

Knowing Our Business
The Role of Education in the University

Alison Lee
Faculty of Education, UTS

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Sandie Lloyd
Projects Assistant
Pro Vice-Chancellor Unit
The University of Newcastle
Callaghan NSW 2308
AUSTRALIA

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Executive Summary

This paper discusses a set of questions and issues confronting the higher education sector to do with the role and place of education. It makes the following major points.

- 1) The public higher education sector is poorly equipped as a whole to respond powerfully to the pace and reach of changes in the overall educational work of the university. It is information-poor in many respects and lacks a robust public forum for scholarly debate and policy dialogue.
- 2) The specialist fields of Higher Education, structured within Academic Development Units (ADUs), and Education, as a broad field of professional training and research historically developed with specific reference to the compulsory school sector, have been and remain isolated and distinct from one another with often debilitating consequences for both.
- 3) Because of their history and current configurations, Education faculties are also poorly placed at present to enter productively into new planning phases within universities concerning educational provision.
- 4) The broad conceptual resources of Education as a discipline involve research-based understandings of learning, curriculum and pedagogy. A broadly-framed *educational* understanding of university education is necessary for the sector to be not simply reactive to political direction and intervention. The educational resources of a university need to be creatively redeployed to utilise existing expertise within an increasingly de-regulated sector.
- 5) This paper argues, first, that the fields of Higher Education and Education ought to have more in common than the institutional history that divides them. Serious measures need to be taken to overcome the anomalies that have them isolated and even in competition with each other. Universities can no longer afford to ignore the resources of Education as a specialist field as it readies itself for the next onslaught of change in the current political context.

- 6) Second, the paper argues for the need to think about university education in terms of an educational framing based on the core constitutive units of curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and the institutional organisation of knowledge. An initial sketching of the field within such a frame reveals areas of need in which change agendas – to modes of knowledge production, agendas of life-long learning, employability skills or graduate attributes, questions of diversification of national provision, competition from the private sector etc – urgently require informed educational, as well as political responses.
- 7) Third, the paper strongly argues the need for a public forum for discussion and debate about the issues raised in the paper and about the role of education within the university more broadly. ‘Learning and Teaching’ have become increasingly politicised and the emerging systems of governance, such as performance-based funding for university teaching, need to be as intelligently engaged within the sector as possible. This would involve participation well beyond the remits of the ADUs themselves and the professional higher education association, HERDSA. What is needed is an opportunity to bring together existing expertise in new ways, to move beyond historical and territorial limitations, both within universities and across the sector nationally.

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Knowing Our Business

The Role of Education in the University

I. Introduction

The context for this paper is the recurrent situation of uncertainty as to the meanings and futures of higher education in Australia. My points of departure are threefold. First, I take it as axiomatic that education remains central to the role of the university, whatever changes are wrought to the 'idea' of this institution through its ancient and recent history. Second, I take the view that Higher Education as a specific field of educational knowledge and practice is in general poorly placed and poorly equipped to address the pace and reach of change to the sector. Third, the field of Higher Education, as it is conceptualised and practised within universities as Academic Development, and that of Education, as a broad field of professional training and research historically developed with specific reference to the compulsory school sector, have been and remain isolated and distinct from one another with profound consequences for both.¹

These three points of departure in turn offer three articulations of crisis, in my view. First, the university is in such a process of change in relation to policy reforms such as de-regulation, privatisation, etc, that its pre-eminent standing as provider of higher education is under increasing threat from many sides and fronts. Second, the enclaves within which the specialist field known as Higher Education, in its different guises (as policy research, academic staff development, QA and research and professional development in teaching and learning) are located, are increasingly under pressure as the sector itself experiences increasing stress as to the nature and conduct of its primary business.

Third, and in complex relationship to the first two, the discipline and practice field of Education itself is under major pressure from developments in policy and economic and social change. Of particular concern to the discussion in this paper is the institutional role and identity of the different faculties or schools of Education in different universities. Education has had an ambivalent history within universities and colleges as both a liberal arts subject and an adjunct to professional training (Middleton 2001) and it

¹ Because of the risk of confusion over the referents of these key terms, I use the initial capitals to signify the disciplines or practice specialisms and lower case to refer to the educational practices and domains of practice in different institutional sites

continues to have an ambivalent status; it all-too-often remains ghetto-ised within devolved faculty silos and isolated as a locus of specialised knowledge about educative processes that appear to have mostly been too difficult to harness and utilise in the business of education within the university itself.

The argument being advanced for discussion in this paper is in two parts. First, the fields of Higher Education and Education ought to have more in common than the institutional history that divides them. Serious measures need to be taken to overcome the absurd anomaly that has them isolated and even in competition with each other. Second, universities can no longer afford to ignore the resources of Education as a specialist field as it readies itself for the next onslaught of change in the current political context. This is a complex argument, which takes into account broad changes in the nature of knowledge production, the challenges of the increasing reach of policy reforms driven by the imperatives of 'knowledge economy', 'globalisation', 'life-long learning' etc, such that 'learning' itself needs to be grasped and investigated with increasing rigour and focus.

These two lines of argument rest on an assumption that the scale of change requires more sophisticated understandings of the central 'business' in which the university finds itself competing with other 'providers' on a global scale than are currently operationally available within the sector. A further assumption is that universities still have the capacity, in theory at least, to build such sophistication through careful attention to appropriate forms of scholarship — forms which can engage relationships between knowledge and learning, and hence between research and teaching and between curriculum and pedagogy, that are more far-reaching than any that are currently available. This potential is, I suggest, one of the things that will differentiate universities from private competitors in the next phases of metamorphosis of the sector.

If these assumptions about the centrality of education to the business of the university are to be realised in policy and practice developments, then universities might envisage a more robust form of 'evidence-based practice' in the field of educational provision, drawing on advanced knowledge about this business that is situated and framed within a broad intellectual framework of educational inquiry and enquiry-led practice. In this regard, to be competitive, universities would need to somewhat re-think the current structures and principles of devolution and autonomy for disciplines and specialised fields in the interests of a super-ordinate concern for educational self-awareness, consistency and good data. In other words, universities need to become more knowledgeable and skillful in the business in which they need to demonstrate leadership in the current environment.

The urgency of the need for informed discussion about the future conceptualisation and proper resourcing of the educational business of

universities is exemplified by the policy movements in relation to the broad sweep of higher education reforms being initiated by the current Australian Federal Government, under the umbrella of *Backing Australia's Future* (Nelson 2003). A major initiative of these reforms is the recent establishment of a National Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education. The Carrick Institute has been established to 'provide a national focus for the enhancement of learning and teaching in Australian higher education institutions'; it is intended to 'be a flagship for acknowledging excellence in learning and teaching' (Nelson, 2004, press release).

The establishment of this Institute, with its national focus and espoused improvement imperative in relation to university teaching and learning, is of course to be welcomed. However, at the point of writing, many questions remain unanswered as regards the scholarly and professional framing of the brief of such an Institute. What, in other words, is to be its educational task? What is to be its 'business' and what will be the limits of that business? What will it and what will it not say about the role and future of education, broadly defined, within the university?

To explore these points a little more closely, this paper frames a discussion of the challenges facing higher education today in specifically educational terms. I do this in the spirit of beginning to demonstrate the troubling silences and missed opportunities for a rigorous grasping of the complex issues at stake in the Higher Education and Academic Development fields as they are represented through peer-reviewed publication and institutional structures and practices in Australian universities. Through an educational framework of curriculum and pedagogy, reworked within the specific contexts of advanced educational practices in universities, I explore the possible insights into current dilemmas and change pressures that can be brought through Educational theorising of the big educational questions at stake here. A broad, systematic and inclusive educational framing is, I argue, significantly lacking in the current field known as Higher Education and its practice field of Academic Development. By this I mean that, currently in this field, ideas about teaching and learning are often conceptually and pragmatically understood differently and separately from those of knowledge and its modes of production. This has become a problem, not just of the effective separation of research from teaching but also, and consequently, a separation from critical debates about curriculum: what it is that should be taught and learned, by whom, in what ways, according to what principles and for what purposes and effects (Boyer Commission 1998).

Immediate and serious consequences of this kind of self-limiting conceptualisation are manifest. In personal discussion in recent months with key members of the current Higher Education Board of the Carrick Institute, the view has been widely expressed that 'we' already know what we need to know about teaching and learning. The problem at hand is thus couched and

framed as one of 'dissemination' of what is known and indeed major funding is now directed towards projects under that frame (see www.carrickinstitute.edu.au/carrick.go). This point is not to undermine the usefulness of dissemination work per se, as the field has until now been dogged with isolation, idiosyncrasy, localism and a policy culture of rewarding what I term 'individualist exceptionalism' through teaching awards. The consequent problems with accumulation, reach and consistency across the sector are in part connected to these kinds of past policy conceptions of how to build quality teaching and learning within the sector. Rather, the problem as I see it is the separation of teaching and learning skills, expertise and practice from the 'core' business of course delivery which remains an uneasy and poorly understood settlement between the autonomy of disciplines and faculties and the often clandestine imperatives of strategic course development. The separation of course development, curriculum and pedagogy and assessment have considerable and serious costs to the capacity of universities to drive future changes agendas. Teaching and learning are in danger of becoming, or rather remaining, relegated to secondary phenomena to be harnessed in a narrowly instrumental efficiency agenda.

The direction of the argument of this paper inevitably sees the establishment of a national institute of learning and teaching in higher education in this country as urgently needing to be directly framed and understood within the broad changes and challenges to the role of the university. That is, it is unrealistic and reactionary to treat 'learning and teaching' as a separate part of university business from that of major changes in knowledge production, innovation and competitive edge (Nowotny et al, 2001); global shifts in the economy and the attendant growth of rhetorics of knowledge economy and lifelong learning emerging from the OECD and elsewhere; and major future changes in higher education itself (DEST, 2002 [*Higher Education at the Crossroads*]).

The title of this discussion paper, *Knowing Our Business*, takes up a challenge from two quite different sources. The first of these is the watershed Occasional Paper produced for the Academy of Social Sciences in 1997 by Brian Crittenden, titled *Minding Their Business: the proper role of universities and some suggested reforms*. This paper is framed in part as a dialogue to that work. The second source is the institutional research into higher education by Mantz Yorke and his colleagues in the UK in recent years. This work argues the need for close and open institutional research as the essential evidence upon which good management decisions must be made in higher education. 'Knowing your business' is a term coined from management theory to capture that sense of inquiry-based knowledge about the business of the university as an essential resource for the sector to be in any position of power or influence over its fate. By extension, I would argue here that the conduct, management, development and transformation of the educational work of the university

need to be *known* in the fullest extent possible. The inspiration drawn from these two sources is discussed in section V below.

One specific outcome of the discussion about the future of education in the university in Australia is, quite simply, there is a priority need for the establishment of some effective mechanism of genuinely open exchange about the kinds of issues being canvassed in this paper. The conceptual and practical resources of Education and Higher Education urgently need to be brought into a more productive and less anomalous and wasteful relationship. There is currently no such forum for exchange with the kind of broad remit and influence required. The history of the professional association, HERDSA, has been such that its sphere of inclusion and influence has been troublingly narrow. There are major and debilitating barriers to such exchange. Key figures in the field, variously located in terms of disciplinary and institutional spheres, have no effective national forum for exchange. There are few national mechanisms for exchanging information, setting agendas, constructing framing and guiding principles or engaging effectively and critically in the policy process, for example in relation to accountability and funding developments in teaching and learning. If there is one urgent and concrete goal for this paper, it is to articulate this need.

II. The policy context of change in higher education: *Backing Australia's Future and beyond*

At the time of writing, the Australian Federal government is in the process of rolling out the most far-reaching suite of policy reforms ever seen within the public higher education sector. These range from initiatives in performance funding for teaching in universities to the tightening of the fee-paying agendas for undergraduate education. In this environment it is of particular interest to the concern of this paper that Government has turned the most emphatic gaze upon university teaching and learning known in history of the nation. The interventionist stance of the current Minister for Education, Science and Training is supported by a Federal Government with a majority in the Senate for what may well be the great part of the next decade. This brief section lays out some of the immediate history and projected influence of reform outcomes such as the Carrick Institute as an important illustration of the sphere of political influence in the educational business of higher education in current times.

The Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education is one of a suite of three initiatives announced within the *Our Universities: Backing Australia's Future* Policy (Nelson, 2003, p 3). This initiative is flanked by the second arm of this program: the enhancement of the Australian Awards for University Teaching, in order to 'enhance the status of teaching' and to 'support the centrality of teaching in institutional missions' (DEST, 2004). The third arm, the establishment of a Learning and Teaching Performance Fund, to 'reward those institutions that best demonstrate excellence in learning and teaching' (Nelson, 2003, p 29), completes this suite as announced (and costed) in the Learning and Teaching Performance Fund Issues Paper (DEST, April 2004). The Issues Paper explicitly announces that it projects 'no significant involvement' of the Institute in the initial development and implementation of the Learning and Teaching Performance Fund. Indeed, although it concedes that there may be 'synergies' between the two initiatives, these are imagined to be 'incidental rather than integral' (DEST 2004, p 2).

In terms of its operations, the Institute is being overseen by the Australian Universities Teaching Committee (AUTC) and run by 'professional staff with expertise in learning and teaching in higher education'. The AUTC advises the Minister on the allocation, management and outcomes of any grants schemes and activities administered through the Institute, including the Australian Awards for University Teaching (AAUT).

The Mission Statement of the Institute is 'to promote and advance learning and teaching in Australian higher education'. Its objectives, as outlined in the AUTC report, are to:

- i) promote and support strategic change in higher education institutions for the enhancement of learning and teaching, including curriculum development and assessment;
- ii) raise the profile and encourage recognition of the fundamental importance of teaching in higher education institutions and in the general community;
- iii) foster and acknowledge excellent teaching in higher education;
- iv) develop effective mechanisms for the identification, development, dissemination and embedding of good individual and institutional practice in learning and teaching in Australian higher education
- v) develop and support reciprocal national and international arrangements for the purpose of sharing and benchmarking learning and teaching processes;
- vi) identify learning and teaching issues that impact on the Australian higher education system and facilitate national approaches to address these and other emerging issues.

In 2004, the AUTC produced a series of recommendations for the consideration of the Minister for Education, Science and Training (AUTC, 2004). Of most immediate interest for this discussion paper is the recommendation concerning the development of the framework which is to document how the Institute is to engage with 'key stakeholders', in order to canvass inputs into the Institute's priorities and programs. Here the question of expertise became of major concern to the field. What kind of expertise was to be deemed relevant and how was this to be determined? For example, what kinds of curriculum development and evaluation principles might be developed nationally around the 'quality of learning and teaching' to be adjudicated through this framework and on what would they be based? What performance indicators might be developed ways of determining priorities and fostering and rewarding 'excellent teaching'? What educational principles would inform the development of these indicators? How would they stand up against international, multi-sectoral research-based educational knowledge and understandings of the changing scene of university education?

These matters remain of practical and strategic importance. It is not at all clear that the 'incidental rather than integral' relationship of the Institute in the implementation of the Learning and Teaching Performance Fund can be sustained. And if it is sustained, what expertise is to be imagined in determination of the indicators by which performance in terms of this fund is to be assessed, if it is not through expertise mediated through a body such as

this Institute? These kinds of questions, while of short-term urgency, in turn also have major implications for the terms on which educational inquiry and management can be envisaged over the longer term of higher education development.

III. External challenges to a status quo in educational knowledge and practice in universities

In this section I sketch briefly two important ways of seeing the scene of major challenge and change to the higher education sector, the role of the university more broadly, and hence to the structuring and practice of both teaching and research. I do this with the specific purpose of exploring the implications of a key point of this paper: that matters of learning and teaching cannot be seen as separate and essentially unrelated to questions of curriculum, assessment, which in turn must be contextualised within a mindful relationship to of the changing nature of knowledge production and distribution. One way to articulate this relationship is to see education – both curriculum and pedagogy – as existing in a necessary though troublesome relation to research or knowledge production. These relations are arguably at the heart of the idea of the modern university and require ongoing re-assessment. In order to begin to address these broader agendas, this paper takes the position that questions of educative processes, framed as ‘learning and teaching’ within Higher Education and current policy discourse alike, need to be rigorously re-framed within a broader conception of *pedagogy*, understood as the relations between learning, teaching and the knowledge produced through this relation within a specific environment (cf Lusted 1986). Section VI elaborates this re-framing in a discussion of Higher Education’s engagement in the educative work of the university.

Two factors motivate the inclusion of this section in this paper, The first, already canvassed, is the deeply entrenched ‘commonsense’ separation of pedagogy (‘learning and teaching’) from both knowledge production and curriculum in higher education, linked to largely individualist and cognitivist conceptions of learning. This problematic lies at the heart of the position being developed here for an agenda of inquiry and development in the field. The second is the equally problematic sloganistic uptake of change agendas in much current Higher Education literature (for example as read from journals such as *HERD* in recent years in this country). Terms such as ‘knowledge economy’ and ‘knowledge society’ often appear in research articles in the field as self-evident ‘facts’ in the world in the absence of a strong scholarly tradition seeking to explore the curricular and pedagogical implications of these historical, epistemological, economic and political changes.

i) Changes in knowledge and the challenge to disciplinary autonomy

For the most part, contemporary universities remain organised around the logic of disciplinary science (Gibbons 1998) or disciplinarity (Messer-Davidow et al 1993). Disciplinary organisation has in turn structured both teaching and

research and intellectual work in universities through much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Lee & Green 1997, Barnett 2000). Disciplinarity can be understood as a socially constructed, authorised and organised *attitude* to knowledge. Its logic is conceptually a closed logic in terms of its boundary work, constructing grids of specification and exclusion. It is disciplinary logic that has historically mapped onto the territorial and economic units of faculties and departments. This double inscription of closed-ness is often informally referred to in university management working language as the 'silo' effect. This structural, conceptual organisational and political logic is usually followed, even when entities such as faculties are organised around other ideas such as that of 'profession' or professionalism/professional practice, or indeed interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary coalitions, more or less.

What is not under question in relation to this state of affairs, however, is the pace and reach of social, economic and epistemological change in the contemporary world. This pace and reach place increasing stress on the prevailing logic of disciplinarity and 'normal science'. Higher education analyst Peter Scott has produced a useful synthesis of what he sees as the major attributes characterising (after Giddens, 1991) late modernity (Scott, 1995, 1997, 2000). The first of attributes is *acceleration*, the sheer increased volume of intellectual and other goods produced and consumed within a society. The second is *simultaneity*, the 'radical compression of time-space' (cf Giddens 1991), a phenomenon of globalisation enabled through the mechanisms of the internet. This has a major effect on social relations in including relations of knowing and learning. The third attribute is *increasing risk*, an ongoing but accelerating phenomenon of modernity. The fourth is *non-linearity, complexity and chaos* and the fifth is *reflexivity* (where boundaries between producers and consumers are weakened and the foundational claims of disciplinary knowledge are undermined by their manifest dependence on economic and social interests. People navigate a way through the social processes described above by reflexively making their own biographies (Scott, 2000, p20).

These changes have wide-reaching implications, for the production, organisation and distribution of knowledge, for the shaping of curriculum and pedagogical relationships, and for the economic contract universities take out with students, reconstrued as customers. They have in some senses become familiar and commonplace. Yet in order to grasp rigorously what needs to be known and addressed within the practices of higher education, their educational implications need to be imagined and envisaged through systematic scanning of practices and the theoretical underpinnings in which inquiry into these practices are framed. There needs in other words to be serious work done to create the conditions and intellectual resources for translating global change phenomena into local ways of questioning the way

things are, the business as usual, more or less, of ways of talking about curriculum and pedagogy in today's higher education systems.

One of the most influential accounts of changes in knowledge and the role of the university in the last decade has been that of Michael Gibbons and his colleagues (Gibbons *et al* 1994, Gibbons 1998, Nowotny *et al* 2001). In this work, the logic of disciplinary science has been referred to as Mode-1 knowledge. It is characterised in its purest form as being defined by academic interests, as hierarchical, form-preserving and relatively homogeneous, and as accountable to protocols of disciplinarity. The modes of production of knowledge are, however changing rapidly and evolving and devolving according to quite other logics and imperatives: those of globalisation, acceleration, complexity, increasing risk and reflexivity as noted by Scott; by the massification (or 'high school-isation') of higher education; by the attendant commodification, de-regulation and privatisation of the sector and by the spread of practices, potentialities and problematics of ICTs. Changes in the production and distribution of knowledge from disciplinary enclosures or 'silos' to the emergence of 'distributed knowledge production systems' are named in Gibbons *et al's* typology as 'Mode-2'. (Nowotny, Scott and Gibbons, 2001). According to this analysis, the new modes of knowledge production are produced in the context of application, are heterogeneous, heterarchical and transient; they are transdisciplinary, collaborative and localised. There is a driving logic of open-ness as distinct from enclosure, more or less. These new modes and relations of knowledge production do not replace but emerge from and around disciplinary science; they emerge out of and shape societies and economies ('Mode-2 Societies').

For universities, this means that they no longer have a monopoly or an unchallengeable position in knowledge production but are one part, albeit still a major one, within distributed systems. Knowledge production (research) and its recontextualisation, dissemination and reconstruction (curriculum and pedagogy) are no longer self-contained activities carried out in more or less 'silo'-like isolation. There are many diverse actors in the knowledge-producing business.²

These kinds of changes can be predicted, according to this analysis, to have a profound effect over course development, and the organisation and practices of curriculum and pedagogy in higher education within the imaginable future. Gibbons' influential World Bank discussion paper (Gibbons, 1998), outlines some of the challenges to traditional discipline-based conceptions of curriculum, teaching and learning. For the purposes of this discussion, it is

² Actual universities have of course more or less dialogic, collegial and consultative relationships with other bodies — consumers of higher education, such as industry and professional bodies. The point here is that mode and relations of *production* of knowledge and the substantive primary *education or training* of knowledge workers are rapidly changing.

not necessary to endorse Gibbons' particular analysis. What is important about that work, however, is that it offers one productive line of inquiry into the inevitability of profound change in educative processes in the higher education sector during the course of this coming century. An approach to the business of education that sees its role as a major producer of knowledge, its pedagogical practices and organisational logics as inextricably intertwined, will need to grapple simultaneously and at a deep level with the changing relations and modes of knowledge production, the recontextualisation of knowledge and competence into curriculum and its changing framings and relations of learning, work, and knowledge production.

ii) Recurrent changes in the university sector in Australia and their impact on curriculum and pedagogy

Over the past fifteen years or so, Australian universities have played out the Dawkins higher education reforms which produced a 'Unified National System'. This era has arguably 'quietly' come to an end in the past several years with the almost unheralded introduction of the Ministerial paper, *Higher Education at the Crossroads* (DEST 2002) where the way was paved for the emergence of a new era of 'diversification' replacing that of 'unification'.

It is not the place here to debate the manifold effects on Australian higher education of the UNS. However, important work in recent years addressing questions and dilemmas of diversity in the sector need to be taken into account in assembling resources for thinking through the implications of these policy developments. Stephen Kemmis and his Education policy analyst colleagues Paige Porter and Fazal Rizvi, for example, writing in 1999, argued that Australian universities were more systemically and programmatically diverse under the UNS than ever before. Yet, in their words:

this diversity is under-recognized and under-rewarded. Government policies encouraging diversity have not been carried through changes to regulatory and funding mechanisms. Common funding and regulatory mechanisms now press all universities towards the same goal: to maximize resources by being as comprehensive as possible, with as many highly weighted fields of study and students as possible. The system favours convergence and inter-institutional mimicry rather than innovation and distinctiveness. If the current system continues, it is most likely to produce only a single hierarchy in which different universities cluster at different levels in terms of quality measured against a few key indicators (like research productivity and the resources available to support their work) (Kemmis et al 1999.p2)

In this Discussion paper, Kemmis and his colleagues examine five 'dilemmas of diversity' which they name as dilemmas of conformity (and an unease with difference), competition, equity, accountability and autonomy. At the time of writing, the system was under threat of unintended convergence and homogenisation through the enforcement of a singular hierarchic funding

model. Internal conservatism within universities was also named as a threat to diversification.

What this paper advocated was a familiar enough list of developments for universities and the policies that governed them. Among them were increasing responsiveness to client and regional needs, including strengthening connections and collaborations with students, business, the wider community, and with peers and colleagues in the disciplines.

This discussion resonates in important ways with points made recently by Ingrid Moses (2004), who concurred that, under the UNS, there was considerable differentiation among universities identified by type and among course curriculum and teaching and learning profiles. This differentiation was largely unplanned and unpredicted, brought about through external pressures, and incentive findings of one kind or another, both external and internal to specific universities.

According to Moses, much, if not all, of this differentiation over the past decade or so has been deemed to be 'positive' by academics, in terms of the opportunities for specialisation and reputation-building in specific areas. However, as she noted, there is a strong belief within the Federal Government, that the existing diversity 'camouflages a fundamental "sameness", ie, a teaching-cum-research mission and aspiration' (p8). Indeed, it could be argued that all of the thirty-nine universities have been steered through policy and funding in a direction where little real structural diversity is possible.

What has changed between the publication of Kemmis and colleagues Discussion Paper and Moses' article, is the intensified policy climate. In lieu of the mix of unplanned differentiation within a structural sameness, the appearance of the Ministerial Discussion Paper, *Higher Education at the Crossroads*, proposes a shift from 'unplanned' to 'planned' differentiation (Nelson 2002, p 25). The Paper then goes on to sketch several quite dramatic change scenarios, including a rather familiar citing of the idea of institutions or distributed networks of 'world-class research intensity', as well as the further development of dual-sector institutions, graduate schools, multi-sector 'educational precincts', 'strategic alliances with business' etc (p 25). As Moses points out, however, there has actually been little response to these projections put forward so clearly in the Discussion Paper, either from the public or from within the Higher Education sector itself.

The purpose of sketching some of this discussion in the context of this paper is to underscore the point that any major policy-driven changes in higher education have major and lasting impact on what counts as knowledge, curriculum and pedagogy in the sector. The problems of diversification and homogenisation sketched here have major and increasing influence on course

development and on participation across the sector. Yet there is, as I will outline below, little systematic curriculum inquiry, including curriculum-historical inquiry, as a research base on which the sector might publicly *know* itself in any systematic way. At stake here, for example, are major and significant shifts in the relationship between research and teaching, and among disciplinary, professional and vocational education. In the light of such considerations, a field of knowledge and practice in learning and teaching can hardly sit effectively separate from such wholesale educational engineering.

Finally in this section, there is a quiet but escalating agenda of change in relation to the questions of de-regulation and privatisation. The Australian higher education sector remains structurally bound to its state-monopoly heritage and arguably can only be thoroughly *thought* in terms of that monopoly. Yet there are many pressures for change, such as intra-national deregulation, international free trade agreements, international higher education summit agreements such as the Bologna Accord and the educational anarchy of the internet. The blurrings of the sectors, including the shadowy spectre of the 'associate degree', are barely conceivable within the current storylines of current 'teaching and learning' discourses within the sector. Profound change is currently going on through largely unheralded processes such as private provider higher education accreditation that are difficult to comprehend in their long-term implications. In this environment, over the next couple of decades, a conceptual separation of ideas about teaching and learning from broader debates about the future shaping of the industry itself, runs the serious risk of becoming anachronistic and counter-productive.

IV. Institutional and Sectoral Responses to Change

The view taken up in this paper, as indicated in the Introduction, is that the higher education sector is poorly prepared for participating effectively in these debates. As a whole the sector is both information-poor and impoverished in terms of genuinely strong national mechanisms and framings for open and critical inquiry. There are currently serious barriers and no effective strategies for overcoming this situation.

i) Gaps, Absences and Missed Opportunities

Higher education as a sector and a domain of educational practice has been an intellectually neglected space. It is information-poor, in many significant respects. First and perhaps foremost, there is little by way of systematic, publicly available information regarding the national picture of programs of study, over the history of the university in this country and specifically over the past generation of change. For example, in their discussion paper on enhancing diversity in Australian higher Education, Kemmis et al (1999) note that:

it is difficult to get beneath the level of systemic diversity to fully comprehend the programmatic diversity of higher education in Australia. It is also difficult to see how programmatic diversity can feed and enhance systemic diversity – how the different pattern of higher education activities within institutions could help to form and shape diversity among institutions.

While the specific argument concerning of policy shaping and funding of higher education in general is beyond the scope of this paper, the point is that work such as this is inhibited by a lack of access to information. Indeed, outside individual institutions' planning and development units garnering information about other universities' courses for competitive edge, little is known about what is going on in curriculum terms nationally. The consequence of this is that discussion of key issues of change and development in the sector tend to remain abstract, unable to effectively influence policy development for the sector as a whole.

Second, the higher education sector is information-poor in terms of the development and the specific shape and function of the units dedicated to the advancement of the specialist field of Higher Education, ie, to academic development for the advancement of teaching and learning in the university. In this paper, these units will be called by the generic name of academic development units or ADUs. The fundamental dilemmas of academic development faced by these units and by those responsible for developing teaching and learning in individual universities are little known by those who

actually work in the 'mainstream' of higher education — discipline or profession-based academics. Not only are there internal institutional barriers militating against robust and productive exchange, there are also serious barriers across institutions to obtaining information and producing systematic knowledge of the sector. In particular, there are significant barriers to bringing together key players across all sectors of interest in an effective way to address these major gaps in national information.

There is a quite extraordinary lack of shared knowledge, expertise and activity between the disciplines or institutional entities of Education and Higher Education/Academic Development. The former is often perceived to be solely or principally concerned with the pre-service education of school-teachers and therefore of limited relevance to the specific populations of university students. The latter struggles for legitimacy and for its very existence as a specific field of inquiry and an institutional entity. The following section examines this a little more closely, since it is a primary expression of dilemma in the 'heartland' of the educational work of the university. This is done, not in a spirit of negative critique but in the mindfulness that currently neither sector leads nor significantly resources the current higher education teaching and learning policy agenda.

ii) Higher Education and Education: lonely planets

The structural and intellectual separation of Education from Higher Education as institutional entities has a specific history that has never been formally traced and documented in this country. This history merits serious investigation as one key to the policy and practice dilemmas currently inhibiting universities in this country from effective change in the areas of curriculum and pedagogy and rendering them effectively conservative and reactionary in educational terms. In the absence of such institutional histories, it is tempting to assume the present state of affairs to be natural and inevitable, in the proper order of things. Yet is important to find ways to question and challenge this order at a time of crisis and major change.

Education faculties and ADUs often co-exist within the same university and even, albeit rarely, within the same administrative unit. They have similar professional concerns but largely different institutional briefs. They have been historically inscribed with major paradigmatic differences and standoffs and, in the most extreme form, accompanied by disabling and isolating institutionalised territorialities and jealousies (Webb 1997). The Higher Education field has often, according to Webb's critique been defensive and reactionary (see section VII [iii] below for a more detailed discussion of this watershed intervention in the Higher Education teaching and learning debate). Indeed, in general, I would suggest that the Higher Education/Academic Development arm of the public university sector in

Australia in a state of some intellectual and professional disarray, at the same time as issues of teaching and learning and academic development move from periphery to centre stage of national policy attention.

There has been a serious lack of sustained public national debate over the educational business of the university for a long period of time. Indeed, there is a startling lack of even the terms within which such debate could be conceived and framed. International discussion and debate canvassed in the major journals and in policy forums such as UNESCO, the OECD and the World Bank do not find ready expression in wide-ranging debate and rigorous research into curriculum and pedagogy within the sector. The national professional association for Higher Education, HERDSA, has languished in a margin in terms of political influence and sway, despite efforts at different times to marshal its forces and build critical mass. It too has been marked by its history of paradigmatic isolationism and defensive border protection strategies. While it is spurious to make simplistic cross-national comparisons, there are some examples of a stronger and more public face to higher education debate to be invoked for purposes of fleshing out the lack under which the sector languishes in this country as a sector of public concern. The SRHE in Britain, for example has, among other things, consistently produced monographs presenting provocative public discussions about key issues in higher education in that country which have wide and general circulation through the Open University Press imprint.

The characteristics of intellectual isolation within the field are often institutionalised within the ADUs. The intellectual isolation of these units from the daily work of teaching and learning within disciplines and departments, has developed in complex relationship with their structural marginality and fragility in universities. While chronically under-resourced and continually under threat from the competing interests of discipline-based faculties in specific university configurations, such units are obliged to constantly demonstrate their usefulness, effectiveness and value from almost indefensible positions. Despite increasing emphatic pressure from centralised performance-based funding for teaching and learning, these units appear increasingly vulnerable. Its population is aging and renewal is a problem. The field lives with these paradoxes as part of their 'heartland'.

One symptom of the continued subordination of the educational to the disciplinary business of universities is the continuing poor rate of engagement of the resources of such units by mainstream discipline- or faculty-based academics. For example, participation by academics in professional development for teaching and learning remains low across the nation. A recent Evaluations and Investigations Project undertaken by Dearn, Fraser and Ryan (2002), for example, saw the field of academic professional development as providing 'uneven and unsystematic provision' of support for teaching and learning across the sector with a general reluctance of academics

to engage in provided programs, and with particular problems being identified in relation to to sessional teachers (Dearn, Fraser and Ryan, 2002). At the same time, many such units are required to spend large proportion of time and other resources administering the QA instruments to service the institution's quality management needs. These include a constant administering of particular kinds of course and subject evaluations, which are often perceived as mechanistic and reductionist and are frustrating to all participants. There is a constant tension among competing imperatives of individual responsiveness to need (a service orientation to professional development), obedience to institutionally driven accountability work through QA mechanisms of one kind or another (Brew 2002) and the exercise of intellectual and professional leadership in the core educational business of the organisation.

The point being made here is not to denigrate the useful work being undertaken within ADUs in the advancement of teaching and learning in universities. Many rich programs exist in a majority of Australian universities, as acknowledged by Dearn, Fraser and Ryan in their report. *My point is rather that there is a serious and complex problem with the field, from an intellectual as well as a structural point of view.* Ongoing institutional marginalisation and constant politicisation, at the institutional level, of the resourcing and funding of such work. militate against the development of sufficient stability to build a robust field of expertise, whether it is educational knowledge about teaching and learning or knowledge about academic professional development. It is difficult to build and sustain programs of institutional research.

The sector's vulnerability and reactivity to policy-driven intervention from the Government are exacerbated in the increasingly politicised higher education climate. As teaching and learning become more and more visible objects of policy, the terms on which the work of responding to and operationalising of policy initiatives have often been determined from *outside* the professional field. Without a strongly framed, broadly based leadership, development efforts have been fragmented and isolated, Powerful examples over the past decade or so have been the histories of the CAUT, CUTSD and EIP initiatives. In the case of CAUT, grants were made to individuals and remained the property of the individual bodies that developed the material. CUSTD initiatives continued to struggle with the problem of dissemination of grants across institutions and the systematic evaluation of their potential broad benefit for genuine capacity building within the sector. While clearinghouse initiatives of one kind or another are currently operating, eg *Ultibase* (<http://ultibase.rmit.edu.au>) and *Uniserve Science* (<http://science.uniserve.edu.au>), and strategies are being examined for the 'effective dissemination of outcomes' of teaching development projects (www.carrickinstitute.edu.au/carrick/go), these initiatives exist largely within a performance-driven conception of development, where fundamental questions of educational framing until now have not been effectively raised.

At the same time, Education in general as a discipline or broad field of intellectual inquiry has a less-than-optimal public profile as a research and practice field dedicated to advancing understanding about educative processes. Education has always suffered from a poor public image, both within the university and the community more broadly, for a variety of reasons that are too complex to address properly in this paper. Education has an increasingly poor public media image in Australia, as exemplified by recent national press articles with titles such as 'It's not rocket science', (Ridd, 2005). Policy-driven criticism of the poor outcomes for children in literacy and schooling success draw denigrating comparisons between educational and medical research (see Yates 2004). Increasing constraint on education research funding, particularly in the US, is having the effect of reducing what can count as educational research to a narrow science paradigm. Overall funding of educational research captures only a tiny proportion of total ARC funding.

Education also suffers from an image problem with respect to popular conceptions of its remit. Education faculties are often seen to be 'just' factories for producing school teachers. Indeed, one strong reason given by key figures within Higher Education and Academic Development for the lack of connection with faculties of Education in the past has been the unwillingness of Education to move beyond its narrow remit within the school sector and its often rigid adherence, in the older university Education faculties at least, to the 'foundation disciplines' of philosophy, history psychology etc. There are many instances of missed opportunity within the history of the Higher Education field to link in with the more established fields of 'mainstream' Educational research and conceptual resources.

Yet political, economic and social changes have blurred the old boundaries. Education has been 'de-territorialised' through the global imperatives of economic reform and the restructure of work. Discourses of knowledge economy and lifelong learning speak to the expanding boundaries of 'the educational' in terms of the 'pedagogisation of everything'. This creates a kind of no-space, where education is increasingly both everywhere and nowhere. At the same time, longer-term projections for the future of school teaching as a career in relation to falling birthrates lead to an impending crisis in this aspect of educational business. The aging of the population of Education academics leads to further critical issues of renewal.

Education has, perhaps not surprisingly, then, been less than prominent within current debates about the future governance of learning and teaching in higher education. Education's image problem in this arena has been recognised in recent times and a bigger public profile for Education in debates about higher education has been called for in recent forums such as annual meetings of the key professional association, AARE and the ACDE itself. There is increasing recognition of the need to address the irrational barrier to the free exchange of conceptual and evidential resources across the sectors.

This paper argues for the priority need for a mechanism for constructing and exchanging open and wide-ranging dialogue and debate, robust and inclusive research agendas, and mature policy responses to the current and emerging change situation. This mechanism needs to provide a way for Education – as a discipline, research and professional field – to participate. As noted in the Introduction, what is most noteworthy is the lack of such a public forum. This has led to the serious lack of a strong and coherent voice or series of voices to speak to and about higher education policy from a sector well informed with research-based evidence of priority concerns in the educational business of the university.

The following two main sections of this paper address some of the principal challenges to the field of Higher Education and the future of education in its general sense, in the university. The paper then returns in its conclusion to a re-examination of the role and place of Education in its specific disciplinary sense, in addressing those challenges. This section concludes with the suggestion that there are still fundamental cultural phenomena, historically and institutionally specific but widespread, that militate against the kind of opening of the educational agenda in the way envisaged in the discussion in this paper. There does need to be critical inquiry into the operating assumptions of what counts as knowledge about teaching and learning, what paradigmatic truths about the relationship between knowledge and learning, curriculum and pedagogy are unquestioned in this circumstance, and how academic professional development can be envisaged and implemented more broadly and creatively in complex relationship to the change scenarios sketched above.

V. Education as the business of the university

i) Defining and troubling the term

One of the key problems in defining the field of inquiry for this discussion is the lack of clarity over meanings of the term 'education'. Education is a floating term, signifying many things. It is a 'polyvalent' term, by which I mean that it is an unquestioned 'good' in society (like freedom, democracy, flexibility and quality), yet its meanings are multiple and impossible to fix. Everyone knows what education is yet its referents are multiple and sometimes incommensurable. This complexity is both a consequence of the increasing importance of education in the imagination of increasingly complex futures, and it is also a big part of its problem. Nowhere is this lack of clarity and agreement more evident than in universities. Education is both mainstream in universities and invisible, both everywhere and nowhere. I draw here on, and attempt to elaborate, helpful framings of these many referents for the term 'education' by Sue Middleton (2001) in New Zealand and Fisher *et al* (1999) in Canada in order to sketch something of its complexity and the difficulty in current times in delineating the territory and grasping what it might mean to know it. This lack of clarity lies, I suggest, at the heart of many of the problems currently being encountered with the sphere of this current discussion about knowledge and expertise in relation to the agendas in higher education policy development. It is a philosophical and epistemological problem but one which has lasting and current effects in defining the territory.

According to Middleton (2001, p3), the term 'education' can be taken up as, first, a discipline (Education), an 'epistemological entity' or unit of administrative organisation (a faculty or school). In this sense, Education has had an ambivalent history within universities and colleges as both a liberal arts subject and an 'adjunct to professional training' (p2). Middleton reminds us of the 'ambivalent status of Education within university hierarchies', attributed in part historically to the tensions between these 'pure' and 'applied' dimensions of the field. Further and increasing pressures on Education as a discipline come from policy regulatory and professional bodies. The business of the discipline of Education is both educational inquiry (inquiry into the relations of learning and teaching) *and* the preparation of education professionals who are to work in formal and informal settings in schools, other sectors, in workplaces, universities and communities.

A second way of thinking about Education is in terms of the subjects (or objects) of its intellectual inquiry: schools, universities, classrooms, curriculum, educational knowledge, learning, new technologies, school

reform, policy, educational disadvantage etc. Educational research in university faculties of Education takes as its objects of inquiry domains of educational provision or practice across sectors and spheres both formal and informal. As noted in the previous section, the common misconception that is held about educational inquiry by many who discuss these matters in universities, is still that Educational knowledge about education (ie research-derived understandings about curriculum, learning, teaching assessment, success and disadvantage etc) are only about, and relevant to, children. This is a major and enduring image problem for Education, one that is historically grounded and often appears intractable. Yet it is one which has to be grasped in some public form if Education is to enter with any effectiveness into the sphere of public debate and influence in policymaking in public higher education. At issue here are commonsense understandings of and passionate attachments to beliefs, among stakeholders in Higher Education and the university sector more broadly, about of the specificity and distinctiveness of learning at university level, and hence the limited relevance appropriateness or applicability of theories of and research into learning carried out in other sectors.

A third way in which the term 'education' is used, then, is as the means or mode of cultural transmission, dissemination or (re)construction, of knowledge. 'Higher' education, in this sense of the term, is in the business of using teaching and learning as a means of producing accredited, qualified employable university graduates. It is what almost every academic in universities does as a large part of their work. Yet the continuing poor participation by academics in professional development in teaching and learning in Australian universities noted by Dearn, Fraser and Ryan (2002) supports a view that teaching remains subordinate to disciplinary or professional knowledge and that possessing such field knowledge is *by itself* sufficient to the professional task of teaching (Lee & Green 1997). That is, the work of the academic heartland of the disciplines is *not* Educationally framed in that capitalised use of the term.

This continuing status quo in universities proceeds alongside the emergence and consolidation of a specific field of expertise in teaching and learning in the specialist field of Higher Education, based significantly on the inquiry frame of phenomenography (discussed in more detail in section VII). One of the tacit assumptions of this frame, that of the binary distinction between 'deep; and 'surface' modes of learning, is predicated in part on an assumption of the distinctiveness of undergraduates as a population of learners. This over-reliance on one inquiry paradigm of learning, together with an assumption of the ontological distinctiveness (as well as internal homogeneity) of the population of learners, has produced an often debilitating isolation of Higher Education learning concepts from other forms of human learning theory. Examples of this isolation are perhaps nowhere more apparent than in the science and mathematics-based disciplines, where

significant research-based understandings of science and mathematics learning produced within the broad Education research community have still limited uptake within university science education. This point is a broad one, and there are notable exceptions and developments, particularly in the work produced in various science and mathematics learning centres (such as SMEC at Curtin University) crossing boundaries between sectors. The general point remains one of uptake within mainstream university programs, and the need for changing relationships between the status of disciplinary knowledge and the knowledge of the business of learning and teaching.

On the one hand, then, education is a core business of universities, meeting their cultural and economic task of preparing graduates for the contemporary and future workforce, On the other hand, as noted in the previous section, Education as a discipline or field of expert research-based knowledge about educative processes is marked by a 'continuing struggle to gain and maintain legitimacy within academic culture and on the national stage' (Fisher *et al*, 2001, p 7). Higher Education, as a field of expert knowledge about the specific educational business of the university, is also marginal and subordinate to the expertise of disciplinary science or disciplinarity in the distribution of resources and prestige.

Exacerbating the problems of structural fragility noted in the previous section is the further problem of confusion over the referents of this term, 'higher education'. In a manner similar to the mapping of Education, Higher Education lays claim to a specific research-based expertise (often foundationally reliant upon the research paradigm of phenomenography) and a profession-practice domain, Academic Development. These fields are in practice difficult to distinguish and ambivalent, though it needs to be noted that the genealogies of generic professional development (with its epistemological base in management theory and psychology) are conceptually different from those concerned with that arm of academic development concerned consistently with the development of teaching and learning. This multiple heritage is just a part of the complexity with which the contemporary field is marked (see for example Brew 2002, Baume 2002, Knapper 2003, Land 2003).

Yet these levels of confusion are overlaid with a broader neglect within the literature. Within the broad field of research and publication in the international field known as Higher Education, questions of teaching and learning are often peripheral and barely present. A striking recent example if this is the publication of a major *Handbook of Theory and Research in Higher Education* (Smart 2004). In this large volume, where chapters cover broad terrain such as post-secondary reward and opportunity, cultural analysis of shared governance, community college governance structures budgeting, fee structures, doctoral student attrition etc, there is nothing that directly addresses questions of the educative processes and practices in the field.

ii) The need to 'Know Our Business'

Public higher education in Australia is increasingly exposed to regulation from its chief, though increasingly less stable, provider of operating resources, the Federal Government. The latest suite of policy developments places the Carrick Institute as one of a suite of 76 reform strategies in the *Building Australia's Future* 'reform package' for higher education. This form of policy intervention can be seen as a response to the increasing stress being placed upon higher education, construed in terms of its changing place in the global economy in general and in the global opening of markets, perhaps in particular, educational markets (Marginson, 1997). Yet the current situation in relation to government funding is that the increase in regulatory intervention and audit by Government is in inverse relationship to the proportion of universities' income from Government sources. This state of affairs hangs in a precarious balance with enormous longer-term implications for the future of the governance of the educative work of universities.

Within this environment, it is education which remained arguably primary business for universities since, without the circulation and flow of financial resources and populations through teaching and accreditation of graduates, and the provision of appropriately skilled workers into the economy, then there would be insufficient infrastructural resource for the carrying out of other business: primary knowledge production – research and innovation – and collaborative partnerships with industry, the professions and the wider community. This is the business captured in the work of the adjacent suite of policies under the title of *Backing Australia's Ability* (DEST 2002). While the central 'idea' of the university, its 'academic heartland' remains that of a 'unity' in Clark's (1994, 1998) between research, teaching and study, these relationships need to be continually re-built and maintained within universities. Policy-based 'drifts' in one direction or another through unification, diversification re-homogenisation etc, need to be mindfully brought to bear in consideration of the role and place of teaching, and of education more generally.

Mature consideration of the complex inter-relations among research, teaching and study (or learning) in their latest reconfigurations (cf Clark 1994, 1998, Lee & Green 1997) remain necessary. Boyer's (1991) four faces of scholarship: discovery, integration, application and teaching, provided an important conceptual resource for the nineties for thinking these relationships through, in policy terms, through interestingly stopping short of building in a robust relationship between the 'scholarship of teaching' and these other three, which are inscribed quite firmly in the categorisations of research activity in Australian universities at present. The Boyer Commission on Educating Undergraduates in the Research University (1998) offers further opportunities for exploration of these issues that are yet to be taken up in the Australian context. The field of Academic Development has in fact been one place where research-teaching relationships have remained an explicit focus, at least in

some quarters (eg Brew 2001). Those relationships, and the tensions between them, arguably lie at the heart of the modern university itself and must underlie any serious assessment of the developments under discussion here. Consideration of these points also needs to be tempered with the local inflections of the relationship between the university, government, industry and society in this country, where the vast bulk of research is actually directly funded by government in a climate of still-low private-sector investment in research. The point being sketched briefly here is simply that the questions of education – what is to be learned, how it is to be learned and to what ends – are 'high-stake' issues in the business of higher education and the university, a point that has been grasped in policy terms yet one that remains marginal in academic-professional ones.

It is for this reason that this paper has been titled 'knowing our business'. The title is intended to do two distinct kinds of work. First, in terms of scholarly debate, it echoes and refracts the title of Brian Crittenden's Occasional Paper, which he produced for the Academy of Social Sciences in 1997. This Paper is titled *Minding Their Business: the proper role of universities and some suggested reforms*. In part dialogue with that work, this paper is subtitled 'the role of education in the university'. In suggesting the multiple referents of 'education' in this subtitle, I am suggesting that education needs to be seen as a major part of the 'proper role' of universities. Hence, the concerns of the paper go beyond narrowly sectarian interested of defending the status and intentions of specific administrative units, whether they be Education Faculty or ADU. Like Crittenden, my concern is to place discussions of higher education course policies and structures, their curricula and their pedagogies, into the broader context of academic debate about the role and function of the university in changing times. Crittenden's paper belongs in a long line of such philosophical discussion with a lineage that goes back to Newman and beyond and that includes rich discussion in the Australian context over the course of the 20th Century in important journals such as the now-defunct *The Australian University*. Notwithstanding the paper's conservatism, to my view, and the past-referenced terms in which Crittenden's arguments are framed and advanced, there is much of value in this paper. It represents a serious attempt at the end of the century to re-imagine the university, in terms of its scholarly *and* educational project, in the terms of the kind of public debate so conspicuously lacking in ways that might engage policy agendas in current times.

Second, my paper's title refers more directly, if somewhat ironically, to the discourse of the enterprise university. Specifically, what is being alluded to is the now-classical proposition within certain schools of management theory: that a successful enterprise in contemporary changing conditions is one which 'knows its business', knows well what it is, how it is to be conducted, and to what goals and ends (British Institute of Management 1974). This formulation has been taken up within the sphere of higher education by researchers such

as Mantz Yorke in wide-ranging institutional research into higher education in the UK in recent years (eg Yorke, 2003, Baume, Martin and Yorke, 2002, Stephenson and Yorke, 1998). The deceptively simple principle of knowing your business is that of the need for a thorough 'knowing' that is grounded and evidence-based, rather than being generic, free-floating, tacit, tradition-bound or transferable. What does it mean to posit that the business of higher education is educational? This question in turn rests on the problematic status and multiple and ambiguous referents for the term 'education' and hence what it can mean to know it.

Both structurally and conceptually, the 'core' business of higher education is undergraduate education, in the sense that all other forms of formal education provision within the umbrella of the university are marked as 'pre' or 'post' this core. Occupying the vast bulk of institutional time, space and work, undergraduate education, the 'bread and butter' of higher education as it is often termed, is in tangible need of being brought within the scope of public debate about knowledge production and distribution, as sketched briefly below. At the same time, the taken-for-grantedness of the centrality of undergraduate education to the business of higher education needs to be troubled by recent and predictive changes in demographic and structural profile. First, the rapid growth or and increasing reliance, on postgraduate coursework and research degrees is yet to be centrally part of the definition of the field of learning and teaching in higher education. Indeed, a significant amount of the research and inquiry-led development in the postgraduate sector of has been funded and undertaken from within the general Educational research field; an example of the prominence of this phenomenon is the recently established SIG for Doctoral Education Research at AARE. Second, the blurring and merging of sectors, both educational and professional, which are already in train and to be envisaged as a growing trend through developments such as those canvassed in papers such as *Higher Education at the Crossroads*, offer major challenges to the residual assumption of the ontological distinctiveness and internal homogeneity of the *students* who are the subjects of higher education teaching and learning theory and development.

VI. Framing an inquiry: 'modes of realisation' of educational knowledge

For the purpose of beginning to map the field of knowledge about teaching and learning in higher education in Educational terms, I have adopted a frame of inquiry drawn from the broad field of Educational studies. I have chosen to take up early the work of the educational sociologist Basil Bernstein, whose theory has had been of major shaping influence in the way in which educational knowledge and its recontextualisation in curriculum and pedagogy over the past thirty years can be thought about. It is not the only frame that could be deployed in this way, but is but a productive beginning, I suggest, to a discussion about how to re-think the problematics being laid out in the first part of the paper. Bernstein's early formulation of the three modes of realisation (or 'message systems') of educational knowledge has been adopted and elaborated by curriculum theorists and educational analysts over the past two decades and has remained a generative frame. For Bernstein in the original account:

Formal educational knowledge can be considered to be realized through three message systems: curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation. Curriculum defines what counts as valid knowledge, pedagogy defines what counts as a valid transmission of knowledge, and evaluation defines what counts as a valid realization of this knowledge on the part of the taught (Bernstein, 1971: 47).

Applying this frame to higher education, the first message system involves the particular realisations of academic disciplines or of fields of human knowledge that are recontextualised and codified into courses and specialist degree or diploma qualifications, and from there to specific strands, subjects, and sequences of subjects that form the curriculum of that course. The second involves teaching, learning, and the relations between them in the engagement with curricular knowledge. The third message system, evaluation, involves what is commonly termed assessment in this country: testing, examination and other modes of evaluation, both formal and informal.

In Bernstein's frame, these three systems work together to produce an outcome: in higher education, populations of graduates educated in certain ways and equipped with certain socially-defined capacities and dispositions. In some contemporary frames, this process is construed as one of producing knowledge workers within a growing global knowledge economy of 'Mode-2 society'. In other, older sociological frames, the systems, unlike those of compulsory school education, have historically been concerned with the formation of an intelligentsia, mandated and credentialled through the channels of the disciplinary structuration and dissemination of knowledge. Such frames and determinants have considerable force within discipline-based conceptions of curriculum and qualification, at the same time as they

are being continually challenged through the imperatives of massification (or high-school-isation), globalisation and de-regulation, as sketched earlier.

The three systems taken together involve fundamental matters of what to teach, how to teach and organise learning, and how to assess what has been taught and learned. In practice, they concern questions of sequence, continuity and development, as well as organisation and administration. Beyond the technical and procedural minutiae of the conduct of education, however, it is necessary to consider in a further range of contextual shaping and determining factors. In higher education, these concern university governing structures and funding arrangements, graduate destination surveys, shaping policy developments such as graduate attribute initiatives, practical administration and management imperatives, faculty or discipline-based planning processes, professional advisory or regulatory bodies, market research outcomes, consultations with industry, etc. While this has not been thoroughly researched and conceptualised, these contextual factors, in varying dimensions of abstraction, involve the sociological and political economy effects of knowledge production itself, and of changing relations between the university and government, as outlined briefly above.

More recently, within broad Educational curriculum theorising and policy analysis, researchers such as Stephen Ball (1990) have added a fourth message-system, which Ball names broadly as 'organisation'. What is striking about accounts such as Gibbons, discussed briefly in section III [i] above, is the emphasis on the changing *organisation* of knowledge production and distribution. This term here bears the weight of the twin dimensions of conceptual and structural organisation. The economic imperatives of these changes, which drive Gibbons' account, need to be placed alongside major epistemological shifts in understandings about the nature of knowledge, as well as the general changes towards complexity in every face of contemporary life, including education, as imaginable through Scott's discussion. The complexity of the list of organisational determinants produced in the previous paragraph can hence be usefully read as an empirical counter to more naïve protests of academic autonomy with its attendant individualism, often brought forward as a rationale for avoiding systematic inquiry into developments and changes in the field.

What this frame is able to do for purposes of discussion in this paper is to show the necessary interrelationships among curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and organisation. For example, these four systems have been taken up in an Australian context in terms of 'the educational-administrative activity contextualising and integrating the systems of knowledge, pedagogy and evaluation, and their respective agencies and technologies' (Green and Fitzclarence 1999, p 9). Here, pedagogy is more than a simple description of techniques and practices of teaching and learning but involves the relations among these different elements in the lived experience of academics and

students enacting a particular curriculum in a particular time and place. Hence, while there are important *strategic* arguments for the difficult task taking up the term 'pedagogy' in contemporary discussions about higher education, the basic rationale is a conceptual one. Within appropriately theorised notions of pedagogy come the resources to attend to fundamental matters of recontextualisation, transmission, dissemination, utilization, construction, maintenance and transformation of knowledge and skills, capacities, competencies and dispositions.

With this rudimentary framework, it is possible to begin a specifically Educational mapping of the field of Higher Education, to offer the beginnings of a commentary about the state of play in this field. To attempt a more thorough analysis would require more resources than are available here, so the work is clearly incomplete. It is also partial and positioned. It is an analysis produced in part out of a particular historical and institutional space and positioning, my own intellectual biography. This is an important methodological point for the production of this commentary. In order to position the following analysis, it is important to acknowledge that it is of necessity produced out of my own history as an academic. The specificities of my institutional history and the histories and ecologies of the institutions I have worked in, produce the perspective I take up in this discussion, and provide a symptomatic glimpse into complexity and change in the field. This history is written as an appendix to this paper and covers the broad set of tensions and dynamics that mark the field more generally. (See Appendix)

VII. A partial mapping of Higher Education/Academic Development

i) Overview of themes

The field of Higher Education and its uptake in the professional practice field, Academic Development, typically concern themselves with researching, and practicing within, questions of student learning and its relationship to teaching. Just as typically, these concerns are not framed within a broad framing of Educational knowledge that systematically and critically addresses the complex interrelationships among all of the message systems. One reason for this has been suggested briefly above: the structural and intellectual separation of Higher Education as a specialist field from disciplinary fields in the 'mainstream' of the business. The complex 'service', 'consultative' and 'QA' positioning of many or most Academic Developers has worked together with 'sacred' assumptions of academic autonomy within disciplinary silos to produce a demarcation point, varyingly defined and often seemingly intractable.

The particular traditions within which the main sweep of work on teaching and learning in Higher Education in this country has been framed will be discussed in a little more detail below. Suffice it to say here that notions of 'deep and surface' learning that were produced within the paradigm of phenomenography, serve to both caricature and oversimplify the work of this field and yet also to characterise the historical and continuing dominance of this one paradigm within the field. It should be noted again that the absence of a documentary history of the field, in which its emergence, consolidation and its institutional and political vicissitudes are set down and accounted for, is a troublesome feature of the failure of the field to 'know' itself, in terms of the title of this paper. Almost the only way to garner any sense of the trajectory of the field over the past decade is indirectly through primary reading of key journals, perhaps most particularly *Studies in Higher Education*, the *International Journal for Academic Development*, or, in Australia, *HERD*. (A list of key journals in the field of teaching and learning in higher education is provided at the end of the references list.)

More recently there has been critique and diversification of theoretical and practice frames and paradigms within the field. Notions of 'reflective practice' in academic professional development work and 'experiential learning' in pedagogical practice have been quietly taken up from adult education. A broader engagement with what might be termed the sociocultural' tradition in educational theorising about learning (Renshaw 2003) has become evident; action learning and action research within a critical theory frame (more or less) have emerged in recent years as important professional development

frames (eg Kember, 2000). More recently a critical edge has emerged in the field, with the establishment of an online 'Challenging Academic Development Collective' serving as a forum for exchange about different theoretical approaches and critical lines of questioning of the assumptions of the practice field (Peseta et al 2005, see also Meyer & Land 2005 for a recent consideration of questions of 'threshold epistemologies'). At the same time, throughout the development of these paradigmatic framings for professional development around teaching and learning, the pragmatic, skills-based texts for direct uptake in professional teaching practice in higher education settings have continued to exercise considerable force. Most notable in this regard is the work over three decades of Graham Gibbs (eg, 1996).

As an example of the broad sweep of topics and practice areas of particular focus and interest to In ADUs across the country at the time of writing, the following themes for research and professional development can be found on Unit websites:

- i) the first year experience in university undergraduate study
- ii) teaching and learning
- iii) e-learning and the use of ICTs
- iv) assessment
- v) the development of graduate attributes
- vi) course evaluation and quality assurance
- vii) postgraduate supervision,
- viii) relationships between research and teaching and
- ix) issues of difference and diversity.

Provision across individual institutions is varied in terms of priority and focus, just as each ADU has emerged out of very specific and idiosyncratic historical circumstances. In the absence of a systematic descriptive history of the field, a crude though initial typology would include:

- i) policy research units that developed into teaching and learning research centres
- ii) distance education centres undertaking research into teaching at a distance and associated academic development activity
- iii) science education or learning skills units focusing on the first year experience

One striking and, in my view, seriously disabling anomaly in this history has been the structural division in many if not most universities between Higher Education as a research-based cluster of expertise about teaching and learning

and academic development and Learning Assistance' (LAS) centres which work directly with assisting student learning. This structural separation has reinforced some major conceptual gaps, particularly the almost complete absence of a focus on literacy in the Higher Education and Academic Development fields. It has probably in many cases also contributed to the marginality and fragility of both types of units. Yet within both there are participants who attempt to cross the boundaries and important academic development work in curriculum development, pedagogy and assessment goes on in the name of 'student learning assistance' (Lee 1997) within LAS centres. Sophisticated recent practice in this field can be represented as moving from a remedial, clinical approach to harm-minimisation for at-risk students of one kind of another, to a dialogic, consultative or co-productive, developmental approach based theoretically in large part on research into the centrality of language and literacy in learning and the production of curriculum knowledge (eg Lee 1997, Morgan, 2001 and various other papers presented at learning.uow.edu.au/LAS2001/). This work is of particular interest in terms of the diversity of the student population, rather than its assumed homogeneity, since it takes as its point of departure the differential language and cultural resources and needs of students and has direct dealings with the outcomes and consequences of changing student demographics. By and large, however, the best of this work goes on in the LAS units separated from ADUs by structure, funding and scholarly and pedagogical paradigm.

The next sections offer a partial account of some of the major themes in this field, brought within the framing device of the four message systems elaborated from Bernstein and Ball and others. When such a framing is applied, it becomes strikingly visible that the bulk of the work that goes on in the field is in the second of the two message systems (pedagogy, or, as it is commonly named, 'learning and teaching'), followed by the third system, assessment (Bernstein's term 'evaluation for this message system is potentially misleading, since it focuses on the assessment of student learning rather than the evaluation of teaching and programs, another of the common major functions of ADUs across the country).

ii) Curriculum

Perhaps the most important point to make in this section is the almost complete absence of an inquiry or development frame for curriculum in the field of Higher Education in Australia. This absence parallels the absence of sector-wide information about programs and courses noted in section IV [I] above. For purposes of simplicity and provisional mapping, the term curriculum will simply be taken here to be coterminous with 'course', in a reflection of its etymology and its commonplace usage. It needs to be admitted that taking up curriculum as a framing device in discussions of higher education here is problematic, as it is a term that has been resisted

within the field (and that of other post-school educational fields (such as the adult, vocational, professional workplace, organisational learning fields) because of the apparent 'school' baggage it carries. Its central importance must be stressed, however. In terms adapted from Bernstein's, curriculum is the selection and re-contextualisation of disciplinary or professional knowledge and its re-representation and sequencing in courses for formal qualification in specialist areas in higher education. A frame for thinking about educational knowledge such as this is essential to take up a critical inquiry into the changes being discussed above.

As indicated in the Introduction to this paper, the higher education sector is information-poor about curriculum from a national perspective. There is little or no systematic reliable information about what is going on nationally in curriculum terms. Individual institutions employ researchers in their planning and development units to garner information about other universities' courses for competitive edge. The reliability of such data is unknown and even such basic mapping material as this is not commonly in the public domain.

Connected to this problem of a basic information lack, the field of Higher Education has tended to focus almost exclusively on questions of student learning and its relation to teaching in a kind of curriculum vacuum. Based on individualist and basically cognitivist conceptualisations of learning, the work in Higher Education has rarely taken up a curriculum inquiry mode of engagement into pedagogy and assessment. There are complex reasons for this, both historical and political, where the small size of the field has produced an idiosyncratic take on the constitution of a field of inquiry (see next subsection). There are deep-seated dilemmas at work here, I suggest, concerning the relationship between teaching and research or knowledge production and the residual super-ordination of the logics and imperatives of disciplinarity over pedagogy, as has been argued earlier. Still sacred, though residualised, ideas of academic autonomy, for example, map readily onto terms within Academic Development discourse such as 'subject matter autonomy'. Curriculum is most often glossed in terms of 'subject matter' in this discourse, seen by default as neutral and not part of the field of inquiry – not part, that is, of the proper field of teaching and learning.

Two significant ways in which matters of student learning are taken up within the field with real curriculum implications are the area of problem-based learning and the development of graduate attributes. In the case of the former, pedagogical questions about learning inevitably move towards and take up questions of curriculum design. There is a growing sphere of influence internationally of problem-based learning methodology for curriculum design, including design of learning relationships. Much of the published work in this field internationally is instructional rather than inquiry-based, however. Publications typically include extensive case-study

material, examples from different professional fields, mostly published in discipline-based or professional journals, such as medical, accounting, engineering and nursing education journals. Prominent and influential among these are the cases from medical education, perhaps because of the prestige and entrenched traditionalism of this field of professional education. For example, *The Journal of Medical Education* regularly contains articles evaluating differences between different types or models of problem-based learning curriculum programs. Much of this work also has an evangelistic flavour, as evidenced in websites such as the Illinois Mathematics Society (www2.imsa.edu/programs/pbln/) or the University of Delaware in the US (www.udel.edu/pbl/) and in textbooks such as Donald Woods in Canada, whose publications seek to promote problem-based learning as a panacea for entrenched problems of older, 'transmission' models of curriculum and pedagogy (eg Woods, 1996).

There are two important points to draw from this example. First, in terms of institutional demographics, the positioning of problem-based learning initiatives is perhaps symptomatic of the place of curriculum work in the field of Academic Development in teaching and learning more broadly. Problem-based learning development work has not by-and-large taken place in ADUs in Australia, with some individual exceptions, but rather within specific disciplines and professionally based departments and courses. This is perhaps consistent with the 'service' or 'responsivist' orientation of Academic Development and the lack or absence of, or indeed resistance to, broad-based, large-scale curriculum initiatives. This in turn can be related back in part to the conceptual problematic of the divide between pedagogy and disciplinarity and in part to the structural history and fragility of ADUs in Australia. In contrast, in some parts of Europe and Scandinavia, where problem-based learning developments are widespread in reputation (if not always in practice), there are whole universities such as the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands that have adopted problem-based learning principles of curriculum and pedagogy across the whole university, in part a mark of differentiation and distinction from other universities.

Second, the work does not engage the disciplinary questions of knowledge so much as underlying philosophical questions of the nature of problems; hence it does not and cannot take part in a highly contextualised debate about curriculum politics in terms of the kinds of knowledge being selected in the first place for recontextualisation and re-presentation in courses and curricula. Theoretical bases for these developments involve matters such as definitional distinctions between 'problem-based learning' and 'inquiry-based learning'. Boundary-defining has been a defining feature of much discussion. These matters are typically taken up in European rather than British or Australian journals in the field (eg *the European Journal of Teaching in Higher Education*). The work might be seen as more or less aligned in principle with the cognitivist end of constructionist theories of learning, broadly defined, and

their relationships to the development of professional knowledge and professional competencies. However, the field seems to concern itself explicitly less with theories of learning than those of knowledge, ie, philosophical inquiry around the relationship between the idea of 'problem' and that of 'learning' (eg Maufette, Kandlbinder and Soucisse, 2004).

Problem-based learning principles or discourses have begun to be incorporated into the repertoire of the field of academic development in the last five years (for example, Toohey 1999). What is important for the discussion in this paper, however, is again the lack of systematic wide-spread public discussion of these ideas in a higher education forum. Proponents of problem-based learning bear the hallmarks of enthusiasts with the doctrinal characteristics of self-referentiality, self-citation and defensiveness (arguably mirroring that of the phenomenographers discussed in the next section). Yet there are indications that the growing evidence of the particular practical effectiveness of these methodologies would bear more open critical scrutiny in terms of what they say about issues of complexity and reflexivity, such as those outlined by Peter Scott in the discussion above.

The second recent development in the field of student learning within a curriculum problematic is the policy-driven work on developing and describing graduate attributes. This work is perhaps more problematic and contentious than that of problem-based learning. It is currently taken up largely within planning and development contexts and framed within 'strategic course development' or QM discourses. The intellectual purpose of the graduate attributes initiatives, following rather than leading policy directions, has been to seek to address questions of professional competence and capability and to explore and articulate the embeddedness of such capabilities and competences in particular professions', disciplines' or practice domains' conceptions of themselves. The educational focus has been on students' progressive development of certain capacities, understandings, skills and ways of interpreting and acting in the world. A perhaps 'progressive' agenda in relation to graduate attributes has been to use the development as a means of breaking down the closed force of disciplinarity with its attendant 'subject matter autonomy'. Recent work at the University of New South Wales has begun to map graduate attributes into curriculum in a variety of disciplines: (www.ltu.unsw.edu.au/ref4432_facultymap_grad_atts). In general, however, questions of both curriculum and assessment have by and large become subsumed into graduate attributes and produced unproblematically as policy development within particular institutions. There is a small body of basic research and inquiry into this phenomenon (eg Barry 2003), though this remains at a descriptive level looking within a phenomenographic frame at variation in attributes across disciplines and professions. Here, the tensions between the 'responsivist' orientation of much academic development work, and its capture by QA and QM agendas are arguably most palpable, most problematic and most at risk.

More generally, within the still-dominant phenomenographic paradigm of research into learning and teaching, there are movements to begin to take into account the effects of 'subject matter' differences. These will be discussed in the next section but it needs to be noted that these matters remain within a descriptive 'variation theory' frame, rather than a critical inquiry frame that could take the curriculum/pedagogy/assessment complex as an aggregate of critically inter-related message systems for the codification and exchange of educational knowledge. By and large teaching and learning remain conceptually autonomous and largely distinct from curriculum conceived as 'subject matter'.

iii) Pedagogy

The field of Higher Education in Australia has been dominated by one discourse emanating from a field of research known as phenomenography. Now ubiquitous and inscribed as 'truth' about student learning in higher education, notions of 'deep' and 'surface' learning originate from a series of studies of learning among university students in Goteborg, Sweden, carried out thirty years ago by cognitive psychologist, Ference Marton. The studies set out to observe student learning following an initial observation that 'some students learn better than others' (Marton 1994, p 4424). Subsequent investigations were conducted in naturalistic settings and set out to 'describe learning through the eyes of the learner' (Marton 1994). Interviews questioned students along the lines of inquiring how they had gone about learning in relation to a particular task. The major findings of these early studies interpreted the initial 'observation' by concluding that the differences in effectiveness of learning could be attributed to different 'approaches' to learning tasks. These differences subsequently became codified as 'deep and 'surface' approaches to learning, where the latter involve memorisation, repetition and reproduction and the latter, privileged approach, involved methods leading to understanding.

As a research approach, phenomenography is concerned with the variation in people's ways of conceiving and perceiving particular phenomena in particular contexts. Hence it is often co-terminous with 'variation theory' with its primary focus on patterns. Its methods are correlational, including factor analysis, cluster analysis etc, and it does not concern itself with questions of cause-and-effect relationships. More recent developments in this work have focused on variation and learning theory, investigating the primary thesis that student need to experience variation in learning. Phenomenographically produced descriptions of learning are cognitivist and individualist in orientation. Principal figures in phenomenography have been its founder, Ference Marton, Roger Saljø, Noel Entwistle; in Australia key figures are John Biggs, Paul Ramsden, Michael Prosser, Keith Trigwell. These figures have been predominantly, though not exclusively psychologists or scientists

by primary disciplinary training, rather than Educational researchers. In Australia this group and their colleagues have dominated the ARC grants in higher education teaching and learning research over the past decade and have formed the key group assessing such grants (www.arc.gov.au/funded_grants/selection accessed April 2005).

Products from the stable of research produced within this single paradigm by a small number of dominant figures have included major influential textbooks on learning and teaching in higher education which count as the authoritative source of knowledge about the field. Principal among these is John Biggs' *Teaching for Quality Learning in Higher Education*, which produced its 2nd edition in 2003. Other books such as Paul Ramsden's *Learning and Teaching in Higher Education* (2003), Prosser and Trigwell's *Understanding Learning and Teaching: the experience in higher education* (1999) and Bowden and Marton's *The University of Learning* (1998) are among those which cement the dominance of phenomenographic approaches to learning in the field to date. The influence of this paradigm should not be overstated, since it the field is my no means homogeneous. However, when the practices within ADUs are closely scrutinised, the effects of the paradigm on what counts as knowledge, as evidence of success etc are ubiquitous. One powerful example of this dominance over the framing of the terms of discussion is the continuing almost universal use of Biggs' (2003) 'Study Process questionnaire' (documenting changes in approaches to study by students) which is widely used within ADUs to demonstrate the effectiveness of the unit within the university.

Typical concerns of phenomenographically-based research in higher education teaching and learning have been those of participants' own self-understandings of their practice, whether that be learning or teaching. Recent work involves an increased attention to teachers' conceptions or understandings of teaching in universities (see Akerlind, 2004 for a recent overview of this literature). This focus leads to an apparent philosophical alignment with the tradition of phenomenology, where indeed the first documented use of the term appeared (Marton 1994). However, theoretically this paradigm is cognitivist rather than philosophical in orientation and methodologically it is scientific and correlational rather than hermeneutic (though recent developments within phenomenography have begun to take up grounded theory and even discourse analysis). The unit of analysis in this work is notably slippery. As Akerlind notes in an explanatory footnote to her literature review and report of her own recent research into 'academics' ways of experiencing being a teacher', terms such as 'experience, awareness, meanings, conceptions, understandings, perceptions, views, etc', are used 'interchangeably' (2004: 374).

As noted in the previous section, this work on deep and surface learning has by and large remained free of systematic critical engagement with the

problematic of context, including the context of the curricular construction of knowledge. The terms of phenomenographic work in learning and teaching have most readily taken up in undergraduate science-based courses, a factor that is probably not unrelated to the scientific basis of the research paradigm within which the research is carried out, leading to the production of the initial constructs. Deep and surface learning has been described at times as a theory of learning, perhaps in the absence of engagement with other formal theorising in the field, including the varieties of constructivism or situated learning theories currently in widespread use in other educational sectors. It has subsequently been widely critiqued for its inadequacies as a theory, mostly from outside the field of Higher Education, but in several notable instances, from within. In particular, the intervention in 1997 by Graham Webb in debate about the dominance of phenomenography in Higher Education marked a watershed in the field, resulting not so much in an opening of the field to debate but to further entrenchment and defensive reaction. Because of the lasting dynamics of this intervention, I have cited the abstract of Webb's contentious article in full here:

The notion of 'deep' and 'surface' approaches to learning is critiqued along with phenomenography, the associated methodology and theory of knowledge. A number of reasons are suggested to explain why the deep/surface notion has attained what is tantamount to foundational status within higher education research, practice and development. These include its ability to both cohere with the past while at the same time enabling a new generation of researchers to rise within the discourse; the contemporaneous growth of educational development centres and staff developers within higher education institutions; the simplicity, universality and power of the metaphor. Some elements of a critique of phenomenography are suggested following both postmodern and philosophy of science objections regarding the observational and interpretive neutrality of the researcher. These point to the importance of the understandings of researchers in the construction of results. It is also suggested that the 'qualitative' nature of the research is undeveloped and does not exhibit the hermeneutical values usually associated with 'human' as opposed to positivist science. The idea of deconstruction is then introduced and the deep/surface metaphor discussed in terms of the post-structural critique of binaries. Finally, the question of power within the higher education development discourse is raised. (Deconstructing Deep and Surface: Towards a critique of phenomenography, Higher Education, Vol 33, No 2, pp 185-213)

The point here is not to engage in the terms of these critiques but to give a little of their flavour. Critiques of the reductionism of the paradigm are widespread. They tend in general to conclude that deep and surface metaphors do not amount to a theory of learning at all but rather to a pragmatic, albeit reductionist, heuristic. However, the working exigencies of Academic Development are perhaps different from those of Educational researchers and theorists who critique the work. The pragmatics of the institutional conditions under which Academic Development work is often

carried out are such that criteria such as intelligibility and applicability for change strategies, particularly within the more entrenched 'transmission or 'collection code' pedagogies take precedence in the short term over conceptual adequacy. Sophisticated Academic Development practitioners knowingly take up the deep and surface pair as a heuristic, a pragmatic tool, rather than a theory, valued for its practical suggestive force for academic from different disciplines. It offers an empirical project, readily identifiable across disciplinary boundaries, it is suggested, and a 'framework' through which to construe change strategies to overcome the trial and error which often marks academics attempts at their own professional development in teaching without outside advice.

It needs to be noted here, however, that a major problem with the phenomenographic work on learning and teaching has been its tendency to homogenise the idea of the learner, in part through the individualising of the notions of 'approaches to learning'. A focus on individual differences has served to subordinate more systemic issues of power and difference. Very little work has been undertaken within this dominant tradition on questions of differences in relation to dynamics of gender and ethnic membership, or systemic dynamics of difference broadly, for example the effects of changing student demographics. The phenomenon of internationalisation of higher education has remained largely un-researched in terms of either curriculum or pedagogy, with some exceptions (eg Kember 2000, Marton and Tsui with Chik, 2003, Clegg, Parr& Wan 2003). A related absence until recently has been systematic research within socio-cultural frames, including those of communities of learning. Exceptions here are practice-based explorations of 'peer learning' (Boud 1999, Boud et al 2001). These initiatives do need now to be carefully re-situated within current socio-cultural conceptions of learning.

A further, intensely absence in Academic Development is the challenge of literacy. Theoretical and research foundations of the work, particularly within the phenomenographic tradition, fail to take account of what is often termed the 'linguistic turn' in contemporary theory, with its educational focus on questions of codification, discourse, the 'old' and 'new' basic skills of reading and writing as foundational technologies of advanced learning. There is an entire paper to be written attending to the literacy dimensions of curriculum and pedagogy in higher education and its absence in the broad agendas of the field.

Later work within phenomenography has begun to address the inevitable charge of superficiality and lack of complexity in the more generic accounts of deep and surface learning itself, by attending to what is still consistently termed 'subject matter' in an attempt to account for disciplinary differences in learning patterns. However, this work is at an early stage and does not deploy a theoretical frame that can attend to notions of the curricular construction of knowledge through pedagogical relations of teaching and learning. In

particular what is lacking in most if not all of this work is a theory of power that would facilitate a critical engagement in issues of student learning of the kind raised by Webb above. The exercise of power involves the institutional moves over the past decade from the descriptive intentions of the early work into a prescriptive and normative form of government of the agenda of the field as can be read through competitive grants and editorial boards of key journals and the like. More recent moves within ADUs have seen a new generation of scholars begin to challenge this hegemony, bringing socio-cultural learning theories and critical, postmodern, feminist and postcolonial lines of questioning to the enterprise of teaching and learning, enabling the beginnings of a critical inquiry frame that will inevitably have effects in the directions suggested in this paper (for example, Clegg 2003, Clegg et al 2003, Peseta et al 2005, Meyer & Land 2005).

iv) Assessment

Assessment has been largely taken up within the Higher Education field as part of the phenomenographically driven agenda for change in learning and teaching practices. As such, the force of this message system is well recognised and it is more or less integrated into the work on learning and teaching. There are extensive examinations of the principles of assessment in the textbooks by Ramsden and Biggs, cited above, and these are widely used and influential. Very recent material such as that of Falchikov (2004) stresses participatory involvement by learners in assessment. Alternative forms of assessment such as peer assessment, group assessment, self-assessment and portfolio assessment have an energetic field of professional development and research, as evidenced by extensive publication in the key journals.

What is not so much in evidence is an open engagement with research into student learning and assessment from within broader Educational research domains. Examples where developments have been slow have been in workplace assessment practices, competency-based assessment debates etc from within vocational, organisational and professional education sectors. There remains a problematic climate of closed sectoral self-referentiality, with critical exceptions (eg Manathunga & MacKinnon 2005). International agendas such as those of life-long learning offer ways to open up this field, some of which were foreshadowed in Candy, Crebert and O'Leary (1994) and addressed by Falchikov (2004), as signalled in the subtitle to her book: *Improving Assessment through Student Involvement: Practical solutions for higher and further education teaching and learning*.

Again what is not evident in a scan of the work in assessment is any systematic attention to questions of the literacies of assessment. This involves a lack of systematic attention to the dominant terms and conditions in which assessment is actually conducted and transacted. Yet it is increasingly the case

that assessment is largely conducted through the written mode in one modality or another. By and large, students are assessed through writing. By and large, academics report inadequacy in assessing the writing dimensions of assessment. Yet there remains a puzzling lack of uptake and even a deliberate refusal of general dialogue with the field of Learning Assistance, where practitioners attend to the breakdowns in the writing-learning relationship and the consequences of the silence about this relationship in teaching, learning and assessment discourses within Higher Education. In addition, as mentioned above, research into curricular and pedagogical issues of literacy and learning are carried out in LAS units with little systematic linking with ADUs, except in individual circumstances. At the same time, LAS units demonstrate much of the same closed-loop self-referentiality and self-citation, albeit within and international network, as the other bodies described here. There is an extraordinary history of gate-keeping, institutional isolation and missed opportunity for productive dialogue, within the higher education sector itself and within aligned educational research movements more broadly. Here is a critical challenge to the sector.

v) Organisation

Much of the discussion in this paper points to the need to attend to the full complexity of the organisational message system of higher educational knowledge. Each of the previous sections points to organisational dimensions to the arena of learning and teaching in this field. Here I will briefly sketch three major dimensions in which the matter of organisation becomes salient in Academic Development practice field in the university.

The first, following the line of development in this paper, is the organisation of knowledge itself. Ideas such as 'mode-2' have become, perhaps unfortunate catch-cries within policy context of higher education. Yet as the changes captured under this term become manifest and intelligible within curriculum and pedagogy, for example within developments such as problem-based learning curriculum and graduate attributes, there are attendant organisational implications. If knowledge production becomes visibly organised more around a logic of transdisciplinarity, for example, in Gibbons' (1998) account, then in curriculum terms, what can this mean for the recontextualisation of knowledge into higher education curriculum, framed within new imaginings of the capacities, dispositions and forms of personhood required to participate in the new complexities of 21st-Century work and social life? These matters of epistemological organisation, attendant upon profound changes in modes of production, are realised in actual practices over time in actual curricular contexts, as new degree programs are envisaged, planned and passed through university organisational accreditation processes. In Australia there is no national curriculum accreditation process and so these changes are never publicly documented.

Little is generally known about the on-the-ground shifts in curriculum in their relationship to larger shifts in the economies of knowledge and work in society more broadly.

The second major organisational dimension is that attendant upon changes to the higher education sector itself. Little can be predicted with any certainty in this arena, though there are clear indications that, with the projected demise of the Unified National System in Australia and the imaginings of new kinds of higher education institutions such as research-intensive institutes, multi-sectoral institutions, private providers including international universities, partnerships with non-educational organisations, etc, there are major questions for what will count as the domain of knowledge and expertise about learning and teaching. Curriculum questions come immediately to the fore. On the one hand, the relationship between teaching and research at the heart of the idea of the modern university, will come into a new phase, with new articulations of the change directions of 'teaching drift' and 'research drift' identified by Clark (1994, 1998). On the other, disciplinary logics, professional logics and the logics of organisational strategic directions come into new relationships. Initiatives of the 90s in areas such as 'work-based learning', involving in some instances, strategic partnerships between universities and private-sector organisations in the design, implementation and accreditation of curriculum, were not developed in dedicated ADU environments but often in Faculties of Education. The resources of adult, vocational and professional education and organisational learning, institutionally placed within broad educational research culture, bring a rich and different mix of theory, expertise and practical experience from that of the internally-referenced Academic Development sector. The fact that particular universities' internal conservatism and caution resulted in a less-than effective follow-through of these kinds of initiatives points to a lack of systemic co-ordination with respect to the strategic and the educational elements of the issue.

The third organisational factor continuing to impact on the field of higher education learning and teaching is the organisational structuring of Academic Development work in universities and its impact on what can and cannot be imagined as a feasible agenda for development in the field of learning and teaching. As indicated above, I believe the organisational isolation of ADUs has militated against the possibility of large-scale inquiry-based curriculum development and curriculum change in this country. There are ongoing debates in the professional field of academic professional development about the relative merits of specialist unit-based, vs locally department-based models of professional development (eg Boud 1999). The problems being raised here, however, occupy a larger canvas: that of the imaginings of the futures of higher education itself and questions of the stage or forum in which such imaginings and their curricular and pedagogical realisations might be explored.

As it stands, the situation facing those who would participate in setting a national agenda for teaching and learning in higher education in response to current policy directives, is that of fragmentation and partisanship. In many respects, the explicit catch-cry of those working in Academic Development is a claim to specificity and partiality. For academic developers and higher education workers, perhaps the privileged principle for their work is 'responsiveness' to the local cultures and ecologies of the faculties and departments they work in. The dynamics of the relationships that ensure between those working from the perspective of research and practice in teaching and learning and from the outsider position of a satellite specialist ADU, always involve a complex dance of subordination and strategising. ADUs are almost always 'service' units, structurally separated and 'clinicised' away from the daily business of teaching and learning in degree course, and professionally subordinate in a 'service' relationship to discipline-based academics.

The pragmatics of Academic Development work constitute a field of practice worthy of systematic study in their own right (eg Brew 2003, Knapper 2003, Land 2003). In Housego's recent grounded account of local practice, for example, the work of Academic Development is construed in terms of the delicate operations involved in 'interpreting context' rather than 'giving knowledge' (Housego 2003). In such a discursive environment, with increasing pressures on responsiveness to policy-driven imperatives of quality assurance and competitive edge, together with professionally unsustainable budget entailments and timeframes, it has become virtually impossible to undertake significant research. In this climate, there is a very real danger that a conceptual status quo in relation to what counts as knowledge and expertise about teaching and learning will remain fragmented from broader discussion and default back to the culture of 'individualist exceptionalism' that marked the initiatives of CAUT and CUTSD though, in the case of the latter, the notion of individualism is inflected with an individual institutional exceptionalism. Conceptions of, and performance indicators for rewarding of, 'excellence', within unrealistic timeframes will continue to actively militate against genuine big-picture imagining and experimentation and genuine sectoral and cross-sectoral capacity building.

Conclusion

I conclude this paper with a return to its subtitle. Questions of the role of education in the university are taken up briefly here in terms of the two main referents of the term. First, I summarise what I see as key educational issues facing the university in need of sustained scholarly inquiry and development within an Educational frame. Second, I consider the question of what it would mean to imagine a university in which its Faculty of Education played an inclusive, productive and integrative part in working through these broad educational issues.

The repeated refrain within which these two lines of thought are expressed here is the real practical and strategic question *what it will take* to genuinely build a culture of open and inclusive exchange and knowledge generation that will build capacities within institutions and exchange across institutions – to build knowledge about learning and teaching in higher education beyond the current narrow boundaries. There is currently a culture of fear and skepticism surrounding the development of the policy agenda. Anxiety and cynicism mark the climate of exchange around the development of key Government initiatives currently before the sector. A prime example of this is the Teaching Performance Fund. How does the educational arm of the university sector find and assert a strong public voice or voices in relation to these agendas?

In relation to the first way in which an education development agenda needs to be laid out, there appear to me to be five key areas of need. The first of these is the development and implementation of appropriate graduate attributes policy at institutional level. In the absence of a critical framing of curriculum and pedagogy, these developments have gone on largely unchallenged and un-debated.

The second area in great need of sustained educational inquiry is the internationalisation of Australian higher education, which needs to be taken up in terms of all four message systems of curriculum pedagogy, assessment and organisation. There are useful documents within particular institutions, framing sets of philosophical and contextual principles for international education across the institution. However, these are often not in the public domain for reasons of institutional competitive edge and hence unavailable in general terms for development into productive discussion regarding their realisation in curriculum and pedagogy. How does the sector learn how to think through the philosophical questions and their realisations into curriculum and pedagogy in critical dialogue with managerialist and profit-driven agendas?

The third issue has been canvassed in the body of the paper and concerns the neglect of issues of language and literacy in student learning. This is a theoretical as well as a pedagogical and professional-development problem. Theoretically, theories such as discourse theories of knowledge construction are necessary to conceptually construe the curriculum-pedagogy relationship. Theories of literacy are necessary to see how the 'conventions and conversations' of particular disciplinary, professional or organisational bodies operate within degree and diploma qualification courses and how students learn the rules of these through their rules and practices of codification. The literacy question is both most seriously neglected and most urgently needed within learning environments engaging with the resources and challenges of information technology.

The fourth issue is the increasingly urgent one of the role and effect of ICT-mediated learning, in its many forms and guises, including e-learning. What needs to be grasped rigorously within an appropriate educational frame is the need for an investigative stepping back from evaluative questions of effectiveness of one pedagogical strategy or another to ask the critical question of the effects of such developments on what has come to count as effectiveness, as expertise, as the new 'main game' of teaching and learning. The critical agenda here has to be to inquire what the current developments and practices actually producing in terms of capacities, dispositions and particular forms of student-hood. Here it is possible to see a rather uncritical evangelistic agenda overtaking a more open and broadly-based line of inquiry.

The fifth and final issue in this initial list concerns the role and importance of postgraduate education, including and especially research education. In recent years there has been a considerable upsurge of research into doctoral education, both from within Education faculties and from ADUs. This field is currently being developed and consolidated through the Educational professional association, AARE, as a special interest group, and advanced through key conferences such as professional doctorates conferences, small focus conferences such as the Deakin-based Research on Doctoral Education and the policy-focused conference Quality in Postgraduate Research, which also hosts and published research-based papers in the growing field. This work has been developed in large part through the conceptual and inquiry resources of Educational research rather than that of Higher Education, though here at least that troublesome binary becomes stressed and begins to break down.

It is at this point, then, that it becomes necessary to consider the second of the two focus points of these concluding remarks: the question of what it would take to imagine a university that deployed its educational resources (including significantly its Faculty of Education) most productively and economically for its own future consolidation and development. Here the

point is not to over-simplify the nature and extent of change that would need to be envisioned and grasped in specific circumstances. Nor is it to naively assert the readiness of any particular Faculty of Education to take up such a challenge within its own institution. There are clear needs for re-positioning and re-skilling for many academics in any process of restructure and re-deployment that might be undertaken. Education academics' claims to expertise in higher education questions and processes must be substantiated and assessed.

Actual as distinct from partisan and rhetorical skills and understandings need to become visible and subject to evaluation in the service of the larger educational agendas of the university. It is very much a question, in the words of the title of the paper, of re-defining who 'we' are and what it would mean to 'know' the business.

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International Journal for Academic Development

Journal of Higher Education

Learning and Instruction

Studies in Higher Education

Teaching in Higher Education

Ultibase

Appendix : a brief academic biography, Alison Lee

My initial work in higher education (after ten years as an English teacher in the secondary school system) began as a 'literacy and learning skills tutor' in a first year foundation program co-ordinated through the Educational Services and Teaching Resources Unit at Murdoch University in 1986. ESTR was one of only a few ADUs in the country at that time. Its specificity was to house both the Higher Education research and Academic Development arm of the University and the Learning Skills Unit, together with technical resources. The fields of learning development (for students) and academic development (for staff) thus inevitably merged in practice. At a later stage in its history, a merger with the External Studies Unit produced an amalgamated Academic Services unit at Murdoch.

My work at UTS began in 1993 with my taking up that University's inaugural post-doctoral research fellowship. I was located within the Faculty of Education. My brief was to conduct research into undergraduate education: specifically, an investigation of the academic literacy demands in the undergraduate curriculum. This Faculty of Education had come into being in the new UTS as an amalgamation between a school-based CAE and an Institute of Technical and Adult Teacher Education (ITATE). This dual emphasis made the Faculty unique in the field and produced a dynamic tension between the imperatives and priorities of post-school education and those of a newly 'post-dawkinised' CAE sector. In that environment, what could count as knowledge about education could not be assumed, readily shared and had to be contested and negotiated. The point here is that the 'dualistic ontology' (Akerlind, 2004) between school and adult, or 'higher' learning could not easily be maintained in that environment over the course of the 90s as the Faculty developed and matured.

Subsequent developments cemented my research field more firmly in higher education, with the development of a research program in postgraduate and specifically doctoral research degree education. One notable part of this story is my direct experience of the narrow frames of research that prevailed at that time within both Higher Education and Education granting committees. In fact, I regularly needed to go outside of any 'Educational' funding body to receive the resources to do the critical educational work on the PhD that followed the post-doctoral fellowship. My colleagues Bill Green (then at Deakin University) and Lesley Johnson (then PVC Research at UTS) sought and received major funding through the Cultural Studies Committee of the ARC for our large project on PhD pedagogy.

My current position as a researcher and scholar is to be committed to ongoing research, educational and professional development and academic leadership

in higher, and specifically postgraduate education. The Faculty in which I work exposes me to educational issues in the school, post-school, adult, community, vocational, professional, organisational and higher education arenas. In such an environment it is neither easy nor intellectually persuasive to corral off questions of pedagogy and learning at university as ontologically incommensurable with pedagogy and learning elsewhere. Indeed, much is made in this environment of the de-territorialisation of learning and its re-contextualisation within contested domains of 'life-long learning' in a globalised space of learning and knowledge production and distribution. My relationships with the ADU (the Institute for Multimedia and Learning) and the EAP/LAS unit (the English Language and Study Skills Assistance or ELSSA Centre) remain collegially productive but structurally frustrated. At the same time, questions of the educational needs of the University broadly are up for new consideration and current structures are open to change.

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