

chapter 1

THE REFLECTIVE PROFESSIONAL IN ACADEMIC PRACTICE

In this chapter we describe the first of two conceptual frameworks that support the idea of the reflective professional in academic practice. We argue that the three core worlds of 'student', 'teacher' and 'researcher', and the academic encounters between them, are deeply and theoretically inter-related. We contrast traditional assumptions – reflecting models of teaching and research practice pulling these worlds apart – with more recent models, drawing on dialogic views of language and constructivist theories of knowledge that integrate them under a common point of convergence in learning. Finally, we suggest that academic values and principles rest in common models of practice.

INTRODUCTION

In the Introduction we raised the issue of developing a professional language of practice for negotiating the changing context of teaching in higher education. Such a language and its mastery, we suggested, are at the heart of the idea of the reflective professional. Over this chapter and the next we shall examine the conceptual frameworks supporting this professional language of practice. They are:

- a theory of the reflective professional within academic practice; and
- a critical matrix of learning in higher education.

With these two frameworks we set out a theoretical narrative, sustaining the idea of the reflective professional and the associated language of practice. It is not our intention to construct an uncompromising structure in granite but, rather, to disclose the broader theoretical frameworks which practitioners might profitably engage with in their own unique situations.

These frameworks provide a way for understanding the vital role that the academic context plays in the practices of research, teaching and learning at the heart of higher education. In turn, how they are practised reflects underlying theories of knowledge and communication which are shaped by the nature and scope of academic roles and audiences. Being a reflective professional means having the capacity to negotiate and reconcile these different academic worlds – critically and creatively to remake conceptual frameworks which are inherently contestable, uncertain and ambiguous. This also means recognizing the importance of developing a critical capacity to help students negotiate the contestable and ambiguous frameworks they will encounter in their own professional and academic worlds.

In this chapter we describe the first framework informing the language and practice of the reflective professional. We examine contrasting models of teaching and research reflected in the tacit theories employed in their practice and understanding. We compare traditional assumptions, describing models that pull the worlds of practice apart, with models that draw them together under a common point of convergence in learning. Finally, we suggest that academic values and principles rest in common models of practice. We begin, however, by briefly describing two critically important features of this framework: the social-constructivist nature of knowledge and the dialogic quality of language which characterize academic relationships.

THE REFLECTIVE PROFESSIONAL: KNOWLEDGE AND LANGUAGE

Knowledge and social constructivism

The theoretical framework developed in this chapter is constructivist in nature. Constructivism, broadly speaking, refers to the view that knowledge is constructed by individuals through the use of language and other symbolic and cultural systems (Bruner, 1996). While constructivism takes many forms – indeed, Phillips (1995/2000, 2007) has suggested that it has become ‘something akin to a secular religion’ with many rival sects holding different theoretical positions – theorists generally agree on its most basic tenets (Kivinen and Ristelä, 2003). These tenets essentially consist of the view that, despite being born with cognitive potential, humans do not arrive with either pre-installed empirical knowledge or methodological rules. Neither do

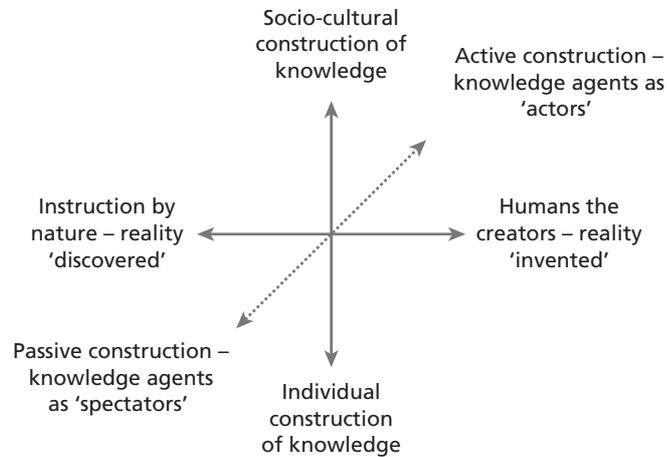


Figure 1.1 *Constructivism: three dimensions*

Source: Adapted from Phillips, 2000

we acquire knowledge ready formed or pre-packaged by directly perceiving it. On the whole, knowledge – and our criteria and methods for knowing it and the disciplines to which this knowledge contributes – is constructed. There is, however, significant variation between the many theoretical positions described as constructivism and/or social constructivism.

Phillips describes the variation along three dimensions (see Figure 1.1), which provides a useful map for locating the framework discussed in this chapter. The main horizontal dimension describes the classic disputed ‘reality: discovered or invented’ (see, for example, Penrose, 1989; Rorty, 1989). At one end, knowledge is independent of human agency: nature serves as a kind of ‘instructor’, its store of knowledge discovered and absorbed or copied somewhat passively. At the other end of this dimension, knowledge (and reality) is essentially made or invented by creative and active knowers. At some point towards the ‘discovered’ end of this dimension, a theoretical position is no longer constructivist but takes a strong realist position in which knowledge is in effect imposed from without. There is no effective space for human agency in the formation of knowledge. At the other extreme of this dimension, the theoretical sites take stances describing radical relativist positions. Knowledge is relative to the knower or knowers. It is essentially the result of individual or group invention.

Our position rests between these two extremes, conceiving knowing neither as discovery nor invention but as social narrative. Social narrative, or social constructivism, is addressed by the vertical dimension of Figure 1.1. The vertical dimension of the map describes the tension between theories

which contend that the construction of knowledge arises within internal cognitive processes and those which argue that knowledge is socially and culturally constructed and, therefore, largely public. This tension is distinct from the different approaches which theorists take when looking at knowledge and learning.

An approach focusing on the individual and the self does not mean taking a position that regards knowledge as exclusively or even primarily inner or cognitive. Piaget and Vygotsky, for example, are both concerned with how individuals learn and construct knowledge, and approach the subject from an individual psychological perspective, but they differ significantly in their views of what that comprises. Piaget (1950) stresses the biological and cognitive mechanisms, whereas Vygotsky (1986) emphasizes the social factors in learning.

The third dimension focuses on the degree to which the human construction of knowledge, whether it is social and public or inner and private, is an active or passive process. Although there are close parallels here with the first dimension, the tensions inherent in this dimension do not map narrowly on to the first. 'Spectator' here is not simply the passive receiver of knowledge from nature and 'actor' is not merely the active constructor of personal knowledge. These terms describe a relationship with knowledge which highlights the active involvement, or lack of it, which human agents have in the process of learning. Again, these agents may be individuals or social communities. Our theoretical framework is broadly located on this map close to the middle of the first dimension but leaning robustly along the other two dimensions towards the 'social' and 'active' poles respectively. Knowing is a social process by which individual experience and meaning are constructed within a system of shared socio-cultural meanings or narratives. As such this book takes a social-constructivist approach to the description of knowledge and human learning.

Language and dialogue

If social constructivism describes the nature of knowledge, dialogue describes the nature of language in which knowledge is shared and developed. Indeed, dialogue is a necessary condition of language and the construction of meaning. The key ideas here may be briefly illustrated by contrasting the views of key theorists of language. The noted linguist Saussure (1966: 9) distinguished language as system (*langue*) from its use (*parole*) and notes that in the latter 'we cannot discover its unity'. The latter, as Holquist (1990: 45–6) notes, is 'quickly consigned (by Saussure) to an unanalyzable chaos of idiosyncrasy',

and abandoned as an area of study. Bakhtin (1986: 70), however, claimed that such abstractions ignore the active process of the speaker and the role of the other in the actual use of language in favour of vague formal terms ('signs') 'interpreted as segments of language'.

Bakhtin argues that linguistic confusion and imprecision 'result from ignoring the real unit of speech communication: the utterance. For speech can exist in reality only in the form of concrete utterances of individual speaking people' (1986: 71). He distinguishes between utterance as a concrete unit of speech communication (inclusive of speaker and situation) and sentence as an abstracted unit in a language system. Bakhtin describes utterance as 'determined by a change of speaking subjects'. Any utterance, he writes, 'is preceded by the utterances of others and its end is followed by the responsive utterances of others' (1986: 71). Speaking (and writing) is by its very nature a response, existing in a stream of related responses and counter-responses distinguished and bounded by a change of speaker, not by full stops and paragraphs. Utterance is defined by dialogue: *otherness* is presupposed by the speaker as the other to whom the utterance is responding and the other from whom the utterance elicits a response. Language is an intersubjective phenomenon (Rommetveit and Blakar, 1979). It is not possible as a private, individual, subjective activity – see Wittgenstein's famous (1968) argument against the concept of a private language – nor is it an independent symbolic system. At its core language is essentially dialogue. Dialogue characterizes all forms of human communication and, as we shall see, is therefore critical to the active construction and exchange of knowledge, or the learning, which exemplifies the academic world. The failure to achieve learning in the academic world, moreover, is often grounded in the failure to realize meaningful dialogue and fully permit the active construction of knowledge.

WORLDS APART

The academic world – immersed in its disciplinary and institutional histories, social narratives, discourses and procedures, its ways of thinking and working, of congregating and communicating, of distributing power, authority and status (Becher and Trowler, 2001) – characterizes the student-teacher encounter before a word is even exchanged. It substantially shapes the teacher's professional experiences and tacitly confronts the student's first tentative encounters with higher education. For the student, the academic world is typically new and strange, its languages and practices frequently unfamiliar and mysterious, even exotic and bizarre. The student's encounter

with higher education is not simply an intellectual grappling with new ideas, concepts and frameworks, but also a personal and emotional engagement with the situation. If the academic context is more familiar for the teacher, its features more explicit and transparent, the teaching encounter with students is immersed in a host of uneven relationships and concerns, including the status of teaching in higher education.

Often unknown to students, teaching has become the poor relation to research and scholarship. The relative status of teaching to research is exacerbated by the financial rewards and status that accompany the latter even as, ironically, concerns on both sides of the Atlantic can be heard to improve the status of the former (US Department of Education, 2006; HEA, 2007). At the heart of the struggle is an all too pervasive understanding that teaching is something an academic does, whereas research and scholarship are what make an academic special. Where many students approach learning in higher education, hesitant and uncertain, cautiously embracing new cultures and ways of thinking, an increasing number of teachers (including many with a natural love of teaching) approach the teacher-student encounter with ambivalence and an underlying sense of dissatisfaction.

There is, then, in the general teaching and learning situation an imperfect encounter of three worlds of experience – student, teacher and researcher – which, ironically, are defined by one another in substantial ways and yet separated by underlying tensions. The teacher, for example, is a teacher in so far as he or she has students. Students, however, do not fully share a world with their teacher, and there is, by definition, a disparity in the knowledge and expertise each possesses. The teacher, moreover, has the authority to teach the particular subject of a discipline in higher education by virtue of his or her work as a researcher or scholar, and yet teaching is typically viewed as detached from and even undermining research. Teaching detracts from the time and effort available to put into research and often contributes to a reduction in the status of the academic, as if being good at teaching precludes one's ability to be a good researcher (Boyer, 1990; Colbeck, 1998; Wolverson, 1998). Teaching so conceptualized has built into it the seeds of its own undoing: it undermines the research and scholarship that provide the authority to teach in higher education. Teaching contests and diminishes itself by definition. Evidence of this may be seen, for example, at the doctoral level, where the less research and scholarship an academic does undermines their authority to both attract and supervise postgraduates. The correspondence and tensions between the three worlds describing teaching in higher education

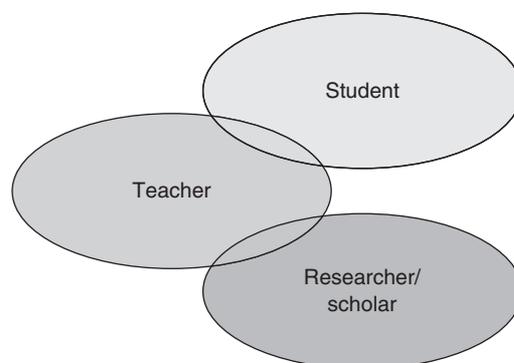


Figure 1.2 *The worlds of teaching*

(see Figure 1.2) characterize the ways in which dialogue and learning occur or do not occur within the myriad situations of these three worlds.

The quality of the meaning and learning achieved in these situations and associated practices is dependent on the extent and quality of the correspondence. How much of the potential correspondence do we permit in practice? How much do we exclude? In a narrowly construed correspondence, we construct situations that reduce the potential for the construction of meaning, irrespective of the quantity of meanings used. In such situations, dialogue can descend into a mechanical and linear process. The listener is effectively detached from the speaker, not because there is nothing to say but, rather, because the social situation militates against it. Dialogue becomes monologue. Meanings are merely transmitted across the situation rather than mutually constructed within it. Deeper meaning is not achieved. The potential for dialogue and the realization of genuine engagement within such fragmented situations and encounters is minimal.

The challenge for professionals in higher education (and it is not limited to those engaged directly in teaching and learning) is to find ways of critically engaging (reflecting and acting) and integrating the academic worlds in which they practise. In the next section we will consider these issues by exploring two relationships between the three worlds highlighted in Figure 1.2: the teacher–student encounter and the teacher–researcher encounter. There is no overlap or relationship shown for the researcher–student encounter since the academic’s role as teacher will mediate this relationship for the vast majority of students. For a small minority – mainly research students – this encounter may be unmediated in a relationship that we shall suggest transforms the way in which we conceptualize research and teaching.

TEACHER–STUDENT ENCOUNTER

The nature of the encounter between teacher and student has been the most extensively examined and researched, although until recently even this has been relatively limited. There are, for example, a wide number of studies looking at how teachers in higher education understand or conceive of their practice *vis-à-vis* their students. Such conceptions are not the result of innate personal traits or cognitive characteristics but are, rather, ‘theories’ (often undisclosed or intuitive beliefs) in accordance with which the particular ‘world’ – the student–teacher encounter – is interpreted and experienced. In a meta-analysis of 13 studies of teachers’ views of teaching in higher education, Kember (1997) identified five general conceptions of teaching in higher education that fall under two broad orientations: teacher-centred/content-oriented and student-centred/learning-oriented. These conceptions range from teachers who view teaching as essentially imparting information to those who conceive it as facilitating conceptual change in their students.

Prosser and Trigwell’s (1999) phenomenographic study describes a somewhat parallel typography of six faculty conceptions of teaching. The first two conceptions of teaching describe teaching as a transmission of concepts. The second pair of conceptions describe teaching as helping students acquire the concepts of a course. A final pair of conceptions focused on teaching as facilitating conceptual development or conceptual change. In a two-year study of the teaching conceptions of American faculty two of the authors of this book found comparable conceptions of teaching reflecting Prosser and Trigwell’s categories: teacher-focused, student-focused, learning-focused (Calkins and Light, 2008; Light and Calkins, 2008) (see Table 1.1).

Teacher-focused conceptions

In the first conception, the teacher regards the practice of teaching as one in which he or she, as an expert, imparts or transmits information to a passively receptive or compliant student. Teaching mainly rests in the content of the curriculum and quality of the knowledge that the teacher has and controls. In this content-oriented conception, good teaching consists of having sound academic knowledge, which is well structured and clearly delivered or transmitted. Student learning is not a central concern of the teacher. Students are expected to accept the knowledge and content which are passed to them and the learning achieved is up to the individual student (Calkins and Light, 2008).

Table 1.1 *Conceptions of teaching in higher education*

Categories of conceptions of teaching	Aspects of conception			
	Student learning	Student relationship to course content	Teaching	Focus of good teaching
<i>Transmission</i> Teacher-focused	Student learning is not the teacher's concern	Passive-compliant acceptance	Transmission, soliloquy-monologue	Quantity, quality, structure and transmission of content
<i>Acquisition</i> Student-focused	Student learning as acquisition of course concepts and skills is teacher's concern	Compliant-active acquisition	Explanation, demonstration, active-monologue towards dialogue	Strategies and tips that help students acquire the course concepts and content
<i>Engagement</i> Learning-focused	Student learning as conceptual development and understanding is teacher's concern	Active-reflective construction	Facilitation, intersubjective-active-dialogue	Developing ways to help students improve and change their conceptual understanding

Sources: Adapted from Calkins and Light, 2008; Light and Calkins, 2008

While the teaching practice is essentially a monologue – a one-way communication from teacher to student – the separation of teaching from learning furnishes this conception with the quality of a soliloquy. Teaching is basically a display of content by the teacher overheard by the student. Indeed, in the most extreme version of this conception, the teacher believes that, if they have delivered the course content, teaching has occurred even if no student shows up to that class. A teacher holding this conception fails to recognize both the dialogic quality of communication and the social-constructivist nature of learning, by failing to recognize the extent and complexity of the premises shared by teacher and students.

Student-focused conceptions

The second conception focuses on the student as someone who will acquire the skills, knowledge/content and strategies for learning that the teacher as expert already possesses. A teacher holding this conception will retain some features of the teacher-focused model – that meaning and knowledge are the preserve of the teacher for ‘transfer’ to student – but they will also recognize that teaching needs to go beyond transmission to play a more active role in helping students acquire the content of that transmission. The teacher regards the student as being a more active, if still somewhat compliant, participant in

a shared situation in which the teacher provides the knowledge and skills to be acquired on the course, but also is concerned that the students do, in fact, obtain this knowledge and skills. The situation is not simply a void across which content and knowledge are transmitted but, rather, a more integrated environment focused on student reception of the knowledge as well. The teacher still defines and frames the knowledge, but through explanation and demonstration rather than transmission, and the student is encouraged to achieve it for themselves (Calkins and Light, 2008).

Good teaching in this conception goes beyond a concern for the quality of the content and how clearly it is structured and delivered to include an interest in developing teaching tips and strategies for connecting the course content to students and satisfying their expectations about obtaining this content (Akerlind, 2005). While the underlying assumption of teachers holding this conception retains, in part, views of teaching as monologue – teaching causes learning – the focus on student acquisition of knowledge recognizes the importance of entering into a kind of dialogue with students and their minds. In focusing on learning as accumulation of concepts as provided, this conception does not, however, recognize the essential social-constructivist nature of knowledge.

Learning-focused conceptions

The third conception focuses on the learner, and on promoting conceptual change. Teaching is not simply regarded as aiding students' accumulation of knowledge presented to them, but rather the process of facilitating a student's construction of knowledge for herself. The teacher will help the student develop and change his own conceptions of the subject and in many ways himself as a person. The development and changes in student conceptual understanding go beyond regarding learning as active compliance in the acquisition of the course concepts to a recognition of learning as an active and reflective construction of those concepts. In this respect, knowledge is understood as socially constructed by the student, and the exchange of that knowledge is, at heart, an intersubjective dialogue of shared meanings between teacher and student.

Good teaching consists of developing ways to help students' improve and change their conceptual understanding. And, in developing those practices, it recognizes that meaning and knowledge are outcomes constructed by students in an active dialogue within the socially rich situation of the course and programme. Knowing and communicating are virtually the same and are grounded here within a situation in which the overlap

between the meanings of the student's world and those of the teacher's world are extended and shared as fully as possible. Teachers recognize that they are engaging people in an authentic dialogue the quality for which – in terms of the student constructions of knowledge – they have a shared responsibility.

Indeed, many teachers holding this conception of teaching recognize a further responsibility which takes them beyond facilitating the construction of knowledge to acknowledging their key role in assisting and supporting the student to develop (or 'reconstruct' themselves) as persons. There is a practical recognition that it is not merely knowledge that is constructed in social dialogue, but also a kind of critical being (Barnett, 1997b).

It should be pointed out that the variation between these three categories of conception focuses around how faculty understand student learning and their own relationship to that learning. They need to be differentiated from models of classifying teaching which distinguish between teaching-centred and student-centred based on differences in the kind of classroom methods and activities they employ. Thus teachers who lecture are described as teacher-centred and teachers who employ small-group, active learning techniques are described as student-centred. Such models often distinguish teacher-focused teaching from student-centred teaching simply in terms of the teaching process. These models are unable adequately to explain those teachers whose lectures are magnificent examples of engaging students in conceptual change or teachers whose small-group activities turn out to be a series of unstimulating monologues.

The suggestion, moreover, that student-centred approaches are not concerned with content/knowledge is misleading as knowledge is critical to all conceptions of teaching. The issue, as noted above, is how teaching contributes to the ways in which students engage with knowledge – i.e. to the quality of their learning. Indeed, it is the continuity of knowledge which underpins the hierarchical relationship between conceptions; the more sophisticated conceptions adding to or subsuming the less sophisticated conceptions (Prosser and Trigwell, 1999; Biggs, 2003). Where the first category of conception focuses on knowledge as the teacher's to transmit, the second accepts the importance of the teacher knowledge but extends it to include a focus on the student acquiring this knowledge and permits a role for dialogue in this acquisition. Finally, the third subsumes both the importance of the teacher and student's knowledge in a fully dialogic relationship, but extends it to include the concern for the quality of learning in terms of how the student constructs or reconstructs the concepts and knowledge shared on the course.

TEACHER-RESEARCHER ENCOUNTER

Since the birth of the idea of the modern research university – with Humboldt and the German Idealists (Thelin, 2004) – teaching and research have defined the nature of higher education and the university. For the vast majority of academics, the teaching-research/scholarship relationship is the principal feature defining their own academic practice. Even those academics whose practices (and institutions) lie primarily at one or other end of this relational axis will feel the pull of the other end in their academic lives. They will have other roles and an increasing number of roles (as noted in the Introduction), but for the most part faculty will understand these roles in relationship to this central axis of practice.

In this respect, teaching and research are inseparable (Barnett and Hallam, 1999), a unity in which the former, as we saw, derives its authority from the latter. As such this unity is often perceived and conceived by academics as deeply uneven. Research, which confers authority and status, takes precedence. Consequently, it is research, not teaching, which provides the key to their identity as an academic professional. It impels faculty to ‘feel primary obligations less towards students ... and more towards protecting and advancing private interests viewed in terms of discipline’ (Bennett, 1998: 47).

This situation has been supported by the growth of national and international academic infrastructures almost exclusively focused on research interests. It is research, firmly imbedded in its disciplines, that provides the expertise, the professional qualifications, the membership associations, the scholarly journals, the national meetings and so on. The very idea of academic professionalism – particularly as it has developed and been understood in this century – has diminished the teacher-researcher overlap and the potential of that encounter. It is that overlap and the nature of the shared meanings that characterize it that our framework impels us to reconsider. It requires a new model or way of thinking about research and teaching. The primary issue here, then, is not so much how we bring the teaching-research axis into balance but, rather, how we conceptualize the relationship. Indeed our very use of the words ‘axis’ and ‘balance’ can be misleading as it suggests a uneven relationship between research and teaching in which positive changes in one bring about negative changes in the other. Figure 1.3 depicts these two ways of conceptualizing the research-teaching relationship.

Diagram A in Figure 1.3 depicts the teaching-research relationship in terms of two detached practices at either end of a scale. One practice is

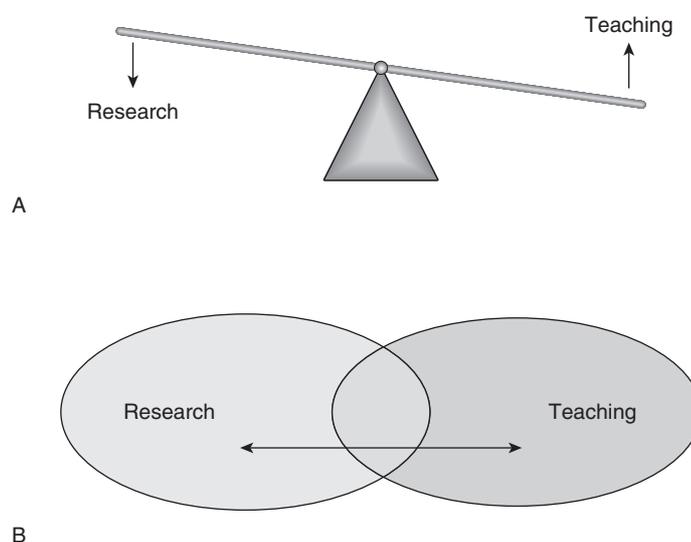


Figure 1.3 *Conceptualizing research and teaching: A) linear model; B) dialogic model*

achieved (often in terms of time and status) at the expense of the other practice: the incompatibility thesis (Barnett and Hallam, 1999). Professionalism in this model has traditionally tilted towards research, often with negative effects for teaching. Thus, for many academics, one of the essential measures of a more advanced level of professionalism is the distance from teaching responsibilities (particularly at undergraduate level) and from students. Indeed, time spent on teaching – doing it, conceptualizing it, developing it and so on – has frequently been regarded as distinctly unprofessional. It is a model, moreover, in which the compensations for professionalism – promotion, status, influence and the accompanying financial rewards – have encouraged ‘imbalance’.

The development and promotion of teaching and learning in higher education have generally been conceptualized and articulated within the terms of this linear model. It speaks, for example, in terms of achieving a ‘balance’ between teaching and research (Kennedy, 1997) and of raising the status and importance of teaching separately from the issue of research (DfES, 2003). This approach – conceptualizing a new professionalism which, for all intents and purposes, is separate from the existing conceptions of academic professionalism – may present a challenge to the supremacy of research, but it fails to challenge the existing model. Indeed, the very challenge to research bolsters the model as one in which the two main protagonists are fundamentally detached from one another, competing for time, status and reward.

Ironically, success in this new endeavour runs the danger of achieving an alienated academic professionalism encompassing two incompatible components. Signs of this are apparent within the central element of this 'teaching' professionalism: professional programmes for the accreditation of teaching in higher education (HEA, 2007). Here, for example, the ongoing 'generic versus discipline' teaching skills debate discloses the gap between the discipline location of research and the perceived a-discipline location of generic teaching skills (in teaching centres or educational departments). Similarly, many academics and faculty perceive such programmes as unrelated to their 'real' work as researchers.

This model has also generated a large number of studies, primarily correlation studies, looking at the relationship between teaching and research (Jenkins et al., 2003; Brew, 2006). Much of this research is predicated on a widespread view among academics that such a link exists. The inherent conflict within this model would effectively disappear if it could be established that there was a strong, conclusive correlation between research excellence and effective teaching. Indeed, the few studies that suggest a correlation are used as arguments within the prevailing model to suggest that a renewed emphasis on teaching is unnecessary and, thereby, to maintain the dominant position of research. That such a correlation is not, as Brew and Boud (1995: 265) point out, interpreted the other way around - 'that being good at teaching makes for better research' - is telling and symptomatic of a political need for a link.

In the end, the issue is rather artificial. Despite this desire for the inherent conflict within the model to be so resolved, these studies are inconclusive overall. They show a negative correlation as often as a positive one and meta-analyses of over 58 of these studies suggest that the correlation is essentially zero - being a good researcher does not imply being a good teacher and vice versa (Marsh and Hattie, 2002). The dialogic model of understanding research and teaching (depicted in diagram B) proposes a compatibility thesis, describing the relationship in terms of the overlap between teaching and research. Rather than constructing this essential relationship in terms of an inherent conflict (see Box 1.1), it attempts to reconceptualize it in terms of what the two areas of practice share in common. It looks to further the potential for constructive engagement by developing and extending the shared meanings rather than locking the two practices within a series of incompatible and competing set of meanings. Diagram B suggests mutual ways in which research practice might share its meanings with teaching (right arrow) and ways in which teaching might share meanings with research (left arrow).

Box 1.1 *Research and teaching as disconnected practices*

For Tasha, an early career lecturer in economics, teaching and research are disconnected practices at the undergraduate level. As she explains: 'I don't necessarily feel that there is a strong inherent link between teaching and research. Certainly, teaching the material has made it easier for me to think about my own writing in clear ways. But I feel the two are really quite separate tasks.' She believes that the topics she teaches in her undergraduate macroeconomics survey course, for example, are so broad that they are only in the most general way connected to her own research on Chinese international trade relations. At the same time, she considers her research to be so specialized and precise that it would be well beyond the scope of her course to bring it into her work, and very likely outside the students' immediate grasp. Only on occasion, when she is reviewing the textbook or prepping her lecture, does the teaching material remind her about interesting questions or background in her own research. The only real connection she sees between the learning that she engages in as a professional economist and the learning engaged in by her students is that they need to communicate their written ideas clearly. Only if she were teaching an advanced undergraduate or postgraduate course on Chinese economics would she be able to see clear connections between the two and, even then, the connection is primarily in terms of similar content.

Instead of regarding these academic practices as separate, often rival practices of the discovery and construction of knowledge through research, or the transmission of knowledge through teaching, this model asserts that they are compatible, analogous practices. Ultimately, research and teaching are simply names for practices in higher education, practices whose goals are essentially the same: the advancement of learning and knowledge. As Light (2008) suggests:

while the former may lead to 'cutting edge' advances in scientific theory, medical treatments, historical understanding, artistic achievement at a national or international level, and the latter to 'cutting edge' advances in individual mastery and construction of personal knowledge of critical concepts in science, economics, philosophy or film studies at the undergraduate level, the structure of the learning and the nature of knowledge is the same – albeit at substantively different levels of achievement.

While the term 'cutting edge' here is pervasive in academic research parlance, it is rarely used in connection with student learning. And yet it has essentially the same meaning, the construction and discovery of ideas and knowledge which are new, exciting and meaningful for oneself and one's peer groups. While the research peer group is national and international in scope and new often means the construction of knowledge and skills never before encountered, *ever*, and the student peer group is local, the learning and knowledge can, nevertheless, be new, exciting and meaningful for the student and his peer group. Indeed, teachers holding the third learning-focused conceptions above

seem to understand the importance of facilitating 'cutting edge' learning opportunities for their students.

The incompatible relationship between research and teaching – frequently, even habitually, regarded as competitors, time and status pitting them against one another – translates into a battle of competing goals: the learning of academics against the learning of their students. The model is built upon a 'rivalry of learning' replete with important issues regarding the power (and associated ethical considerations) which academics exercise in how the rivalry plays out. There are two ways for unravelling this contradiction, for constructing a more compatible model. One way focuses on developing and describing more compatibility between the practices. A second focuses on the similarity of the goals.

With respect to the first, Boyer (1990) suggests extending the idea of 'scholarship' to teaching. Indeed, he writes of the idea of scholarship – 'engaging in original research ... but also stepping back from one's investigation, looking for connections, building bridges between theory and practice, and communicating one's knowledge effectively' (1990: 16) – as embracing all academic practice. It is noteworthy that he writes of such a 'scholarship of teaching' that it does not lie simply in transmitting knowledge but also in investigating, transforming and extending it. Such processes take place, moreover, both in active dialogue with one's students and in active dialogue with oneself and one's colleagues in the whole context of the design and preparation of teaching for students. As such the 'scholarship of teaching' assumes learning-focused conceptions of teaching. It is primarily distinguished from research (the 'scholarship of discovery') in terms of the audience it addresses and the methods it employs. It presupposes a conceptual framework of 'dialogue' and shares with research what Clark calls 'a culture of inquiry' (1997: 252). This approach for unravelling the paradox has been extremely influential, generating substantial research, literature and discussion in both the UK and USA (Hutchings and Shulman, 1999; Kreber, 2002; Trigwell and Shale, 2004; Brew, 2006).

While the scholarship of teaching and learning (SOTL), as described above, engages teachers in focusing on the quality of their students' learning and encourages learning-focused conceptions of teaching, the focus is primarily on how some faculty might focus their scholarship on teaching as opposed to other traditional research scholarships such as the scholarship of discovery or the scholarship of application (Boyer, 1990). It does not provide an adequate model for the integration of research into teaching in the work of potentially all faculty (Light, 2008). Recognizing the similarity in the goals of both teaching and research provides a richer way of integrating

research and teaching. Its most radical formulation is to recognize that teachers with learning-focused conceptions (and associated practices) are essentially building research capacity in their students and as such contributing to the academy's overall research mission.

Building research capacity resides in the ability to facilitate the capacity to 'think critically, to identify and develop interesting problems and questions, to problem solve, to engage and collaborate with peers, to critically and creatively analyze and evaluate evidence, to synthesize ideas, to generate results, to draw conclusions, to produce reports or tangible texts and artefacts for assessment and review' (Light, 2008). In contrast to SOTL, where scholarship resides in the teacher's study and publishing of their teaching, scholarship and research reside in the learning capacities and outcomes of the students.

If the character of research elucidates more precisely those qualities of inquiry and discovery at the heart of excellent teaching, the practice of teaching similarly discloses more clearly the critical issues of learning at the heart of research. Research is a process of learning. It is equally concerned with 'questioning one's own pre-existing knowledge and understanding in light of new ideas and new evidence' (Brew, 1999: 297). It constructs its meanings within culturally and academically established situations with their own particular approaches, methods, 'languages' and criteria of success. In this sense academics are in effect master learners in their field, and this expertise in learning is what they can bring to teaching (Bain, 2004; Light, 2008). Both research – facilitating one's own and one's colleagues' learning – and teaching – facilitating one's own and one's students' learning – operate with different methods, in different contexts with different constraints and criteria of achievement. At their core, however, they share the same essential structure and meanings. They are not fundamentally distinct activities but are integral parts of the same academic enterprise (see Box 1.2).

Box 1.2 *Teaching and research as connected practices*

Quentin, an anthropology professor, asks his students to think of themselves as investigators, as they probe material and ask themselves critical questions. He designs even the most basic assignments so that students must use the tools of a professional in the field, so that they learn different observation techniques, report writing and interpretation. In their coursework – both in and out of class – students must grapple with more sophisticated concepts concerning the ethics, values and responsibilities that an anthropologist has to consider, even though he does not expect them all to be professional anthropologists. It does not matter to him that the content of the class is not always connected to his research directly; he still regularly shares his preliminary data and published findings with his students so they can understand how he has investigated similar problems in the field.

There is evidence, moreover, that many academics do, indeed, integrate such a model within their own understanding of their academic work. In a study of faculty conceptions of learning across their academic practices, Light and Calkins (2006, 2007) reported contrasting conceptions within two general categories of understanding: unconnected and connected. Faculty in the former category reported experiences in which the relationship between research and teaching was regarded as non-existent or as related only in terms of an overlap between the content of their research field and the course they were teaching. These faculty regarded their own learning as qualitatively different from that of their undergraduate students, student learning consisting of the passive acceptance of concepts presented to them, while their own learning was characterized as a constructive process of asking questions, addressing problems, making connections with personal experience and drawing on existing knowledge. There were, however, faculty in the connected categories who reported substantial relationships between research and teaching, not merely in terms of the content but particularly in terms of the learning required in the field. Student learning was modelled on their own learning as researchers and, as above, was described as a constructive process of conceptual change through engaging with meaningful questions and problems.

In these connected encounters – typically sparse at the undergraduate level – meaningful correspondence between researcher and student is established. The enriched social meanings of learner (researcher) and learner (student) are shared and enhanced (see Figure 1.4). Together they generate the dialogical conditions for an overall integration of the ‘worlds’ of academic practice. As such, they provide the essential conceptual location upon which the concept of reflective professionalism developed in this book is based. The ‘professionalization’ of learning and teaching in higher education is not limited to learning and teaching. It requires critical reflection on the whole of academic practice, including research and scholarship. It is a challenge that is both substantially in advance of current practice (Brew, 1999) and at the heart of a broad proposal for reinventing undergraduate education as essentially a research endeavour (Boyer, 1998; Light, 2008).

PRINCIPLES OF ACADEMIC DIALOGUE

In the above discussion of the key encounters of academic work, the dialogic nature of language and the social-constructivist nature of knowledge were highlighted as critical features of meaningful understandings of teaching, research and student learning. In this section we describe the academic principles and

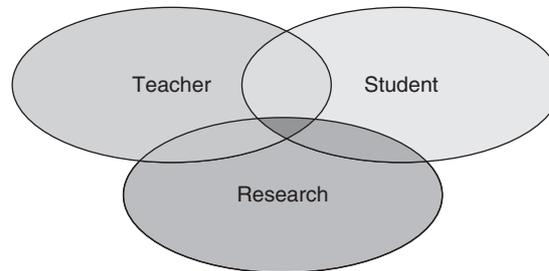


Figure 1.4 *The worlds of teaching revisited as research*

values that characterize these practices, stressing the importance of these same dialogic and constructivist features. These values and principles comprise commitments to:

- *scholarship and research*: in teaching as well as to one's own discipline;
- *collegiality and consideration*: with and for all members of the learning community including students, teachers, researchers, those supporting teaching, and so on;
- *equity and opportunity*: to encouraging participation in higher education and to equality of educational and learning opportunities;
- *difference and empowerment*: to respecting, developing, and empowering individual students within their common and different learning situations; and
- *reflection and improvement*: to continued critical reflection and evaluation of practice and its innovative and creative improvement.

The values underlying these commitments are, however, much easier to acknowledge than to achieve. Superficially, at least, they draw upon the finest principles and interests of academic tradition and are almost impossible to reject. In practice they require as substantial and significant a transformation of understanding and 'being' as those advocated for teaching and research. We may usefully consider these principles in terms of two models of 'being' an academic (or of 'academic being'): the 'autonomous' and the 'relational' (Bennett, 1998, 2003). These models condition the relationship between self, others and community in higher education. They also closely correspond to the conceptual distinctions described with respect to teaching and research.

The first model, 'insistent individualism', is lodged in the idea of self as individual and detached. It 'emphasises separation, individual autonomy, privacy, fragmentation and self-sufficiency' (Bennett, 1998: 12). Such a person

specializes in 'academic freedom', arguing at its extreme that the scholar's merit is absolute and intrinsic, essentially inaccessible to external evaluation, particularly from other disciplines or even other specialist areas or sub-specialist areas within the same discipline. This model draws upon both the academy's celebration of uniqueness, distinctiveness and independence of mind, and upon its inherent suspicion of the collaborative and the co-operative. It fosters a conception of research and scholarship which is individually designed, executed and aimed, first and foremost, at 'making a name for oneself'. Academic rewards reinforce it: better to author than co-author, better to be first author than second author; better to be distinctive than find commonality. Even students (particularly research students) – through the promotion of student 'followings' and 'cults' suitable to the academic's interests and needs – are regarded and valued in terms of their contribution to this individual mission.

At the heart of this model is the notion of 'unilateral power' (Loomer, 1976), the power individually to control and shape others while at the same time resisting being controlled or shaped by others. It is a power defined by contest, by 'winning' over others who 'lose', by academic pecking orders and freedom from academic responsibilities which do not contribute to individual academic status, power and reputation. Its primary arena is disciplinary in character, an arena of battles waged over specialized intellectual 'corners' and niches requiring insistent and uncompromising defence.

Ironically, the emphasis of this model on individuality, separateness and self-sufficiency is conditioned by social relationships and social constructions of meaning and importance. Indeed, the battle is about meaning, about what we construe as meaningful and important in the community, about what is knowledge. Academic individualism recognizes that knowledge and discovery are not the private accomplishment of the individual in isolation but are, rather, achieved in social situations (Bennett, 2003). Its character is defined less by the idea of a private, separate individual than by the quality and practice of social relationships within the academic community. Insistent individualism does not describe an individual (versus a social) model so much as a 'corrupted' social model, one in which the conception and practice of social relationship has been degraded towards 'monologue' rather than socially constructed in genuine 'dialogue'. Its singular character discloses a fundamental 'impoverishment' which – in so far as academic self-identity emerges through such relationships – also describes the individual's academic self.

The alternative 'relational' model of academic self, Bennett (2003) contends, is deeply imbedded in earlier academic traditions defined by a

common sense of community and shared purposes. These are traditions receding under increasing specialization, market pressures, the growth and diversity of faculty and their conditions of employment. It is a model that does not regard others in academia as merely the means through which to pursue private ends, as competitors for resources, advancement and reputation. It constructs, rather, a genuine dialogue by extending value to others as colleagues, recognizing that self, other and community are also locations of human worth. It requires the recognition of the essential importance and worth of others in the whole academic enterprise. Against 'unilateral power', this model rests in the idea of 'relational power', and 'the notion that the capacity to absorb an influence is as truly a mark of power as the strength involved in exerting an influence' (Loomer, 1976: 17). In this respect, relational power inheres in the dialogical idea of 'active responsive understanding'.

This focus on the 'other' is not merely an intellectual acknowledgement of the social nature of practice but also, importantly, a concern for others. It is a concern that discloses academic practice as an inherently ethical as well as intellectual enterprise. The principles of academic dialogue are better regarded as virtues than rules, virtues with intellectual significance: 'not mere expressions of feeling, but guides to behavior that correlate importantly with learning and the increase of knowledge' (Bennett, 1998: 35). Bennett goes on to describe these virtues in terms of the concepts of 'hospitality' and 'thoughtfulness', and later 'spirituality' (Bennett, 2003), although we will focus on the first two.

'Hospitality' retains its widespread sense of being open and welcoming to the other, and of listening and accepting, but in a disciplined and rigorous way. It neither suspends critical judgement in the face of inadequate evidence nor enters dialogue with judgements already irrevocably formed. It does not include, therefore, complicity with indulgent, conspiratorial or even simply easygoing practices, but rather of being open to the full potential of the other's experience and thought irrespective of difference, status and privilege. It embraces a willingness to engage with the strange, the different and the uncertain; to evaluate it sincerely and honestly; to enlist and empower this other in the pursuit of learning and knowledge.

'Thoughtfulness' also embodies its commonly understood qualities of being intellectually 'reflective' and 'critical' and of being ethically 'sensitive' and 'considerate'. In both it draws upon the virtues of fidelity and courage: intellectual fidelity to the spirit and rigour of the inquiry and ethical fidelity to the needs and concerns of the others, be they students or colleagues. It similarly recognizes the importance of courage in sustaining

responsible and rigorous exchange and discourse. It neither yields intellectual or ethically to an abuse of power by others, nor succumbs to the practice of such abuse of power towards others. Courage requires the recognition and acceptance of one's vulnerability and responsibility to the mutually shared freedoms of the other.

This relational model provides the conceptual framework supporting the practices and behaviour described by the inter-related principles of academic dialogue mentioned above. A commitment to *scholarship and research*, for instance, goes beyond a concern for informing one's teaching through ongoing study and learning in one's own disciplinary fields. It recognizes the importance of ongoing scholarship and the research of one's students and of one's own teaching practices, conducted with students and colleagues. It is a commitment essentially to integrate the whole of academic practice within the larger context of continuous learning. Such a commitment by definition embraces the other principles. It recognizes, for example, the dialogic location of academic practice and the ensuing requirement that principles of *collegiality and consideration* govern relations with the whole spectrum of staff, students and all external persons with which one's academic projects are engaged. Such a principle entails an understanding of how we create and express ourselves in academic exchange, of what enhances exchange and of what undermines it:

undisciplined rhetoric is destructive. Polarizing rhetoric, careless and self-indulgent discourse, being candid only when personally convenient, and dwelling in unchecked negative complaining, corrode the very foundation of a community. The collegium disappears when members are too abrasive, when aggressiveness dominates exchange, when learners are abused, or when concepts insisted upon are isolating and obscuring rather than inclusive and illuminating. A constant threat to any collegium is individual insecurity and jealousy – diminishing community and generating isolation and insulation. (Bennett, 1998: 29)

This, it should be emphasized, does not mean conformity, 'group-think' or superficial consensus which would merely substitute group 'monologue' for individual 'monologue'. The model stresses, rather, a genuinely open, critical and constructive dialogue that draws upon all its constitutive voices. It sustains both the principles of equity and opportunity and of difference and empowerment, asserting an active dialogue, which respects and values the difference (as well as the commonality)

disclosed by 'others' in the dialogic situation. It provides opportunities and encouragement to participate in the appropriate academic discourses and learning situations. It appreciates the obstacles to participation that diverse groups may face for reasons such as gender, race/ethnicity, class, age, etc., and it actively works to overcome such obstacles.

It is a model insisting, moreover, that learning and teaching within an integrated conception of academic practice is actively maintained and continually refreshed to ensure both its vigour and to prevent its collapse into a model of insistent individualism. Robust intellectually and ethically informed academic dialogue is characterized by principles of continuous *reflection and improvement* conducted collaboratively with colleagues and students. The relational model of 'being an academic' within a genuine dialogical situation insists, almost by definition, upon reflection on practice and social exchange. It is reflection with purpose: critically to improve academic practice – enhancing and extending learning and knowledge – with and for the 'other(s)' implicit in the socially shared situation.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has described the *dialogic* or *relational* character of academic practice that lies at the heart of our concept of the *reflective professional*. We have argued that the three central worlds of *student*, *teacher* and *researcher* are deeply and theoretically inter-related. They not only share significant overlaps in their various social and academic roles but also share the essential structures of their associated conceptual frames of understanding. Each is characterized by opposing conceptual frameworks – relational versus individual or dialogic versus monologic – with substantial implications for academic practice. Furthermore, in the dialogic model these worlds converge in the crucial concept of learning – the third location of our conceptual framework. A detailed discussion of the nature of learning and the constitutive role that it plays in our understanding of the reflective professional will be the subject of the next chapter. Finally, it should be emphasized that this chapter was informed and characterized by an acutely ethical component which is inextricably embedded in the dialogic framework and conceptually entrenched in the idea of the 'other' which defines academic 'being' and practice. It provides the foundation upon which principles of academic dialogue – commonly accepted and cherished by academic tradition – are established.

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Final questions: Concerted efforts to ensure that an integrated understanding of academic learning and the values of academic dialogue genuinely and pervasively characterize academic practice are the most significant factors in bringing about real change in practice. They, therefore, probably represent its toughest challenge and raise critical questions for academic practice. Are the facets of academic work essentially rival or complementary practices? How is expert learning understood in the context of research and scholarship, or in the clinical and professional domains? How is student learning different? Need it be different? What lessons might I take from an understanding of my own learning to that of my students' learning? Are the principles of academic dialogue between colleagues similar to those exhibited with students?