

Teaching and Learning: Mapping the Contextual Influences

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This paper outlines a conceptual map that allows new academic staff in universities to see the relationship of teaching and learning within a context wider than their individual specialisations. These wider contexts include the institutional context and its sub-contexts, as well as local, national and international contexts. Examples are given to illustrate how the conceptual map has been applied not only within Victoria University but also in New Zealand schools. The teaching-learning conceptual map is particularly useful in interpreting the different notions of learner-centredness for it recognises the totality of learning activities within an institution.

teaching, learning, conceptual map, contextual factors, university education, New Zealand

INTRODUCTION

At Victoria University of Wellington, the provision of teacher training for academic staff lies with the University Teaching Development Centre (UTDC). The Centre works with staff and departments to provide a range of workshops and advisory services on teaching, learning, course and program design, assessment, evaluation, supervisory practices and the use of information and communication technologies in teaching and learning. In addition, it monitors the literature on higher education on behalf of the University to identify trends and developments that might have an impact on the education provided to students.

The purpose of this paper is to outline a conceptual map developed by two former staff of the UTDC, which looks at the relationship of teaching and learning within an ecological framework. The map has been used to encourage new academic staff to recognise the contextual factors that impact on student learning in the courses (papers or modules) that they teach. The relevance of this map for the literature on quality in higher education will become apparent: the focus is on the transformational role of university education for student and community learning. University education should empower students and the community through the learning experiences that are provided (Harvey and Knight, 1996).

This paper focuses in particular on the use of the map with new academic staff to enable them to see the bigger picture of university education rather than simply the narrow confines of their subject specialisation. Towards the end of the paper, examples of the application of the map are provided along with a discussion of the implications of the map for the concept of 'learner-centredness'.

MAPS AND MODELS

It may be useful first to explain why the writers have used the term 'map' rather than 'model' to describe the framework presented in this paper. The term model conveys to most people the notion of a theoretical framework that is used to explain or interpret the connections between

events or entities; a model is assumed to be generalisable to a specified range of situations or a population of events or objects. Often a model makes use of quantitative data in order to replicate or simulate real-life events. While the framework being presented here uses both research and argument to justify its structure and shape, and contains most of the elements that would give it the status of a model, the writers are unwilling to ascribe it this status (although in earlier conceptions we called it a model). ‘Purpose’ is a critical factor: our aim is to communicate meaningfully with other academics, not to make claims about the objectivity of our views. The framework sets in place a starting point for identifying, as we see it, the many different factors that impinge on our roles as teachers and researchers. It shows how we have organised our thinking. However, it may provide a useful (but not the only) starting point for other academics to think about how their teaching and research activities link with the needs of students, the discipline, the university and the wider community.

The concept of a map as used by the writers takes account of purpose and perspective. It includes the recognition that those producing a map have a particular frame of reference or set of premises that are guiding their thinking and direction. Change the frame of reference or purpose and a different map is needed. This is no different than recognising that a public transport map (eg. the London underground) serves a different purpose and highlights different landmarks than a street map. (One of the writers on his first visit to London, took a 30 minute tube journey, changing trains in the process, only to find out later from a street map that the journey could have been walked in 10 minutes. The wrong map was used!)

The remaining point to make about models and maps is that the educational literature abounds with different (but often very similar) so-called ‘models’ of teaching and learning. For example, Ramsden (1992); Biggs (1999); Prosser and Trigwell (1999) all provide models that depict relational features of teaching and learning. The map presented here can be thought of as a different way of looking at the terrain of factors which impact on student learning. Another map is provided by Horsburgh (1999); she draws together the elements that she sees as important for ensuring that university education is a transformational experience. The important point to note is that each construction of the terrain of teaching and learning is valid because each makes sense of the particular features that the writer wants to highlight. The ultimate test of the utility of a map is that it understandable to readers, makes sense of the known literature and research, and is relevant for practitioners in their own teaching and learning contexts; that there could be different maps is not problematic. The final word is left to Fay (1996) who uses the analogy of a map to argue the limitations of objectivism:

In cartography there is no “One Best Map” of any particular terrain. For any terrain an indefinite number of useful maps is possible, each depending on the aspect of the terrain highlighted as an entity, the mode of its representation itself contingent on the uses to which the map will be put, and on the perspective from which the map is drawn. (Fay, 1996, p.210)

A RELATIONAL MAP OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

Figure 1 identifies the key components of the relational map of teaching and learning developed by the writers (hereinafter called the ‘T-L map’). The central core of the map is the interface between the students, the content of a course (paper or module), and the teacher. These are the corner stones of any formal teaching-learning context, even if the medium of teaching and learning is in some way IT or distance based. The way in which the teacher and students work together in respect of unravelling the content influences directly the effectiveness of the learning. However, the T-L map recognises the presence of key relationships, which link these components:

- student understanding of the content – this is the key outcome of the teaching-learning process;
- staff expertise of the subject – this is a requirement for any effective teaching performance and one which draws upon the teacher's ability to integrate latest research into the knowledge base of a subject; and
- staff-student rapport – this is a hypothetical construct for representing the many teaching and interpersonal attributes of academics that motivate students to perform to higher levels.

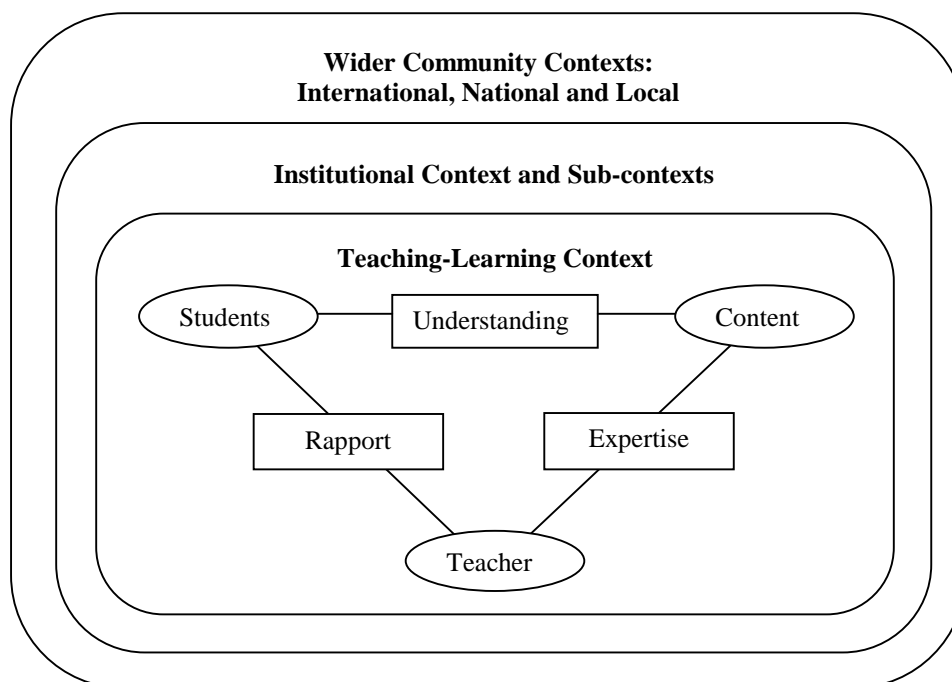


Figure 1. Relational Map of Teaching and Learning (the T-L map)

The T-L map also recognises at least three levels of context in which teachers and students operate: the immediate teaching-learning context of the course, including the instructional processes and activities which the teacher puts in place; the institutional context, which can be divided in various ways into sub-contexts (eg. department, faculty); and the wider community context (local, national and international). In this respect, the map has features similar to the ecological approach taken by Bronfenbrenner (1979) to the study of human development.

The following discussion explains each component of the map in more detail.

CENTRAL ELEMENTS OF THE T-L MAP: STUDENTS, TEACHER AND CONTENT

Students

Academic staff need to have knowledge of their students. Who are they? Where are they from? What reasons do they give for enrolling in the course? What background knowledge and skills do they bring to the course? What are the age, gender and ethnic characteristics of the class? What educational and professional qualifications do students already hold? Do the students have a rich work experience, or are they mainly straight from school? What approaches to study do they bring? And what networks already exist among students for peer support in learning?

These questions are important for several reasons: they enable the teacher to locate the likely strengths and weaknesses of students (collectively as a class, if not individually) and build on the students' existing knowledge and skills; they also enable the teacher to contextualise material to

students' background, interests and goals; they assist the teacher to think about class dynamics and ways of building small group activities into the teaching-learning environment; and they enable the teacher to cue in more quickly to informal feedback on the relevance and value of the material being taught. Knowledge of students aids a teacher in virtually all phases of the planning and delivery of a course – the design, teaching, classroom management, assessment, and evaluation – and helps to establish rapport with the class.

Content

The word 'content' is used here to refer to the knowledge, skills and values, which are the domain of a particular course (or module or paper). However, the notion of content held by the writers is premised on the educational goal that what is taught should ordinarily be less than what is learned ($T < L$). This captures the idea that a key role of the teacher is to stimulate students to go beyond the prescribed content – to foster both cooperative and independent learning strategies, which take students further than what is achieved through the direct transmission of knowledge from teacher to students. However, it is relevant to note that students and teachers come together because of content. Students recognise the teacher's expertise and expect that their own knowledge and skills will be enhanced by their contact with the teacher. Control over the prescribed content principally rests with the teacher or a higher authority, but a good teacher will find ways of allowing students to share some of this responsibility. This becomes increasingly important as the student advances through his or her university education.

Underpinning the content of a course are a number of key design questions that must be addressed by the teacher. To what extent does the course embody the broader goals of a university education (eg. life-long learning and the graduate profile)? How does the course relate to others in the same program? What prerequisite and co-requisite skills are expected of students? What provisions exist for diagnostic and bridging assistance? What professional skills or competencies are expected to be covered? What scope exists for student choice? And what external groups should be consulted in the development of the course?

The importance of these questions is clear. Basic principles of program and course design require that coherence exists between the different courses in the same program (that is, together they should make a sensible learning program for students), and that within a course, the content, sequence, assessment and delivery should all be consistent with the objectives or intended outcomes. (Note: a well designed course will allow for – not stifle – the achievement of unexpected outcomes which take student learning to a new plain). It should be noted that considerable emphasis is now placed on ensuring that programs and courses meet the needs of students and other groups who have a stake in the education being provided. Within New Zealand, current program approval procedures operated by the New Zealand Vice Chancellors' Committee (NZVCC) and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) in fact require evidence of appropriate internal and external consultation.

Teacher

The map places great importance on teachers reflecting on their own knowledge, skills, values and professional development as teachers and researchers. Within academic development workshops conducted by the UTDC, teachers are asked to focus on what they see as their role in student learning, to articulate their implicit and explicit theories of teaching, to identify where they need to focus to enhance their own teaching and research development, and to contemplate through the model the strategies that they can employ for fostering student learning and involvement in the subject.

To complement the self-reflections of teachers, the UTDC has undertaken a range of training needs analysis to assist staff understand more clearly the University's expectations of them. One study of particular significance focused on the key teaching roles of the university lecturer (Milliken, 1990). This study identified several key teaching roles, which have subsequently been revised twice by Hall (1996; in preparation). The key roles are listed in Figure 2.

This analysis, perhaps more than any other undertaken by the UTDC, identifies the scope of the teaching function of the university lecturer. It shows very clearly the importance of a teacher's commitment to the subject, to students, to teaching, to oneself through professional development, and within New Zealand to partnership with Maori. The scope of the work and the implications for professional development cannot be underestimated.

<p>Subject expert: The role of achieving and maintaining expert knowledge and skills in a chosen subject area or areas.</p> <p>Course designer and manager: The role of designing an academic course and of planning for, managing, and evaluating the human and material resources required.</p> <p>Communicator: The role of exchanging information, knowledge and ideas to maintain positive working relationships and promote student learning.</p> <p>Assessor: The role of planning an assessment program for a course, writing valid assessment tasks, marking student work, and providing constructive feedback to students.</p> <p>Motivator/empowerer of learning: The role of providing conditions which stimulate students to think and learn, and which encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning.</p> <p>Academic adviser: The role of giving students accurate information and advice in a way which reconciles their own goals with University regulations.</p> <p>Research supervisor: The role of encouraging and guiding students towards the successful completion of a research project.</p> <p>Evaluator: The role of making effective use of formal and informal feedback to review and enhance the quality of student learning.</p> <p>Bi-cultural partner: The role of providing the conditions that encourage both Maori and non-Maori students to participate fully in the activities of a course or program.</p> <p>Self-manager: The role of actively fulfilling personal and professional goals, and of managing one's own work and one's own development as a teacher and researcher.</p> <p>Note: Based on discussions with several colleagues in Australian and New Zealand universities, the writers have included the following additional role to take account of the growing need for academics to engage with information and communication technologies in their teaching. This role is seen as covering many of the tools that academics need for keeping abreast of technological advances in teaching and learning. The only issue is whether the role should be given separate status or be seen as integral to other roles. The writers subscribe to the latter view but recognise that to highlight its importance, the role requires specific mention.</p> <p>IT user: The role of selecting and using competently a range of information and communication technologies to enhance the pedagogical processes of a course and to maintain one's own expertise of a subject.</p>

Figure 2: Key Teaching Roles of the University Lecturer at Victoria University

THE KEY RELATIONSHIPS: EXPERTISE, RAPPORT AND UNDERSTANDING

Figure 1 identifies a basic relationship connecting each of the central elements of the map (students, teacher and content). Each relationship is encapsulated in a notion that conveys a helpful message or signal for fostering teacher reflection on the contexts of the work.

Expertise

The key relationship between teacher and content is embodied in the notion of expertise. Teachers must keep abreast of their subject, conduct research, network with colleagues, disseminate information about their subject, and integrate different theories and research findings relevant to their teaching. Underpinning this work within New Zealand is the need to foster the teaching-research nexus in line with the *Education Act 1989*, which identifies the interdependence of teaching and research as a defining characteristic of a university. For example, academic staff are expected to:

- undertake research and study leave and report on these from the perspective of the benefit to their teaching;
- attend conferences in their subject in order to maintain currency in their research and teaching;
- include their own research, and the research of others, in course content;
- require students to conduct research or use research skills in assignment work;
- require students to conduct laboratory experiments and participate in field trips;
- use colleagues to teach in areas of their research expertise; and
- use external experts to give lectures or lead seminars.

Rapport

The key relationship between teacher and student is embodied in the notion of rapport. This takes account of research findings on the teacher attributes and behaviours that students have identified as important for encouraging their learning and understanding. For example, ten years of student evaluations at Victoria University has identified that attitude to students, mutual respect, clarity of communication, organisation of teaching, constructive feedback, teacher enthusiasm, intellectual challenge and approachability are all very positively correlated and strongly linked to the building of an effective relationship between teacher and students. Similar conclusions have been reached in overseas research on teaching and learning (see, for example, Entwistle (1992), Ramsden (1992), The University of Adelaide (1992) and Biggs (1999) for summaries of key findings and principles). If students and teachers get on well with each other, the conditions exist for students to take greater control of their learning. The desire of students to succeed is typically reinforced by a positive professional relationship between themselves and their teacher.

Understanding

The key relationship between students and content is the notion of 'understanding' in the form of a bridge that students have actively to build. In this context, understanding is used in its broadest sense to mean not only understanding of meaning but also the performance of a learned skill or the demonstration through behaviour of an intellectual or ethical value. The emphasis on student activity in their own learning is not new; it is well embedded in the work of historical figures in education such as Piaget and Dewey, and is central to the models of teaching and learning in higher education provided by Ramsden (1992), Prosser and Trigwell (1999) and Biggs (1999). It is also central to the notion of 'quality as transformation' as proposed by Harvey and Knight (1996) and illustrated through research on two educational programs in a New Zealand tertiary institution by Horsburgh (1998, 1999). The role of the teacher is to provide the expertise, the course design, the teaching and the assessment in such a way that students are encouraged to develop their understanding and go beyond the prescribed content. This in fact places demands on

teachers themselves to engage with research on student learning, including approaches to learning, orientation to study, learning styles, students' own conceptions of what learning means, principles of reinforcement, modelling, cooperative learning, constructivism, metacognition, transfer, and so on. University teachers have a responsibility to understand how to facilitate student learning, that is, how to provide the conditions... "which stimulate students to think and learn, and which encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning" (see Figure 2, the role of 'motivator/empowerer of learning').

CONTEXTUAL COMPONENTS

As already indicated, the three contextual components identified in the map are: the teaching-learning context; the institutional context and sub-contexts; and the wider community context (local, national and international).

Teaching-learning context

At the centre of the map lies the everyday teaching-learning context of a course. This focuses on both the formal and informal educational activities which impact positively or negatively on student learning. The way a teacher manages the classroom, facilitates interaction and networking among students, challenges students through the provision of stimulating assessment tasks, and provides feedback which enhances students' understanding of their learning, has an important bearing on the student course experience and their success in meeting personal, course and professional goals. A productive teaching-learning environment does not come about by chance. The ability of teachers to design good courses, establish clear objectives or intended outcomes, bring about interaction and intellectual debate, and provide quality feedback, all require planning and the development of expertise in a wide range of teaching and assessment strategies. UTDC experience indicates that students value most of all:

Content: Content that is well selected, relevant and up-to-date.

Information: Clear information about the course, its objectives, its content, the assessment requirements, and constructive feedback on work.

Engagement: Delivery that is engaging, whether through lectures, seminars, tutorials, computer based learning, or other methods.

Assessment: Tasks that are relevant, fair, and promote understanding.

Support: Access to lecturers, tutors and other persons who can provide support and clarification when blocks occur and more information is needed. Approachable teachers are a must.

This list shares a lot in common with the seven principles that Chickering and Gamson (1987) identified from a distillation of 50 years of research on teaching and learning in higher education. According to these writers, good practice:

- encourages student-faculty contact;
- encourages cooperation among students;
- encourages active learning;
- gives prompt feedback;
- emphasises time on task;
- communicates high expectations; and
- respects diverse talents and ways of learning.

Many writers have developed similar lists of what they believe are the essential characteristics of an effective teaching-learning environment. All have very clear implications for the way teachers might promote a climate of learning for their students.

The institutional context

In order to be successful, teachers must also have a good understanding of the institutional context within which they work. The institution provides the strategic direction, policies, conditions and many of the rules that govern the way teaching, learning and assessment takes place. Of particular importance is the ethos towards teaching and learning communicated by the individual departments or academic units within the institution. If students and their learning are valued, the context already exists for a teacher to establish rapport with students and to promote a course climate conducive to learning. Of relevance here are the results of a two-day symposium held at Griffith University in 1996. This symposium brought together representatives from university departments across Australia, which had been identified as achieving high satisfaction ratings from graduates using the Course Experience Questionnaire (*CEQ Symposium: Best Practice in University Teaching*). In a plenary session of the conference, Ramsden identified the following common characteristics of these departments and the programs that they offered:

- very positive departmental ethos towards students and teaching: students felt that they mattered and the teaching was of a high quality;
- very positive departmental ethos towards research and scholarship: students valued the scholarship of their teachers and their enthusiasm for the subject; and
- quality programs that made connections between theory, practice and the reasons students enrolled: teachers enabled students to draw connections between the classroom and what happens beyond the university.

The institutional context is important also because of the emphasis senior management places on quality management. For example, student advising, learning support services, assessment regulations, classroom facilities, computing resources, library services and incentives for professional development in teaching, all impact on the quality of the teaching-learning environment. A teacher in a university must understand the institutional context – the ethos, rules, conditions and rewards – and learn to work effectively within these to enhance both their own professional development and the learning opportunities for students. The teacher should also be prepared to challenge through appropriate structures those provisions that have a negative impact on the teaching-learning environment.

The wider community context

No institution exists in isolation from its wider community. In teaching development workshops at Victoria University, academic staff have been encouraged to identify the key elements in the community context which might impact on their work as teachers and researchers. Internationally, this means teachers engage with overseas scholars, professional associations and societies, and network through conferences, journals, the internet and other media. Staff need to keep abreast of international developments. Within the New Zealand context, obvious influences include: government policies on tertiary education; the Treaty of Waitangi; developments in the National Qualifications Framework; the needs of professional bodies, industry and employers; and the expectations of students' families and different community groups. Of particular significance is the recent research evaluation exercise (the Performance Based Research Fund) undertaken in the New Zealand tertiary sector and the emphasis it places on academics producing high quality research (Hall, Morris Matthews and Sawicka, 2004; Tertiary Education Commission, 2004). To some extent all university teachers need to develop a political sense about the significance of their

work and the importance of their interactions with the wider community. Furthermore, academics need to consider ways in which they can embrace their role as critic and conscience of society and thereby provide expert comment on matters of importance to the wider community. Such matters are often the basis for enhancing the relevance and quality of the education that students receive.

Of relevance here is a report from the Association of Commonwealth Universities (2001). The thesis of this publication is that universities exist in a changing world and that 'engagement' with the wider community is a core value for universities to pursue:

Commonwealth universities face high expectations from the societies of which they are part. They will be judged, and learn to judge themselves, by the variety and vitality of their interactions with society. Those interactions, and university decision-making to foster them, are what we term 'engagement'. Twenty-first century academic life is no longer pursued in seclusion (if it ever was) but rather must champion reason and imagination in engagement with the wider society and its concerns. (Association of Commonwealth Universities, 2001, p.i)

And:

Engagement implies strenuous, thoughtful, argumentative interaction with the non-university world in at least four spheres: setting universities' aims, purposes, and priorities; relating teaching and learning to the wider world; the back-and-forth dialogue between researchers and practitioners; and taking on wider responsibilities as neighbours and citizens. (Association of Commonwealth Universities, 2001, p.i)

In respect of engagement in New Zealand, it is of interest that the recent Government decision to establish Centres of Research Excellence in a limited number of higher education institutions has resulted in successful applications all coming through inter-institutional and inter-agency proposals.

APPLYING THE T-L MAP

As mentioned in the introduction, the T-L map is used as a means of encouraging academic staff to think beyond the narrow confines of their subject expertise to see the bigger picture of teaching in a university. So far evaluative feedback has been very positive from staff who have been introduced to the map. The point to note is that the map is not intended to be a singular representation of all the factors involved in influencing the teaching of a subject. It is introduced as a starting point for reflection by the teacher. Clearly different contextual factors will operate depending upon the subject, course, mix of students, and the expertise and interests of the staff. Many staff take the next step of reshaping or elaborating the picture to fit their own contexts. For example, in one VUW professional program (a masters degree), the responsibility for the curriculum – objectives, content, assessment and timetable – is negotiated between the student, a work-based mentor, and the student's academic supervisor within the faculty. For one supervisor in this program, the critical elements in the wider community are the student's work context and the role of the work-based mentor in providing support to the student. The supervisor has redrawn the model and elaborated it in a way which more accurately depicts this situation. Furthermore, he has identified a time dimension to the model that recognises that the roles of the different players in the teaching-learning environment (the student, the mentor and himself) develop and change as the student progresses through the program.

The T-L map has also been used by a number of research students at both Masters and PhD level. In one study (McCahon, 1999), the researcher used different maps (which she called 'models') to look at the macro and micro levels of her data; an earlier version of the T-L map provided a macro picture of the contextual aids and difficulties involved in a distance program for librarians. More

specific features of the teaching-learning environment were conveyed in a different model – this was seen as complementing and extending the T-L map.

In another completed thesis (Hollard, 2001), the researcher used the T-L map as a starting point for conceptualising contextual issues around sexuality education in New Zealand schools. As the thesis developed, the map evolved to incorporate lines of interaction, which focused on those factors that facilitated or inhibited the ability of a school to implement a relevant program.

One further use of the map should be mentioned. One of the writers has conducted focus group evaluations of several postgraduate programs at Victoria University. Typically, such evaluations proceed in four stages: the participants (students of a program) first meet with the evaluator to be briefed about the process, including the details of the purpose, the methodology, ethical considerations (eg. confidentiality and the right to withdraw), and the reporting of the results. In the second stage, focus group methods are used to elicit the views of the participants about various aspects of the program, including important contextual information. In the third stage, the views of the participants are summarised and returned to the participants for verification. A report is then prepared for the program coordinator.

From the perspective of the T-L map described here, the first and second stages of this evaluation procedure are the most important. In the discussion of the proposed methodology, participants are introduced to the map as a way of enabling them to think more broadly about the factors that have either helped them with their learning or have created problems. With respect to the map, students usually have no difficulties in understanding its construction and are able to identify quickly what for them are the key features in their learning environment (wider community, institutional and teaching-learning). It should be noted that not all the factors that foster or discourage learning lie in the immediate teaching-learning context. For example, in one program, students complained strongly about the removal of access to a tearoom, which had provided a very important location for student interaction; one of the significant elements of the social contexts of learning for these students was removed. In effect, the use of the T-L map had enabled these students to focus on an issue, which might otherwise not have been noted through more conventional evaluation procedures.

THE INTERPRETATION OF LEARNER-CENTREDNESS WITHIN THE T-L MAP

The notion of learner-centredness is one which many academics subscribe to although it is not always clear what they mean by this term. For some it means ‘focusing on the learning needs’ of students, but exactly what these needs are is not always explicit or even understood by many teachers. For others, learner-centredness focuses on the provision of choice and clear information so that students are well informed about the content and requirements of a program. Others see learner-centredness in terms of flexible learning – giving students a degree of control over aspects of their learning, such as when to study, where to study, how to study, what to study, and so on. Still others see learner-centredness in terms of the provision of activities which promote ideals such as life-long learning, being a reflective practitioner, being an independent learner, or the possession of qualities specified in a graduate profile. The writers accept that all of these may constitute important aspects of learner-centredness, but the T-L map provides a more coherent way of bringing these different conceptions together.

A key factor in the development of the T-L map is the writers’ concerns about the approaches to teaching and learning that many academics seem to adopt. Some follow a so-called ‘transmission’ model of teaching which is essentially content-centred in focus. Others follow what they believe to be a student or customer-centred approach but in the process they appear to lose sight of the knowledge base of the subject they are teaching. Others (only a few) seem to put themselves at the centre of the teaching-learning environment – their own charisma seems more important than the

content of the subject or the needs of students. Within the map presented here, the students, content and teacher are all seen as central to the teaching-learning environment; all have to be considered and in some way harmonised in order to be learner-centred. Furthermore, the contexts of learning must also be considered so that students benefit not only from the immediate teaching and learning environment, but also from the support services available in the institution and the engagements that academics and students themselves make with the wider community.

CONCLUSION

In summarising this paper from the perspective of learner-centredness, the writers emphasise all of the following as important:

- A teacher must know the students, collectively if not individually. A teacher should have a good idea of why students have chosen to enrol in a course; where they are coming from; what they bring in terms of previous knowledge and experience; where they are going; and what motivates them. This is not as difficult as some people think. A lot of this comes about through experience. It can also be accelerated by use of questionnaires, tutorial contact, office hours, and just taking a little time to talk and listen to students.
- If a teacher is to provide the conditions that foster student involvement in the subject, the teacher must ensure that he or she has developed, and continues to develop, teaching and assessment strategies that promote student reflection and learning. In other words, the teacher must address her or his own professional development in order to become an effective teacher. There must be a focus on the self.
- Content cannot be ignored or given a minor place in the teaching-learning environment. The reason teachers and students come together is because of a particular content. The adage “you can't change knowledge if you don't have knowledge” applies very much to university education. Respect for knowledge and respect for sources of knowledge are important for scholarly study.
- A teacher must also recognise the importance of context in student learning. A teacher needs to understand and use institutional provisions to assist students to network with each other and make effective use of the facilities that are available to them. A teacher should also apply pressure through appropriate channels to remove the system blocks that inhibit student learning.
- Lastly, teachers should engage with the wider community in those spheres of their teaching and research that have obvious educational relevance to external bodies, agencies, stakeholders and community groups. Such interactions can only improve the currency and relevance of the education students receive.

In the above conception, ‘learner-centredness’ is not simply a focus on students; it is the harmonisation of many factors that work to the benefit of students. There must be a focus on the needs of students, the knowledge base of a program, teacher professional development, the teaching-learning context, and interaction with the wider community.

Of interest to the last point is a text on university education by Bowden and Marton (1999). In this text, the authors argue the case for reconceptualising the modern day university from the notion of a **University of Teaching and Research** to a **University of Learning**. The shift to a focus on ‘learning’ is important because it recognises that knowledge formation takes place at two levels – the individual level as students come to understand the content of the courses they study, and at the collective level through research where ... “human knowledge in its entirety is also widened and humanity learns” (Bowden and Marton, 1999, p.4). The importance of this conception for the

present paper is that the focus on learning recognises that students, academics, institutions and the community are all involved in the learning process – they are, in fact, all learners from the activities of a university. Learner-centredness is more than simply a focus on students – it recognises the totality of the learning activities of a university. The T-L map presented here embodies this totality.

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