Work-integrated curricula in university programs

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Abstract

Higher education is under increasing pressure to re-evaluate the place of practice in its programs and there are increasing demands for workplace-based experiences to be built into undergraduate degrees. The paper reports on an extended responsive case study conducted in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Griffith University between 1994 and 2004. The findings point towards a model that can be used to develop courses based around a set of key challenges that learners need to face, criteria for the university's construction of worthwhile activities, and principles of procedure which are required in order to implement them. It is suggested that university curriculum planners should concentrate on a process model of teaching, learning and research rather than on the more traditional models that tend to treat knowledge as a commodity and emphasise its production, transmission and delivery.

Introduction

In January 2005, the Australian Government changed the funding arrangements for University work-integrated learning courses (Department of Education Science and Technology, 2005). This meant that in order for these courses to be funded at the same level as other academic courses they now need to be directed and meet specific academic criteria to do with the quality and nature of the university input. This means that there needs to be:

- (i) ongoing regular input and contact between university staff and the student;
- (ii) oversight and direction needs to be exercised by staff over the ongoing learning and performance of the student;
- (iii) the definition and management of the assessment processes needs to be clearly under the control of the university;
- (iv) the definition and management of the educational objectives and content also needs to be under the control of the university; and

(v) the university is required now to define and manage performance levels achieved by students in the course (Department of Education Science and Technology, 2005 p.33).

Programs that do not meet these criteria will not receive direct public funding from the government (Department of Education Science and Training, 2005, pp. 33-35); so universities in Australia now need to look closely at existing practicum courses and to devise curriculum models consistent with them. What then is the teaching role of the university in this new student focussed vision? What kinds of curriculum statements are required to articulate a learning teaching process that meets such a requirement and what is it that they need to describe?

Workplace learning and the university curriculum

A body of literature is appearing around the concept of work-integrated learning which stresses the importance of action based courses conducted in the workplace. Many writers stress the importance of student autonomy, insisting that an essential objective of the work-integrated learning is to prepare graduates who are able to make complex judgements and be directly accountable for the consequences (Conway, 1988; Heron, 1992). The emerging professional also needs to acquire the ability to exercise discretion and make fine discriminations in situations which are technically and socially complex, and to have acquired a level of autonomy and identification with the profession to be able to manage in multifaceted institutional contexts (Barnett & Coate, 2005, pp. 61-65). These writers argue that these objectives and the means of attaining them should be central to curriculum statements that purport to convey the essence of what a student can expect to learn (Barnett & Coate, 2005, pp. 37-38). The recent legislative changes make this particularly true in Australian Universities.

The concept of professionalism demands that knowledge, autonomy and responsibility are integrated and interrelated in practice. The complex and unpredictable situations that professionals are expected to deal with mean that a specialised body of 'content knowledge' is necessary but not enough. When autonomous judgements are required, the application of that knowledge always

demands discretion and responsibility (Robson, Bailey, & Larkin, 2004). The idea that each 'profession' possesses a monopoly of some esoteric and difficult body of knowledge is at the centre of claims to expertise by the professions and hence to power, influence and status.

The key ideas of accountability and any claims to *trust* in professional relationships also means that the professional has prime allegiance to the client as well as any employing authority. The need for trained professionals to be as adept in their practice (including their ability to negotiate) as they are in their theory is paramount. The immediate problem is how a curriculum statement can be constructed that meets the requirement that the university is 'directing' the learning of its students but which still retains the central objective of student autonomy.

A phenomenographic study conducted by Fraser and Bosanquet (2006) indicates that academics in Australia have constructed definitions of curriculum around increasing levels of complexity which tend to reflect the three 'knowledge-constitutive interests' identified by Habermas (1972). The most comprehensive category of definition, which incorporates the other two – the 'technical interest' and the 'practical or communicative interest' – is the 'emancipatory' curriculum where rational autonomy, freedom and empowerment are the outcomes of a dynamic, interactive set of experiences (Fraser & Bosanquet, 2006). Grundy (1987) claims that a learner with an emancipatory interest uses the curriculum to transform his/her own consciousness and the way he/she perceives, interprets and acts in the world. Thus, an emancipatory interest demands a critical pedagogy in which the learners construct their own knowledge negotiating the curriculum in a dialogical relationship. A curriculum that allows, or even demands, such a process will consist of a series of social acts within complex institutional contexts that place the student into 'a state of willing compulsion' (Barnett & Coate, 2005, p. 158). Such a curriculum is always in a process of change and development as those who negotiate reflect evermore critically on the pedagogical act.

Universities have always seen a practicum as an important component of the preparation of those entering an occupation traditionally labelled as a profession. In recent years, though, the need for workplace based courses has proliferated and a

variety of models for the workplace based curriculum have emerged (A. Bates, Bates, & Bates, 2006). Several recent Australian authors (see e.g. Higher Education Council (HEC) Report cited in Clanchy & Ballard, 1995; Lyons & Brown, 2001; Te Waita, 2001) note that universities now provide for a much wider range of vocational choices to meet the needs of their graduates. Nunan (1999, cited in Bell, Crebert, Patrick, Bates, & Cragolini, 2003, p. 4) argues that those newer universities who are beginning to provide more complex information about each graduate's abilities to prospective employers are actually ahead of the game.

Briggs and Cooper (2000) show that in response to the rapid changes in higher education in western countries, universities are now seen as direct contributors to the economy. Greater productivity is assumed to be engendered by competition and ever greater efficiencies are expected. This has created a culture of managerialism in the universities (Barnett & Coate, 2005) and attempts to construct curriculum statements are becoming more and more tied to the ever increasing minutiae of assessment criteria. This in turn has created a pressure which asks curriculum designers to consider outcomes *before* they can consider the process. There is an immediate need to develop curriculum statements that reverse these priorities and allow the assessment procedures to serve the course and not vice versa.

Field Placement in a School of Criminology and Criminal Justice

Field Placement is a final semester course in the Bachelor of Arts (Criminology and Criminal Justice) conducted by the Griffith University School of Criminology and Criminal Justice; it occupies one quarter of a student's final semester's workload. The occupational areas for which students are being prepared include policing, corrections, crime research, juvenile justice, crime prevention, early intervention welfare programs, and policy and legislation. The placement involves students being situated in a number of quite different work environments so it needs to be able to provide the flexibility of individually tailored experiences within an open course framework. More than 60 students are involved each year and placed in more than 50 selected institutions under the supervision of practitioners in the field. Academic staff members augment this supervision, with each student's learning structured according

to a constantly renegotiable learning plan. Since its inception in 1994, this has evolved into a process-based action-learning curriculum for each student.

The development and teaching of the course and the design of the research study both adopted a utilitarian view of theory using an interpretive-constructivist paradigm in which meaning is seen as growing and changing as experiences are described and as experiential knowledge becomes fixed into propositional forms. Initially, attempts to describe processes are expressed in terms that tend to be idiosyncratic and negotiable but later become more focussed on tested procedural knowledge which relates the concepts to personal action.

In the course itself, students do this by communicating with co-workers in the workplace, peers in the workshops and finally, by articulating constructs of their own praxis in written form. The effectiveness or otherwise of key learning experiences was in the design of the tasks set and in the associated consultative process that occurred between the university faculty member, designated organisational supervisor and the student.

Students begin the course by attending three two-hour compulsory workshops prior to the practicum itself. These focus on the particular skills essential for achieving graduate employment: job-searching, resume writing and the presentation of self in the job interview. This provides them with an overview of the range of occupations available to them and is a specific requirement not usually regarded as a university criterion for achievement.

During the practicum, students attend the placement organisation for 100 contact hours over the semester. They keep a detailed personal journal that records their learning experiences and their responses to them. This journal is maintained as a confidential document seen only by the course convenor for assessment purposes (M. Bates, 2003b). The assessment also requires each student to complete a work project initiated by the placement organisation and the student is given the added responsibility of negotiating with both the workplace supervisor and the nominated academic staff member ('academic facilitator') the detailed tasks involved and the assessment weightings for each. Four three-hour workshop that focus on the students'

developing understandings of the workplace experience and of their own journal records are held at intervals during the practicum at the University.

Focus of the research

This paper reports on the analysis of data collected from those involved with the course between 1994 and 2004. The research set out to determine the defining characteristics of the learning-teaching process and the roles of various stakeholders with the learning tasks required by the course. It also investigated how the learning-teaching process impacted on the students' self-perception and self-definition as emerging professionals.

By concentrating on the constructions and interpretations made by stakeholders, each individual's involvement in the course became a 'case' in itself and the whole study, which is focussed on improving course delivery and teaching practices, was both 'collective' and 'instrumental' (Stake, 2000). It was also 'responsive'. Stake (1975) had already defined a 'responsive' program evaluation as one in which the researcher collects data from the stakeholders, circulates an interim summary of the findings back to them, and then returns at intervals to repeat the process. An overview of all of the interim summaries became the final report and Stake found that the programs were not only evaluated more dynamically using this approach, they were actually improved. As the stakeholders began to understand each other's contexts, perceptions and intentions more thoroughly, they began spontaneously to modify their own behaviour even before the final recommendations were available.

In the course itself, the sharing and refinement of the students' constructs occurs in a series of workshops and concurrent writing. In the research study, the data was collected and analysed over three iterations of the course and each set of tentative findings led to a subsequent refinement of the research question. This meant that the study could concentrate on the linear construction of meaning through narrative and the students' and the researcher's constructions of propositional statements about procedure. It also enabled a process model akin to that advanced by Stenhouse (1975) to be developed using a set of 'principles of procedure' as the theoretical holding

form. These separated the useful from the non-useful when describing particular student tasks and allowed basic pragmatic principles that could be used to frame research and learning to be developed.

The detailed verbal and written feedback obtained from students, University staff and workplace supervisors was idiosyncratic, complex and strongly tied to the immediate contexts of action and response in a web of relationships. It included direct expressions of feeling as participants objectified their experiences and made sense of what was happening to them. The changing construction of meaning as the course proceeded was the 'issue' explored in the study. The constructions of meaning and perceptions of students, University staff, workplace supervisors, and administrators were all considered. Most of the verbal and written data used in the study was generated initially as artefacts of the course itself.

The interview material and journal records used in this paper were chosen so that the range of responses to the course could be covered and was not concerned with the distribution of these responses. All stakeholders in the study including students, other staff members and workplace supervisors are protected by the use of pseudonyms and participants knew in advance of the data collection that the course was the subject of a substantial research study. Students freely provided written permission to use excerpts from their journals, and written permission was obtained to use information from student, staff and supervisor interviews. No participants withdrew from the study or withdrew any permission to use the materials they had provided.

Although, the student journals were assessed at the end of the semester this in no way compromised the integrity of the claims made in them: the criterion for the assessment was only the student's demonstrated ability to reflect upon learnings honestly, whether the learnings were positive, negative or indifferent was unimportant but the reflections were required to be in terms a third party could understand. No students were ever penalised for claiming an experience or set of experiences were either negative or simply unimportant. In keeping with the philosophy of reflective practice and action-based learning, assessment in this course was a part of the teaching process and not a separate or administrative add-on.

Phase one: The course as challenges (1994 – 2002)

Prior evaluations of outcomes established that the Field Placement course was valued by the students and the workplace agencies as an essential part of professional preparation in a variety of contexts and sites. It was the convenor who set the structure and climate for encounters with others, and it was these interactions with others that determined the nature of the course. This preliminary analysis also identified the convenor as central to ensuring that the process of maximising challenges and opportunities for all students occurred. Other stakeholders did not see the convenor simply as an administrator but also as someone who had an academic overview and understanding of the degree program and of the field placement course in particular. The convenor was expected to have knowledge of each student, particularly those experiencing difficulties, to be aware of the problems they were encountering, and ready to make incisive interventions without either reinforcing anxieties or undermining initiative. Other stakeholders, including workplace supervisors and faculty staff, had a view of parts of the total course, but it was the convenor who, as the representative of the University, had to take care of the whole. The convenor's decisions that determined the nature of the experiences that the students had, and it was the convenor's interventions that guided and directed these experiences when necessary.

Students recorded significant learning experiences in their journals with surprising candour. They also went some length to augment their comments with oral and written statements about *how* these experiences had prompted the learnings they reported. The students' descriptions of the nature of these experiences always appeared to involve a challenge of some kind and the student went through a cyclic process which began with experiencing a problem (or conflict) and a degree of anxiety (or stress), engaging in action, and subsequently experiencing a sense of conquest (or release). The following seven categories of challenge emerged from the preliminary data.

- i) Challenges associated with immediacy of events

Students were often surprised by the way in which conflicts, problems and challenges presented themselves suddenly. They commented on their sense of amazement at the 'all-at-onceness' of events in the workplace and how problems seemed to appear from nowhere and not necessarily in any kind of sequential order. This, they reported was unlike the way they appeared in their theoretical studies. For example, Rachel wrote in her journal

The best way to describe my first day of Field Placement is 'Overwhelming'!!!! There was so much information to take in, in just 8 hours. There were so many names to remember, office procedures to memorise, and a great deal of personal challenges. I am naturally a very shy person who gets frightened by new situations. Even in this early stage I can tell that this Field Placement course is going to be a challenge!

ii) The challenge of real crises

Not only did criminal justice placements present students with experiences that were real and immediate, they usually involved clients or others who were in a state of personal crisis. There was a certain melodrama that students found exciting and even alarming in the criminal justice workplace and developing the resilience to deal with extremes of emotion and behaviour became very important to them. For example, Fiona wrote in her journal

The responses and actions of many inmates even in fictitious role-plays surprisingly gave me a great deal of 'information' about their thought processes, rationality, and personality. For example, during a role-play one inmate chose to stab another to death because he was sitting on his motorbike. When questioned about his response to this event the inmate replied, 'no-one touches my bike, it means more to me than my woman'. He frightened me; his responses were riddled with anger and hate. I remember thinking that he seems so deeply rooted in his ways that it must be difficult for him to change.

iii) The challenge presented by the demands of on-going negotiation

Students were used to having demands placed upon them and then being given time to go away and deal with those demands. The fact that there was always a response reaction to every move they made, and new and unexpected twists occurred as they attempted to negotiate and solve problems, meant that they

often faced new and disquieting challenges. Amelia was working in a partnership with Daniel and wrote in her journal

Throughout the day I kept setting him time frames to work to...Continually he kept finding other things to do and this really frustrated me. Eventually I had to turn my constant reminders and checking into a joke with mock frustration, however underneath it was very genuine. ... I also got experience with trying different approaches to encouraging him...I learned that I am not as tolerant as I thought I was and can get quite frustrated...I may have to become more flexible in this in the future to avoid excess stress.

iv) The challenge of reflecting on action

Many students had previously no experience of writing a reflective journal that openly attended to the feelings they experienced and the actions they initiated in response to those feelings. Confronting their own responsibility for what they did (or failed to do) in writing without feeling overwhelmed or guilty also presented challenges on a daily basis. Brendon explained his experience:

The idea of writing a diary every week was another experience in itself, because you have to...think about everything that has happened...and write about in a way that an independent third party can understand. ... It gives you an outlet to express some feelings that you don't want to say directly to an individual. The added security of the diary ensures that what you said won't get back to that individual.

v) The challenge of mediating meaning

This course, with its requirement that a written report be generated on some aspect of the host institution's activities, deliberately puts students in a position where they have to translate the experiences and realities of the workplace into written text that has meaning for the audience in the workplace as well as for an academic from the University. The student's writing was their primary vehicle for conceptualisation. As they completed the requirement they were expected to negotiate with their academic facilitator the 'contribution' they were making and the criteria that would be used for their assessment. Anita found the experience of having to explain her project to her academic facilitator as personally reaffirming. She wrote that when she had to describe her project she was also able to place it in the context of the organisation:

knowledge that she was unaware that she had developed. She further explained that:

He helped me clarify the outline of my project and suggested some useful readings... He made the process of the project seem more approachable ... [which] increased my motivation...

vi) The challenge of taking responsibility

For many students the field placement was the first formal experience they had of facing real and direct consequences for their immediate behaviour. Until the practicum much of what they had learned had been either hypothetical or mediated by some sort of 'exercise' structure; but the practicum was the real thing. As Daniel wrote:

We were reluctant to meet [our supervisors], as we were embarrassed about the draft we had sent them over the weekend. Sure enough, they ripped the draft apart and suggested several major changes to it... I was shocked at the straightforwardness of their assessment.... I left the meeting embarrassed and angry with myself....

Or as Rosslyn recorded in her journal:

...it has finally occurred to me that this project can have an effect on someone and...may indeed help someone. At first I felt...this was a huge responsibility to give to a university student but now, the more I get into it, the more I realise that this is what uni has been preparing me for.

vii) The challenge to collaborate rather than to compete

Again, until the practicum, many students had seen their work simply as being their efforts to meet the demands of others and to do it on their own, while competing with their peers. In Field Placement their major preoccupation when presented with their 'professional' responsibility was 'What am I supposed to do?' For many of them it was difficult to see others around them as potential allies to whom they could turn to for help; instead, they often regarded having another person join them in a collaborative endeavour as an implicit judgement that they had failed. Erin's journal entry was representative of the struggle

I have to wait for feedback [on my research proposal] from Paul now. I have no idea what to expect...I am really worried...I just don't feel confident or good enough...but the workshop...was really positive and helpful...I was able to talk to my classmates and find out their

experience... It was a relief to find out that I was not the only one who was feeling out of sorts, out of place and scared...

Phase two: Towards a process model – creating criteria as holding forms (2003)

It became clear that a more focussed study was required to establish the characteristics that the set learning tasks needed to manifest in order for the students to be confronted with appropriate challenges. Each placement experience is unique, and the learning task requirements are devised in collaboration between the convenor, the workplace supervisor, and the student. There seem to be implicit and often unspoken criteria used by the convenor in the ongoing design of the experiences for each student. It seemed too that some of these criteria had never been formally articulated and existed almost as a set of assumptions that the convenor espoused.

In isolating these implicit criteria and later the principles of procedure adopted during their implementation, it became clear that the relationship between knowledge and meaningful action in the practicum was more than just a close one: they were in fact different sides of the same coin and one could not exist without the other. Essentially, the focus was on the circumstances under which productive knowledge and action emerged and on procedural rules that would enable a representative of the university to construct such circumstances.

An initial set of principles of learning and research was developed in earlier work by the author (M. Bates, 2003a). The methodology of that study drew on the work of Clifford Geertz (1979) and Norman Denzin (2001) and was based on relativist and constructivist paradigms. During the preliminary phases of this study a second set of principles were developed (M. Bates, 2003c) and this was then revised and refined in a further publication (M. Bates, 2004).

A further analysis of the convenor's decisions and interventions during this iteration of the course resulted in a set of nine criteria that appeared to have been used in the curriculum design, i.e. in the selection of worthwhile activities for each student. This resulted in the formulation of nine criteria. These criteria imply that judgements need

to be made by learners about what they do. Teacher/facilitators need to use similar criteria as they make decisions about the constraints and encouragements they offer their students. The list (see Table 1) was developed using as a base the principles originally articulated by Raths (1971) for junior school curricula. With some alterations they were subsequently found to be equally effective in describing the ‘activity of curriculum’ (i.e. teaching and learning) in the middle school (Stenhouse, 1975) and are here modified and rephrased so they can be applied to and by adult learners.

Table 1: Nine criteria for determining the inherent worth of a learning activity in the Field Placement course

<p>All other things being equal, one activity is better than another if it:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. permits a student to make informed choices and to reflect on the consequences of their choices; 2. involves the student in a real situation with a real problem that challenges his or her intellectual processes with problem solving, either personal or social; 3. demands that the student engage in the risks of attempting something new; 4. assigns to the student active rather than passive roles; 5. asks a student to engage in inquiry into ideas or applications of intellectual processes; 6. asks a student to examine in a new setting an idea or an intellectual process that has previously been studied; 7. requires a student to rewrite, rehearse, or polish his or her initial efforts; 8. provides opportunities for the student to engage in a range of relationships that either support or challenge her or his worldview and his or her current and future professional frame of reference; 9. is relevant to the expressed needs or goals of the student. <p><u>Caveats:</u></p> <p>It should be noted that these statements</p>

- do not claim the reified status of phenomena. (The criteria are constructions that are offered as potentially useful criteria, not as postulated ‘truths’ to be contested.)
- do not claim universality. (Although they claim a degree of generality, the criteria are still strongly context bound and make sense only in specific circumstances.)
- do not claim factorial integrity. (The principles overlap and include nuances that in turn resonate with similar principles.)
- do not assert priorities. (The principles recognise that very small differences in initial conditions can result in major differences in outcomes: the relative weighting placed on these principles when a choice needs to be made depends on the context.)
- do result from tacit (silent) knowledge and intuition that takes many factors into account at once.
- do assume that any agent attempting to implement these principles is doing so according to personal values consistent with the principles.
- do assume an institutional and systemic context (the criteria assume the existence of an ongoing program with clear institutional and educational constraints).

This set of criteria became a holding form for the more refined categories and principles of procedure for program design and implementation that were developed in the next part of the study.

Phase three: Principles of procedure for the design and the implementation of work experience courses (2004)

The process of operationalising these criteria and designing specific activities was then examined as part of the responsive case study in a further iteration of the program in 2004. Another University staff member, who was to convene the program in the following semester when the usual convenor would be on leave, took the role of co-convenor during this iteration of the course. The co-convenor collaborated with the

convenor as together they designed the activities and made appropriate interventions. Analysis of this process and its outcomes was informed by the student journals and interviews with supervisors. A set of 80 highly detailed principles of procedure were developed directly from the data by investigating interpretations of events rather than simply recording teaching behaviours. These contextualised propositions identified teaching behaviours that appeared to be the most effective in a given set of circumstances.

For example, Principle 44 was in part drawn from a reflective response in the second workshop.

- 44. It is essential that the convenor is aware of the varying degrees of engagement for each student and reinforces the individual nature of progress in this course.** Students need to be encouraged to set their own standards and make judgements about their performance.

Rosslyn had commenced her placement later than the other students and was at a different stage of her work. She had written in her journal:

...I attended [the] workshop feeling very left behind and a little anxious. ... It seemed to me that everyone was soaring through their placement and making a lot of headway on their projects, whilst I'm not even sure what my project will be.

- 74. It is important for the convenor to make use of every opportunity to draw parallels between their work placement experience and the potential experiences in their future world of work.** It is also worth noting that often the most 'throw-away' comments by the convenor can be remembered when they apply to a particular student's problem.

On the other hand, Principle 74 drew on two separate reflections: I had noted in my own journal entry of the final workshop:

...When we discussed the learning plans I mentioned that students needed to understand how to 'manage their supervisors' as this was similar to how employees need to take a hand in their own performance reviews. This was novel thought for them.

This intervention was subsequently referred to in Erin's journal

I had a review meeting with Paul...We had quite a good conversation about theories and...I enjoyed it. Paul is...quite a nice guy. Might be a pain in the

ass to work with, but I am sure I can handle him...or 'manage' him as Merrelyn says.

These 80 principles were subsequently refined into a more manageable set of thirteen generic characteristics that need to be reflected in the tasks and activities set for the students (see Table 2). In this list the principles of procedure are cast as criteria to be used to determine whether or not any particular learning activity has inherent worth. But now they have direct implications for the nature of the convenor's interventions as well as the judgements that need to be made about the constraints and encouragements offered to students. Most importantly the learning activities designed by the convenor contain demands that are intrinsic to the activity itself: such 'demands' and 'requirements' cannot be imposed by the convenor – they must arise from problems inherent in the practice.

Table 2: Thirteen characteristics, which need to be reflected in activities and tasks set for the students.

Activities should be designed and developed so that they:

1. reflect the student's current state of knowledge and interests. They need to be directly relevant to the expressed needs of the student and developed in collaboration with the student.
2. require the students to take on an active rather than a passive role in a social context; there must be an obvious and clear relationship between knowledge and the required action.
3. demand that the student be directly concerned with real problems, real needs and real activities located in a real workplace.
4. involve the student in addressing a problem, with a need to make choices and decisions and then following through with appropriate action based on those decisions.
5. demand the application of previously acquired knowledge (tacit, propositional and theoretical) into a new context or setting (i.e. the workplace).
6. involve the student in accepting the consequences of his or her decisions and actions.

7. involve the student in risk taking associated with new behaviours and new environments, understanding that these 'new' challenges will provoke different levels of anxiety for each student.
8. demand that the students demonstrate they can use relationships constructively.
9. demand that the students must use collaboration and the legitimising processes of strategic thinking and acting.
10. demand that the student demonstrate an understanding of the use power and social influence.
11. demand that the students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between an institutional framework and what is possible.
12. demand that the students demonstrate reflexive analysis (i.e. the ability to think on their feet and modify their actions immediately) and the subsequent reappraisal of goals and strategies.
13. require the students to refine their initial efforts of practice (through re-writing, rehearsing, and polishing).

These characteristics then describe the nature and purpose of the student's social transactions with those assisting her or him to construct meaning. The convenor (along with the workplace supervisor and the academic facilitator to whom some of the convening functions are delegated) needs to become a 'sounding board' and helper. She will be operating in a collaborative and responsive mode and will not be overtly directive, preferring instead to allow the exigencies of the tasks and the workplace context to make the demands listed above. This approach of drawing out the values that underlie action in the learning encounter is thus extended, and the principles of procedure apply not only to the program designer but also to the convenor, the academic supervisors, the workplace supervisors, and the students as well as they work together on implementing the program.

Conclusion

The findings of the three phases of this study have significant implication for the design, implementation and management of practice-based programs in higher education. Indeed, it could be argued that all course descriptions and curriculum statements would benefit from a language that reflects the authentic union of theory and practice that ultimately constitutes the values and competencies of professionals. It is not suggested that the particular principles developed here should be used for all practice-based curricula. What is important is that an honest effort is made to articulate those principles that guide a particular curriculum and that they are reflected upon and if necessary revised each time the course is conducted.

The principles of procedure outlined here come from what the teacher does in his or her teaching and from what the student does in his or her learning. Research into that process becomes the activity of reflection and conceptualisation as further learning is planned. For the principles to mean anything in a work placement course the actual context of the placement must be taken into account for each student. The emerging learning needs to be kept under constant review according to the values held or negotiated between teacher and student. The principles may vary from course to course but the activity of articulating the principles that drive real learning in the course being described can assist both teacher and learner to conceptualise the curriculum they are jointly constructing. The generic framework offered here may be seen as a first step towards a process model for work-integrated learning. Further research may indicate the extent to which it needs to be developed in order to adequately describe the action learning of students in other professional discipline areas. The interactive dynamic processes of learning can then be articulated clearly rather than assumed or simply stated as hopes.

The essence of an emancipatory curriculum can be encapsulated in value statements that determine a teacher's actions in particular circumstances. Many of the fine-grained and contextually specific principles of procedure articulated in this study were remarkably simple when put in slightly more generic terms. Although personal practice reflects each teacher's generic set of values it is clear that these values can be articulated in procedural terms for a specific course of study. Pedagogical and andragogical values, when expressed as principles of procedure, can be used to determine the institutional and social dynamics of learning and the content is seen as

emerging from the chosen learning context. Thus, 'content-in-context' becomes a powerful base upon which we can design, develop and implement a specific curriculum.

An accurate account of a specific curriculum is thus a contextualised statement of intended action and we leave out perhaps the most important parts of a curriculum when we express our teaching intentions as only propositional knowledge which is 'to be learned' by the students. Such statements are usually couched in the passive voice and are likely to increase rather than bridge the theory/practice divide in the minds of learners. Instead, it is suggested that tertiary curricula (in particular practice based curricula like field studies courses) should be based around such a set of value statements. When this occurs the knowledge-in-action, which constitutes the praxis inherent in both professional practice and research, could still remain central to the preparation of professional practitioners.

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Word length: 6938 total