

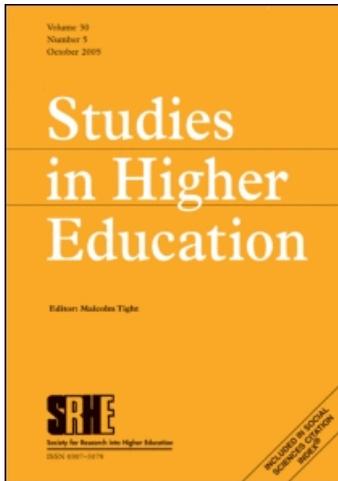
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Self, others and society: a case study of university integrative learning

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There is currently an over-emphasis on the economic aims of higher education at the expense of the aims of personal and social transformation. This article proposes a specific approach to integrating educational aims. It draws on the works of Jürgen Habermas and Martha Nussbaum to conceptualise integrative learning as a simultaneous focus on self, others and society. A small-scale case study of five lecturers from different disciplines is employed to explore the value of the conceptual framework by illustrating variation in how integrative learning is understood and practised in contemporary pedagogical conditions.

Introduction

The case study discussed here originates in the ongoing development of the Centre for Integrative Learning (CIL) at the University of Nottingham, one of 74 Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETLs) established by the English Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE) in 2005. The CIL represents an attempt to advance a conception of integrative learning that fosters students' abilities to draw connections between and across different learning experiences and environments, and to devise pedagogies that enable students to become intentional learners, able to fulfil their potential as human beings and purposeful actors in an increasingly interconnected yet fluid world.

A specific reading of the current higher education context motivated our proposal to the CIL for a small grant to undertake a case study. For us, there are three valid multidimensional goals of a university education: for economic wealth and individual prosperity; for individual fulfilment and transformation; and for citizenship in a democracy. However, what we see in the UK and in many western systems of education is an over-emphasis on economic purposes at the expense of those concerning transformation of individuals and contributions to society beyond the economic. At present, the success of higher education is largely measured in terms of the labour market value of graduates and contributions to national economic competitiveness. The ascendancy of instrumental economic ends is compounded by pedagogic discursive practices which tend towards, on the one hand, over-emphasising disciplinary knowledge or, on the other, education reduced to content-free 'generic' or 'transferable skills'. The case study is directed at exploring an empirical basis for our perceptions, and at developing ideas about how it might be possible to strengthen the individual

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and collective transformational goals of education, and reintegrate them with economic goals.

The CIL grant allowed us to interview five selected lecturers and their students in sociology, history, bioscience, business education and economics, and then to follow up the students a year later. Here we report only on the results of interviews with the lecturers conducted between April and May 2008.

Conceptual framework: constructions of ‘integrative learning’

The contested purposes of higher education, the kind of graduate who emerges from university, and the relationship between the university and society are matters of considerable contemporary debate. In the USA, anxiety about the future direction of mass, liberal higher education and how far it cultivates ‘the kind of learning graduates need for an interdependent and volatile world’ (Association of American Colleges and Universities 2007, 7) has resulted in a growing recognition of the need to break out of conventional academic and curricular silos, and to bridge divisions between liberal arts and sciences, theory and practice, and learning in academic and non-academic contexts. This has led to a new focus upon the notion of integrative learning which, from an earlier emphasis upon interdisciplinary study, has become a means of articulating the need for a more holistic approach to higher learning, in which awareness of subject is more deeply aligned with self-awareness, and self is connected outwards to awareness of others and the world. This more intentional, connective learning is seen as the key not only to entrepreneurial innovation and problem solving, but also to developing the human potential of learners and ‘inspiring citizens to create a more just, humane and sustainable world’ (Association of American Colleges and Universities 2007, 25; Huber and Hutchings 2004).

It is perhaps unsurprising that the potential of integrative learning has come to the fore in the USA, where curricula are less specialised than in England. Nonetheless, the possibilities of integrative learning, we believe, are equally relevant to English and UK higher education, and particularly the promotion of a deeper and broader education that cultivates not only students’ understanding of subjects and disciplines, but also self- and other-awareness allied to purposeful and ethical action. However, in the UK integrative learning has only just begun to be theorised, and we are concerned to ensure that this goes beyond a limited ‘employability’ focus on fostering closer connections between academic learning and the world of graduate employment (see, for example, Johnston and Watson 2004). Our aim, therefore, is to advance discussion of a multidimensional conception of integrative learning, and to investigate its manifestations in the values and practices of lecturers within more specialised and single-discipline-focused academic systems and programmes, and within more research-intensive contexts.

A theoretical basis for the normative value of integrative learning is provided by the work of Jürgen Habermas and Martha Nussbaum. Habermas (1987) supplies a framework that not only assists us to see how economic, individual and collective aims might be integrated in academic curricula and pedagogy, but also explains contemporary tensions in higher education. The central concept is the human lifeworld that consists of three components: personality (self), culture (others) and society. Historically, universities have been (and should be) concerned with the reproduction of all three components (Habermas 1989). The lifeworld enables the mobilisation of ‘communicative reason’, which is the human capacity to come to reasonable

agreements with others and collectively to make social change in the interests of all. But when the lifeworld is 'colonised' by money and power, the capacity for communicative reason is compromised. Yet, simultaneously, colonisation provokes resistance in the lifeworld, so that elements 'break through' whenever spaces and opportunities arise (McLean 2006). Habermas's perspective leads us to accept that the contemporary emphasis on instrumental ends in universities has the effect of diminishing concerns with the human lifeworld; but also to expect to see options being taken to educate students to be self-aware, prepared to cooperate with others, and oriented towards being useful members of society.

While Habermas provides a broad framework to explore aims, for a more specific formulation of an education that integrates personal and social goals we turned to Nussbaum (1997, 2006), who asserts that we need education that cultivates humanity. To this end, she advocates three core 'capabilities' to be fostered by education, which resonate with Habermas's lifeworld elements of self, others and society. These capabilities are, first, critical self-examination. Second is the development of the 'narrative imagination', which she defines as:

The ability to think what it might be like to be in the shoes of a person different from oneself, to be an intelligent reader of that person's story, and to understand the emotions and wishes and desires that someone so placed might have. (Nussbaum 2006, 6–7)

The third capability is to strive towards the ideal of the world citizen. We have taken these three capabilities to convey the central goal of integrative learning, that students come to be able to reflect on the connections between academic work and the rest of their lives with others in global society, and act in purposeful, self-aware and ethical ways (Walker 2006).

Methodology

With the ideas set out above in mind, we wanted to investigate to what extent the elements of the human lifeworld – self (personality), others (culture) and society (the social world) – are the focus of university education, and how far students are taught to develop the capabilities to be self-reflective and autonomous, to connect strongly with others, and to be socially aware and responsible. Moreover, we wanted to explore how these capabilities might be integrated.

The five lecturers selected were experienced teachers with some knowledge of the work of the CIL and a broadly sympathetic stance to innovative approaches to teaching. They were asked about their educational values and what enabled and constrained their teaching, with a particular emphasis upon the integration of self-awareness with a facility for being with others and a concern for society. We employed a narrative-analytic approach to explore how lecturers talk about their experiences of university education and identified core themes across the interviews, coding data broadly for 'self', 'others', 'society' and 'pedagogy'. At the same time, rather than deal with fragmented codes, we attempted always to treat thematic extracts as parts of whole interviews, whilst recognising the limitations of reducing these extracts and the narrating voices of the lecturers to meet the conventions and restrictions of an academic article.

Although, inevitably, our account alludes to disciplinary differences, we do not want to stress this, though it is evident from our small data set that discussion of self,

others and society is closer to the heart of some disciplines than others, and thus more to the forefront of their teaching and learning. Nevertheless, no claim is made that any of the lecturer voices is either representative or comprehensive, especially not of their individual subject areas. So, for example, our claims are much less about sociology as a field than about teaching sociology as experienced and talked about by a specific, situated empirical subject. For this reason the emphasis is on the data as illustrative, and on the capacity of even small-scale fieldwork data on lived experiences to complement and interrogate theory development in a dialectic of theory and data (Strauss and Corbin 1997). Moreover, this approach places at the heart of the theorising process our ‘capacity to make meaning of data’, to bring a conceptual perspective to bear on individual voice ‘texts’, and to establish plausible relationships among concepts as we proceed (Piantanida, Tananis, and Grubs 2004, 332).

Empirical voices of lecturers

We first report on the strong lecturer focus on the development of a specific student subject (or self), and a much fainter focus by these lecturers on developing intersubjectivity (the capacity for understanding and communicating with others), and how lecturers only implicitly or vaguely construct students as ‘ideal global citizens’. The second sub-section explores what lecturers say about the constraints on and possibilities of teaching that integrates self, other and society.

The lifeworld ‘breaking through’

Taken together, the lecturers construct a student self who is critical, autonomous, rationally-choosing and confident, with the potential to construct and pursue her/his own life projects in society. However, while the individual is emphasised, there is a much fainter sense of students being members of communities who are learning to be with others and, accompanying this, there is a sense of academic study and life as compartmentalised. We found that the five interviews fell into three groups, which demonstrate variation shaped by individual understandings of disciplinary framings and associated orientations to curriculum and pedagogical process: (i) history and sociology, (ii) economics and bioscience, and (iii) business education. We discuss below how different inflections of the lifeworld appeared in the transcripts of the three groups.

What is important for the economist and bio-scientist is that students come to think like economists and scientists, and this is centrally related to knowledge acquisition and application. For example, the economist says ‘a body of knowledge ... will allow them to be credible as graduate economists’. He emphasises in particular the importance of understanding the concept of ‘opportunity cost’ in which life choices are measured in terms of what ‘you’ve given up’, and which provides a specialist way to ‘view the world’. In the case of the bio-scientist the initial and overriding concern is with the ‘large’, ‘enormous’, ‘huge’ body of knowledge that needs to be understood if one is to become and be a respectable scientist. The self is present but the valued end is the self-as-scientist. What matters is knowledge acquisition, having ‘well honed critical faculties’, weighing up evidence, developing independent judgement, dealing with the unexpected, discovery, and so on, because these are key to being good scientists. Just as grasping the concept of ‘opportunity cost’ is central to thinking like an economist, so ‘the scientific method’ is the essence of being a scientist.

There is evidence of a self that connects to society breaking through, so that the economist expresses a ‘hope that they would be ... more rounded as people’ who have acquired ‘a whole series of wider skills that could be developed regardless of the fact they’re doing economics’. However, despite his keenness to impress on students in their first lecture at university that ‘economics is absolutely everywhere, underpins everything you do’, we found it harder to detect an ethical dimension and clearly articulated concerns for what an economist might do as a ‘global citizen’. The bio-scientist suggests similarly that substantive scientific knowledge and critical scepticism provide an important connection to living in society, though still focused on self:

I would expect them – if they’re out there working in a bank or teaching or driving lorries or whatever, you know – and see a newspaper headline about animal/human hybrid embryos and they think ‘Oh yeah’, I can cope with that because ... I’ve heard about that, I know what they’re talking about, I know what these bits are, I feel comfortable with that information.

Their scientific knowledge and method might be part of how science graduates deal with and orientate themselves in a shifting and uncertain world, for the subject itself shifts and is uncertain, ‘so you have to, as a person, be capable of dealing with uncertainty. I mean if you want to go through life just working with secure facts, you wouldn’t get very far as a biologist, possibly not as a person either, but certainly not as a biologist’. To a large extent, both the economist and the bio-scientist appear to separate academic study and life; and also, personal development and work. What it means for students to become ‘more rounded’ as human beings is seen to occupy spaces outside the curriculum and pedagogy, and outside the lecturers’ influence as educators. While the lecturers say they wish to encourage reflection, it is self-confessedly not attempted to any great degree because the curriculum is crowded with content.

The historian and sociologist discuss values more explicitly. The historian has a strong commitment to the discipline and what it, specifically, offers in cultivating humanity. He links self and discipline. To study history is to learn to be a particular kind of self, which has a clear orientation to the examined life:

I would quite like them to be somebody who questions what they are told, who is able to criticise information that other people think is a given, that is not meant to be criticised ... I would also hope that they would be open-minded and they would be able to pick up new information quickly, they would be able to understand how to find things out in a way that is not trivial, they would understand that you do need to take a range of viewpoints if you’re researching something and you don’t look at it narrowly.

And, alone in the group of lecturers, the historian explicitly promotes narrative imagination and links it to living in the world with others:

[S]ome [students] empathise ... and put themselves into the situation that they’re reading about in the distant past or even in the recent past ... then when they go out ... they can have at least a fighting chance of understanding what somebody else is like and what motivates them ... So it may encourage them to be less selfish.

In contrast, and, perhaps, unexpectedly, the sociologist is less convinced that sociology is the only (or even the best way) to understand society. For him it is, above all, higher education itself that should be suffused with ethical dilemmas for the student to grapple with:

We're working towards a position where people understand what's actually going on in a world of insecurity, of uncertainty, a world of economic globalisation where ... some of the kind of racist phobic reactions to immigration are arguably reactions against those uncertainties, those anxieties, but they're also ethical statements ... it's not for me to coerce them into one particular opinion, but what I think I do have a responsibility to do is to penetrate beyond the kind of media headlines and then it's really for a student to say 'Well my ethical position is here, there or somewhere else', and I think we need to think through what that actually means.

Our third group comprises one lecturer only, who teaches a large first-year module in a business school. We find here a strong concern with the attributes of what it is to be a successful entrepreneur, a particular kind of person: 'they should be more creative, be more imaginative, be more alert to opportunities, be more ready to grasp them, be a little more maybe self-confident'. While the ends of entrepreneurship can be purely economic, they can also be broader: the business lecturer makes one explicit statement about his desire that students learn to work together, and become thoughtful in addressing social change, and putting creative and imaginative problem-solving abilities to work to improve society:

What I hope they take away from it is, first, the recognition that thinking differently from other people ... it's actually quite productive. I hope that they come away with a sort of an idea about problem solving and the crucial importance of really stripping the problem down, to find out what the real root causes are, rather than knee jerking towards a solution which is what people tend to do ... and if they were more creative in the solutions that they considered in solving it and took a little more time, then things might improve.

The potential of education for culture (i.e. others) and society emerges from this interview, even if it is described in terms of a problem-solving formula and a prescribed set of attributes.

In terms of evidence for the lifeworld 'breaking through', across the group we found a well-articulated notion of developing a student self capable of reflection and self-awareness, what Nussbaum calls the 'examined life'. On the other hand, in most of the transcripts, the data coded for 'others' and 'society' were considerably fewer, though there were variations, with the historian/sociologist and lecturer from business studies explicitly discussing at some length the students' attitude to others and their future contributions in society.

Indistinct pedagogies of integration: constraints and opportunities

From our perspective, curriculum and pedagogies are the vehicles to strengthen the personal and social goals of higher education. We now therefore turn to what the lecturers say about their approaches to teaching and learning – what we call their pedagogies.

It is clear from the data that even lecturers acquainted with the work of the CIL, and sympathetic to its aims, struggle to find ways to practise rich forms of integrative learning in their classrooms. While there are genuine concerns about what students are becoming and may be, the responses of our interviewees to questions about constraints on teaching to promote personal and social goals illuminate how contemporary conditions hold back the human and ethical project of integrating self, other and society, and the project of rebalancing the goals of higher education. Overall, there was a marked sense of the difficulty of fostering a genuinely 'humane' education. In the face of the

day-to-day challenges of large classes, lack of resources, fragmentation of learning through modularised programmes, and associated issues of student motivation and instrumental approaches to studying, a sense of a loss of the personal/human relationship with students suffuses the transcripts.

For the economist, bio-scientist and the business studies lecturer (who deals innovatively with exceptionally large classes), pedagogical constraints are articulated largely in terms of technical and institutional problems, such as class sizes, lack of equipment and timetabling problems. For example, the economist comments on the effects on reflection of a modular degree structure ‘where everything is constrained by “Gotta get this done in ten weeks, we’ve only got so many hours, need to get through”, “Do the exam” ... it’s that sort of, almost black box, grind them through’. He also muses on the inevitability of teaching being impersonal compared to the past:

I was talking to somebody the other day and I was harping back to the days of pre-mass education and we had a second year group ... there was about twenty of them then and we used to take them out for an evening ... once a term just to find out what was going on in their lives and it used to be a brilliant way of getting a great understanding of what they were getting from the module of the course and everything else, it was great informal feedback if you like, but now I’ve got 180 on that module, I can’t take 180 out.

Similarly, the bio-scientist observes that the need to acquire ‘vast’ bodies of knowledge militates against lecturers connecting subject and personal development more intimately. He too regrets that ‘the amount of time you can spend with each student goes down when the class sizes go up’.

While the historian also observes that larger numbers militate against the development of relationships, he and the sociologist tended to locate constraints more broadly in government and higher education policy. For the sociologist in particular, the student behaving like a consumer is seen as an entirely predictable effect of the dominating ‘business climate’ of higher education, and the difficult struggle to resist this is a defence of: ‘a sort of ethical project actually that ... I value and love ... it can feel that ... you’re fighting a very isolated struggle ... with like-minded individuals, but you know still trying to stem a tide. [It] can feel a bit overpowering’. For the historian there is a similar resistance to new business-oriented ideologies in higher education (‘the wonderful Mrs Thatcher’s legacy’), but, as we discuss later, there is also a spirit of creative accommodation to new conditions, concretely expressed in innovative pedagogic practices, an enterprising approach to change shared by the business studies lecturer.

Indeed, in the face of substantial obstacles, the group of lecturers display a discernible desire (if more foregrounded in some lecturers’ accounts than others) to connect more closely with students in an educational experience which engages students deeply in their subject, and places a stronger emphasis on being and becoming. We turn now to characterising the efforts the lecturers are making (even if they do not define the term in exactly the way we do) towards practising integrative pedagogies.

For the economist, the overriding goal is that students ‘think like an economist’, but he finds tutorials and seminars often unsatisfactory for achieving this goal. He tries to keep his lectures interactive, but this is difficult with 260 students, and the interaction is limited to questions for clarifying understanding. However, he notes that ‘it’s the dissertation where the students say “That’s the first time I’ve really thought about economics”’; and supervising is rewarding; ‘They end up writing really excellent pieces of work ... and that’s quite reassuring for us and it’s very fulfilling’. If the

final-year dissertation is focused upon developing an independent economist self, it is nonetheless regarded (if less explicitly and more faintly) as a means of broader identity formation.

In the case of the bio-scientist, throughout the degree there is a pronounced focus upon student inquiry through individual and collaborative project, laboratory and experimental work. So the substantial body of knowledge to be acquired is realised to a large extent through investigation. This allows a pedagogy of tolerating uncertainty and gaining independence guided by the scientific method:

Something will go slightly differently from how you expected and they'll come and show you what they've found and say 'Is this how it should be?' and you have to say ... 'Yes, if that's what you've done and that's the result you've got, you've done it right, even if it's different from what all the books in the library tell you ...' OK, now it might be unexpected, but unexpected is not right or wrong.

At the heart of the sociologist's pedagogical approach is a strong desire to encourage student independence of thought and a 'critical analytical' mindset that eschews easy answers. He wants students to focus upon 'asking the right questions or relevant questions and sometimes acknowledging our limitations and arriving at that humbling conclusion that, you know, there is no singular, obvious answer and that's OK and sometimes that's actually the act of empowerment'. It is a research approach to teaching, he suggests, which supplies a pedagogical means to genuine student independence. In his favourite final-year option module the sociologist gives students a free hand 'to go away and do things', to select their own literature and frameworks, which causes anxiety 'because they're thinking "Am I doing the right thing?"' but ultimately it works very well'. For this module he deliberately resists giving over-specified guidelines for assessment. And it is here, he claims, that he gets 'intellectual, mature, critical' student work – the best work that he sees. He worries, though, that chances to push students to work on their own are being closed down. He mentions specifically that concern about the National Student Survey drives departments to ever clearer specification of what is expected of students, which obstructs students' freedom to develop their own minds and find their own voices. He places a particular emphasis upon the merits of the dissertation as a vehicle for developing autonomy. Below he discusses, with some passion, his reaction to a suggestion that came up within the department that it be made optional:

It's a declaration of bankruptcy actually, if we understand higher education as people being encouraged to think for themselves and to ask certain questions of themselves and their world ... I really think it's a sort of deprivation, to kind of deprive human beings of a space to ask questions of themselves and the world.

The historian shares the concerns articulated above, though his pedagogical approach focuses both on students' independence in learning and, equally, on working with others. A notable feature of his teaching is student-run seminars, which are conducted throughout the course and which emphasise critical reflection on self and subject, and encourage active, collaborative working. The historian's consistent concern with students' engagement with others is noteworthy in comparison with the other lecturers: 'Group work is important ... I want them also to understand that it's not all about them as individuals, they need also to be able to collaborate and to achieve things as a group of students'. He explicitly encourages students to take a reflective approach to peer teaching in the student-led seminars:

I obviously try to get them to connect with their previous experiences and reflect on those, what has been effective and what has been less effective about what they've done in the past in order to develop what they're doing now ... I'd also ask them to think about what particularly good seminars they've been in that other people have run, so that they understand that they don't just have to do it the way they feel comfortable with, so that they can branch out and do new things.

The dissertation again appears as an important pedagogic strategy, because it enculturates the student as a practising historian ('lets them into the craft') and it requires a close relationship with the tutor.

At this point, it can be argued that the labour-intensive dissertation provides a potentially powerful instrument for integrative learning. For four of the lecturers, whatever their broader pedagogical approach, the research dissertation/project generates intellectual challenges, risk-taking and uncertainty, accompanied by the emotional and human charge of discovering something new, and taking up the challenge and succeeding in it. When it is fully and well realised, this pedagogy relates closely to the 'examined life' of the self-aware individual.

The context of the business school lecturer is quite different. He teaches one very large first-year module of around 900 students, for some of whom it is a compulsory module and for others an elective. It includes students studying outside the business school. The lecturer is quite clear that there is no point in standing up and telling students how to be entrepreneurs. Students first hear about the history and underpinning theory that supports entrepreneurship. They then split into large groups of a hundred, sub-divided into teams of five, and the lecturer explains a six-stage creative problem-solving process. Teams work on projects, mentored by local business people each dealing with several teams in a large lecture theatre: they identify an issue or a problem that they want to focus on, working out 'what problems and issues are there out there, that [need] a solution – it would constitute a potential business or a solution that would just improve everybody's welfare'.

Here, in unlikely circumstances, is a pedagogy of inquiry and discovery, directed to solving practical problems in the contemporary world, with the associated challenges of uncertainty. As the business studies lecturer puts it: 'If you are dealing with large numbers then it doesn't mean you should have to give up on the idea of having a richer sort of learning experience for the students'. The technical approach of specifying how to set about problem solving, and then setting up groups, allows some chance of students demonstrating creativity and having a more humanly fulfilling educational experience, even in the adverse conditions of an extremely large group.

In summary, this section has shown how lecturers in different disciplines employ a variety of pedagogic strategies to encourage the integration of academic work with a sense of self. In parallel to the previous section, we find less evidence of pedagogies that encourage engagement with others and an obligation to contribute to society, though these are somewhat more evident in the accounts of the historian, sociologist and business studies lecturer. It may be that connections to society are found naturally in some of the disciplines.

Conclusion

Much of the empirical data confirms our reading of the higher education context and its effects. The direction of mass higher education in the UK has seen a narrowing

focus on graduate ‘employability’ skills, cumbersome and bureaucratic ‘quality assurance’ regimes, and instrumental concern about ‘consumer’ satisfaction. In our interviews, responses to these ranged from regret to creative accommodation to (largely covert) resistance. In this, the literature suggests, they reflect more generally academics’ responses to the changes in UK higher education since the 1980s (see Trowler 1998; Henkel 2000; Kogan 2000).

There is little doubt that such trends condense the space in which integrative pedagogies, that reflect a strengthening of the personal and social goals of higher education, can operate. Despite this, the potential of education to cultivate self-awareness and independent, reflective judgement emerges from our interviews. The human lifeworld breaks through, as Habermas predicts it will. We see it breaking through in our lecturers’ sense of the loss of personal relationship with students; in their belief in the value of human relationship in teaching and learning; and in their differently inflected attempts to enable students to ‘have some sense that education is worthwhile’ in more than simply economic terms. Academics may have had to bend to the will of a market-focused, outcomes-oriented ideology, but our interviews suggest they have not been entirely captured by it.

We might be some way from making Nussbaum’s ‘narrative imagination’ and the ‘ideal of the world citizen’ explicit goals of higher education. Still, the conditions of hope that we detect in our lecturers’ care for the student self can be used, we believe, to encourage more integrative approaches to teaching and learning, many of which are already happening in subject teaching, albeit unremarked upon or left implicit. It can be seen also in a wide range of other pedagogic strategies, from collaborative projects in bioscience, to student-run seminars in history, to problem-based learning in sociology and business. It can be seen too in the dissertation as a vehicle not only for intellectual development, but also for fostering expansive, multidimensional human potential. There are, too, some hopeful stirrings from policy bodies: for example, the Quality Assurance Agency has recently commissioned the New Economics Foundation’s centre for well-being to produce a report ‘to give explicit consideration to quality from the perspective of the individual learner and with regard to the well-being of the wider economy, environment and society’ (New Economics Foundation 2008, 1).

Whilst we do not underestimate the difficulties of attaining our conceptualisation of pedagogies of integrative learning, we think that its value might become increasingly self-evident in a volatile, economically dysfunctional world in need of citizens who are self-knowing agents capable of purposeful action for individual and collective change. For us, therefore, conceptualising integrative learning in a theoretically robust, but empirically grounded, way is a step towards correcting the economic tilt in UK higher education, and promoting an education for democratic citizenship. Our own next task is to investigate corresponding student voices in these disciplines towards a fuller conceptualisation of an integrative pedagogy, that might let learning breathe more fully and learners become more richly human.

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