New Landscapes and Languages of Higher Education

The quality of learning, teaching and curriculum

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Introduction

This Chapter addresses three questions: What is good quality university teaching? How can it be achieved? How can it be assessed? To address these questions we start by making a case for a multi-dimensional, rich conceptualisation of teaching, drawing on a substantial body of higher education research that investigates what supports meaningful learning and on Lee Shulman's notion of 'pedagogical content knowledge' to argue for a principled approach to the design of learning, teaching and the curriculum, which brings groups of students into productive relations with bodies of knowledge. Having established an evidence-based conceptualisation of good quality teaching, we turn to contemporary policy efforts to assess the quality of university undergraduate teaching, arguing that globally the current landscape and languages of higher education are shaped by neoliberal discourses that position learning, teaching and curriculum as a technical-rational matter. In this context, measuring quality by way of 'metrics' requires the use of proxies for good teaching, which runs the risk of offering an impoverished definition of the quality of teaching in higher education that also privileges certain social groups. We argue that new languages are needed for the academic community to discuss learning, teaching and the curriculum and that, if we want genuinely to enhance the quality of university education, then metrics must be augmented with peer review, case studies and high quality education and training for teaching. The argument that unfolds is underpinned by the assumption that providing all students, whatever institution they attend, with an equally good university education is essential to social justice.

Conceptualising good quality undergraduate teaching

Many theoretical and empirical resources can be employed to conceptualise what might constitute good quality undergraduate learning, teaching and curriculum. Yet, as we will show, they do not tend to underpin ideas about high quality teaching which inform policy. In the two sub-sections below we discuss first a valuable body of international higher education research that has informed some local policy and practices; and then Lee Shulman's concept of pedagogical content knowledge to argue for a conceptualisation of high quality teaching which combines the student-centred approaches of generic research with the need for the teacher to transmit bodies of (inter)disciplinary and professional bodies of knowledge.

The current higher education landscape includes substantial investment in research and development of digital and blended teaching and learning environments. The result is reports making claims for a range of 'tangible benefits' (JISC 2008a and 2008b) and, simultaneously, there is scholarly criticism that innovations are insufficiently cogniscant of pedagogical principles (Selwyn, 2012) or of contextual realities(Kinchin, 2012). However, the argument we develop here is equally relevant to traditional face-to-face settings and these more recent developments. This is because the key focus in this argument is how teachers make particular bodies of knowledge accessible to particular groups of students. While teaching strategies may

vary between different kinds of teaching and learning environments, as we will show, the pedagogical principles remain broadly the same.

Higher education teaching and learning research

The last three decades have produced an output of research on teaching and learning in higher education, mainly from the Europe and Australia, which has had some influence on policy and practice. It is not the purpose here to do justice to a substantial body of research, but rather to indicate broadly how it has shaped thinking about undergraduate learning and teaching. We draw attention to two features of this research which have contributed positively to the quality of thinking about undergraduate education. The first feature is what might be called the student-centred 'turn'; and the second is that as a body of work the research suggests a number of remarkably consistent generic principles about what teachers need to know and do in order to support student learning.

It has become commonplace for educationalists specialising in higher education (often called 'education' or 'academic developers') to encourage teachers to be 'student-focused' or 'student-centred', which is proposed as an alternative to being teacher or content focused. Supported by research evidence, a student-centred approach is informed by the ideas that knowledge cannot be passed on intact to students (they are not 'blank slates'); that how rather than what students learn should be the central focus of attention; and, that students' perceptions of their learning environment provides important information about the quality of their learning; that is, pedagogic matters should be understood from the students' point of view.

Probably the theory that has most influenced the student-centred turn in Europe and Australia is what is commonly known as 'approaches to learning' (for example, Biggs, 2003; Prosser and Trigwell, 1999; Ramsden, 2003) . As well as being ubiquitous (seen in courses, policy statements as well as referred to in many books and articles), it is empirically well-grounded and coherent and holds out the promise of being practically useful: Diana Laurillard claimed that it 'offers the best hope for a principled way of generating teaching strategy from research outcomes.' (2002, p.71) Put simply, this research demonstrates that students' conceptions of learning affect their approach to learning which, in turn, is strongly related to learning outcomes. Conceptions of learning are represented on a continuum of increasing sophistication from 'a quantitative increase in knowledge' to 'an interpretative process aimed at understanding reality' (Prosser and Trigwell, 1999, p.38). The key variation in approach to learning is expressed as the dichotomy 'deep' and 'surface':

> 'The motivation associated with a deep approach to learning is to understand ideas and seek meanings. [Students adopting a surface approach] are instrumentally or pragmatically motivated and seek to meet the demands of the task with minimum effort.' (ibid. p.91).

In terms of teaching, Trigwell and Prosser (1996) also found strong relations between academic teachers' conceptions of student learning and their approach to teaching:

> 'Those teachers who conceive of learning as developing and changing students' conceptions, conceive of teaching in terms of helping students to develop and change their conceptions and approach their teaching in a student-focused way.' (p.281).

In England, the findings from research proposing student-centredness found their way into policy documents by way of the slogan 'student experience' applied both to the experience

of university teaching and learning and to the broader experience of university. More recently, the phrase 'student engagement' has appeared, which echoes a seminal paper by Mann (2001) which reconfigured surface and deep approaches to learning in the light of the concepts of student 'alienation' and 'engagement' as well as other evidence about the types of 'learning environments' that appear to foster interest and time spent on academic activities (Harper and Quaye, 2009).

While the research described above has estbalished that pedagogic matters should be understood from a student learning point of view, there has also been substantial research evidence, including meta-analyses, that has led to a number of lists of general teaching principles. Chickering and Gamson's (1987) 'Seven principles for good oractice in undergraduate education.' offered an early version for use in training university lecturers. Since then lists of general principles have been provided by, *inter alia.* Ashwin et al (2015a). Brennan et al. (2010), Entwistle (2009), Gibbs (2010) and Ramsden (2003). The lists never contradict each other and principles consistently reappear. There is broad agreement that effective teaching is informed by research evidence that can be related to teaching contexts; that it employs collaborative methods, as well as encourages individual student effort by prioritising the activity of students as learners; that it is underpinned by an understanding of how assessment shapes student learning and how it should be congruent with learning goals (and therefore be various); and, that it is that it takes into account the outcomes and forms of other learning that students encounter in their lives. It can be seen that most of these principles refer implicitly to how students learn, rather than to curriculum and content. There is some agreement on the latter, that is that the selection and sequencing of curriculum content should be coherent (Barnet and Coate, 2005, Biggs, 2003). Ashwin et al's (2015a) principles include 'Effective teaching and learning engages with expertise and valued forms of knowledge in disciplines and subjects.'; and, there has been influential work done on 'threshold concepts' in different disciplines (Meyer and Land, 2006) and ways of thinking and practising in the disciplines (Huber and Morreale; 2001; McCune and Entwistle 2011; McCune and Hounsell 2005). However, taken as a whole, higher education research on teaching and learning has had little effect on thinking about curriculum and acquiring and transmitting disciplinary or professional knowledge.

Despite the research effort and the presence of some of this research in programmes of education and training for new university teachers (Gibbs 2013), as we will show below, the language of student-centred practices, student experience and engagement or that provided by generic principles appears fleetingly only in extant policy documents. Moreover, the argument we are advancing here is that knowing and understanding about the generic aspects of student learning and teaching (which can be called 'pedagogical knowing') is necessary but not sufficient because it does not encompass substantive content knowledge. We seek a conceptualisation of good quality teaching which is rich, multi-dimensional and meaningful to academic teachers who are dedicated to the (inter)disciplinary and professional fields.

Pedagogical content knowledge

Here the concept of pedagogical content knowledge is introduced to argue that teaching and learning should be neither knowledge nor student centred but rather about bringing particular groups of students in all types of higher education institutions into productive relations with particular bodies of knowledge.

We propose a conceptualisation of good teaching which takes account of the processes of knowledge acquisition and, importantly, is close to the realities and possibilities of teaching in a university. Thirty years ago Lee Shulman (1986) introduced the term 'pedagogical content knowledge' to argue against a distinction between knowing content and pedagogical knowing when discussing what school teachers need to know and understand in order to support student learning. Although written so long ago about schooling in the US, the seminal paper, called *'Those who understand: knowledge growth in teachers'*, has clear relevance for discussing what might count as genuinely good quality teaching in universities today. At the time in the US, pedagogical research was generic and concentrated on pedagogical skills. While Shulman recognised the usefulness of such research, he identified problems for both research and policy with the absence of reference to the subject matter to be taught -called the 'missing paradigm' (p.7)- which can be applied to the higher education research discussed in the previous section.

From a research perspective, important questions are ignored which relate to how the disciplinary knowledge of the teacher is transformed into content for teaching specific groups of students. Questions are side-lined such how do teachers decide what to teach? How should knowledge content be represented so that students understand it? What questions relate to it? How are misunderstandings dealt with? How are clarifications about subject matter generated? What are the sources for metaphors, examples, demonstrations and re-phrasings? These questions are difficult to answer unless the research involves a discipline expert. From a policy perspective, Shulman argues, generic teaching and learning research gives the impression that content is relatively unimportant. Policy makers find evidence only about generic aspects of teaching and then the tendency is for standards, proxies, metrics and mandates to be similarly generic. Thus Shulman found lists of pedagogical skills similar to those in the 'national standards' for university teaching in England today (HEA[i]): manage classrooms; organise activities; ascribe blame or praise; formulate questions; judge general student understanding. So, given these problems, for Shulman, a theoretical framework was needed that showed how content knowledge and general pedagogical knowledge relates. Our argument is that this kind of theorising is exactly what is needed if the complexities of university teaching are to be captured and for it genuinely to improve in quality and in status (in fact, Shulman's paper was framed as a defence against Bernard Shaw's 'He who can does. He who cannot teaches.').

To achieve pedagogical content knowledge, teachers first must understand the deep structures of their disciplines and fields, so that they are:

> '[…] not only be capable of defining for students the accepted truths in a domain. They [are] also able to explain why a particular proposition is deemed warranted, why it is worth knowing, and how it relates to other propositions, both within the discipline and without, both in theory and in practice.' (p.9).

Secondly, combined or added to this understanding of content *per se* is knowledge about 'ways of representing and formulating the subject that makes it comprehensive to others' (ibid.). This would include, for example, knowing about: powerful analogies, illustrations, demonstrations; what makes specific topics difficult; what are common preconceptions and misconceptions and how to reorganise material address them.

What we would add to Shulman's concept is that such teaching and learning should take place in particular policy settings that also help to shape what is possible. Teaching expertise lies in taking an evidence-informed approach to working out how to create a teaching-learning environment that provides all students with the best chance of developing a rich understanding

of powerful knowledge, given the possibilities and constraints offered within a particular setting. The educational philosopher Pring chimed with the concept of pedagogical content knowledge being at the heart of good quality when he conceptualised teaching a 'moral activity' which mediates:

> '[T]ransaction between the impersonal world of ideas embodied within particular texts and artefacts and the personal world of the [student] as he or she struggles to make sense, searches for value, engages in discovery, finds ideals worth striving for, encounters ideas.' (Pring, 2001, p.112)

Our aim up to now has been to establish a rich, multi-dimensional conceptualisation of good quality university teaching which combines generic principles about the relationship between teaching, learning and the creation of environments with the necessity of teachers as individuals and as groups to be highly knowledgeable in their own fields. We assume that such a conceptualisation will serve for all higher education settings and diverse groups of students. We turn now to the languages used to convey what constitutes high quality teaching in the current higher education landscape.

Learning, teaching and curriculum in a neoliberal context

Globally, there has been a rapid change in the landscape of undergraduate higher education as demand for student places has outstripped supply and providers have proliferated. Higher education has expanded dramatically and become a lucrative market in a world dominated by policies which encourage free markets, which, in turn, has led to more diverse institutions and modes of undergraduate education. These institutions and modes of undergraduate education tend to be hierarchically stratified. In the contexts of market ideology and increasingly greater numbers of students with more diverse characteristics, governments have an interest in regulating university education as a commodity with which the student 'customer' should be satisfied and which should provide employment skills. In this section, we discuss the effects of regulatory frameworks on how learning, teaching and curriculum are understood by policy-makers and practitioners, using England as an example, though similar trends are evident across the world.

In English higher education policy, there has been a steady trend away from social-democratic discourses evident during the post second world war period (1940-1960) towards promoting the values and norms of the market-place. The 'Dearing Report' (Dearing, 1997) is often named as the first policy document to emphasise the role of universities in supplying what was needed for the national economy. The emphasis has become stronger in successive documents. Each pushes further ideas for privatising the system and allowing a free market, simultaneously proposing regulations, including for monitoring the quality of teaching and manipulating opportunities for enhancing social mobility. *'The Future of Higher Education'* (DfES, 2003) was an unequivocal statement that higher education is for the economy and, as a corollary, for social justice through individual prosperity; *'Higher Education: Students at the Heart of the System'* (BiS, 2011) shifted the majority of the costs of undergraduate higher education to individual students and emphasised that high quality undergraduate education was achieved through requiring institutions to provide precise information about what they offered. Such information should allow students to make informed choices between providers in a competitive higher education marke. In 2015 the consultation paper *'Fulfilling our potential: Teaching excellence, social mobility and students choice'* (BiS, 2015) the government proposes creating a market of 'diverse' providers, where the quality of education on offer is signalled by the award

of one of four levels of quality. Institutions can charge different levels of fees depending on the level of award they achieve determined by the quality of teaching as measured by a set of common metrics, known as the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF[iii]). Teaching needs to be scrutinised so that institutions can be compared and ranked: metrics will give students the 'information' they need to make 'reliable comparisons' (p 19).

The English policy landscape has increasingly been shaped as one in which both good teaching quality and social mobility are positioned as coming from a diverse, competitive, highly-regulated market of multiple providers, among which all students are equally able to choose because they have adequate information about courses and their prospects of future earning and can be assured of 'value for money'. The proposed TEF discussed above represents how the scrutiny of teaching is intensifying in England, even as the market of institutions opens up. Increased scrutiny of teaching in higher education is by no means limited to the UK. Globally, the OECD's AHELO (Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes) project seeks to compare the quality of what students' learn in different institutions and countries (see Ewell 2012 for an outline of its development and Ashwin 2015 for a critique of its approach). Thus the English TEF can be seen as a particularly stark example of a global pheomenona and, as such, is an instructive case by which to consider the broader problems associated with the use of metrics to measure the quality of university teaching.

Problems with contemporary conceptualisation and measures of 'excellent' teaching

The first problem concerns the instability caused by the type of regulation. The global trend can be understood in the wider context of what Michael Power (1994) called the 'audit explosion' whereby in contemporary society auditing both as a practice and an idea is ubiquitous and connected to a fundamental shift in patterns of governance. In his tract, Power did not reject entirely the need for control and accountability, but rather argued that the particular style that prevails –'quantified, simplified, ex-post by outsiders' ('Style A') (p.8-9)- has detrimental effects. The contrast is with 'Style B' characterised by expert communities and trust. One of these effects is that the system of audit will need constant adjustment because audits are concerned with 'image management rather than […] substantive analysis' (Power, 1994, p.48) and, as academics learn to 'play the game' of image management, crises will occur. England provides a stark example.

In the recent past there have been successive official efforts to audit the quality of university teaching and to raise its standing in comparison with research. The first two major iterations involved teams of 'peers' visiting and inspecting, but were abandoned after accusations of elitism, favouritism, gamesmanship and grade inflation[iv] . These were replaced by a 'lighter touch' audit carried out by institutions themselves, which will give way to another system (at the present time the TEF is proposed). As is evident:

> Audits are usually publicly visible when they fail. Their benefits are often ambivalent and a source of controversy. Audit reconstitutes itself in a syndrome of regulatory failure: it emerges from crises institutionally secure despite processes of blame allocation within the regulatory world. (Power, 1994, p. 27.)

So the audit method, designed to reassure the public and the state is intrinsically flawed, yet instead of being thrown out it is merely adjusted.

Secondly, 'simple, robust' (BiS , 2015, p.31) metrics as measures carry multiple problems related to equity. The common metrics proposed by the TEF are data about:

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employment/destination; retention/continuation; and, student satisfaction. Graduate salaries are generated by many factors that have nothing to do with the quality of teaching a student has received: for instance, the prestige of a given university in an already highly stratified higher education landscape; the gender-pay gap (particularly relevant to some subjects more than others); the social capital already possessed by more privileged students, especially those attending more privileged institutions. Moreover, earning potential is far higher in the South of England than it is in the North of the country. Similar observations might be made of retention/continuation statistics. Privileged young students without dependents will find it much easier to complete their degrees than poor, inner-city single parents (who are far more likely to attend their 'local' and generally less prestigious, university). Student satisfaction indicators are again a poor proxy for teaching excellence. There is a good deal of evidence to suggest that student satisfaction is higher in particular types of institution. For instance, campus-based institutions typically score much higher than inner city institutions perhaps because particular types of students tend to chose to study in particular types of institutions. The data would be meaningful only if adjusted to take into account data about a university's average student intake by class, race and gender and so that the premium afforded by an institution's current place in the prestige ranks is negated. If this is done, the likelihood is that the common metrics will reveal no large differences in 'quality'.

Thirdly, is the impoverished, technical view of learning, teaching and curriculum created by the language used to discuss its quality. From the perspective of pedagogic content knowledge as an indicator of quality, indicators for the students' acquisition of disciplinary/subject/professional bodies of knowledge[v] is absent. This omission is typical of most recent policy documents (Ashwin et al, 2015b). Although, the TEF document does acknowledged that 'excellence' should incorporate disciplinary differences, the metrics proposed do not include anything that touches on it. Indeed it is suggested that disciplinary experts come to the panels that will judge the quality of teaching only at a later date: 'In time, it is envisaged that panels will be convened for each discipline (subject) and include experts in that discipline to make relevant and robust judgements.(BiS, 2015, p. 28). Thus subject knowledge is backgrounded.

Similarly, the student as an active agent in learning is absent. Many commentators have observed that constructing students as customers or consumer of an educational product (a degree) largely defined by how 'employable' has deleterious effects on learning, teaching and the curriculum (Brown and Carrasso, 2013; Collini, 2012; Holmwood,2011; Naidoo and Williams, 2015; Williams, 2012). If metrics are to be employed the potential for unintended consequences of their use on students as learners needs to be carefully considered. For example, in England institutions are required to give information about teaching contact hours, which can give the impression that a greater number always correlates with a better quality of teaching. A key feature of higher education is effortful independent study and independent thinking: focusing on what is called 'teaching intensity' could have the effect of more 'variable' (BiS 2015, p. 8) teaching and fewer well-educated students. Furthermore, it is clear that some disciplines require more teaching time than others (laboratory-based disciplines is comparison with disciplines requiring substantial amounts of solitary reading). What is crucial is that students learn as result of the contact hours, both during and after.

While the student as a generic learner is present in the TEF document, it is little supported by the substantial body of research evidence discussed above. Interest is expressed in finding metrics for 'student commitment to learning' and 'pedagogical approaches' including

appropriate pedagogical approaches, but beyond consulting 'technically' there are no ideas about how these indicators might be converted to metrics. Overall, there is no sense of the academic teacher as having knowledge both of a discipline or field and of how students learn that discipline or field.

The TEF document's underpinning desire to achieve simplified measures of the complex activity of high quality teacher reveals inherent contradictions. The document states that the key principles for common metrics and other institutional evidence are that they must be valid, robust, credible, comprehensive, current *and* 'simple'. The reconciliation of these principles is almost impossible with the use of metric: for example, they will not be credible to discipline experts. Other contradiction include:

- proposing 'excellence for all students' (p. 18) by creating a competitive market of providers offering a variable quality of teaching;
- identify 'exemplary practice' (ibid.) by the use of simple metrics;
- on the one hand, acknowledging that institutions are and must balance a range of objectives, and on the other, institutions must not let this complexity 'weaken incentives to deliver value for money for students.' (p.19);
- the document asks 'What do we mean by excellence?' (p.21`) and answers: it incorporates diversity (discipline, student, type of provider); it is the 'sum of many factors' (ibid.); perceptions of what is excellent will vary; and, it is not easily achieved. Yet all this ineffability must and be can be reduced to measures that are easily comparable: 'Our aim is to develop a simplified and risk based approach which forms a single coherent system' (p.25).

In our view, the contradictions arise from a persistent market ideology which is impelled to construct teaching as an activity amenable to 'technical rational' (Habermas, 1985), that is state-regulated economic and bureaucratic, solutions; when, in reality it is a 'moral-practical' activity involving the complexities of transmission and acquisition of bodies of knowledge in specific circumstances to specific students, which needs sincere communication between all interested groups to come to agreements about what should be done. The tendency to seek easily measurable indicators is because under 'Style A' systems consideration of how to achieve complex intellectual, social and emotional outcomes becomes subordinate to improving efficiency and performance.

It is certain that metrics alone or as a major method of assessment cannot capture good teaching. The proxies that metrics offer are distant from what Readings (1996) in '*The University in Ruins'* called the 'scene of teaching'. This abstraction from reality is predicted by Power (1994): he argues that these Style A systems are ' abstracted from first-order activities and obscure' (p.27). The authors of the TEF approach 'recognise that these metrics are largely proxies rather than direct measures of quality and learning gain and there are issues around how robust they are.'(p.33). But this insight does not deter from the quest for them. Successfully imposed, metrics are likely influence the education which is the subject of audit to fit their own parameters (Power 1994) by conveying a reductive, impoverished view of it. In the final section we discuss an alternative approach to coming to agreements about what constitutes high quality teaching and learning and how it can be judged.

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A qualitative approach to judging high quality teaching

This chapter is concerned with the conceptualisation and judgement of good quality undergraduate teaching, learning and curriculum. So far, guided by higher education research and Shulman's concept of pedagogical content knowledge, we have proposed a conceptualisation in which academic teachers have deep, expert knowledge of both *what* subject matter is to be taught and, based on an understanding of how students learn, *how* it should be taught. We have gone on to argue that truly good quality teaching, which involves pedagogical content knowledge, cannot be measured solely by metrics that do not connect to knowledge of content and pedagogical knowledge. Moreover, these metrics can perpetuate existing inequalities in the system. In this section, we sketch principles for an alternative, qualitative approach to judging high quality teaching. While there have been many objections from the sector to measuring the quality of teaching by metrics[vi], experience tells us that teaching is, indeed, 'variable' as the TEF document asserts. Yet, there are few suggestions about how to check whether teaching is genuinely good enough or not. Of course, any alternative becoming a reality would entail many interested parties coming to agreements which seems a distant prospect in England where 'Style A' type systems of quality assurance are relentlessly pursued: as Power (1994) predicts this form of control and accountability 'makes it difficult to envisage alternative styles which involve civic dialogue […] direct accountability and active interaction' (p.27).

So first, achieving a more valid and credible view of teaching expertise will require a different type of policy languages for the goals of higher education. These are available. The European Higher Education Area's (EHEA) Yerevan Communique (2015) envisions higher education as contributing 'to building inclusive societies, founded on democratic values and human rights' (p.1) as well as providing 'the competences and skills required for citizenship, innovation and employment' (p.2). Its goals are broad and ambitious and the student is constructed as active citizen as well as worker, therefore teaching should 'promote intercultural understanding, critical thinking, political and religious tolerance, gender equality, and democratic and civic values, in order to strengthen European and global citizenship and lay the foundations for inclusive societies.' (ibid.).

But how are accounts of such teaching for governments and the public to be made? There are options, all of which incur costs, though they are unlikely to be more than that of the layer of administration and work required to present metrics. We suggest three broad principles to guide the construction of an alternative approach to improving university teaching quality and to ensuring all students are exposed to good quality higher education. The first is suggested by Power's (1994) Style B environment, which is characterised by being qualitative and high trust and by involving internal agents and public debate. The principle is that, of all groups, it is peers in disciplinary/professional fields who should be the judges of what is good quality teaching. Michael Young made this point: '[T]he objectivity of truth claims always depends on their external validity –that they do explain something in a convincing way, on the support they invoke from a particular community of experts and on the legitimacy of the particular community involved.' (Young, 2000, p.528). We propose that the only viable assessors of curriculum which is informed by pedagogical content knowledge are disciplinary experts, themselves current engaged in the practice of delivering higher education in the same or a cognate (inter)disciplines or fields (notwithstanding that educational experts in teaching and learning can recognise the quality of generic aspects of teaching). Students,too, have an important role to play in assessments of the educational process.

The second principle is that high quality teaching is usually underpinned by the type of knowledge acquired during education and training. A comparatively easy metric would be the numbers in a university who have achieved a qualification in teaching in higher education. In universities in England the practice of insisting on some form of training for teaching at the beginning of careers is widespread and there is a movement to standardise the courses. However, from our perspective the courses offered would need to be related to developing pedagogical content knowledge. The quality of teaching could then be judged, at least in part, by evidence of a curriculum for academic teachers which offered access to this form of knowledge. Again, Shulman (1986) offers an insight into what might be the sources of teachers' knowledge. For him, pedagogical content knowledge takes three 'forms' accessible to teachers (and therefore to others): 'propositional knowledge' which takes the form of principles, derived from empirical research or philosophical enquiry; 'maxims' derived from practical experience; and 'norms and values' derived from moral reasoning. As discussed above, there are many lists of principles, maxims and values available to academic teachers. But, as Shulman (1986) points out, because their power lies in their economy:

> [T]hey are decontextualized and stripped down to their essentials, devoid of detail, emotion or ambience. Yet, to be remembered and then wisely used, it is precisely the detail and the context that might be needed.' (p. 11).

He therefore proposes that 'case knowledge' be developed as a complement to the principles of propositional knowledge. We are used to 'cases' in particular to demonstrate the 'impact' of research. Originally used to teach legal theory, 'to call something a case is to make a theoretical claim (ibid.):

> 'Case knowledge is knowledge of well documented and richly described events. Whereas cases themselves are reports of events or sequences of events, the knowledge they represent is what makes them cases.' (ibid.)

There are three types of 'case knowledge' which relate to the three types of propositional knowledge: 'prototypes' which illustrate the operation of theoretical principles; 'precedents' which capture and communicate maxims; and, 'parables' which convey norms and values. All types of case exemplify, illustrate and bring alive theoretical pedagogical content knowledge. To embody pedagogic content knowledge the cases would be specific to (inter) disciplines or professional education.

The proposal here is radical in that it goes against the grain of current practice and trends: that is, standards in the form of a list of generic principles[vii] and courses usually led by people who are neither educationalists by background nor discipline or professional field experts. This does not mean that the courses do not provide some useful principles, often derived from the generic higher education reseach discussed earlier. Nevertheless, the business of applying general pedagogical principles to specific bodies of knowledge is often left with individual academic teachers. A further risk is that in these courses high quality teaching is conceptualised as a clutch of generic skills and techniques. Shulman (1986), though, added 'strategic knowledge' to pedagogical content knowledge, which is the development of wisdom, it bestows the flexibility to judge, to weigh alternatives, to reason about ends and means, and to teach self-consciously and reflectively. Case knowledge is a powerful means to strategic knowledge, and it is built by 'a pool of scholars and reflective practitioners capable of preparing and interpreting cases.' (p.13). The building of a cadre of such scholars and practitioners who

possess pedagogical content knowledge and are involved in the education of academic teachers will take a shift in culture.

Thirdly, we propose the principle that high quality teaching should be demonstrably related to research evidence about what supports student learning and the acquisition of bodies of knowledge. This principle connects to the second, for it would be necessary to engage some academics in the disciplines and professional fields in research which sheds light on pedagogical content knowledge and the effects of learning environments. In the US, Shulman has inspired a body of work on teaching and learning in the disciplines known as 'signature pedagogies' (Gurung et al. 2009; Shulman, 2005). In England, though, the standing of such research is low, unless it emantes directly from departments of education. Many universities assume that discipline-specific pedagogical research will be low-rated in exercises designed to judge research quality of departments[viii], and discourage both the production and the submission of discipline-specific pedagogical research. In universities, high-quality teaching will involve collapsing the teaching and research divide, which suggests encouraging submission of research relating to teaching, learning and curriculum both to bodies judging the quality of research and to bodies judging the quality of teaching. Such research outputs could well be the kinds of cases that Shulman proposes which explore and demonstrate pedagogical content knowledge.

The alternative to assessment by metrics is to conceptualise teaching as a complex, intellectual activity underpinned by pedagogical content knowledge. Such an alternative would feature growing expertise in pedagogical content knowledge; the development of pedagogical cases in (inter)disciplines; disciplinary peers making expert judgements about whether cases can be interpreted as high quality teaching; and, education and training for university teaching which prioritises pedagogical content knowledge. This type of approach both does justice to the nature of university teaching and is more likely to win the backing of academics themselves who are the teachers because it will allow teaching to bring its own rewards rather than being 'incentivised' (BiS, 2015,p. 18).

Conclusion

The Chapter has established that teaching higher education students is a complex, human., activity. Teaching well requires academic teachers (as individuals and in groups) to possesses deep knowledge both of subject matter and of pedagogical processes. The languages used to discuss learning, teaching and the curriulum in the contemporary higher education landscape obscure the true nature of high quality education. An ideology which has established forms of regulation and governance aimed at finacialisation and marketization directs university education towards economic gain alone and employs a performance and efficiency models of assuring and enhancing teaching quality. Resistance to the commodification of curriculum and pedagogy which ensues is difficult. That said, there have been oppositional experiments, for example the Socioal Sciece Centre in Lincoln[ix] and the Occupy movement. Moreover, own own research has shown us that, though the space to do so is getting tighter and tighter and though there is much compliance, there are also acts of curricula and pedagogic resistance on the part of academics because they are committed to how their disciplines can contribute to the lives of individual students (especially, perhaps, in those universities attended by poorer students) and to society (see for example, Jenkins at al, forthcoming and McLean et al, 2013).

We began the Chapter with the three questions: What is good quality university teaching? How can it be achieved? How can it be assessed? In our view, offering more convincing alternative answers to these questions than those on offer now involves going to what is known about

genuinely high quality education and within the sector learning a new, sophisticated language about learning, teaching and the curriculum with which to make arguments. While we illustrated our argument in relation to recent developments in England, this is equally important in such international settings as the OECD, European Union, UNESCO and World Bank which all develop policies around the measurement of high quality teaching in higher education (see Ashwin et al. 2015b for an exploration of this policies). In the face of such policies, we need to articulate the purposes of education in the disciplines and professions and to combine knowledge about curriulum with pedagogical knowledge and take arguments to policy makers.

Globally higher education systems might take account of what the sociologist of education, Basil Bernstein (2000) showed us many years ago about how knowledge can be and often is unequally distributed in society through formal education systems. In higher education systems already stratified by status and reputation, it will not be elite students in elite universities who will be deemed to be experiencing teaching of a lower level of quality. The acquisition of a body of knowledge is the acquisition of power: individuals can be personally transformed and gain the capabilities to contribute to society as citizens and works. The theorising of learning, teaching and curriculum we propose shows how access to powerful bodies of knowledge in the (inter)disciplines and professional fields might become equally open to all students.

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[i] The UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/recognition-accreditation/uk-professional-standards-framework-ukpsf-accessed February 2nd 2016

[ii] It is worth noting that the current proposals for England seem to be an expression of a desire to create a higher education landscape analogous to that which exists in the US, with much greater fee differentiation and a larger number of private providers in the market. But one of the characteristics of the US landscape, both for private and for public providers, is that the administrative burdens it sustains are far lower than those already existing in the UK .

[iii] Hereinafter 'Fulfilling our potential: Teaching excellence, social mobility and students choice' (BiS, 2015) will be referred to as 'the TEF document'.

[iv] Reports were in the 'Times Higher' the only weekly newspaper for higher education in the UK so it is very widely read. For example, 'TQA [Teaching Quality Assessment] devalued by grade inflation', March 2nd, 2001, 'Analysis: Good teachers or great stage managers?' , August 2nd, 2002, 'Quality requires a radical rethink not a quick fix' , March 30th, 2001, Universities are sinking under inspection load, March 23rd, 2001.

[v] We did not conduct a discourse analysis of the TEF document, but could not resist some counting to convey the relentlessness of some of the messages about what counts as improving teaching: 'value for money' is mentioned 25 times; 'knowledge' 5 times; 'skills' 23 times and 'information' over 65 times; and, 'learning' about 30 times.

[vi] See for example, contributions to the British Educational Research Association (BERA) *Research Intelligence* (2015) 'Framing Excellence in Research: Towards a TEF for Higher Education', Issue 28 and Stefan Collini's review (2016), 'Who are the spongers now?', *London Review of Books*, 38(2) pp. 33-37

[vii] Th Higher Education Academy's UKPSF, cf Endnote i

[viii] Currently the Research Excellence Framework (REF), the TEF is intended to mirror the REF.

[ix] http://socialsciencecentre.org.uk/