

The politics of university teacher education: A wooden horse in academia?

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the relatively neglected field of the 'training' of university academics in the area of teacher education. Changes in higher education, with reference to both the New Zealand and UK scenes, are explained in relation to neo-liberal reforms and economic rationalism. The world of adult teacher education is investigated prior to examining the more precise contexts of university teaching, with particular attention given to professionalisation and the teaching profession. Current trends in university teacher education are identified, highlighting its contradictory nature, amid heightened student expectations and greater demands for research outputs by managers. The issue of quality of university teaching is at a crossroads - is it to be accepted explicitly as problematic or smuggled in as a wooden horse?

This paper is concerned with the issue of 'training' or 'education' for teachers of adults in the university setting and the political dynamics surrounding provision. While the field of 'teacher education' is well documented and has an extensive literature, the teaching of adults is more lightly treated as a serious arena of exploration. Within adult teacher training/ education, the subset of higher education has achieved much greater importance as demands on academic staff have increased (Cuthbert, 1996). The concept of university teacher education (i.e. the initial training of academic teachers to perform a central function; their on-going professional development) is contentious for reasons which this article will explore. In providing a context for discussion, examples will be taken primarily from Aotearoa/New Zealand and United Kingdom.

Initially I explore the broad socio-political field of societal change in recent decades to which universities have had to adjust in the Western world. Major changes in higher education will be discussed to provide a context in which academics in universities are expected to undertake their roles related to research, teaching, administration (and sometimes, community service). I will explore the world of adult teacher education to illustrate how university teachers are related to the broader scene of teachers of adults in a variety of settings. I then explore what it means to be an academic in contemporary universities, with special emphasis on professionalism and the teaching profession within academia. A case study, and the dynamics around the kind of professional training provided currently for academics in Western countries, will be analysed in terms of prevailing ideologies and practices. I conclude with some speculation about future trends for teachers of adults in universities. To what extent is a wooden horse of professionalised teaching being smuggled into academia?

Location of the author

I have recently moved location from being a senior academic at the Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand (AUT) (where the bulk of my day-to-day work was concerned with managerial and administrative issues) to a teacher/researcher at the University of Glasgow, Scotland. In effect, I have consciously returned to my area of primary passion in academic work (adult and continuing education; lifelong learning) and have given away status as a 'big fish in a small pond' to become 'a small fish in a big pond'. Just as importantly, I have moved from a 'new' university (AUT became a university in 2000, and was the first polytechnic in New Zealand - perhaps the only polytechnic - to change its designation) to an established, traditional Scottish university in the UK (established in 1451) where there are very different tribes and customs (Becher, 1989).

Prior to my appointment at the Auckland University of Technology (2001-2004), I was an academic staff member at the University of Auckland (1991-2000), another traditional institution, and at the University of Waikato (1989-1991), an institution beginning life in the latter part of the 1960s as a regionally-oriented university. The point of this explanation concerning relocation is to emphasise that I have experienced life as a teacher in a variety of university types, three in New Zealand and one in the UK. I am a white middle-class male with a keen interest in promoting more democratic principles in higher education, particularly as a teacher of adults with an academic background in adult education.¹

The advent of neo-liberalism and globalisation

The eras of Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher and David Lange are commonly associated with marked changes in their respective nations, especially related to economic and political reform. In New Zealand of the mid-1980s, the name of Roger Douglas is closely linked to the advent of neo-liberalism, a new form of ideological control of a country promoting deregulation and/or streamlining of public services (e.g. postal system; railways; housing), privatisation, and promotion of the "minimal state" in terms of social spending. Downsizing of government departments (some of which became State Owned Enterprises), the sale of public assets and the implementation of user pays were practical ways in which "economic rationalism" was played out in Aotearoa/New Zealand (Codd, 1997; Dale and Robertson, 1997; Hazeltine, 1998; Kelsey, 1999).

The effects of globalisation - international forces of a political, economic and cultural character penetrating beyond national borders - are usually associated with homogeneity, sameness and unity (Stalker, 1996) but should not be assumed to have identical impact in different locations. For instance, Dale and Robertson (1997) advocate that regionalisation is a countervailing phenomenon. They point to "the emergence of geographically and economically distinct trading blocs in the pursuit of stable trading markets and mutual security" (1997: 210). In the case of Aotearoa/New Zealand, the emergence of a strong indigenous movement to safeguard Maori interests is testimony to the validity of this observation. Correspondingly, the emergence of the Scottish Parliament is a concrete manifestation of Scottish people asserting their desire to manage their own destiny.

Recent changes in higher education and universities

The education sector as a major component of social policy was heavily affected by what has been dubbed "a new cult of efficiency" (Bates, 1990). Higher education (HE) in both New Zealand and the UK has had to deal with traumatic change at a global and localised level to the extent that its very mission has been challenged. In the New Zealand scene, HE includes eight universities, twenty-three polytechnics, four colleges of education, three whare wananga and hundreds of private training establishments (PTEs) such as business schools, language institutes, religious institutions etc. In the UK the definition appears to be tighter with a clear distinction between universities and Further Education (FE). For all intents and purposes, the universities are higher education. They are

differentiated into traditional - such as Oxford, Cambridge, Durham and London in England, and Edinburgh, Glasgow and St Andrews in Scotland - the 'red brick' institutions of the 1960s - and the recently created new universities, many as enhanced polytechnics, established post-1992. For the traditional universities, their comparative advantage is focussed on retaining an elite form of education, based primarily on classical liberal education, together with professional development of the 'true' professions (Taylor, Barr and Steele, 2002). Their 'clientele' have been those students who demonstrate appropriate "cultural capital" (Bourdieu, 1977), including a sizeable international market. The 'middle range' institutions in this social hierarchy have tended to differentiate themselves through offering programmes more reflective of the geographical communities of which they are part. In New Zealand, the University of Waikato falls into this category because of its historic commitment to its hinterland; in Scotland, the University of Stirling. The 'new' universities as converted polytechnics have been much more oriented towards vocational education and the 'new' professions (e.g. nursing), offering more 'real world' knowledge. Certainly, Auckland University of Technology in New Zealand, is an exciting example; in Scotland, Glasgow Caledonian University is an equivalent. In short, there is considerable stratification of universities both in terms of what forms of knowledge they emphasise and who they attract as students. And some institutions defy tidy categorisation such as the Open University which attracts a larger than usual number of mature-age students, predominantly women (McGivney, 1990).

So what have been the major changes in the university sector in the last decade? Essentially the changes in the higher education scene have mirrored those of the broader "macro" environment. Economic rationalism has found a comfortable home in all the tribes of academia (Collins, 1991; Thompson, 2000). "Doing more with less" and "working smarter" are dictums of contemporary HE. Accordingly, the main functions of academic staff- research, teaching and administration - have been altered and an ethos of entrepreneurialism has swept into the 'ivory tower'. Increasingly, universities have become like corporate organisations with Chief Executive Officers (still labelled as Vice-Chancellors or Principals), strategic plans, line management, quality assurance schemes, heightened staff appraisal mechanisms and increased accountability (Codd, 1997).

While the emphasis of this paper is on university teaching - preparation for it and continuing professional development - this analysis cannot be disconnected from other duties of academic staff. An escalation in say, teaching, usually means a diminution of research capacity; greater expectations on university academics to produce research outputs of international standing necessarily mean less time for teaching in all its guises (course planning; lecturing; marking). It is not a zero sum game. In addition, the devolution of responsibility for planning and administration of university programmes can also mean increased administration for all or selected academic staff.

The arrival of the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) in the UK and the Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF) in New Zealand has raised the bar on the academic goalposts. The need for academics to publish in high calibre peer-reviewed journals has increased pressure on scholarly performance standards at the same time as demands for teaching effectiveness have risen. As promotion in universities tends to be based more on research capability than teaching expertise (Smyth, 1995), then regardless of rhetoric regarding the importance of teaching, the strong likelihood is that academics will give acceptable minimal effort towards their teaching while endeavouring to improve research outputs. In the hardening arena of league tables based on research prowess, some universities seem to be responding to the research-teaching nexus by creating more research-only or teaching-only pathways. Rather than expecting academics to perform highly in both arenas, the strategic decision has been taken to have individuals specialise in one domain. At AUT, an untidy resolution to this issue for this new university was to create "research pathways" where those staff selected through competition for this designation have been allocated fewer hours of teaching. The default position is that other staff are deemed to be primarily teaching-focussed yet with an expectation of conducting research as well.

A trend across higher education systems has been the movement towards more competency-based programmes related to an underlying ideology of instrumentalism. As pointed out by Hager and Gonczi (1996), competence can be conceptualised in different ways. In its narrow interpretation, behaviour can be reduced to specific measurable outputs which purportedly contribute to completion of tasks. This approach has been the basis for UK qualifications frameworks and that of the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQA). In New Zealand, unit standards, the cornerstone of constructing learning outcomes, have been adopted within communities and industry (e.g. via Industry Training Organisations, ITOs), the accumulation of which leads to qualifications on the NZQA framework from levels 1 to 8. In the UK, both National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) in England, and Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) in Scotland, are based on similar pre-specified performance standards. A wider definition of competence relates to a more holistic set of behaviours where the accomplishment of tasks *is* not reliant on minute observation of discrete actions. In most universities, the dominant trend has been to ignore the behaviourist orientation of pre-specified outcomes in favour of this integrated, holistic approach to competence that is more relational and better suited to complex, professional judgments (Hager and Gonczi, 1996).

In the New Zealand context, only the new university (AUT) has programmes related to levels on the NZQA framework, reflecting its polytechnic origins and applied vocational emphasis. Traditional universities, bastions of liberal education ideals, have refused to embrace any technicist system that may threaten the integrity of cognitive development and the autonomy of the institution. Another influencing initiative in Aotearoa/New Zealand has been the advent of the National Certificate of Education (NCEA) in secondary education, essentially a criterion-referenced system for student performance, in which renewed emphasis is given to the clarity of student learning outcomes and the adoption of appropriate assessment mechanisms by teachers. Eventually, this system will produce a raft of pedagogically-sensitised students into New Zealand universities who seek enhanced teacher effectiveness in HE (Barrington, 2004).

Outside programme development, the economic rationalist position has affected almost every facet of university life. The striving for 'efficiency' and 'effectiveness' seems relentless (and these goals may be mutually exclusive or only marginally compatible). As in other sectors of education, there has been intensification of work (Apple, 1982), greater devolution of decision-making to those responsible for acquiring resources, and increased accountability. Hence, teachers are increasingly the mediators between managerial surveillance and students who have heightened demands (since higher fees raise expectations of quality delivery of service).

A major change in higher education in both countries has been its "massification" (Evans and Abbott, 1998). As higher education has become a tool in many countries' attempts to upskill the workforce to maintain competitiveness, greater numbers of students from more diversified backgrounds have entered universities. In the main, the new universities have attracted more students from marginalised groups (Taylor, Barr and Steele, 2002), leaving the more traditional ones freer of such complications and better placed to capitalise on their higher research profiles. In the New Zealand context, the popularity of foundation, bridging and access programmes (Benseman and Russ, 2003) in the universities attests to the demands of previously disenfranchised groups (e.g. Maori; Pasifika) for greater access into universities, which were once the preserve of the white middle classes. In the UK scene, the continuing emphasis on widening access and social inclusion (Gallacher *et al.*, 2000; Gallacher, 2003) in both FE and HE reinforces this point further. At the University of Glasgow, where I am currently working in the Department of Adult and Continuing Education (DACE), there are numerous options open to mature age students to 'try out' education and proceed further, if successful. In this case, DACE functions as a conduit for less traditional students to experiment with higher education in a more supportive environment on a trial basis. This kind of provision is echoed in other universities, in both New Zealand and the UK, in a bid to better acculturate marginalised students to university life and promote the possibility of lifelong learning.

Teachers of adults

The field of 'teacher education' is usually conceptualised as that of training teachers of children in compulsory education. As such, the profession has an established process for 'training' its teachers, often through BEd programmes which include a blend of curriculum studies (subjects they teach the children), studies of education (psychology, history, sociology etc) and initiation into the profession (through professional studies and practicums in schools).

The hallmarks of a profession have been described as the control of content, if not the terms of work; substantial autonomy and self-direction; control of the production and application of knowledge and skills; the adoption of a code of ethics in practice (Yerka, 1981; McCulloch, Helsby and Knight, 2000). Professions tend to have watchdogs - in the case of New Zealand, new programmes need to be approved by the New Zealand Teachers' Council and ultimately the stamp of professionalism of a teacher is in the hands of this body. However, this scenario of the regulation of teacher education does not find a neat equivalent in the realm of adult and higher education.²

Historically, a teacher of adults could practise with no, or minimal, professional preparation, though there is now less likelihood of this occurring. Adult educators may receive professional training through a wide range of programmes, ranging from non-credit occasional workshops through to extensive postgraduate courses available in a few universities. A hierarchy of training exists wherein the bulk of opportunities are available through low-key workplace induction for mainly volunteers or part-time workers. Post-basic training, frequently linked to the gaining of specific credentials, is more often engaged by full-time professionals who usually teach in further or higher education (Findsen, 1996). Because the field of adult education straddles an extensive array of settings (e.g. literacy; community services; second language learning; workplaces; higher education) and fulfils multiple philosophical purposes (e.g. see Merriam and Brockett, 1997), it has been virtually impossible to reach consensus on what kind of preparatory education should be available to whom. At the top of the opportunity pyramid, full-time professionals will engage in Master's level or professional doctoral studies to better link their practice to appropriate theory. For the vast majority of adult educators, many of whom work in community settings with modest resources, the stark reality is that one usually learns informally and haphazardly.

Attempts to professionalise adult educators have largely failed (Collins, 1991). Professionalisation of the field has been defined as:

those elements which have placed emphasis on providing adult education with a sound theoretical base, have emphasised research and the application of scientific standards to methods, materials and the organization of the field and have promoted the need for professional training and staffing (Selman and Kulich, 1980: 109, cited in Collins, 1991: 82)

Only in instances where staff work in more specific contexts (e.g. nursing) has a cadre of professionals in adult education developed, usually following a code of ethics promoted by that profession or discipline. Of course, the issue of whether adult educators want to be part of a profession has been debated hotly across the globe. Educators predominantly from a critical framework (e.g. radical adult educators) have strongly opposed any attempts to professionalise the field. Why so? Ostensibly, the attack on professionalisation has emerged from a belief that the field would be too heavily regulated, forced into a straitjacket where a competency approach to work would prevail. The opposition extends to a resistance to homogenise adult educators, to deskill them. As expressed by Michael Collins:

A tendency of professionalization to infantilize adults in more and more arenas of everyday life ... exemplifies yet another way the cult of efficiency erodes both individual autonomy and rational community values (1991: 15).

Another criticism is that professionalisation will justify the existence of an elite (often identified as university academics) who will continue to define the field without due attention to practice.

Adult educators, especially in their radical guises, oppose the creation of further social stratification and the disempowerment of the mass of workers (Merriam and Brockett, 1997). What little still exists in adult education within a social democratic frame is threatened by moves to render higher education institutions as vocational training centres rather than places where intelligent debate on essential community issues can occur (Taylor, Barr and Steele, 2002).

In this paper I construe academic staff in universities as a subset of educators in HE and as a subset of teachers of adults in formal learning contexts (Qarvis, 1995). While they have been appointed for their subject expertise, usually linked to advanced academic qualifications, most have had little direct professional development related to their teaching duties.

Being an academic in contemporary universities

Given the changes in higher education outlined previously, academics are fully stretched to achieve excellence in each of teaching, research and administration. The dictum 'all universities are equal but some are more equal than others' can be applied in any country in the world. In both New Zealand and the UK, there is significant stratification between universities (e.g. 'old' and 'new' universities) and even within universities (the old professions such as law and medicine maintain elitism in comparison with open-entry liberal arts subjects). Hence, the precise working conditions of academics are barely comparable and are always context-specific (Cuthbert, 1996).

The actual working conditions of academic teachers in universities have received considerable critical debate (Smyth, 1995; Evans and Abbott, 1998; Knight, 2002). In a critique of the employment relationships of academics, Keep, Storey and Sisson (1996) argue that the expansion of higher education in the last two decades (between 1979 and 1993 the number of universities in the UK has increased from 38 to 72, accompanied by 50 colleges of HE) has resulted in concerns over quality assurance in research, teaching methods, the types of learning experiences which students have and the effective management of a more diversified system. They identify declining academic salaries, stop-go recruitment policies producing an older cohort of academics, and staff motivation and commitment as especially problematic (1996: 36).

The dynamics of change in the roles of academics in higher education have been analysed by many writers (e.g. Smyth, 1995; Cuthbert, 1996; Thompson, 2000; Taylor, Barr and Steele, 2002) but few have identified the inherent contradictions in the process as does Edwards (1997). While his critique of adult educators is not focussed on university teachers *per se*, it is quite applicable to them. Edwards refers to educators struggling to find a real sense of identity, given their "multiple selves" and the need to "cross borders" (1997: 166). He argues for a more complex understanding of the "reflective practitioner" (derivative of Schon, 1987) wherein the adult educator (in this case, the university teacher) moves from being a professional to an activist to an entrepreneur. In a fluid context, academics can perform multiple roles, demanding engagement with different ~ rms of knowledge and considerable adaptability. Hence, in a (post)modern university, the demands on academics are multi-faceted and often contradictory - for instance, a teacher may face a class of immediate school-leavers in a large stage one lecture theatre in the morning; and then work with a commercially-oriented small group of managers at their workplace on a consultancy in the afternoon.

From a Marxist perspective, "the proletarianisation of the academy" has been a term used to describe the phenomenon of academics undertaking more menial tasks in an atmosphere of reduced autonomy (Braverman, 1974). In Smyth's analysis of the situation in universities, there are a number of "worrying tendencies", inclusive of the following:

- A growing separation of the conceptualisation and execution of work;
- The quest for increased managerial control under the guise of increased competitiveness;

- Reduced worker autonomy, particularly for those at the periphery of the workforce (usually women on part-time appointments);
- The push for more explicit work patterns which are more readily codified and measured using performance indicators;
- Institutional drift where the norms and values are reflective of business and industry;
- Despite the rhetoric of devolution and self-management, important decisions tend to be made by special policy-making units remote from the actual work. (Smyth, 1995: 14-15)

In accord with what Keep, Story and Sisson (1996) perceive as a "professional model" of university management, universities are responding (perhaps more slowly than some would want) to external pressure to increase the quality of teaching, as advocated by Sir Ron Dearing, Chairman of the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education. He remarked:

It has always struck me as odd, that the university teacher has not wished to establish him or herself in terms of professionalism, through some qualification in the art and science of teaching (cited in Keep, Storey and Sisson, 1996: 40).

Further, the report pointed to the imbalance in regard of teaching and research in universities, the latter constituting what is really important, as demonstrated in promotion criteria (and we can add, the RAE in UK, and the PBRF in NZ).

The teaching profession in academia

The challenges and pressures experienced in other parts of the education system (e.g. increased accountability; drives for efficiency) have been equally felt in higher education. There has been an ambivalence expressed in university communities about the need for professional preparation and on-going staff development. Is this yet another mode of social control and surveillance? Is there a genuine need to increase the effectiveness of university teachers? The answer to both questions could be "yes".

A considerable amount has been written about the need for greater innovation in university teaching on the basis that much of it has been based on the "transmission perspective" (Pratt, 1998). Those of us who have sat through endless lectures where written material is read aloud in a monotone voice or have been participants in conferences where academics ignore the audiences they are supposedly addressing through using unimaginative teaching practices, would want to see changes occur. Adult learning principles such as engaging audiences in active dialogue, adapting curriculum to the learning readiness of students, co-constructing knowledge and providing regular, meaningful feedback to students are gradually finding acceptance in HE (Knight, 2002; Zepke, Nugent and Leach, 2003). Having noted this need, it is important to maintain a very open notion about what constitutes "effective teaching" so that one model does not come to be adopted as the norm - for instance, Pratt (1998) identifies five approaches currently in practice in universities and he argues for the sensible continuance of each, according to context.

The political issue of teacher education in universities is heightened by mixed messages relayed to staff. New recruits in universities are increasingly expected to engage in initial professional training (Walker, 2001), some of which is linked to credentials and professional sanctions. They are encouraged to develop their teaching repertoire but often as an additional task to be performed in an already squeezed agenda. Once such 'training' is completed, the likelihood is that their promotion will have little connection to their effective performance as a teacher. Adding further to the contradictions, is the reality that it is more usual for recalcitrant older professors to be the least convinced of the merits of improving their teaching since their academic credibility has been based on research outputs and retirement is just around the corner. Thorne and Cuthbert (1996, eh. 13), drawing upon Clark's (1987) work, *The Academic Profession*, differentiate between two ranks of academics: the teacher, spending most time on actual teaching; and the lecturer or professor, who is charged with doing research and is given the resources to do so. This may result in a class of

teacher whose primary function is to transmit knowledge and another class where knowledge is created. This differentiation harks back to "teacher only" and "research only" positions in universities both of which can be readily casualised. Hence, the strong support amid academics to retain the academic role as a combined teaching-research one is no surprise.

Staff engaged as teachers of teaching staff, quite often located in centres for professional development or learning and teaching centres, appear to have limited political sway in universities. These staff must have academic credibility themselves to influence the behaviours of other academics; they also sometimes struggle to find an academic home of their own within a university (Blackwell and Blackmore, 2003).

The actual quality of provision of teaching preparation and development in universities has increased as accountability for teaching capability has increased (personal observation). As a benchmark for comparison, I provide a sketch of the provision at the University of Glasgow, located in two different but related sections, the Teaching and Learning Service (TLS) and the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) office.

As the name suggests, the TLS provides a range of activities focussing on teaching and learning as follows:

- A new lecturer and teacher programme (see below);
- Training for graduate teaching assistants, tutors and laboratory demonstrators;
- Postgraduate qualifications;
- Support for Departments - for instance, in project work and reviews;
- General workshops (e.g. on assessment issues);
- Communications and Information Technology (C&IT);
- Seminar series (on new teaching-learning developments).

I wish to focus on the new lecturer and teacher programme (the postgraduate qualification) as it illustrates an emerging trend beyond the walls of this university. The New Lecturer and Teacher Programme (NLTP) is a two-year part-time programme leading to the award of a Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice. When participants complete this programme, they can apply for membership of the Institute of Learning & Teaching in Higher Education (ILTHE), a nationwide consortium of member higher education institutions. The NLTP consists of a taught module (*Academic Practice in Higher Education*) and an assessment module, *Developing a Portfolio of Academic Practice*. An interesting note at the end of this website notice states:

Successful completion of the two modules within the probationary period constitutes the minimum University requirements for probationers with regard to professional development in teaching in Higher Education.

(<http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/tls/NLP/index.html>, p.2)

This certificate represents a harder line by the University in maximising the chances that lecturers will have the requisite knowledge and skills to undertake teaching at a proficient level. The other programmes offered by the TLS complement this Postgraduate Certificate by providing ongoing professional development. The challenge for staff undertaking this more ambitious credit programme is to create space for an additional task; much of this allocation of space will be determined by Heads of Department who might see such programmes as distracting attention away from subject-related concerns. For part-time academics, the challenge is considerable because there are often unrealistic expectations amid colleagues on their participation in departmental matters, aside from 'extras' of professional development.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is also provided to staff at the University, some of which is credit-bearing and much which is not. The Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC) provides funding to CPD for programmes to be self-financing, developmental and vocationally relevant. CPD provision is vast in its scope and looks to extend staff's capabilities in a

broader range of duties beyond teaching. One laudatory programme, *Learning Works*, provides non-academic staff with opportunities to study almost any imaginable subject, not necessarily related to their job requirements (Davies and Maclachlan, 2003).

To summarise, the case study of provision at the University of Glasgow is fairly typical of the range of professional development for staff in many Western universities. In a political climate of economic rationalism, there is increased pressure on academic staff to be at least minimally proficient in their teaching (of course, many attest to excellence), alongside heightened expectations of their research capabilities.

A crystal ball is required

Looking into the future is at best a perilous task. However, there are observable trends in the wider dynamic educational context suggestive of future directions for university teacher education.

It is unlikely that a fully professionalised body will emerge to represent the breath of interests of academic staff, not all of who see teaching as their primary endeavour in a university. While reward for performance in quality research outputs rather than for excellence in teaching is sustained then most academics will comply to increase their chances of promotion or to avoid redundancy by focussing on research. However, it is probable that attitudes towards effective university teaching will harden rather than soften. This is because under a New Right political agenda, both outside and internal to universities, accountability and quality assurance will continue to take precedence under an ideology of instrumentalism.

The position of teacher education in universities is fraught with contradictions and tensions. Those in most need of professional improvement are the least likely to take it up, unless pressurised to do so through shortcomings identified in staff appraisal. Yet staff appraisal is best not used as a stick to beat up poor performing staff but as a developmental tool to enhance voluntary professional development (Hope, 1998). Coercion is the poorest form of motivation for academic staff who value autonomy very highly in their job satisfaction (Murlis and Hartle, 1996).

A better way forward is to focus on the quality of learning for students, which staff in particular subcultures or tribes (Becher, 1989) within academia need to promote. Programmes initiated at the departmental level tend to have a greater chance of success when peers work with peers in a mutual quest for improvement. In short, collegiality is crucial under leadership from Heads of Departments and Deans, supported by teaching and learning units and/or professional development centres. Such an approach is consistent with adult learning-teaching principles. The advent of the notion of "communities of practice" is helpful here.³ Aligned to this idea has been that of a "critical companion" or an "activist professional" (Walker, 2001). The former expression is synonymous with mentoring but has an individualistic ring to it; the latter, 'emphasising a collectivist endeavour, recaptures the social democratic ideal associated with social purpose education (Taylor, Barr and Steele, 2002). In either case, one way forward is to encourage a more 'bottom-up' approach where collegiality, normally expected of university life, is highly encouraged.

Conclusion

The arena of university teacher education is examined as a subset of adult teacher education. Given the formal character of universities with established traditions and norms, the issue of teaching the teachers is necessarily contextualised as part of the dynamic of the changing face of higher education in contemporary societies, in this case, from New Zealand and the United Kingdom, primarily Scotland.

University teacher education has become more heavily scrutinised in universities. This increased monitoring of the capabilities of academic staff in their teaching role has been linked to

heightened accountability and expectations of effectiveness from a more demanding public. This line of expectation is entirely consistent with neo-liberal reforms in many nations where New Right ideologies and practices have changed the dynamics of contemporary society. A cult of efficiency has been established so that university teachers have been encouraged to do more with less, yet be better teachers.

The 'training' of university teachers has accordingly assumed more significance in universities. New staff are facing hardened environments where university managers expect competence from staff via preparatory programmes and/or continuing professional education. Yet, a contradictory situation arises, given the complexities of modern academic life and the need for peer-reviewed publications for research purposes (as exemplified by the RAE in the UK and the PBRF in New Zealand). A new professionalism amid academics may arise, but unless it emanates from genuine self-generated motives from staff (as opposed to top-down prescription), it is likely to have only modest beneficial impact at best. University teacher education should not be a wooden horse brought in by stealth but one where riders choose which horse to support.

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Notes

1. See Findsen (2002) for an example of a critical investigation into university based adult education at the University of Auckland.
2. This situation may change in the New Zealand context as adult and community education (ACE) has recently been subsumed under the new Tertiary Education Commission (TEC). The relative autonomy of ACE is under threat.
3. This is a term gaining increasing prominence in adult education circles, as exemplified by the Adult Learning Australia's 2003 conference concentrating on this theme.

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