

Provocation

Associate Professor Shelley Kinash
Director, Learning and Teaching, Bond University

skinash@bond.edu.au

http://works.bepress.com/shelley_kinash/

Graduate employability- example of Learning & Teaching Research

- ▶ ‘Researchers’ say that Learning and Teaching is not real research
- ▶ ‘Teachers’ say that research is eroding quality learning
- ▶ No wonder working life is so tough for Directors of Learning and Teaching
- ▶ How do we leverage National OLT Research?



Has the focus on graduate employability eroded university learning?

- ▶ Too vocational?
- ▶ What is HIGHER about higher education?
- ▶ Living in the future rather than in the now?
- ▶ What will you be vs. who you will be.

What is the optimal balance between generalist and professional/vocational?

- ▶ Qualification vs. Education? Skills vs. Knowledge?
- ▶ Overloading some careers? Our responsibility?
- ▶ Supporting fun choices - University responsibility fulfilled?
- ▶ (Good vs. Important)
- ▶ (Customer desire vs. what is right?)

“I think we need to fess up and say ‘Look, University is a business we are here to make money.’ Every university is.”

From an educator.



“The death of intellectualism, with more emphasis on job skills. It is not what university is meant to be anyways, job skills should be on the job, university should really be about the pedagogical process and that is not our focus. As a result, academics are not given the opportunity to really showcase their skills within the university setting in a way that they should.”

From a student.

In the business of higher education
we build it,
expect them to come and then
go forth and prosper.

- ▶ Does this process work?
- ▶ Does the outcome work?

Overall students tend to feel devalued

- ▶ “Get us through the door and then forget us.”
(From a student).
- ▶ Question this? Ask postgraduate students who have been out in industry (valued) and returned to be students (devalued).
- ▶ Postgraduate students driving national innovation.
- ▶ How can we honour, embrace and champion students building their graduate capacity?
- ▶ If students are customers, then do we risk abandoning those who need us for those who can ‘afford’ us?

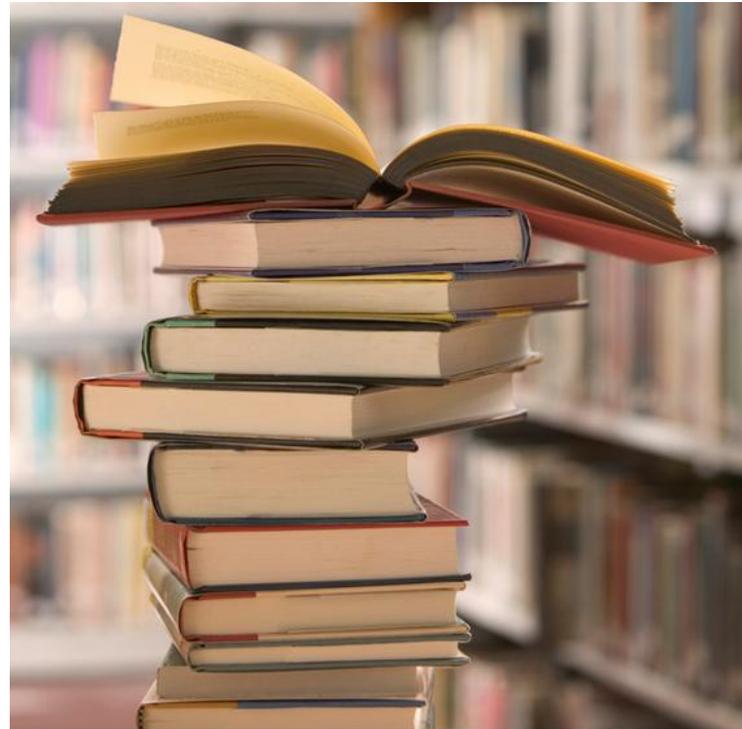
“You cannot solely be a skills focused university that only cares about the student experience.”

From a student.

TREAT US LIKE A
CUSTOMER AND
WE WILL DEMAND
A REFUND

The crowded curriculum

- ▶ Graduates report that the most value of their university experience came from what they did ‘beyond the classroom.’
- ▶ Employers - do not interview straight HDs (Millionaire Mind)
- ▶ Are we over-crowding the curriculum so that we are obstructing this?



“I don’t care about grades because I think that leadership capital and life experience is far more important.”

From an employer.

Grade

A₁

B

A

11

Are universities shonky employers?

- ▶ Casualisation of the workforce
- ▶ Poor morale
- ▶ Department in-fighting
- ▶ Mixed messages

“So a fellow who leaves after 20 years’ service is given a shake of the hand and maybe a gold watch or something but no one stops and reflects on the fact that we are losing there something more than a lecturer. The community is losing something more than a lecturer.”

From an educator.



“I’ve had to make my own opportunities. There essentially was no career development that takes you from your degree into academia. Other than pushing someone off a cliff.”

From an academic / PhD student.

“I would go anywhere where there’s a permanent position; however I’ve been told by the workforce out there that I’m unemployable. So I’ve spent 10 years perfecting a CV that’s suited to academia, which essentially, I’m told that I can’t even get a job answering phones with.”

From an academic / PhD student.

“Are we seeing people as our greatest asset and resource and treating them accordingly? Or are we seeing them as an objectified resource that is disposable? I think that is the early 21st-century question in the workplace across all domains.”

From a student.

Contacts

<http://GraduateEmployability.com/>

<http://PostgraduateStudentExperience.com>

<http://HigherEducationStudentEvaluation.com>

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