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ABSTRACT

This study examined the moral values embedded in the instruction and practice of higher education, focusing on instruction within three disciplines at a mid-sized residential university in the Pacific Northwest over the course of three semesters. Through classroom observations and transcriptions of tapes of classroom interaction in 46 undergraduate classes, the study examined faculty discussions of student evaluation and grading, using Rokeach's (1973) typology of values. Three vignettes from the classroom transcriptions are provided to show that the relationship between the faculty and students is less important than their respective relationships to the content. These models attempt to show that according to the realist discourse, knowledge/power originates from the discipline's content and acts on both the faculty and the student. The script employed by faculty in the hard sciences and mathematics conveyed a message that affirmed obedience to the knowledge paradigm of the discipline, while the script employed by faculty in the social sciences and humanities emphasized the interpretation of knowledge as a human responsibility. (Contains 63 references.) (MDM)

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Moral Education: Current Instruction and Practice in Three Higher Education Disciplines

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Paper presented at ASHE in Orlando, Florida

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This paper was presented at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education held at the Marriott Hotel, Orlando, Florida, November 2-5, 1995. This paper was reviewed by ASHE and was judged to be of high quality and of interest to others concerned with the research of higher education. It has therefore been selected to be included in the ERIC collection of ASHE conference papers.

Moral Education: Current Instruction and Practice in Three Higher Education Disciplines

Introduction

In 1852, John Newman wrote that a university education "implies an action upon our mental nature, and the formation of a character; it is something individual and permanent, and is commonly spoken of in connexion with religion and virtue" (1976, p. 105). Over time, this purpose of moral socialization and development of students has become fundamental to our notions about the role of higher education (Rudolph, 1990; Strange, 1994). Moreover, McPherson (1983) claims that the noneconomic aspects of student moral and emotional development provide numerous economic payoffs. Thus, higher education's moral components comprise a meaningful part of the postsecondary educational experience and provide an important justification for the public support of universities and colleges (Astin, 1977; Bok, 1974; Bowen, 1977; Chickering, 1990; McPherson, 1983; Weingartner, 1993).

Literature on higher education forwards the notion that experiences of students who attend university result in enhanced or increased moral development, as compared to non-students' development in moral judgment (Bowen, 1977; Feldman & Newcomb, 1969; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Rest, 1988). Yet voices can be heard which enunciate problems on college campuses of racial, ethnic, religious and gender violence and intolerance (Balenger, Hoffman & Sedlacek, 1992; Finley & Corty, 1993; Malaney & Williams, 1994); cheating and other forms of academic dishonesty (Graham, Monday, O'Brien & Steffen, 1994; McCabe & Bowers, 1994); and consumption of alcohol, drugs and other abusive substances (Hanson & Engs, 1995; Fulton & Spooner, 1987). These problems reflect the social malaise in the larger American society and have prompted

several scholars to call for renewed attention to the moral aims and practices of university education (Astin, 1992; Boyer, 1987; Hackney, 1994; Thompson, 1991).

Purpose

Recent works by Robert Bellah, et al. (1992), Allan Bloom (1986) and Bruce Wilshire (1990) speak to the task of understanding the moral influences in university level education. These scholars recognize and recommend a strong role for faculty in the moral socialization of students (also see The Report of Wingspread Group on Higher Education, 1993). Indeed Wilshire writes that education is a moral enterprise, but that the contemporary research university lacks moral direction. He argues that as attention on campuses has shifted to other concerns and activities (i.e., the scientific discovery of knowledge, professionalization of academic disciplines and bureaucratization of the organization), much of the educating act has become taken for granted.

To bring to attention this current state of higher education, Wilshire poses the question, "What is the educating act?" He responds, "There is genius in the Latin word *educere*—to lead out, or draw out. It contrasts richly with *instruere*—to build in. The educator leads students out to confront basic questions, while the instructor merely builds in information and techniques" (1990, p. 22). Similarly, Joseph Lowman states while writing about teaching techniques in university classrooms, "Whether they participate in the discussion or not, students become more aware of their own attitudes and values by comparing them with the values and attitudes expressed by others. Exposure to different views can lead some students to question or even change their implicit assumptions" (1984, p. 123). These scholars highlight the goodness of

undergraduate education and of professors leading students to ask, search and reflect on questions and answers about meaning, identity and truth.

Indeed, faculty continuously communicate to students messages with moral intent. In Alasdair MacIntyre's study of moral theory he asserts, "Every action is the bearer and expression of more or less theory-laden beliefs and concepts; every piece of theorizing and every expression of belief is a political and moral action" (1981, p. 58). Thus, all forms of interaction between faculty and students, both inside and outside of the classroom, are embedded with moral meaning. Imbued with value, teaching techniques, reading materials and assessment practices, create boundaries between good and bad, right and wrong, fact and fiction, the learned and the unlearned.

Current literature examines the moral intent of teaching techniques and reading materials primarily from a philosophical, historical and personal perspective, but remains silent on the issue of assessment (Bellah, et al., 1993; Bloom, 1986; Wilshire, 1990). The literature on assessment has been largely developed to understand evaluation and measurement practices as they relate to issues of test construction, (i.e., reliability and validity) (Sax, 1989; Standards for Educational and Psychological Tests and Manuals, 1974). Another, part of this work has evolved around student cheating and plagiarism (Graham, Monday, O'Brien & Steffen, 1994; McCabe & Bowers, 1994). There exists yet another area on questioning and classroom discussion techniques for evaluating student learning (Barnes, 1983). But, the relationship between instruction and practice of assessment and its moral intent has been ignored. Thus, the purpose of this study is to address the following questions: (1) What values embed the instruction and practice of assessment in higher education? (2) From where do faculty gain these values and value structures? and (3) What does this tell us about the nature of moral education in higher education?

Therefore, given the call for renewed attention to university education's moral aims and practices, and the questions raised from current efforts to address this call, the following paper presents description, analysis and interpretation of a study of lower division undergraduate classes in three disciplines. The paper proceeds by first identifying methodology used to collect data. Second, theoretical framework used to analyze the data is delineated. Third, the study's findings and discussion are offered. Fourth, the paper concludes with a summary of the significance of the study.

Methodology

In a study by Jackson, et al. (1993), on the moral life in public schools, the authors offer advice and guidance for future researchers who study morals in the educational setting. Based on their two and a half year long study of eighteen teachers, these scholars recommend that during the observation a researcher attend to his or her own feelings and reactions. The validity of this suggestion becomes salient when the theoretical assumption that values are cognitions infused with emotion is recognized (Collins, 1986, 1990; MacIntyre, 1981; Rokeach, 1972). Specifically, Jackson, et al. (1993) state the following:

> (1) that the observer not specify in advance what he or she is looking for but, instead, remain as open as possible to the subtleties of what is going on within the events or situations that capture his or her attention;
> (2) that the observer cultivate an eye and an ear for the problematic, for those aspects of what is seen and heard that are off-key in some way or jarring to the sensibilities, even if ever so slightly; and
> (3) that the observer always include himself or herself among the objects being observed and learn to audit his or her own reactions, which include likings and dislikings of what is seen and heard, however faint and seemingly premature such reactions might be. (1993, pp. 246-247)

However, these scholars extend a two dimensional model of moral instruction and moral practice for gathering, analyzing and theorizing about the moral influences in

schools and classrooms. First, five elements comprise the dimension of moral instruction: (1) formal instruction that is moral, (2) instruction that is part of the regular curriculum that is moral, (3) rituals, (4) visual artifacts with moral content and (5) moral commentary on activities. Second, moral practice contains three elements: (1) classroom rules, (2) moral substructure of classrooms (trustworthiness, worthwhileness, justice) and (3) expressiveness in interaction.

Using these suggestions, data for this study were collected using a field research methodology (Johnson, 1975; Lofland & Lofland, 1995). Forty-six undergraduate classes taught in three disciplines (hard sciences, social sciences, and humanities) at a mid-sized residential university campus in the Pacific Northwest were observed over a three semester period. These three disciplines were chosen as the disciplinary paradigm was hypothesized, based on a review of literature, as a significant influence on the values of faculty.

The information gathered from observations of these classes can be categorized under the following: (1) observations of classroom interactions; (2) reflective notes on classroom interaction; and (3) transcriptions of tapes on classroom interaction. The observations of classroom interaction centered mainly on faculty behaviors (i.e., body movements, facial expressions, location in the classroom) but also encompassed student behaviors. I attempted to write out as much of what was said in the class by the faculty and students, as well as how it was said. When I entered a class I also recorded the number of students in the class, the gender and ethnic composition, seating arrangements, attention cues and other situational cues that caught my attention as an observer. Throughout several lectures, I paid attention to what students did by using systematic observation, much like a "time and motion" study (Wolcott, 1994).

In addition, I used a tape recorder to facilitate later recall on events, words and personal feelings that occurred during the lectures. Observations that were incomplete in the notes were completed. A reflective journal, much like the theoretical log, was kept. Here I attempted to record "hunches" on theoretical relationships, but also following Ellis (1991a, 1991b), I recorded my feelings about my experiences in the classroom. Finally, the tapes were also transcribed and checked against my notes to determine the accuracy of my notes.

The techniques discussed by Wolcott (1994) for transforming qualitative data were used, in conjunction with the memo process discussed by Glaser and Strauss (1967): Findings were highlighted, displayed, developed with attention to the study's analytical framework, and regularities were identified. By studying the three disciplines with differing paradigms, comparisons and contrasts can be used to see the nature of the moral intent more clearly. Persistent observation was used to establish credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Discrepancies in observation were investigated further for clarification.

Thus, despite these attempts at developing reliable and valid data and analysis, I realize the meaning of Jackson, et al. (1993) words when they write, "Classrooms, as we have come to understand them, are not places whose buzz of activity fits neatly within a single descriptive framework. They are too crowded and too much goes on within them. Therefore, every description that might issue from such a complex, crowded environment is a selection of among many that could possibly have been given. That selection is inevitably the result of an act of interpretation on the part of the observer regarding what is worth noting and the way it should be noted" (1993, pp. 46-49). This experience in classrooms was fundamentally different from being a student, a teacher, or from other opportunities that I've had to observe classroom interaction (i.e., as a

student teacher in a junior high school I was attentive to what teachers were doing and how students reacted so that I could copy these practices later). Observing these classrooms transformed my understanding, appreciation, and amazement for what goes on in a class.

Theoretical Framework

Milton Rokeach's (1973) instrumental and terminal values provided a comprehensive set of values from which to analyze the observational record, reflective journal and transcripts. Rokeach's values typology has received extensive research and purports to contain the most prominent values in American society. Table 1 lists the 36 values that compose his values typology.

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The exercise of relating what I observed, felt and recorded to Rokeach's values helped me to understand and learn the data. The specific values—as I perceived them—are presented in the following section on findings and discussion. However, this values typology became less meaningful as I came to develop an interpretation of the moral aims and purpose surrounding the instruction and practice of assessment.

The interpretation, instead, drew from the literature about differences between the disciplines of higher education. Hazard Adams (1973) writes about the academic disciplines of higher education as academic tribes. He sees the hard sciences, social sciences and humanities as forming their own communities organized around particular problems, rituals, symbols and values. Research on academic disciplines has largely supported theory about differences in scholarship, curricula, attitudes, pedagogy, theoretical models and values as being based on Thomas Kuhn's (1964) concept of paradigm (Biglan, 1973; Donald, 1983; Dressel & Marcus, 1982; Lodahl &

Gordon, 1972). In the content analysis of ten task force reports on curriculum reform carried out by the Association of American Colleges, results are presented that suggest that disciplinary differences—in content, context and form—between the natural sciences and mathematics, social sciences and humanities are pervasive (Luttuca & Stark, 1995). Differences between the disciplines on their epistemological, ontological and metaphysical assumptions are manifested throughout the discussion. The hard scientists, mathematicians and many social scientists espouse a modernist position that embraces a realist philosophy, while the faculty in the humanities and other social scientists advance constructionist theories of knowledge (Adams, 1973; Bloom, 1986; Snow, 19[illegible]; Ward, 1995).

The philosophical arguments that occur between and within each of the academic disciplines on questions of knowledge, being and truth are theories with moral intent (Seidman, 1992). The significance of this moral intent is identified by Steven Ward when he writes, "One of the central arguments to be advanced here is that epistemic and methodological debates are far more than quandaries over what approach corresponds to reality or what method is more conducive with certain ontological presuppositions or subject matters. They are critical elements in the internal social organization of fields and the creation of symbolic boundaries between fields, and in the political and moral battle for the control of knowledge production in academia and, to some extent, society-at-large" (1995, p. 111). Many current positivists reject the value-free science proffered by the intellectuals of the Enlightenment: However the ideal of a value-neutral science remains an attractive possibility (Phillips, 1992). But, the concession by modernists that their science possesses moral intent has been slow.

Postmodernists, critical of positivists hesitancy to disclose their value biases, assert that the construction of knowledge and criteria of truth forwarded by positivist

discourse is ideological, privileged and hegemonic (Bloland, 1995; Cherryholms, 1988; Seidman & Wagner, 1992; Teirney & Rhoads, 1994). Postmodern thought acknowledged the moral intent of its developing theories from inception. Summarizing the Foucaultian argument, Madan Sarup writes, ". . . knowledge is a power over others, the power to define others. In his view knowledge ceases to be liberation and becomes a mode of surveillance, regulation, discipline" (1993, p. 67). However, Linda Nicholson (1992) claims Foucault recognized not only the repressive, but the productive nature of knowledge/power. Nicholson elucidates the differences between the modernist and the postmodernist as based on a denial of historical situatedness of truth and knowledge/power by the former rather than the later. The postmodernist discourse and attention to emancipation, praxis and marginalization show a deep concern with knowledge as an exercise of the powerful against the disempowered.

Paulo Freire (1970) has written extensively about knowledge as oppression in educational practice. He uses the metaphor of banking to communicate his point. He writes, "Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry men pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other" (1970, p. 58). Freire outlines ten aspects of current educational practice that are oppressive, which can be summarized in the following:

(1) there is a unidirectional flow of knowledge from teacher to student;
(2) the primacy of the teacher over the student is enforced through teacher domination of classroom action, talk, discipline and decisions;
(3) professional authority and authority of knowledge are confused by the teacher, which reduces student freedoms; and
(4) the teacher is made the subject while the students are made objects.

The philosophy of realism pervades the practices witnessed in banking education.

However, Freire invites educators to take on the responsibility for reformation of the educational system and delineates a constructionist philosophy on education as the practice of freedom. The postmodern portrayal of knowledge as oppression is the antithesis of the modernist view that has traditionally been advocated by universities, "for they are the master institutions that preach freedom, liberation and emancipation through knowledge" (Bloland, 1992, p. 532). Thus, the tension between the philosophies of realism and constructionism guided the interpretation of this study's findings.

Findings and Discussion

Heeding the advise of Jackson, et al. (1993)—to let the subtleties of the events capture my attention and to develop sensitivity to those aspects that are off-key in some way or jarring to the sensibilities—I became fascinated with classroom discourse that surrounded student assessment. As I observed and analyzed what faculty had said about the assessment processes, how faculty acted when discussing issues pertinent to the assessment processes, how students behaved and expressed themselves during these encounters and my feelings experienced on these occasions, the moral intent became visible. Similarities and differences in classroom discourse between the three disciplines emerged as comparisons were made.

Three lectures will be presented; one for each discipline. These excerpts from the observational record were chosen because they exemplify much of the instruction and practice that was observed in the other classes. Following each vignette, an analysis using Rokeach's values typology will be offered.

Hard Science and Mathematics

This first vignette is of a class that I observed on a Friday in late March. The record indicates that it was a large class; about ninety students scattered throughout an auditorium.

> . . . He stood on the platform and waited for the class to get settled before he started. . . The professor looked at his watch and then began to talk. He said, "Right, why don't we get started. But before we start I want to speak to you about your exams. I made a mistake and took one point off of question number five. Several of you came to my office to point out to me that your text defined the term in another fashion than what I gave as correct on the exam. What I will do is give everyone one point—raising you one point with respect to the absolute curve. With that said, the average for this exam is 55 percent."
>
> Pausing, he went on to say, "This is truly a hard class, we keep getting new material. There are lots of demands on your skills, lots of new concepts every day. The truth is that there is just a lot to learn and it will take time on your part to keep up. If you got fifty percent or less that's trouble. You are going to have a hard time passing the course. Fully five hundred points come from homework. So there are lots of ways to get points besides exams. But, if you're not getting them in the homework assignments; you are going to be disappointed. Feel free to talk to me about your exams. But it is going to continue to be a hard course. The final exam is very much in the same spirit as the mid-term AND it will be cumulative."
>
> "BUT" he waited for this word to sink in, "This a wonderful subject because you come out speaking like an engineer—for those of you who dream of being an engineer—when you are done. It truly is worth it. . . ."

I should interrupt and say that the course was not an engineering course, but a prerequisite for entering the College of Engineering. As the course was a prerequisite for several other programs and degrees, there were other majors in the class. The record continues:

> . . . . Several students laughed. The professor paused, "So, this is your next homework assignment." As he said this, he turned around, looked up to a chalk board as the screen moved upward to reveal about forty questions. I heard a student somewhere just behind me whisper under his breath ". . . damn . . ."

The record then proceeded to talk about what occurred as the professor gave his lecture. Near the end of the entry, I wrote:

> .... Only once did a student ask a question in this class. I could not hear what the question was because she was too far away and too quiet, but I could hear the professor's brief remark that answered her question. He wore a mic throughout the class, but he had answered her question while looking at the board. At this time I had strong feelings of distance, invisibility and anonymity. I felt disconnected from him.
>
> The lecture ended with the professor's statement of "Right, see you all on Monday!" But, somehow I don't feel that I have been seen....

The entry concluded with commentary about the contents of several overheard conversations as the students left the room.

In this discourse the capable (competent) is emphasized rather than the intellectual (intelligence). The language used points to failure being based upon a lack of skill, time and/or practice, not the quality of intelligence or intellectual ability. Demonstrated competence of the subject matter is how worth is established. Both students and professor would say that grades are based on what you can do not who you are. In this class personal identity is ignored; anonymity prevails in this context. Thus, the loving (caring) is devalued. Even when questions are answered, the board receives the attention rather than the students. Honesty as captured in the concept of truth is evidenced. The professor reminds the students that only what he knows to be true is presented. The course is hard and only the capable can pass. The logical (consistent, rational) is also good. Students can expect the same kind of final as the mid-term. The professor's speech and action depict him as obedient. The revealing of the written homework assignment high on the board, with the professor turning around to see it, carries certain biblical allusions to the writing on the wall in Belshazzar's palace. An impression was given of someone/something other than—even higher than the

professor—being in control. The religious connotations give added meaning to the whispered "damn" of students who fail to be capable. However, I ask, is it the subject/discipline that demands that the pace be swift and the standards high?

The dialogue is surprisingly silent on terminal values. The closest statement to expressing a terminal value occurs when the professor says that the effort is worth it. There is the slightest sense of accomplishment hinted here. Worthwhileness is a value presented in the Jackson, et al. (1993) piece that more clearly fits the discourse. The information conveyed and tested is important for some future profession. Thus, delayed gratification is also valued.

There are several other values that do not fit into Rokeach's value typology. For example justice is valued here. A "fair hearing" was obtained when student grievances over the assessment of their competence occurred. The textbook, an authority on the subject in its own right, was used to plead their case. An appeal to the professor as judge resulted in an increase of one percent on student tests. Further, time is itself a value; it is a limited commodity especially for those who are capable. Those who are not capable are told to drop the class and try again. Thus, there are two classes of students with two different time pressures.

Social Sciences

On a Monday afternoon towards the end of the semester I entered the following notes into my journal. The observational record indicates that the room was crowded with about sixty students in attendance.

> . . .The professor began by telling the students when her office hours were going to be as she had plans that would take her out of town, but if they needed to see her and could not make these hours they could call her to schedule an appointment. She said to the class with a smile, "It's a wild time for me too!"

Speaking quickly, deliberately, while moving about the front of the room she continued, "Test four is in the week of April 24th on the 26th or 28th, I can't remember, but it is not on Monday cause I don't like giving tests on Monday. You need to warm up like everyone else. Test five is the final and it going to be given during finals week. Unlike the others, this test will be comprehensive. SO, you'll need to prepare for it now. Here are the limitations to help you not be so frightened. It will cover the same issues as on the previous tests. It will not ask questions on any issues not covered before. THERE WILL BE NO NEW TOPICS. These are the things that I think are important, but they are not the exact same questions. Classes given by guest speakers will not be included because it is too hard to pick out what I think is important. So the tests will cover only the lectures and textbook readings. It will also be one hour—most important. Anyone have any questions? Let's make sure that we are all on track."

The professor paused while looking around the room. Eye contact was made. Then she began, "Remember, if you have A's on all the tests you do not have to take the final."

A student's hand was raised. Calling on the student by name the professor asked, "Yes John, you have a question—comment?"

The student asked if they had to have A's on each test or only the cumulative 'A' grade to be exempt from taking the final.

She responded, "Sure, if you have an overall average of 'A' then that's great." She paused, "Anything else?"

After another pause, "Please turn to your study guide. You'll notice that there will be fifty questions no less, no more. There will be no changes, no surprises from what is on this guide. If you have read your textbook chapters, come to class, and have been awake, you should have no problems. I'm going to ask you how to do some calculations, but you'll not have to do them. You'll get plenty of practice doing calculations before you leave this place. I want you to have the basics—to know how things are defined. There is a potential problem—too many questions—so I'll try to do a good job. Anything you need to talk about or ask before we go on?"

Two other students asked content questions. The professor responded by calling on them by name. . . .

Again, the capable (competent) surfaces as an important value. However, it takes on a different ethos in this context. The dialogue is directed to the 'A' students rather than the 'D' students. Capable students are defined as those who attend class, read the text and study in advance. Reward rather than punishment—salvation rather than damnation—seems to be how the discussion is ordered. Related, and most

significantly, the human is included. This professor clearly recognizes herself as the source of authority. She talks about herself as responsible for seeing that the exam is appropriate. Further, students possess little anonymity. Caring, or Rokeach's concept of loving is identified. Students were identified by name throughout the class. It suggests that the professor is aware of the students' capabilities and uses them to determine what the standard will be. This professor wants students to be comfortable and prepared when taking the exams. While her talk is fast, she pauses often to allow students to ask questions, ponder what is said, or just keep-up on the note taking. The logical (consistent) is valued. The test will be like all the others, there will not be any surprises.

Humanities

On a Thursday morning I sat down in a classroom and waited for the class to begin. Written in the record is the following:

> ... There were two screens pulled down as I entered the class.... The professor entered the hall, taking a step toward the sixty or so students he said, "Is everyone ready for the quiz? The main thing will be to identify important concepts and explain their relevance. You will have about eight minutes on this first slide because it has most examples of the concepts that we have been studying."
>
> The professor walked slowly to one side of the left screen and looked around as the projectors were turned on by his assistant. The light beamed the image of the slides across the hall and onto the screens. He then walked out of the room as the assistant moved to the front with the remote to oversee the administration of the quiz.... After several slides and twenty-five minutes, the professor walked back into the class. The assistant stood up. He walked over to where she stood, placed his hands on his hips and began to talk to her in a whisper. She laughed. He sat down where she had been sitting.... "I'll give you a minute longer to finish up." He waited a minute. "Time to finish up—pass the exams to the middle."
>
> While his assistant collected the papers he counted out pieces of paper for each row on which was written the next assignment. "For this next assignment I want you to choose something that you're interested in. To write a good paper

you have to have a central focus." He gave several examples. He then provided examples of opening sentences and conclusions. He warned the students not to get too broad. "The paper is not to be a presentation of random facts, but is to come to some conclusion." He stated, "If you're having problems come talk to me."

"Does anybody have any ideas that they would like to discuss?" He paused. "Who has an idea that they would like to share? No one has decided, or you don't like to talk in public." He paused. "I will not press you." He paused again.

"Please do not leave this to the last minute. If you think about it the day before it is due it is not going to be a good paper. Search now, pick an interest now, discuss it with me in person or over the phone. I will help you narrow it down. We can discuss it together. I would hope to see and receive papers that cover a variety of interests. If you choose wisely, you can get much out of it. People often tell me that the most that they get out of this class is from the writing of these papers—it's the process you know. I am more than happy to look at a draft of the paper too. I would say people who show me a draft of their paper on the past assignment got better grades than they would have otherwise. I made some comment that was helpful."

He paused, "Even when I write papers I get someone else to give me feed back, I find it beneficial to have someone else read my work. Read it out loud, let it rest for a while—you catch all kinds of errors." Pausing, he continued, "I've read some very sloppy papers that nobody read. It's a waste of time."

This dialogue is different from the other two. It does not specifically address the bottom students or the top students. The discussion is not, "let me tell you why some of you are failing," nor "let me share with you how some of you do so well." Rather, his advice seems to be directed at all the students, as if they are all capable of either producing a poor paper or a good paper. Capable is defined by being interested in the subject, clarifying and making a central argument (logic), preparing ahead of time (responsible) and having someone else read your work (what I see as courageous). Other instrumental values are used to define the capable. Honesty is alluded to when he includes himself under this definition, "Even when I write papers. . ." This professor's action and talk contains a lot about being helpful. His providing more time for the first slide, giving examples of thesis sentences, counting out papers, being

willing to talk in person or on the phone and editing drafts all point to a personal attention to more than 60 students in the class. Caring is not the emphasis but rather helpfulness. This value possesses less personal familiarity between people, yet identifies a strong student oriented approach. Courageousness also surfaced when he requested students to share ideas with the class. However, respect as a value also surfaced, "I will not press you." Again, it is the instrumental rather than the terminal values around which the dialogue is centered.

Interpretation

There is a consistency in the overall structural organization of the discourse across the three disciplines. First, an event that pertains to student assessment (e.g., a test or assignment is handed back, or about to occur in the near future) begins the dialogue on the subject. Usually, these discussions occur at the beginning of the lecture period. However, I observed several professors who waited till the end the class before discussing in-depth the issues related to assessment. But, when this occurred the professors frequently told the students at the beginning of the class that they were going to take time at the end of the class to talk about the assessment. Second, performance or standards criteria receive discussion. A request to failing students to come see the professor frequently accompanies this part of the discourse. However, the language enforces the idea that it is the professor who is seen in these encounters rather than the student. Third, the professor hints or suggests to students ways of improving future performance or preparing for an up-coming assessment. Finally, professors offer predictions or promises of more of the same kind of assessments in the future. This organization, whether related to papers, tests or assignments, was consistent across the disciplines. However, differences emerge between the specific values that are addressed in each of the four parts when making comparisons across the disciplines.

Greater similarities were detected within rather than across the disciplines on the moral intent of the analyzed instruction and practice. Specifically, the dominant philosophical orientation of the discipline, whether it leans in direction of realism or constructionism, appeared to inform much of the discourse on assessment. The influence of realism surfaced in the instruction and practice of assessment in courses in the hard sciences, mathematics and social sciences. Translated, this means that faculty in these disciplines (not so much in the social sciences), emphasized the level of difficulty of the course, presented themselves as bound to teaching and assessing a given body of knowledge and gave little recognition to interpretation or other the human influences on assessment outcomes. On the other hand all of the faculty in the humanities courses that I observed embraced a constructionist philosophy. Most faculty that I observed in the social sciences would be defined as constructionist too. Faculty in these disciplines, who espoused a constructionist philosophy, engaged in instruction and practice of assessment that expressed student success as related to how they as faculty performed their role, recognized themselves as possessing control over the decisions that involved the material and gave much attention to interpretation and other human influences that complicate assessment outcomes. These are the salient aspects of the moral intent of these two philosophies as they surfaced through the instruction and practice of assessment.

The interpretation of the moral intent of these two philosophical orientations relates directly to Freire's (1970) concept of education as oppression. Freire's argument successfully and clearly shows the student as oppressed. However, he depicts teachers as the oppressors and beneficiaries. As I worked through the memo process to develop the analysis, my interest in the moral intent of the two theoretical positions centered on how the professors depicted themselves in relation to the material. In these vignettes

the hard scientist portrayed himself as obedient while the social scientist depicted herself as responsible. Is the hard scientist oppressed by his modernist assumptions about knowledge? How does the professor benefit from the realist philosophy that he infuses into his instruction and practice of assessment as compared to the faculty with the constructionist theory?

The professor is hidden by this discourse with its accompanying dialogue about the hardness and intensity of the course and lack of attention to the human. The discourse acts as both a shield from student criticism (i.e., blame for the difficulty and pace is cast onto the "nature" of the discipline by the faculty) and as a weapon (i.e., identifying, labeling and sifting students). This script relegates responsibility for decision making in this critical area upward and away from the faculty member. Thus, appealing to the professor becomes pointless. Students are left with only their limited experience in the discipline and the text for coping or appealing injustices in the assessment processes. Work for the faculty member is reduced as how knowledge is being constructed by the students becomes secondary to the issue of how knowledge should be presented. In other words, what the realist discourse tries to hide, the constructionist discourse opens up: Constructionism validates the messy possibilities of multiple interpretations of knowledge and thus acts to equalize the power as faculty and students seek to understand the interpretation of the other.

What does this mean for the moral aims and purpose of university education? This study provides another window on the influence of the two philosophical orientations that are embedded in undergraduate education in three disciplines. I argue, as does Wilshire (1990) and Freire (1970) that the realist philosophy does not lead to the educating act, as connected to human freedom. Figure 1 and Figure 2 provide

models of the relationship between content, faculty and student based on the realist and constructionist discourse, respectively.

insert Figures 1 and 2 here

These models attempt to show that according to the realist discourse, knowledge/power origniates from the discipline's content and acts on both the faculty and the student. In this script on assessment, the relationship between the faculty and student is less important than their respective relationships to the content. In the constructionist script however, the faculty and student are involved in an interpretive dance involving the content. This discourse on assessment places responsibility for success on both faculty and student. Thus, the knowledge/power linkages in this discourse emphasize the equality between the content, faculty and student.

Conclusion

In Allan Bloom's discussion of the philosophical differences between the academic disciplines, he writes, "These are the shadows cast by the peaks of the university on the entering undergraduate. Together they represent what the university has to say about man and his education, and they do not project a coherent image" (1986, p. 380). Faculty, through teaching strategies and reading materials, convey to students theories with moral intent. This study adds assessment to this list.

Specifically, the analysis of discourse revealed a consistent pattern in the structural organization of instruction and practice related to assessment across the disciplines. However, differences between the disciplines emerged when comparing the moral content of this discourse. The script used by faculty in the hard sciences and mathematics conveyed a message that affirmed obedience to the knowledge paradigm of the discipline. The script employed by faculty in the social sciences and humanities,

emphasized the interpretation of knowledge as a human responsibility. Further, the influence of these discourses as they relate to relationship between content, faculty and students was explored. The interpretation suggests that faculty are hidden by the realist discourse that locates the source of knowledge/power on the discipline and its content. In the constructionist discourse equality is forwarded.

Therefore, the study found evidence to support the position that particular values are infused into the instruction and practice of assessment. Besides influencing the teaching techniques and reading materials, the philosophies that pervade higher education can be seen as influencing student assessment. These faculty would probably be surprised to realize the scope of the moral that penetrates their discourse about the assessment of students. Indeed, the findings of this study suggest that whether faculty are purposefully engaged in the project or not communicate and socialize students into academic philosophical communities that possess theories with moral intent.

Table 1

Rokeach's Value Typology

Terminal Values	Instrumental Values
A comfortable life (a prosperous life)	Ambitious (hardworking, aspiring)
An exciting life (an active life)	Broadminded (open-minded)
A sense of accomplishment (contribution)	Capable (competent, effective)
A world at peace (free from war)	Cheerful (lighthearted, joyful)
A world of beauty (nature and the arts)	Clean (neat, tidy)
Equality (equal opportunity for all)	Courageous (standing up for beliefs)
Family security (caring for loved ones)	Forgiving (willing to pardon others)
Freedom (independence)	Helpful (working for other's welfare)
Happiness (contentedness)	Honest (sincere, truthful)
Inner harmony (no internal conflict)	Imaginative (daring, creative)
Mature love (sexual intimacy)	Independent (self-reliant)
National security (protection)	Intellectual (intelligent, reflective)
Pleasure (an enjoyable life)	Logical (consistent, rational)
Salvation (saved, eternal life)	Loving (affectionate, tender)
Self-respect (self-esteem)	Obedient (dutiful, respectful)
Social recognition (respect, admiration)	Polite (courteous)
True friendship (close companionship)	Responsible (dependable, reliable)
Wisdom (understanding life)	Self-controlled (restrained)

Source: Rokeach, 1973, p. 28

Figure 1

Model of Knowledge/Power Linkages for Realism

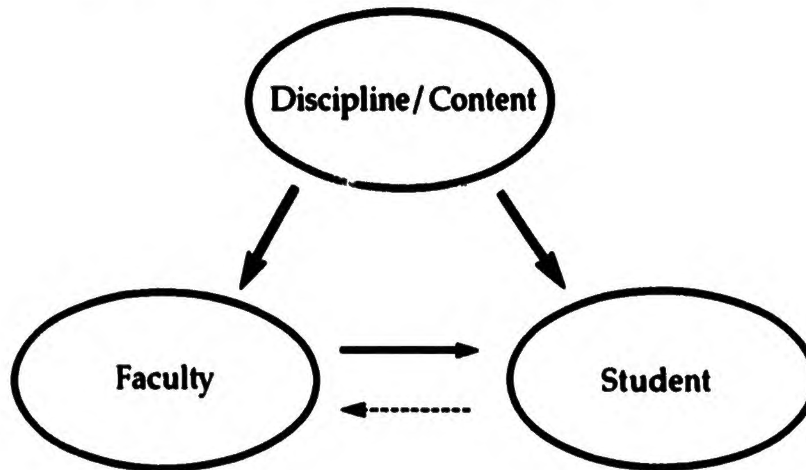
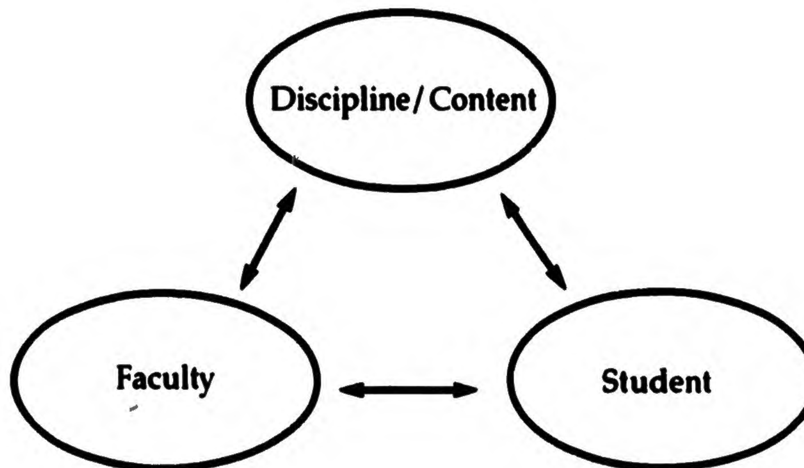


Figure 2

Model of Knowledge/Power Linkages for Constructionism



Note: Arrows show the directional flow of knowledge/power.
The stronger the influence the heavier the line.

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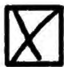

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