

This paper takes the view that the University is a place of education – not only of learning; a place where formation and transformation of students can and should take place. Education is concerned with the flourishing of humanity and universities are central to this. They should seek to address the “big questions” of the day and provide safe spaces for unsafe ideas. This paper discusses the development of a disciplines-based curriculum in Education Studies, as a case study for reconstituting the university. This paper sets the context and introduces five accompanying papers which all add detail. It introduces the four constituent disciplines of Sociology, Philosophy, Psychology and History of Education and the three types of knowledge which the disciplines seek to address, namely academic, professional and personal knowledge. It argues that students should be facilitated in their development of these if we are to reconstitute the university and transform students.

We live in a culture of uncertainty in which knowledge is changing rapidly and there is a limited amount of pre-ordained knowledge for developing curricula. Society is unsure of the future and universities are uncertain of their role. This paper takes the view that the University is a place of education – not only of learning. It is a place where formation and transformation of students can and should take place. Education is concerned with the flourishing of humanity and universities are central to this. They should seek to address the “big questions” of the day and provide a safe space for unsafe ideas.

This paper discusses the development of a disciplines-based curriculum in Education Studies at Liverpool Hope University, the BA Education, as a case study for reconstituting the university and transforming students. This paper sets the context and introduces five accompanying papers which all help to add detail to the case study. This new degree aims then to combine the broadening of students’ horizons with a sharpening of their intellectual skills and knowledge through the study of the composite disciplines of Education. This new foundational major is not a ‘grafting’ on an old tree but a ‘planting’ of something new. It is a unique opportunity to create something distinctive that universities and faculties of education have struggled with for a long time, with varying success.

A survey of 25 Education Studies degree courses at higher education institutions in England confirmed that a disciplines-based approach to Education is not common. Only two of the degrees are disciplines based, including Liverpool Hope University. The others are primarily driven by the study of educational issues. Nine of them do contain discipline modules or units, such as the History of Education or Psychological Approaches. However, overall the nine courses do lean to a more issues-based approach when considered holistically.

The need for a curriculum fit for the 21st century was an internal driver for the new curriculum discussed in the accompanying papers and generated a full review of the provision in the Faculty which resulted in a shift to a student-centred, curriculum-referenced, disciplines-orientated curriculum for all undergraduates in the Faculty, including those on teacher education degrees. In facing the disciplines, the curriculum embraces three types of knowledge which are integrated in the planned

experiences of students. This recognition of the three kinds of knowledge lies at the heart of building capacity in future educators, something which the Faculty strives to do. The three types of knowledge addressed within the disciplines-based curriculum are:

1. Academic Knowledge - This is about scholarship and research. The role of discipline orientated knowledge is critical to this.
2. Professional Knowledge - This allows theory to be explored through practical situations and enquiry based learning and helps students to understand and apply academic knowledge.
3. Personal Knowledge - In which the values, aspirations and emotional (and spiritual) aspects of learning and educating are formed and fostered.

The new curriculum is not just about the final outcome, the degree certificate, but about the process. As such it seeks to offer a rich, challenging, dynamic education, which stretches students academically, personally and professionally. We think this is best done by the study of the cognate disciplines of Education, which for us are:

- The Sociology of Education,
- The Psychology of Education,
- The Philosophy of Education,
- The History of Education.

There are other academic disciplines which we could have chosen, such as anthropology or politics of education, however we feel that the four selected are the most significant.

Taking Philosophy of Education as an example we are keen to make clear to students and others the difference between *educational philosophy* (“the systematic study of particular aspects of educational theory” (e.g Special Educational Needs)) and *philosophy of education* (“the ideas of the great educators...for whom education was discussed in the context of...ethical formation and the character of learning” (e.g Freire)) so to provide a balance between the two (Haldene, 2012). As a result of this, in their first year (Level C) students are introduced to the subject during a period of 5 thematic weeks. Epistemology, Ethics, Political Theory and Philosophy of Religion are presented and connected to issues in education during the course of the first four weeks. In the last week, students begin to learn about the educational views of two 20th century thinkers (i.e. Martin Buber and Frantz Fanon). The Philosophy, History and Psychology disciplines are examined in the accompanying papers which discussing why they were included and what contribution they make to student transformation.

The programme takes a traditional disciplinary view, popular in the 1960s, but interprets it creatively to engage contemporary students who have a wide interest base and diverse career aspirations. The focus is not on building boundaries of knowledge of education, but on the contrary, to facilitate a more integrated and flexible use of knowledge in students’ future journeys – something which is in danger of being lost in modular curricula. It seeks to overcome instrumentalist attitudes in

students by engaging them in a curriculum and pedagogy which expects them to be active learners. Two of the accompanying papers discuss our approach to this by examining in more detail the pedagogy which supports the curriculum and the students responses to this linked to their ranking of the four constituent disciplines.

This paper introduces a series of related papers which explore the discipline-based curriculum from the perspective of some of the disciplines. It considers student choices linked to these disciplines and in doing so proposes that a discipline-based curriculum encourages a non instrumentalist attitude which sees education as a means of humanising society. The paradigm shift here is to move responsibility for student learning to the student, with the teacher as facilitator. Education Studies has become a degree subject perceived to be held in relatively low esteem. The disciplines-based approach at Liverpool Hope aspires to reconstitute the university and seeks to transform students into future educators with a commitment to social justice.

#### Reference

Haldane, J., (2012), "Educational Studies and the Map of Philosophy", in *British Journal of Educational Studies*, Vol. 60, No. 1, pp. 3-4;