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In recent decades, there has been a shift in higher education discourse away from 'teaching' as an activity discussed in isolation, to the ubiquitous conjunction 'teaching and learning' (or 'learning and teaching'). This is particularly true in areas related to educational enhancement, and it is now rare to see enhancement-oriented policies, university units, educational initiatives, or job roles with titles that include 'teaching' without 'learning'. Such shifts in discourse are rarely innocuous and can have substantial effects on how concepts are understood (Scheffler 1960).

While an explicit rationale for the change in terminology is hard to find, there are familiar motivations for the shift away from thinking and talking of teaching as an activity in isolation, and for the increased attention on the relationship between teaching and learning: there has been a change in the focus of evaluation, from an 'instruction paradigm' to a 'learning paradigm' (Barr and Tagg 1995); there has been increased attention to students' experiences of learning environments, and the interaction with students' approaches to learning (Marton and Saljo 1976); constructivist theories and student-centred approaches have played a role (Lea et al 2003); there has been a growth in interest (primarily in North America and Australasia) in 'student engagement', a broad construct encompassing time-on-task, quality of effort and student involvement (Kuh 2009).

Drawing on both the schools and higher education literature that explores the relationship between the concepts of teaching and learning, this paper will employ conceptual analysis to investigate the implications of the dominance of the phrase 'teaching and learning'. The paper will argue that this new discourse has implications that directly conflict with those ideas that motivated the shift in the first place.

The word 'learning' plausibly has two interpretations, as an achievement word or a task word (Kapunan 1975, drawing on Ryle 1949). We can think of learning as an *achievement*, as in when we say that someone has learnt to speak Spanish, or someone has learnt the names of the current Manchester United first team. We can also think of learning as a *task*, as in when someone visits a website in order to learn about political developments in the US Senate. This rarely acknowledged ambiguity generates confusion (Biesta 2015) and has important consequences for the implications of the discourse of 'teaching and learning'. There are two implications that generate problematic contradictions.

Implication one: Teaching and learning are two sides of the same coin

The fact that teaching and learning are rarely cited independently in the context of enhancement implies that the two things do not occur in isolation: that whenever teaching occurs so too does learning. If we understand learning in its achievement sense, there are two problems with the implication. Firstly, it is deeply implausible to hold that teaching always entails learning. While that view has been held in the past (Dewey 1910) it would rule out the idea of *attempting* to teach, and would require evidence of learning achievement to justify a claim that teaching has occurred

(Mitchell 1966); these are deeply counterintuitive consequences. It is even less plausible to hold that the achievement of learning entails teaching. Secondly, it has the consequence that learning-as-achievement, which always accompanies teaching, is therefore the responsibility of those who teach (Scheffler 1960). This would limit student responsibility for learning in ways that run directly counter to the ideas that motivated the shift towards learning and away from teaching in the first place.

If instead we understand 'learning' in its task sense, the implication is more plausible, at least in one direction - that teaching is always accompanied by some learning-type activity, such as studying, comparing, evaluating etc. (Kapunan 1975).

Implication two: Parity of esteem for teaching and learning

The constant conjunction of teaching and learning, particularly in contexts where the focus is educational enhancement, implies that teaching and learning are of equal value.

Understanding 'learning' with its achievement sense, the implication has the drawback that it directly contradicts the ideas that initially motivated the shift away from teaching and towards learning. They expressed in different ways the idea that learning achievement is the key element in education, and that efforts to evaluate higher education and efforts to improve the practices of teaching staff are best served by an acknowledgement that teaching has no intrinsic value; its value lies in its ability to generate learning achievement.

Understanding 'learning' in its task sense, the implication is still problematic. There is a sense behind some of the ideas that motivated the shift in discourse that student learning activity (engagement, effort, time-on-task etc) is more crucial than teaching to the achievement of learning, and that the primary role of teaching is to generate that learning activity (Kapunan 1975). In which case, the implication of equality of value between teaching and learning-as-task also undermines the original motivations of the shift in discourse.

Conclusion

Over the course of the last few decades, the acknowledgement of the primacy of learning has in large part led to the replacement of the word 'teaching' by the phrase 'teaching and learning' (or 'learning and teaching'). I have argued that the ubiquitous conjunction of teaching and learning has two implications: that they always occur together, and that they are of equal value. The ambiguity of the term 'learning' complicates matters, but on either interpretation, the two implications I have discussed seem to be in direct conflict with the ideas that motivated the shift in discourse in the first place.

It may be the case that the phrase 'teaching and learning' is merely "the symbolic crux of an altogether worthy crusade to get teachers to feel pushed to look at the results of their teaching in the student" (Komisar 1968, p.170). Nevertheless, I have argued that the repetitive conjunction of teaching and learning undermines that worthy crusade, and that we should give more thought to how we talk about efforts to improve higher education, rather than repeat self-defeating slogans.

984 words

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