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A LITTLE LEARNING IS A DANGEROUS THING? THE ETHICS OF TEACHING ACCIDENTAL TOURISTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

This paper raises questions about the ethical issues that arise for academics and universities when under-graduate students enrol in classes outside of their discipline - classes that are not designed to be multi-disciplinary or introductory. We term these students 'accidental tourists'. Differences between disciplines in terms of pedagogy, norms, language and understanding may pose challenges for accidental tourists in achieving desired learning outcomes. This paper begins a discussion about whether lecturers and universities have any ethical obligations towards supporting the learning of these students. This examination illustrates the challenges faced by lecturers some of whom, we theorise, may experience a form of moral distress facing a conflict between personal beliefs and organisational requirements. It also critically examines the role and responsibilities of universities towards students and towards their staff. This paper indicates the need for greater reflection about this issue, especially given the many constraints facing lecturers and universities.

Introduction

Under-graduate students within higher education may seek opportunities to study in classes that are outside the traditional degree structure in their discipline or they may be expected and/or encouraged to cross disciplinary boundaries as they prepare for future careers. This paper argues that the participation of what we term 'accidental tourists', under-graduate students from differing disciplinary backgrounds in classes which are not designed to be multi-disciplinary or introductory or which are not perceived as attracting a multi-disciplinary cohort, is an important, but often overlooked variable in higher education, with significant implications for pedagogy. Our interest is not to engage particularly with the pedagogical questions associated with teaching to accidental tourists, but rather in using various ethical approaches to examine the ethical dilemmas that this cohort of students poses for lecturers and universities – all of whom are moral actors. We also acknowledge that students have ethical responsibilities in respect of their learning, but these are not the focus of this paper. At the heart of this paper therefore is an acknowledgement of possible tensions between the organisational priorities of universities and of lecturers. Universities are of an increasingly commercial and consumerist orientation (Canaan & Shumar, 2008; Ernest & Young, 2012). As such they may encourage the proliferation of accidental tourists as part of strategies to attract, retain and graduate students in order to achieve participation and performance targets (Commonwealth of Australia, 2008). Lecturers are instrumental in achieving organisational ends, but also try to give expression to their personal and professional values and try to balance the needs of the majority of disciplinary

specific students and the needs of a minority group, accidental tourists. This paper indicates the need for greater reflection about the ethical issues posed by accidental tourists, and how these are managed by lecturers and universities.

This paper is presented in four sections. The first section defines what we mean by the term "accidental tourists". In the second section we discuss the challenges faced by accidental tourists and by those who teach into classes that attract such students. In the third section we begin an assessment of the ethical questions that may arise for those who teach classes that attract accidental tourists and in the fourth section we canvas the ethical questions that face organisations or, in other words, we discuss institutional responsibilities. Although this manner of organising the paper presents a neat differentiation between the ethical issues for lecturers and for universities the reality is of course much messier, with organisational norms and directives having a direct influence on teaching practice.

Defining Accidental Tourists

It is important to clarify what is meant by the term *accidental tourists* if the ethical implications are to be understood. Under-graduate student cohorts may be comprised of students from a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds. Students may choose to learn outside their discipline for a number of reasons. In some cases the subject matter under examination in the unit intersects disciplinary boundaries, because an issue is of common concern and requires the contribution of more than one discipline to reach a solution or to enable students to examine a particular topic from a number of perspectives (Davies & Devlin, 2007, p.3). In these situations multi-disciplinary teaching is designed to promote interdisciplinary learning. However, this paper does not focus on classes that are designed to be multi-disciplinary as a broad body of literature exists in relation to this.

Rather we note that there have always been under-graduate students who undertake study in an area outside their core discipline, enrolling in classes that are not designed to be multi-disciplinary or introductory. Usually they seek to enrol in these classes because they are viewed as being complementary to their primary area of study, or out of interest, or merely to fill a gap in their degree structure with an interesting subject or a class that is perceived to be 'easy'– we call these students 'accidental tourists'. These students may benefit in a number of ways from studying outside their core discipline.

The Challenge of Fitting In

The contention in this section of the paper is that at least some accidental tourists may face particular challenges in undertaking a class outside their discipline, when that class is not designed to be multi-disciplinary or introductory. This occurs at two levels. At the first level, that of the students, there is a concern in that departing from their disciplinary specialisation they may take classes for which they are not adequately prepared or to which they are not naturally inclined (Davies & Devlin, 2007). At the second level, there may be pedagogical challenges in that, as noted by Macfarlane (2004), the first point of identity for many lecturers is their discipline, rather than their position as a university educator.

Students

Students of a particular academic discipline normally proceed along standard educational pathways (Davies & Devlin, 2007). While students generally specialise in one or two discipline(s) (e.g. through double-degree programs or double majors), it is also not unusual that, at some point during their degree, they will choose to undertake classes that are outside their core discipline(s) (Davies & Devlin, 2007).

Davies and Devlin (2007) note 'discipline influences students' views about what is known, what is valued, and what is capable of investigation' (p. 2). Hence, accidental tourists may have special needs

or encounter particular challenges when undertaking classes outside their discipline. This view is predicated on a sense that students form a disciplinary identity which shapes their learning practices. However, this view cannot be accepted uncritically as others, such as Winberg (2008), also note that identification with a disciplinary community can be weak or strong. It would seem logical to suggest that disciplinary identity becomes stronger as the student advances in their study. This may be so for many students, but for others disciplinary identification may weaken as the student progresses in his or her studies. For students entering higher education, the self-identification that they are a 'law student' or an 'engineering student' might be an important means to anchor their personal identity. Such certainty as regards to identity might be important at a time when they are making a transition from secondary to tertiary education, between being an adolescent and an adult, and, for some, leaving home for the first time. Such students might then feel the need for a strong attachment to or identification with a discipline. Others entering higher education will be uncertain about what they want their future to be and are likely to have weak disciplinary attachments. Likewise some students towards the end of their studies may be finishing a degree knowing that the discipline will not be relevant to their chosen career path; others may have embraced a multi or trans-disciplinary identity. This is to say that the impact of disciplinarity on students is likely to be variable and individualised.

Having said this, there is a body of evidence that suggests that discipline can be a variable that impacts upon learning and thus constitute a possible barrier to engagement by accidental tourists. In respect of student learning, Becher (1989) has suggested that disciplines can be categorised as: hard pure; soft pure; hard applied; and soft applied and that these categorisations have implications for teaching and pedagogy. For example, hard pure disciplines (e.g. physics) are often concerned with universals, simplification and have a quantitative emphasis and require retentive memories for facts, problem-solving skills and quantitative skills. In contrast, soft pure disciplines (e.g. anthropology) are concerned with particulars and are qualitative in orientation and require lateral thinking, critical thinking and fluent written and oral expression (Neumann, Parry & Becher, 2002). In respect of assessment, Smart and Ethington (1995) found that the goal of knowledge acquisition is emphasised in pure disciplines whereas knowledge application is emphasised more in the applied and the soft disciplines. One implication of this is that disciplinary differences may be indicators of differences in students' preferred learning styles (Kolb, 1981) – in other words a student from a hard science background may not survive and thrive in a discipline that emphasises effective and critical written communication. Another implication is that different disciplines may have different disciplinary norms e.g. one discipline may favour constructivist approaches to teaching whilst another may be more didactic (Blackmore, 2007). Conversely, another implication may be that disciplinary barriers may not be as important if a student visits another discipline within a field (i.e. physics to chemistry) (hard pure to hard pure). However, if hard pure disciplines emphasise knowledge acquisition, then the physics student will be lacking key knowledge when enrolled in a chemistry class. At the level of teaching delivery, students are likely to bring with them expectations regarding teaching methodologies based on their experiences within their own discipline(s). For example, a student's disciplinary orientation might shape the questions they ask and their approaches to class discussions (Frost & Jean, 2003). Language may be used differently between disciplines (Blackmore, 2007). Disciplinary differences may determine different teaching modes (for example, advocacy is a key skill taught in law). All of these factors point to the possibility that some accidental tourists may have to make adjustments, sometimes significant, when studying a class designed for and delivered by another discipline. It is also important to acknowledge that a student's learning preferences may not be fixed and might change with exposure to different environments and ways of doing or being (Nulty & Barrett, 1996).

Teachers

Despite some research in this area, it is still unclear the extent to which discipline impacts on pedagogy. Lueddeke (2003), for example, identified several variables that affect an individual's approach to teaching scholarship: the discipline area itself, teaching concepts, gender, post, years of teaching, qualifications and teaching certification (p. 216). Lueddeke's research suggested that teaching pedagogy has less to do with qualifications, experience or position and more to do with the

discipline area itself and "teaching conceptualisation" (Lueddeke, 2003, p. 213). Other research supports Lueddeke's conclusions and indicates, at least in part, that pedagogy is often dictated by discipline-specific preferences (Ballantyne, Bain & Packer, 1999; Carpenter & Tait, 2001). In an attempt to move towards an understanding of quality teaching in higher education, Ballantyne, Bain and Packer (1999) undertook a cross-faculty study examining issues such as the types of teaching used, teaching methods, teaching objectives and student groups. What emerged was that different disciplines favoured particular aspects of teaching such as critical evaluation or problem solving. Carpenter and Tait (2001) drew similar conclusions when they researched the concept of 'good teaching' with a specific focus upon teaching values and teaching methodologies of lecturers from faculties of education, law and science. Like Ballantyne, Bain and Packer (1999), they found different disciplines preferred different pedagogical approaches: education lecturers generally adopted more progressive educational techniques and incorporated technology as compared to the more traditional, didactic methods of law and science lecturers.

Others also note disciplinarity as an important variable. Becher (1989) and Blackmore (2007) suggest that academic disciplines function as tribes providing and perpetuating a powerful notion of identity for both students and teachers alike. Disciplinary communities are said to be identified and constructed through particular forms of knowledge, and retained values, beliefs (Becher & Trowler, 2001) and teaching practices (Neumann, 2001; Neumann et al., 2002). It has been established that patterns of attitudes, meanings, symbols and behaviours are created or affirmed around disciplines (Frost & Jean, 2003). A discipline's identity may be evident in the manner in which a lecturer designs, teaches and evaluates a class (Winberg, 2008). The culture of a discipline includes a knowledge tradition that incorporates ways of thinking, a common vocabulary, and related codes of conduct (Frost & Jean, 2003) as well as a style of writing, methods and methodologies, modes of analysis and preferred discourse. These factors construct the identity of an academic, but as Knight and Trowler (2001) noted, academics are not necessarily attentive to the construction of their identities and its impact upon teaching.

Hence for many classes that accidental tourists enrol in, the focus may be to teach 'tribal' (Becher & Trowler, 2001) or disciplinary norms and to 'pass on the torch of the subject to a new generation' (Macfarlane, 2004, p. 27). As such there may be conscious, or unconscious, resistance to acknowledging the needs or valuing the contributions of those from outside the tribe. Unless a class is specifically designed to be multidisciplinary or introductory, not enough thought may be given to the needs of accidental tourists, especially when the class is designed to teach disciplinary norms at a relatively advanced level.

From this brief outline of the difficulties that may be experienced in this space by both students and lecturers we begin to see the shape of some of the ethical dilemmas that may confront lecturers. These ethical issues are explored in more detail in the next section. However, it is important to note at the outset that lecturers operate in organisational contexts that may explicitly or implicitly influence or affect the way in which they respond to ethical dilemmas in the context of their professional practice.

Ethics and Teaching to Accidental Tourists

As Macfarlane (2004) notes, while much attention has been given to the rights of academics, less attention has been paid to their responsibilities or what Kennedy (1997) terms academic duty. In this section we ask whether lecturers have ethical responsibilities towards accidental tourists enrolled in their classes and, if so, examine the extent of any moral duty that arises. There are of course a number of available ethical theories that can be used to analyse the ethical responsibilities inherent in undertaking certain tasks. For the purposes of this analysis, we primarily focus on three of the most important: utilitarianism, Kantianism and virtue ethics (Aristotle). We argue that the different ethical approaches employed in this analysis provide broader perspectives on the extent of the obligations or duties that lecturers may have to accidental tourists.

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The underlying premise of utilitarianism is to determine the benefits and harms of any proposed action in order to choose a course of action that maximises human well-being. As such utilitarianism determines moral worth by assessing outcomes. In contrast Kantianism focuses on the reasons why an action was taken, emphasising intent or motive over outcome (1964). For Kant (1964) a good outcome does not make an action morally right if the motive for that action was not in accordance with widely accepted maxims or laws that should guide action. Virtue ethics does not look to universal laws to determine action but rather focuses on determining what a good person would do, suggesting that inherent virtues or traits guide a person to take the right actions.

Shifts in governmental policies around tertiary education have resulted in an expansion of student numbers within universities, as well as increased pressure towards commercialisation of teaching and research, increasing research outputs and research quality and an emphasis on obtaining external grant monies (Becher & Trowler, 2001; Sikes, 2006). At the same time there is a greater emphasis placed upon teaching quality and a focus on student centred learning (Harley, Muller-Camne & Collin, 2001; Jongbloed & Vossensteyn, 2001). At the personal level these policies impact upon lecturers – unless one is in a purely teaching stream, promotion is still largely driven by success in research, placing pressure on lecturers who may be uncertain about how much time to devote to student learning needs in the face of other pressures (Sikes 2006).

In this context, adopting a simple utilitarian approach – the greatest good for the greatest number, which could be defined narrowly as the greatest good of the greatest number of students enrolled in that class - to the question of how much time to devote to accidental tourists in classes that are not designed to be multi-disciplinary or introductory may almost be reflexive. In informal conversations we have had with colleagues about this issue, an argument is often made that a lecturer's greatest obligation is to the majority of students enrolled in that class. If, the argument may go, a student chooses to enrol in a class outside their discipline then they should be required to fit in as best they can and personally seek ways to make up any deficit in knowledge or understanding. In other words, it is the student's responsibility. In an environment where academic staff are increasingly under stress and facing time constraints because of environmental and personal pressures, one can see the attractiveness of this argument. Indeed, pragmatically, most lecturers can deal with the needs of one or two accidental tourists in the context of providing additional support during consultation hours, although for some this may raise ethical questions about fairness. Is it fair to devote so much attention to the needs of one learner when one could be working to improve the learning outcomes of the majority? In general though consultation hours are designed to provide individualised assistance to any student and demand can be managed. But when the numbers of accidental tourists rise within a class then the pragmatic concerns about time management and the ethical questions about fairness are thrown into sharp relief.

Utilitarianism also involves making a decision about what is morally right to achieve maximally better outcomes having regard to any negative effects. So when do the scales shift and when, if ever, does the utility of accidental tourists become important? Is it a question of maximising the benefit to the all students or the majority of students? Or is a key factor in determining how much time and resources lecturers invest in accidental tourists a function of the degree of benefit or detriment to the lecturer? Perhaps in accordance then with utilitarianism, the level of the obligations and duties of the lecturer to accidental tourists increase as their numbers as a proportion of the class increase?

In our informal discussions with colleagues some have also argued, especially from the professional schools, that a lecturer's obligation is to the discipline or the profession to ensure disciplinary norms are met by students (Wilkins, 1999). In Becher and Trowler's (2001) terms, they are deliberatively choosing to teach 'tribal'. This is a claim to a different form of utilitarianism where one looks beyond the utility of students to the utility of society more broadly. This argument suggests that the perpetuation of the norms of a discipline/profession is a particular form of social good and that there is some form of duty to society or to a profession to teach technical and professional skills to students (Wilkins, 1999). A consequence of this view is that the utility of any students who are not part of that

Paper presented at the AARE Annual
Conference, Adelaide 2013

Australian Association
for Research in Education

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discipline is subjugated to the broader social utility that it is argued is accompanied by teaching 'tribal'. Whilst this view would be supported by those who believe the function of higher education is to ensure the acquisition of certain technical skills, and to train graduates (Wilkins, 1999), opponents would suggest that it overlooks a core function of higher education which is to educate. Goodlad (1995), for example, suggests that a focus on what he terms 'survivalism' or skills to earn an income is a 'heresy' of curriculum development that can distort higher education. This heresy is accompanied by another heresy of teaching methods Goodlad (1995) terms 'occupationalism' – the solidarity of disciplinarity which may overemphasise the needs of the profession or discipline when constructing how a class is taught. This form of teaching 'tribal' may have a social cost as well as a social benefit. In some senses, then, utilitarianism only takes us so far.

A Kantian approach (1964) suggests that a person's motives or intentions and the action itself are centrally important in terms of determining whether an action is right or wrong. A good outcome cannot justify a wrong decision as moral obligations are not connected to consequences. As such a Kantian approach raises questions about the need to evaluate and assess what it means to be a good teacher, the implication being that a good teacher has a duty to teach well. This interpretation of Kantianism has some overlap with Aristotle's virtue 'pride' and will be discussed in more detail in association with that virtue.

A Kantian approach (1964) also emphasises respect for persons. Respect may require that lecturers should recognise and respond to the interests and, in this context, the needs of others when making decisions about the level of learning support to be provided. The level of learning support may depend on the individual and the treatment meted out to that person (the level of respect accorded to them as learners). For example, many resilient individuals would thrive on the challenge of having to do further work to integrate what they already know with the norms, practices and knowledge of another discipline. Other students may find such an experience quite confronting and would expect additional support, particularly if institutional policy has influenced their choice to enrol in a class outside their discipline. Either way, learning cannot be forced, although it can be facilitated (Brookfield, 1995). If a university has influenced or even facilitated their enrolment in a unit outside of their discipline, without at the very least thinking about the consequences for those students' ability to learn, this may raise higher level questions about the appropriateness of such policies, a question discussed in more detail in the subsequent section of this paper.

However, it is also important to note that we live in societies which accord great respect to individual autonomy or self-determination (Dworkin, 1988), which arises in part out of the Kantian emphasis on respect for persons (1964). If we respect students, as individuals and learners, then their choices must be respected and the consequences of their choices, negative or positive, are also their responsibility. This is assuming, of course, that those choices were informed by good information provided to them by the university. It is necessary that students who are making a choice to enrol in a class from another discipline that is not designed to be introductory or multi-disciplinary are aware that these classes are likely to be challenging and may require a greater degree of intellectual commitment in coming to terms with different norms and expectations. To some extent a true appreciation of how difficult a class may be can only be gained through enrolling in such a class, but at a generic level the challenges can be laid out for those students.

An approach driven by virtue ethics (Aristotle) is somewhat different in emphasis from Kantianism in that it suggests an individual draws upon the traits of his or her own character (Macfarlane, 2004) in order to do the right action in the right way at the right time. Aristotle created a list of moral virtues which can guide action, emphasising moderation and that it is not appropriate to emphasise one virtue to the exclusion of others. One virtue described by Aristotle is sensitivity. Some suggest that this requires that learners should be treated as individuals rather than as members of an amorphous group (Macfarlane, 2004), an approach that also resonates with the Kantian emphasis on respect for persons. This suggests a need for a more individualised response to any differences in student learning needs or at least a greater sensitivity to the needs of individuals or groups from different disciplinary backgrounds.

Another of the virtues is pride. In this context, pride relates to doing a good job and hence to having pride in one's teaching (Macfarlane, 2004). But considering the Kantian emphasis on a person's motives and intentions and the Aristotelian virtue 'pride' requires an examination of what constitutes a 'good' teacher (Hativah & Goodyear, 2002; Crebbin, 1997). Some would say that good teaching may mean that every student feels their needs are met and others counter by saying that 'while meeting everyone's needs sounds compassionate and student-centred it is pedagogically unsound' (Brookfield 1995, p. 21). A commitment to being a 'good' lecturer can mean that the work associated with teaching and supporting students can expand to encompass all the time available. Moreover, it may be that trying to meet every student's needs may leave lecturers 'carry[ing] around a permanent burden of guilt at their inability to live up to this impossible task' (Brookfield, 1995, p.21), which as Brookfield and others note can be psychologically demoralising (Becher & Trowler, 2001). This demoralisation can be characterised as a form of moral distress. Moral distress occurs when a person believes they know the most ethical course of action in a given set of circumstances but feels powerless to take that action. Moral distress often has negative implications for professional progression and, perhaps more importantly from a virtue ethics perspective, moderation in terms of ensuring a work/life balance.

What do these theories suggest for lecturers when dealing with accidental tourists? They suggest that lecturers may take a variety of approaches when dealing with accidental tourists. For some, a utilitarian approach, of maximising the utility of the majority of learners by not providing much support, other than support through the provision of consultation hours, to accidental tourists, may be taken.   Some would also argue that utilitarian considerations at the societal level support the continuance of disciplinary norms to enable the acquisition of desirable professional or technical skills or attributes (Wilkins, 1999). Others would dissent from this view to suggest that societies should value the capacity of students to receive a broad education and hence that lecturers should support accidental tourists to a reasonable extent. This is especially the case when initiatives to support accidental tourists might also benefit the other students. Even if an individual lecturer's principles and/or organisational or environmental pressures suggest the adoption of a utilitarian approach we suggest that such an approach can and should be mediated through an examination and integration of it with Kantian and virtue based approaches. A concern with a utilitarian approach is that if only the utility of the majority is fostered the utility of a minority may be overlooked, which may have negative consequences for both the minority and the majority.

Other ethical approaches, such as the Kantian and virtue ethics approaches discussed in this section, can help temper this but they raise questions of how much is too much? Where is the boundary between trying to facilitate effective learning and the possibility of moral distress if a lecturer is, for whatever reason, unable to facilitate a learning environment that maximises learning opportunities for *all* students? While ideally, from an aspirational perspective, we should like to say every student's learning opportunities should be maximised, the structural constraints inherent in the current university climate mean that conditions to enable this are hardly ideal (Brookfield, 1995; Sikes, 2006). Analysis of these issues raises questions about when the obligations to accidental tourists move from being solely a concern for the lecturer to a situation that requires engagement at the institutional level.

Organisational Ethics

Examining the obligations of an institution raises the question of whether an organisation carries ethical responsibilities, to whom and in what circumstances. Organisational ethics provides a useful lens through which to review these questions. Although organisations are comprised of individuals, organisational ethics recognises that culture or environment can shape and influence the conduct of individuals who work within that space. This culture is created or shaped by the values of that organisation as seen by its policies and practices developed by management and other key leaders (McDaniel, 2004). Organisational ethics stems from a recognition that, to quote Emmanuel, 'moral demands exist not only on the individual but also on organizations, systems and institutions' (2000, p. 151).   Organisational ethics creates a framework through which an institution can recognise the

relational nature of its being; its impact, positively and negatively, on others (Magill & Prybil, 2004). In summary, organisational ethics is about reconceptualising the organisation as an ethical actor (McDonald, Simpson & O'Brien, 2008). Organisational ethics primarily has a Kantian orientation with an emphasis on how organisations treat their employees or workers.

If moral demands exist on organisations, then we need to reflect on whether any ethical obligations arise for universities when they offer services to accidental tourists. We must particularly ask the question: what issues arise when an institution enables, and especially if it encourages, under-graduate students to enrol in classes outside their discipline(s), that are not designed to be multi-disciplinary or introductory? To determine this we then must examine the values that many, if not all, universities espouse and analyse how these values align with the way in which universities operate. A further question that needs to be asked then is whether universities' organisational structures support the realisation of their values?

We discussed earlier the impact of disciplines on student learning and pedagogical norms, but disciplinarity is not merely a creation of the disciplines. Universities also often play a role in reinforcing disciplinarity to students. As Fink (2003) notes, universities generally rely on one form of organisational structure: disciplinary based departments or faculties. Fink (2003) also notes that these units are powerful as they control educational offerings, and the recruitment and selection of academics as well as who gets tenure and promotion. They also reinforce the disciplinary or 'tribal' norms which impact on pedagogy as noted above. As Salter and Mason (2007, pp. 106-107) have noted:

> Conformity with the ways of the disciplinary tribe is ensured through the mark and degree
> classifications awarded at university; peer review of book proposals, academic articles, and
> research grant applications; the marginalisation of non-conforming; and the natural desire
> of members to obtain approval of others in the tribe, especially the tribe leaders.

The creation of disciplinary departments within a university's organisational structure sends signals to students and academics about the importance of disciplines and reinforces a sense that one is in a disciplinary silo or tribe. Even when students are completing a double degree, these degrees still create the boundaries of disciplinary norms. So the university, through its organisational structure, also plays a role in determining and establishing student and academic identity – an identity founded on discipline. Incidentally then its organisational structure may contribute to a sense of alienation that some accidental tourists might feel or experience when enrolling in classes outside their discipline. It also may contribute to a perception, by some academics, that they need to teach in such a manner as to reinforce disciplinary norms and prioritise the services they provide to students who are enrolled in the faculty or school's courses.

For many universities an expressed objective is to create positive learning outcomes for students, although this might be expressed in a number of ways, including an imperative to meet the needs of students. We suggest that university administrators also need to reflect upon 'what can we do individually and collectively, to help the faculty and students create more significant learning experiences?' (Fink, 2003, p. 199). So it is important to examine what ethical obligations might arise for universities in the context of accidental tourists from the perspective of those most affected by the university's values and operational norms: students and academics.

The university's obligations in respect of its academic staff are intertwined, to some extent, with its obligations to its students. In respect of academic staff, organisational ethics requires a university to consider how it wishes to treat and support them drawing on Kantian ideas that people should be treated as an end in and of themselves. Wall (2007, p. 229) states that:

> The way in which an organization treats the people who carry out its purpose impacts both
> the functioning and success of the organization but also the health and well-being of its
> human resources ... employees and contracted professionals ... have a right not to be treated
> as means to some end.

If a university is encouraging or facilitating cross-disciplinary enrolments, and encouraging academics to meet student 'needs', organisational ethics would suggest that it must give some thought to the pedagogical challenges this may place upon academics, the ethical questions that they might struggle with, and therefore the moral distress they may consequentially feel when there are no simple answers. Moral distress may arise if lecturers are torn between the institutionally sanctioned and virtue driven end of trying to maximise the learning outcomes of all students, while at the same time trying to balance the many other work related demands placed upon them.

An arguably false assumption is that all student 'needs' can or should be met. As Brookfield (1995) notes, this assumption furthers the interests of those who support the market model of higher education – where for marketing purposes we say student needs must be met and for consumer satisfaction and retention purposes we must meet student needs. As a consequence, as Fink notes, typically universities simply expect academics to do everything that needs to be done 'working under the obviously false but very attractive assumption that faculty time is infinitely elastic' (2003, p. 209). In other words they may be treating faculty, intentionally or otherwise, as Kant might have phrased it as a means to an end rather than an end in and of themselves. This might contribute to a perception, by some academics, that they need to be all things to all people and that any short-coming in doing so is a moral and professional failing (Brookfield, 1995) with potential negative consequences at an organisational level. An ethical approach would suggest that universities need to, at the very least, acknowledge the added burden, in terms of the potential for moral distress, that accidental tourists may place on academic staff and reflect on how it can better support them. As Fink notes, 'effective instructional development is linked to and depends on effective organizational development' (2003, p. 199).

We suggest universities should also give some thought to the difficulties that some students may experience in the context of such enrolments. Of course, one simple way to resolve these issues is to simply refuse to allow such enrolments, for example by the use of pre-requisites. This approach is often employed when a degree of highly specialised knowledge may be required in order for a student from that discipline to successfully complete the class, let alone an accidental tourist. However, simply adopting this approach as a matter of utilitarian expedience also raises some ethical issues. While it is convenient for the institution and its staff to limit enrolments in such a manner, such a determination also limits the autonomy of students to make choices about what classes to enrol in and how to pursue their academic and personal development. At times placing limits on autonomy is both necessary and desirable (Dworkin, 1988). However, the question remains whether such actions are consistent with many universities' espoused values, particularly around student centred learning and personal development.

Additionally, one may ask the Kantian inspired question if a university considers one of its values to be student centred learning (or some such similar objective), are its actions consistent with its values if it supports and facilitates cross-disciplinary enrolments but takes no action to provide the organisational structures to properly enable student learning or to support its academic and professional staff to do so? Student learning refers to, as much as possible, supporting engagement in learning by all students, not just those who have the skills and motivation to self-learn. If a university enables such enrolments but does not support accidental tourists, this raises questions as to whether the university is consciously, or unconsciously, misleading its students, raising their expectations but not providing the benefits they expected. If so, this may raise some serious questions then about the level of trust and respect students, and by implication the public, can be expected to accord any institution that is not seen to be living its values and the impact this may have on the institution's reputation and standing.

However, it also raises deeper questions that go to the heart of tertiary education policy and the heart of pedagogy. If an organisation is not seen to be living its values nor the expressed values of the state, as expressed in the policies that shape the design and provision of university education, what impact does this have upon the reputation and credibility of the sector? Does it in fact undermine, in real terms, the emphasis placed at the policy level on student centred learning and teaching excellence?

Further, if students are encouraged to become cross-disciplinary learners and yet fail because of systemic factors, what impact does that have on the policy and pedagogically-driven concern to ensure students receive a broader education to fit them for their obligations as citizens (Frost & Jean, 2003; Manathaunga, Lant & Mellick, 2006)? Perhaps even more importantly, what impact may this have on their confidence in the future to undertake life-long learning? There are of course no simple answers to these questions as university learning is delivered in an increasingly complex environment, but we suggest they are questions that must be considered and discussed if universities are truly committed to living their values and maximising the interests of students and staff and the broader society in which they function.

Conclusion

While a little learning may or may not be a dangerous thing, the phenomenon of accidental tourists certainly raises questions about whether and to what extent lecturers and universities have any obligations to support the learning of this cohort of students. A simple response would be to say that the students who make a choice to become accidental tourists must take responsibility for their own learning. This might be justified on the basis of respect for individuals, prioritising the needs of the majority of students, or on the basis of the social benefit claimed from reinforcing disciplinary norms. But for both lecturers and universities we suggest that the picture could be more complex. As moral actors, both lecturers and universities may have, or may be perceived by students or others to have, some responsibilities for this cohort. If this is the case we can see that lecturers may have multiple, sometimes conflicting, responsibilities and obligations to accidental tourists and to the other students enrolled in their classes, as well as to themselves, their colleagues and their university. If these responsibilities are perceived as creating conflicting obligations it may result in significant moral distress to lecturers who feel unable to be all things to all people, a distress that may be compounded by any institutional pressures to meet student needs.

Universities also are moral actors who have responsibilities to the higher education sector, to the public, to their employees and to their students. Organisational ethics suggests that it is important to examine the structures, policies and practices within organisations to determine if and how an organisation models its values. In this context it is clear that, for most universities, organisational structures reinforce the importance of disciplinarity and hence of differences and exclusivity between disciplines. This may encourage lecturers to focus on the needs of those students who are pursing disciplinary study and foster a sense amongst students that disciplinary focus is important. For many universities, an organisational value is to support student learning or meet student needs. On its face, this is an admirable objective for universities to strive to achieve. However, espousing such values sometimes means that we overlook or underplay potential underlying consequences and tensions. Whilst universities are responsible to students, and ultimately to the public, for the quality of the education provided in the higher education sector, universities also have ethical obligations to their staff, particularly, in this context, their academic staff. It appears that the issue of how much support should be provided to accidental tourists also raises significant questions about the legitimacy of the objectives of universities and how they live their values.

There are no simple answers to the questions raised in this paper, but at the very least we should start a process of discussion and debate about these issues and about whether obligations are owed to accidental tourists, by whom, and the extent of those obligations.

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