowledge. Freire regrets that teachers are told that they have *nothing* to do with the *production* of knowledge: "*If I spend three*

hours with a group of students discussing, and if I think that this is not researching,

then I do not understand anything!" (Freire, 1987, p. 8). Freire is adamant that

"dialogue is a moment where humans meet to reflect on their reality as they make and

remake it" (Freire, 1987, p. 98). According to Freire, dialogical education is an

epistemological position. To return from Freire's seminal insights to Barnett's study

of the present plight of higher education. Barnett claims that professional life is now

becoming more than the handling of complexity i.e. managing overwhelming data and

theories, it is also about handling multiple frames of reference – a condition he calls

supercomplexity. Supercomplexity arises when we are faced with conflicting

frameworks with which to understand a situation. Barnett asserts that the main

pedagogical task of a university is not to transmit knowledge but to develop in human

beings the attributes appropriate to conditions of supercomplexity (2000, p. 164). In

order for this to become a reality, he claims that a 'higher education' must embrace

three dimensions of being: knowledge, self-identity and action, in its pedagogies. In

other words, new methods of teaching have to be developed in higher education. An

educational requirement of supercomplexity is that the student should have the space

to develop her own voice. Barnett regrets that lecturers often have an idea of teaching

that puts the students in a subservient position. The followers of such an approach see

students as recipients of a curriculum instead of largely choosing and/or making it

themselves (Barnett, 2000, p. 163). The main values inherent in the approaches taken

by those with a critical stance on the other hand are participation and dialogue.

The educator as psycho-diagnostician and facilitator of learning

In this context, it is worth considering the relevance to this discussion of two

opposing theories of learning: the Behaviourist and the Cognitive movements.

Behavioural psychology was the first psychological approach to have a real impact on educational thought and practice. Skinner, a proponent of Behaviourism explored the influence of the environment on people's behaviour. The cognitive movement on the other hand grew from an awareness in educational circles of the need to find out what is going goes on in the mind during learning. This gave rise to the cognitive movement with the focus upon internal mental operations rather than external stimuli. Cognitive theory is a learning theory that builds from internal mental models whereas the behaviourists focused on the externally observable behaviour of humans. Therefore, the focus of cognitivism is on mental structures and acts. As applied to educational encounters, cognitive theories put the emphasis on the learner's thinking processes rather than on the teacher's action and the classroom situation. Zukas and Malcolm (2002) find that in higher education, literature focuses on diagnosing learners' needs, for example, following a particular learning theory (Brown, 1993), taking into account learning styles and skills (Boyatzis and Kolb, 1991), and concentrating on techniques and tools for the particular needs of the learner (Gibbs, 1992; Grenham *et al.*, 1999). Zukas and Malcolm warn that if learning is understood in this way, then pedagogy becomes reduced to nothing more than diagnosis and facilitation, and psychological approaches are used as tools to inform the ways in which practice takes place; that is, theory determines practice.

With reference to pedagogy in adult education in U.K., Zukas and Malcolm (2002, p. 4) find that forms of psychology, especially humanistic versions, have influenced much of pedagogy in adult education. Humanistic education emerged as a reaction to the behaviourist concern with external environment. According to Bertrand (2003, p. 310) the underpinning philosophy of humanistic education is that each individual

must determine and control his/her own path of development. Andragogy is based on humanistic assumptions that the adult learner is a self-directed human being who possesses rich prior experiences, has a readiness and orientation to learn related to the roles and responsibilities of adult life and is internally motivated.

Andragogy is based on the following four assumptions.

The assumptions are that, as a person matures,

1. his/her self-concept moves from one of being a dependent personality toward one of being a self-directed human being;

2. s/he accumulates a growing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasing resource for learning;

3. his/her readiness to learn becomes oriented increasingly to the developmental tasks of his/her social roles;

4. his/her time perspective changes from one of postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application, and accordingly his/her orientation toward learning shifts from one of subject-centredness to one of problem-centredness.

Knowles (1995, p. 96) states: '*I have described this faith in the ability of the individual to learn for himself as the 'theological foundation' of adult education''*. Thus self-directed learning is seen as the underlying principle of andragogy. It is argued that the assumptions of andragogy are still based on a psychological model of learning. Hanson (1995) points out that rather than attempting to describe the various

ways in which adults learn, there is the danger of andragogy prescribing how adults

should learn. In other words, the above assumptions could be viewed as general

characteristics of all adult learners and as Hanson (1995, p. 103) points out andragogy

could be seen as "*a form of abstract individualism rather than an engagement with*

learners themselves within their real life situations". Thus the 'educator as psycho-

diagnostician' could tend to view the learner as an individual and not move beyond

the classroom to broader social or community environment. Shor (Shor and Freire,

1987) refers to a self-directed learner as a form of pedagogy where the teacher is a

'resource-person' and a 'mentor-on-demand' when the student asks for something.

Freire also challenges the self-directed teaching approach and believes that education

is always directive; "*Even when you individually feel yourself most free, if this feeling*

is not a social feeling, if you are not able to use your recent freedom to help others to

be free by transforming the totality of society, then you are exercising only an

individualist attitude towards empowering or freedom" (Shor and Freire, 1987, p.

109). Thus, in this sense, pedagogy is not simply limited to a classroom situation but

it should lead to social intervention.

The educator as reflective practitioner

Zukas and Malcolm (2002) point out that in much of the literature on higher

education, reflective practice is presented as taken for granted 'good practice'. They

point to the fact that while reflective practice has been contested as a concept in the

literature of childhood education and adult education (e.g. Bright, 1996; Ecclestone,

1996), the conceptual basis of reflective practice have seldom been addressed in the

literature on higher education (Eraut, 1995).

The idea of the reflective practitioner is usually attributed to Schön who wrote the book 'The Reflective Practitioner in 1983.

However, the concept of reflective practice dates back to Dewey. According to Dewey (1933, p. 9) *"Reflection is an active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds supporting it and future conclusions to which it tends...it includes a conscious and voluntary effort to establish belief upon a firm basis of evidence and rationality"*.

Dewey understood reflective thinking as a form of intelligent action (1933, p. 17). Dewey (1933, p. 57) also emphasised the following characteristics or attitudes that were necessary to reflect on one's practice: 'open-mindedness', 'responsibility', and 'wholeheartedness'. Open-mindedness means that one is prepared to explore other points of view. Responsibility involves taking on board what you find and applying the information to other situations. Wholeheartedness means that one is able to critically evaluate and be prepared to deal with uncertainties in order to make meaningful change.

Schön brought the concept of 'reflection' into our understanding of what professionals do. In his book 'The Reflective Practitioner' (1983), he argues against the dominant model of 'technical rationality' and looks towards an epistemology of practice. According to Schön (1987), reflection occurs when 'knowing-in-action', or the knowledge that professionals depend on to carry out their work, spontaneously produces a surprise. This surprise can lead to either 'reflection-in-action' or 'reflection-on-action'. The former occurs immediately during the activity by thinking

about possible ways to reshape the activity. The latter occurs following or by interrupting the activity. However, Mc Mahon (1999, p. 167) points out that Schön's model lacks the rigour of action research.

The educator as situated learner within a community of practice

One of the characteristics of social-cognitive theories is that the construction of knowledge is built on interactions with people and the world (Bertrand, 2003). These interactions are seen as affecting cognitive development. On the other hand, cognitive theory does not take social interaction into consideration. In social cognitive theory, there is an emphasis on social learning, situated context, interactions among individuals, participation, cooperation and socially shared cognition (Bertrand, 2003, p. 164). Thus, Lave and Wenger (1991) state that participation in social practice is the fundamental form of learning. The learning communities model centers on the advancement of the collective knowledge of the community, and in this way, helps the development of individual student learning. It focuses on the development of a culture of learning in which everyone is involved in a collective effort of understanding. Wenger and Synder (2000, p. 139) define communities of practice as "*groups of people informally bound together by shared expertise and passion for joint enterprise*". The main idea underpinning this theory of a learning community is interdependence and participation in social practice.

The educator as assurer of organisational quality and efficiency

Zukas and Malcolm (2002) point to an element in teaching and learning in higher education, that looks at the contribution of teaching to the quality of an institution's activities (e.g. Ellis, 1993; Elton, 1987). They believe that this model often co-exists

with the 'educator as psycho-diagnostician and facilitator', in which the learners and teachers are constructed in ways that enable them to be regulated and controlled (Zukas and Malcolm, 2002, p. 5).

Analysis of pedagogic identities

In their review of pedagogic identities, Zukas and Malcolm point to the omission of the following from the pedagogic model: Vygotsky's ideas and the idea of the educator as disciplinary thinker. There is an omission in the literature on higher education pedagogy about the nature of knowledge and who is involved in the production and analysis of pedagogic knowledge.

In their review of the literature, Zukas and Malcolm explore the views held by each of the pedagogic identities. Within a critical practitioner stance, the educator has a social identity. The critical practitioner questions the content and purpose of their teaching. In this way, the pedagogic role of adult educators is not separated from the content of teaching. The key point is that critical educator inhabits 'knowledge-practice' communities, which are inter-disciplinary and pedagogic.

The educator as psycho-diagnostician separates the pedagogic from the discipline. Thus pedagogy is analysed in relation to 'teaching and learning' rather than playing any part in knowledge production. Within this model the focus is on the learner and how learning takes place within the learner. There is little regard for the socio-cultural situatedness of the individual. The learner is simply identified according to particular learning styles.

Zukas and Malcolm (2002, p. 5) raise a concern that the conceptual basis of reflective practice has seldom been addressed in the literature in higher education. It is worth taking note of Day's (1999, p. 224) suggestion that governments are now using 'reflective practice' as a means of promoting technical proficiency within the teaching profession.

Zukas and Malcolm (2002, p. 9) point out that the current version of pedagogy in higher education has come about due to the split between disciplinary and pedagogic communities in higher education and the split between research-based and pedagogic communities of practice. Thus teaching was seen as a separate activity to research. With the increase in a diverse study body, there is a need for "*differing strategies necessary to enable diverse adults to learn different things in different settings in different ways*" (Hanson, 1995, p. 105). The idea of one overarching theory for teaching and learning does not seem appropriate to accommodate the diverse student body now in higher education.

Evaluation of teaching and learning in higher education

In this section, I briefly explore what the literature says about the professional development of teachers within higher education.

In her book, 'Action Research in Higher Education: Examples and Reflections', Zubber-Skerrit (1992, pp. 67-75) discusses a study, which involved seven teaching academics at an Australian university, whose personal theories of professional development were drawn out using Kelly's repertory grid technique. Each of the academics had experienced at least six different methods of professional

development, including action research. Each participant in the study reflected individually on the various methods of professional development that they were familiar with. Results appeared to show that these academics believed that the best way to learn about university teaching is not to be given information and advice (on how to improve teaching) by outside experts who decide what academics should know but that university teachers could and should try to learn about teaching, as they do in their research about their discipline or particular subject area, such as a personal scientist (Kelly, 1963) and a problem solver (Popper, 1959; 1969) through active involvement, practical experience and reflection (or thinking) about the experience (Lewin, 1952; Kolb, 1984; Carr and Kemmis, 1986). An important condition is that these developmental activities be personally initiated, self directed and consciously controlled by the university teachers themselves. This kind of self-professional development is directly relevant to the individual teacher's needs. Tiffin and Rajasingham point to a meta study that was carried out by Griffith University, Australia of what constitutes good teaching in a university. The report, that drew on papers from UK, USA and Canada, points out that no single system of evaluation can ever measure teaching. "*There is no 'right' way to be a good teacher*" (Tiffin and Rajasingham, 2003, p. 59). However, they point to a 'new breed' of university administration with its roots in business culture that wish to standardise teaching processes that can be observed and understood by the student customer.

Ramsden acknowledges that the teacher's own conception of teaching is crucial in their professional development. He argues that telling teachers about effective strategies is not sufficient to improve student learning. He believes that the universities approach to quality in teaching and learning "*often still reeks of unskillful*

assessment practices" (Ramsden, 1994, p. 11). He stresses the need for teachers to be involved in self-assessment if they are to develop professionally. Ramsden discusses a teacher assessment process used within higher education in Australia that does not use 'expensive' and 'clumsy' inspection models. This particular assessment process requires self-evaluation by teacher linked to institutional objectives and then followed by external audit of the results of the process. This, he believes, allows each individual to have ownership over the teaching evaluation process through dialogue with others. He refers to the work of the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA) based in UK, which he believes, is an excellent example of how ideas about how students learn and how assessment and teaching affect their learning are integrated with the experience of teaching. SEDA have been running professional development and accreditation programmes since 1992.

Ramsden admits that there are no "foolproof techniques" (Ramsden, 1994, p.1) for guaranteeing quality in teaching, but that the effectiveness of education relies on teachers' professionalism, experience, and commitment. He points out that evidence of improvement is automatic evidence of accountability and summarises his views on assessment by saying that;

> *...it should provide plenty of feedback and encourage openness and co-operative activity. It should minimize anxiety and the sense of being continually inspected. It should be valid, generous, and fair. It should be the subject of a dialogue between assessors and assessed. It should not do anything that discourages people from trying to criticize their performance candidly, and from trying to use the information they gather about their performance to enrich what they subsequently do. It should encourage responsible self-assessment. It should be integral to teaching and learning, rather than additional to teaching and learning. It must lead to trustworthy judgements about academic performance.*
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> (Ramsden, 1994, p. 9)

I believe that this offers a useful view of assessment that involves dialogue between teachers and others, and provides a sense of ownership of the process on the part of teachers. According to this view, the teacher is not just seen as an individual who is only self-directed but one who is also in dialogue with others in the context of professional development.

Conclusion

It is vital that teaching and learning are not neglected in research enquiry, if the needs of a more diverse student body are to be adequately met. Teachers in higher education are also learners. Teachers need to take account of social practice and collaborative learning as opposed to the individual acquiring knowledge. Adults learn in different ways and this needs to be accommodated within the teaching and learning process. If we take a critical perspective to the development of pedagogy in higher education it is important that teachers learn to examine their own professional practice within a community of practice. The implication for this is the need to develop the capacity for teachers to adopt a critical stance to their practice by inhabiting 'knowledge-practice' based communities. In my thesis, I will explain how I am critically examining my practice in order to bring about improvement. The development of my pedagogy occurs through dialogue with participants on the programme. Through these interactions, my educational values can be seen to emerge. These educational values can then become communicable standards of judgement by which I judge my practice.