

Affective Development in University Education: Final Report

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A study funded through the Charles Sturt University Scholarship in Teaching Fund

Introduction

When students are undertaking tertiary study they develop knowledge, skills and affective qualities (e.g., values, beliefs, dispositions and attitudes). While it appears to be relatively clear about what knowledge and skills students are required to learn in various programs, and how these things are taught, learned and assessed, there is less clarity about what affective qualities students should develop, and even less understanding about how they might develop them. In many universities, some of these affective factors have been acknowledged and articulated in statements of graduate attributes. Furthermore, in professional degree programs there are often values and ethics that underpin professional practice in that field, and these affective qualities are required to be integral to that program. That said, regardless of the program or field of study, education is value-laden and emotional, and while students are growing in their knowledge and skills in their particular area, they are also developing beliefs and values about their discipline and themselves as operators in that discipline, and attitudes towards the subject (Bishop, FitzSimons, Seah & Clarkson, 2001; Hargreaves, 1998).

Clearly there is a broad scope for research in this area. This project focussed on the deliberate and intentional development of affective qualities in programs across the Charles Sturt University (CSU) faculties. The study was limited to the perspectives of the institution as expressed in documents and by the staff of the university (i.e., a student or external stakeholder perspective was not explored).

Rationale:

The CSU “Graduate Attributes”, as articulated in the *Strategic Plan 2002-2007*, have aspects that relate to knowledge, skills and affective qualities. The examples cited below show attributes that have a significant affective (values, beliefs, dispositions, attitudes) component;

Charles Sturt University Graduates will also demonstrate:

- *an understanding of, and commitment to, open inquiry, ethical practice, social justice, tolerance and cultural diversity*
- *an appreciation of the need for a balance between economic sustainability and environmental sustainability.*

For a graduate to have these attributes (and others) they would need to have environmental values, beliefs about social responsibility, and a positive attitude towards different cultural groups, just to name a few. Also, a key platform at CSU is “education for the professions” and therefore, many of its programs are characterized by a significant affective component. For example: a teacher graduate would need to value learning and have a positive emotional response to children; a mathematics graduate would have a fascination in mathematics and a joy for solving mathematical problems; and a police graduate would value the law and have a positive attitude towards all sectors of the

community. Often this affective dimension of students' learning is not overtly considered or addressed in the preparation, delivery and assessment of learning experiences, but the CSU *Graduate Attributes* and professional programs clearly contain qualities that are affective in nature. This implies that there is a clear agenda that these affective attributes will be 'taught' and 'assessed' (Carroll, 2004).

This project explored the affective dimension of university learning and teaching at CSU. The study centred on the deliberate and intentional growth of beliefs, values and attitudes from the institution's perspective (i.e., the affective views the university promotes at the institutional, faculty, school and subject levels). It was not within the scope of this project to explicitly explore the incidental affective teaching environment, although the literature suggests that this is significant. While overtly teaching knowledge and skills, lecturers are also displaying, often unconsciously, their values, beliefs and attitudes, and these significantly impact students' affective development. This would be an important subsequent study. Also, this study did not explore students' and graduates' perspectives on their affective development through their experiences at CSU, and again, this would be an important ensuing project.

The Affective Domain

The affective domain has been variously defined in the literature, but generally it includes aspects such as beliefs, values, attitudes and emotions (Grootenboer, 2001). Its components are often defined as those beyond the domain of cognition, although this is not universally accepted. McLeod (1992) suggested that the affective domain could be conceptualized as a sort of continuum:

... we can think of beliefs, attitudes and emotions as representing increased levels of affective involvement, decreased levels of cognitive involvement, increasing levels of intensity of response, and decreasing levels of response stability. (p. 579)

This conceptualisation seems to allow for a direct connection between some aspects of the affective domain (e.g., beliefs and attitudes) but not others (e.g., beliefs and emotions). Other writers have also linked some facets of the affective domain and not others. For example, Bishop, et al. (2001) saw values as being closely allied with beliefs, but not directly with other affective aspects. These conceptualizations could be summarized as in Figure 1 below.

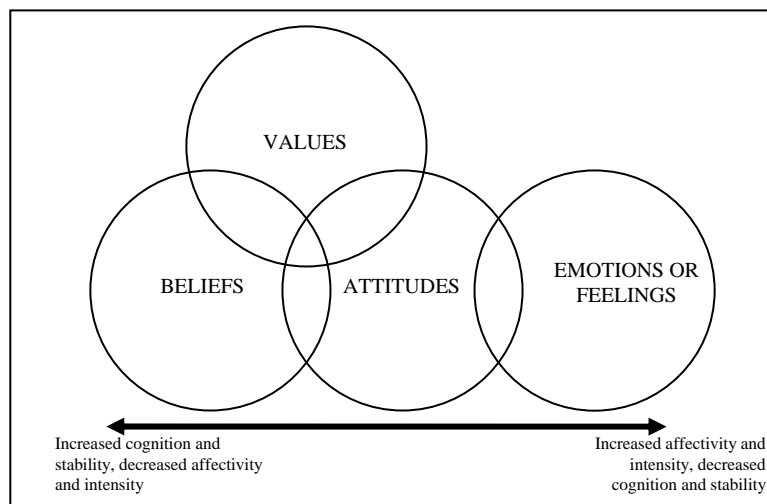


Figure 1: A conception of the affective domain (Grootenboer, 2003)

While this conception of the affective domain may be useful, it still largely simplifies its complex nature and how it influences, or is a part of university education. However, the difficulty in precisely defining the affective domain should not diminish its relevance.

The Development of Affective Views

As mentioned above, there is some discrepancy about the distinction between the affective and cognitive domains, but one generally accepted point of differentiation is the way learning or development occurs within each realm. Affective views and responses are developed through experience rather than being carefully thought-through or logically considered (Rokeach, 1968). In this sense, beliefs and attitudes are seen to grow in a more organic fashion, or to ‘just happen’. Furthermore, affective views are stored in episodic memory, couched in significant events in individual’s personal experience, meaning they may not be accessible through cognitive strategies such as critical evaluation or logical review (Nespor, 1987). The lack of deliberate or even conscious attention to developing affective responses can mean that they are often tacit, and yet they can powerfully influence decision-making and behaviour (Pajares, 1992). However, the explicit nature of affective outcomes for CSU graduates implies a more deliberate and intentional approach to affective development, thus providing impetus for this project.

The development of values, beliefs and attitudes has always been inherent in university programs, but there seems to be growing emphasis on making these more particular and explicit, as is revealed by university documents such as ‘graduate attributes’ (Hoban, et al., 2004). This implies an imperative to consider how these affective qualities and views can be ‘taught’ (Nilsen, 2004), and this appears to be an under-researched and under-theorised question in university education. Indeed, Kezar (2005) suggests that there is a real problem with most scholarship on tertiary and organisational learning because learning is too narrowly defined in terms of knowledge or intelligence development and it ignores the affective dimension.

Aims:

The aims of the study were to:

1. Identity the affective qualities that are seen as desirable for CSU graduates;
2. Explore and document the pedagogical processes employed by CSU teaching staff to develop these affective qualities in their students;
3. Explore and document the assessment practices employed by CSU teaching staff to develop these affective qualities in their students; and
4. Identify the ethical issues that are inherent in promoting particular affective views.

Method

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the current project:

1. How do staff, schools, faculties (and the university) decide which affective qualities are important for their graduates?

2. How do staff, schools and faculties develop affective qualities in their students through their teaching?
3. How do staff, schools and faculties assess affective development?
4. What ethical issues are involved with promoting particular affective views?

Methodology

The study was qualitative in nature and employed an interpretive framework. Data were collected in three phases as outlined below. During the second and third phases of the data collection it became clear that the course coordinators and teaching academics often spoke about issues relating to both coordination and teaching, so the data for these two sources was considered and analysed simultaneously. Interviews were conducted with participants from across the university campuses and a range of discipline areas, including Education, Science, Nursing, Midwifery, Policing and Business. Although the aim was not to develop a 'theory', the data was analysed using grounded theory methods. The data was analysed using the N-Vivo7 program.

Document Analysis

A selection of documents were sourced and analysed to identify where and how affective factors were included at CSU, and the nature of the affective qualities deemed significant. The documents included the University Handbook, subject outlines and statements, the CSU graduate profile, and discussion papers where affective aspects of the graduate profile considered. The identification, collection and analysis of these documents was the first task undertaken in the project.

Course Coordinators: Semi-structured interviews

One course coordinator from each Faculty (selected in consultation with the Deans and/or Heads of Schools) was interviewed. Interviewing participants from across the Faculties ensured a breadth and variety of perspectives of the topic at hand. The interviews focussed on affective development within their particular discipline and were structured around the following broad themes:

- Desirable affective qualities for the graduates within their discipline (e.g., what values would you like your graduates to hold?);
- Processes for deciding upon these affective qualities (e.g., do you have discussions about beliefs that imbue your discipline?);
- Approaches for developing these affective qualities (e.g., how do you overtly promote certain attitudes in your classes?);
- Approaches for assessing these qualities (e.g., how do you know if students have developed the desired values?); and
- Ethical issues about affective change (e.g., do you see any ethical issues in promoting certain beliefs or attitudes?).

These interviews were audio-taped and transcribed. The transcripts were then returned to the participant concerned for editing, comment and verification. The edited transcripts were then used as part of the data set for the study.

Teaching Academic: In-depth interviews

In-depth interviews (one in each Faculty) were undertaken with teaching academics to explore in greater detail the practical ways these academics promoted affective development within their teaching. The initial research design was to undertake a case study using a variety of data collection methods with these participants, but this had to be

modified to in-depth interviews once it became clear that the proposed case study would have been too onerous for the participants. Nevertheless, the in-depth interviews provided rich data about how each teaching academic viewed affective development in their subjects, some of the methods and teaching approaches they used to develop affective qualities, and issues and concerns that may hinder desirable affective growth. Most of the teaching academics involved also had coordination responsibilities (and indeed, the course coordinators above also had teaching responsibilities) and so the interviews often traversed issues and topics related to coordination as well as teaching. The interviews were structured around the following questions:

- What are the desirable affective qualities that you hope to develop in your subjects? (e.g., what values would you like your students to hold?);
- Are there any processes for deciding upon these affective qualities? (e.g., do you have discussions about beliefs that imbue your discipline?);
- What approaches do you employ in your teaching to develop these affective qualities? (e.g., how do you overtly promote certain attitudes in your classes?);
- How effective do you perceive these approaches to be?
- How do you assess/evaluate these qualities? (e.g., how do you know if students have developed the desired values?)
- Are there any ethical issues concerning affective change? (e.g., do you see any ethical issues in promoting certain beliefs or attitudes?).

As with the course coordinators, these interviews were audio-taped and transcribed, then returned to the participant concerned for editing, comment and verification. The edited transcripts were then used in the data set for the study.

Findings and Discussion

Throughout the study it was clear that issues surrounding affective development are important and significant at CSU. While this report will note some key findings, what was clear throughout was the complexity and difficulty in trying to promote and achieve affective development in a university context. That said, many academics at CSU are clearly thinking about these issues and concerns, and the findings presented below represent valuable and thoughtful insight into the affective dimension of university teaching and learning. Before presenting the views of the academic staff obtained through the interviews, a brief synopsis of the CSU context will be outlined by summarising some of the documentary references to affective dimensions. (Note that pseudonyms are used throughout this report)

Affective Factors in CSU Documents

A broad, but by no means comprehensive, review of documents revealed a legislated and required commitment to affective development as an integral part of all programs at CSU. Indeed, the university itself has a *Statement of Values* that is published in the annual Handbook (e.g., page 21 in 2007). Furthermore, the *Student Charter* (printed on the same page) outlines a number of expectations that students can have of the university (and visa versa) including affective aspects such as; “a supportive, harmonious and positive learning community of which you are a valued member ...”.

A fundamental avenue for the articulation and promotion of desirable affective qualities has been through the CSU *Graduate Attributes*. This list of graduate attributes has

been approved by the CSU Council (Minutes of meeting number 36) and the CSU Senate final approval 7 December 2005; Issued February 2006). The requirement is that all Bachelor degree courses and sub-degree awards “**will foster in their graduates the attributes ...**” (emphasis added). As outlined in a previous section, these attributes have a significant affective flavour and dimension. For example:

By the conclusion of their studies, students are able to ... demonstrate an understanding of, and commitment to, values-driven practice in their field of study that takes account of open enquiry, ethical practice, social justice, cultural diversity, reconciliation and environmental sustainability.

It is clear from the statement above that the university has an expectation that students will not only have a cognitive knowledge of certain values and beliefs, but personal commitment to those views and positions.

A number of schools have prepared discussion papers and documents that have addressed the *CSU Graduate Attributes* in their particular context. For example, the School of Education prepared a statement of *Aspirations* for their students and graduates (http://www.csu.edu.au/faculty/educat/edu/docs/Grad_SOE_Attributes.pdf). The aspirations included (emphasis added):

- ... graduates to be educators **with a passion** for their subject/discipline, pedagogy and their students’ learning; and people **with a passion** and commitment to the knowledge and technical skills of their discipline(s) and to their ongoing learning
- ... graduates to be **sensitive to** the rights and needs ...
- ... graduates to be **collectively engaged** and have **positive relationships** ...
- ... graduates to be **committed to** education as a process of critical transformation ...
- ... graduates should have a **social conscience** and **commitment to** improving their community

Here again, it is clear that it is not just a thorough technical knowledge is sufficient, and graduates are expected to have particular values, beliefs and personal qualities, and that these are developed through the School of Education programs, courses and subjects.

The mandate to develop affective views and qualities at CSU is clear. The ideas, views and strategies of a number of CSU course coordinators and teachers, about how this might be done, are presented in the sections that follow.

Desirable Affective Qualities

Interviews were conducted with participants from a range of discipline areas across the university including Education, Science, Nursing, Midwifery, Policing and Business. In each case, they discussed the desirable affective qualities that they sought to develop through their programs, courses and subjects. In each case, they were able to list some beliefs, values and attitudes that they saw as important, some of which were quite generic, and others that were more discipline-specific. The more universal qualities included values and attitudes about ethics, a sense of empathy and care, and a disposition for life-long learning.

The focus on ethics is not surprising considering the professional nature of many of CSU’s courses, and the central nature of ethical conduct to professional practice (Also, CSU has had a longstanding commitment to ethical issues, particularly through its involvement in CAPPE). For many of the participants it seemed that ethical values were a given, and as such they were unquestionably accepted. These ethical values were expressed in various ways, for example:

We hope they [students] develop an ethical conscious. (Alex, Science)

I'd like the students to be continually questioning the role of technology in learning and the ethical implications. (Mary, Education)

... you need to have a sense of ethics and justice and a whole range of values ... (Alice, Nursing)

Indeed, a number of courses at CSU have whole subjects devoted to ethics (e.g., in the School of Business: ITC331 Security, Privacy and Ethics; in the School of Policing Studies: JST491 Ethical Issues in Investigation) within their field, highlighting the importance of this affective quality for CSU graduates as they embark on their professional careers. The notions of empathy, thoughtfulness and care were also widely noted by the participants, including those from outside the so-called *caring professions* of teaching, nursing and midwifery. These included the need to develop a caring attitude to the environment, thoughtfulness in working in teams, and “empathy, appreciation and understanding of difference” (Emma, Policing). Finally, the desire to see graduates have a disposition to life-long learning was noted by participants across a range of disciplines and was expressed as developing an “interest in learning for its own sake” (Emma, Policing), and, “enthusiastic and excited about learning” (Mary, Education).

Determining Desirable Affective Qualities

Throughout the study it was clear that the participants were aware of certain affective qualities that they felt were important for their graduates to possess and display. As mentioned above, some of these seemed to be noted across discipline areas and others were more discipline specific. In response to this, the participants were asked how the appropriate, desirable and necessary graduate beliefs, values, attitudes and dispositions were determined.

One clear way that these affective qualities were known was through professional standards or external criteria that were in some way prescribed by a professional body. In this sense, there was no negotiation, nor was there seen as any need for debate, as the affective qualities they prescribed were seen as essential and central to the professional practice in that field. Therefore, it was important that students develop these views and virtues through their programs at CSU. For example, the competency standards published by the Midwifery Council clearly promote a woman-centred philosophy of midwifery, and the academics who work on the CSU midwifery unashamedly build their program on the same central value.

Not all the discipline areas had a list of externally mandated criteria and even in those that did, there were affective qualities that seemed to be seen as important and desirable for graduates. Again, it often seemed that these were fairly uniformly accepted within the discipline and somewhat tacitly known. That said, there were certainly other beliefs and views that were noted as contestable even amongst the university colleagues.

The participants were asked about how they decided what the appropriate affective qualities (not including the externally mandated ones discussed above) were that underpinned their subjects and courses. Almost without exception, the participants said that there was no deliberate process for discussing, debating and determining the desirable affective qualities for their graduates. In some cases, particularly where there was a small teaching team, it was seen as unnecessary because these things were just known and assumed to be shared. Others suggested that it might happen through informal conversations or as a side-issue to another topic of discussion. Furthermore, course

coordinators were quite clear that they did not want to be prescribing values positions or beliefs that their colleagues had to teach or promote.

The Marginalisation of Affective Development and University Practice Architectures

In the preceding section it was clear that affective qualities are seen as an important and an integral part of the education students receive at CSU. However, it was evident throughout the study that in general, it is quite difficult to actually promote affective development within the practice architectures of a university, let alone require particular values, attitudes and dispositions. Clearly there are a range of ethical and moral dilemmas inherent in demanding certain values and beliefs of students, and this requires a great deal of thoughtful consideration (beyond this report). Nevertheless, as has been already shown, CSU graduates are expected to have certain affective qualities, and so it is behoven on the university and its staff to include them as an integral dimension of their tertiary education. Certainly, the participants in the study were concerned that graduates from their programs could graduate without any commitment to the values, ethics and beliefs that were seen as crucial to practice in their field.

We can guarantee that they learn them [appropriate beliefs and values] but we can't guarantee that they believe in them and what they will do in the real world when they graduate. The only thing we can do is give them the opportunity to acquire those that we think are appropriate attributes and hope that they will act on them. (Alice, Nursing)

However, it should be noted that many of the participants were confident that most of their graduates held beliefs and values that were largely consistent with those of their field. In many cases, it was felt that students enrolled in programs that had already captured their interest, including the affective qualities associated with the discipline. This also meant that they were somewhat sympathetic to the values and attitudes that imbued their university program.

Universities are award granting institutions, and as such they are required to measure and assess various things to ascertain whether an individual has met the requirements for a particular qualification. These processes are couched in a history and tradition of tertiary education, as well as a range of other pressures, not the least being legal and financial factors. Within this context, assessment in the university needs to be rigorous and seen to be objective, and so this has lead to evaluation practice architectures that are largely based on measurement. In general, this works well for assessing candidates' knowledge and skills, but it is not appropriate in many ways for promoting affective development. In short, despite much of the rhetoric about affective development through university programs, it seems that the teaching and learning environment of the university – the practice architectures, prohibit, or at least limit, the requirement for students to have or develop certain beliefs, values, attitudes or dispositions.

The assessment of affective qualities was seen as particularly problematic for a number of the participants. While many were able to evaluate students' affective qualities in informal ways, there was less confidence about making and formal assessments (e.g., through assignments or tasks that were used to determine student grades). This point is well illustrated in the following quotation from one of the participants:

Apart from assessing their knowledge of ethics and morals in examples, we don't assess whether they actually have the qualities themselves. We might assess their knowledge of ethics and morals, but of course that is not assessing their ethics and morals, it just assesses their understanding of

what an ethical approach might be. Whether they apply that approach we can't assess. I'd be surprised if anybody truthfully said that they assess qualities like this and based on that assessment, were confident enough to say that the student had those qualities, because students will answer questions in order to pass whatever it is you are assessing. (Alex, Science)

What was clear throughout the data was the difficulty in formally assessing affective attributes using the tools and methods that were currently used to assess other dimensions such as knowledge and skills. This raises some important questions about whether affective-type qualities can and should be formally assessed, and if so what technologies and approaches might be fruitful?

Developing and Changing Students' Affective Qualities and Views

In the previous section, it was noted that the beliefs, values and attitudes that students bring with them to their university program were influential in their graduating qualities. For example, one would hope that someone enrolling in an environmental science degree might have an interest in issues of conservation and sustainability. These affective qualities might be somewhat naïve, but nevertheless, sympathetic and amenable to the particular discipline that they have selected.

However, while this is no doubt the case in many respects, it is not always that simple. Students can enter their programs with firmly held beliefs about professional practice in their field that can be tacit, tenacious and unavailable for reconsideration. For example, a preservice teacher may come from a very traditional educational background and they may begin their degree program with fixed formal beliefs about teaching and learning. These views and values have been formed and reinforced over many years in the school system, and so their teacher education program may struggle to unsettle these prevailing views. In the policing program, candidates may come from a police family, and they will have particular, and most likely, dearly held views about policing and the role of a police officer. Again, in this situation it may be very difficult to bring about any meaningful critical reflection on these affective views as the experiences of the university seem so minimal compared to the wealth of experience outside the tertiary program.

An allied concern also emerged because many CSU programs are professional in nature, and as such they often have a practicum component and they have to address issues of practice. Often these practical placements are very influential in moulding students' beliefs and attitudes because they have the significant legitimising effect of being "real experience" (as opposed to the university-based subjects). Indeed, this is the *real world* that the CSU professional programs are preparing their students for, and so the affective attributes developed as part of their program should be enabling for the graduates in their practice. But it is also the case that professional graduates should be able to critically reflect upon and consider the prevailing beliefs, values and attitudes that are evident amongst the practicing professionals in their field, and not necessarily accept them as fixed and always appropriate for changing times. For example, Celine (Education) commented about this dilemma in preparing primary school teachers:

Lots of students come to us believing that maths is taught formally through textbooks because that was what it was like for them. We try and show them another way ... but when they go on prac they tend to see the old beliefs in action again, so ...!

She went on to discuss how the traditional beliefs and values about mathematics teaching and learning tend to be sustained because of the powerful wealth of experience the student teachers have had, and the beliefs and values presented in their university subjects can be

dismissed as not being “practical”. The net result in these cases is that the underlying values, beliefs and dispositions towards this aspect of professional practice are never open to change.

The complexity of learning and affective development means that it is unlikely that a students’ experiences prior to entry, or during their practical components of their program, will lead to affective attributes that are completely positive and enabling (or completely negative and disabling). Therefore, as has previously been stated, it is the responsibility of the university through its programs to help students develop the affective qualities and attributes that have been deemed as appropriate for their field or discipline (not withstanding the debates about how these are determined mentioned earlier).

Teaching Approaches that Facilitate Affective Development

One of the central aims of this study was to ascertain and understand some of the teaching approaches employed by academics to develop affective qualities with their students. Despite the reservations presented above, it was clear that the participants had thought through and developed some teaching approaches and strategies that were explicitly designed to promote reflective review of personal affective attributes and the prevailing values and attitudes of their discipline. In line with the preceding discussion, these teaching strategies tended to be less formal and more interactive, although most of the participants also mentioned the use of lectures to address topics like ethics. The approaches outlined by the participants included:

- modelling;
- the “rub-off” effect;
- story telling;
- case studies;
- role playing; and
- first-person writing.

These will be briefly discussed in turn.

Modelling: A number of the participants made it particularly clear that they needed to passionately hold and display the affective attributes that they desired for their students. The sense here was that, whatever they might say, the students will read them, and the modelled affective qualities will be the strongest form of communication about what is important. Of course, in the interviews it was clear that these academics were fervently passionate about their discipline, and many commented that it wasn’t difficult for them to enact such values and beliefs because, they were indeed committed to them. In this manner, they were in many respects just being themselves, and certainly not putting on an act.

One of the participants went on to suggest that “modelling is very powerful, and it is even more powerful when I debrief with the students about why certain things are modelled in a particular way – what values underpinned my actions” (Celine, Education). Through the interrogation of her professional practice with her students, this teaching academic not only displays what certain appropriate affective traits look like in action, she also helps the students unearth the values, beliefs and attitudes that underpin it.

The teaching academic’s sense of personal attachment and modelling of desirable affective attributes seemed, to a greater or lesser extent, underpin many of the other strategies.

The “Rub-off” Effect: Another informal approach for facilitating affective development that is akin to the modelling strategy mentioned above was the so-called “rub-off” effect. This approach was largely unstructured and relied again on the academic having a personal and passionate commitment to the affective attributes they were promoting. In short, students acquired and appropriated the desirable dispositions, attitudes and values by spending time with the academics and developing a relationship with them. This relational approach was mentioned by a number of the participants, but it did require them to spend sufficient time with the students so that a relationship could develop, and this tended to be less formal teaching situations (e.g., workshops and tutorials) and in some cases, time spent together outside of their programmed learning events. Quite a few of the participants also mentioned that finding the time and opportunities to be with their students in these ways was becoming increasingly difficult.

One of the participants discussed how a camp provided opportunities for students and academics to interact in a less formal setting.

I run field trip to a remote part of the country for students and there is plenty of opportunity to discuss things around the camp-fire, and during the course of the trip we can see attitudes changing.
(Alex, Science)

Similarly, other participants talked about subjects that are structured differently from the standard semester of lectures, workshops and tutorials. In subjects where the students spent a considerable block of time together (like a block course or residential school) the participants reported that there was more opportunity to interact in a more intensive manner, and these times provided more opportunity for positive affective attributes to *rub-off*.

Story-Telling: Alongside the modelling of personally held values and attitudes, a number of the participants also used stories from their own professional experience to illustrate, exemplify and convey desirable affective qualities. These stories have the legitimacy of being from *real experience*, and as such they are often seen by the students as being plausible and important. Stories also enable the students to see and appreciate how particular values or ethics are enacted in practice, thus bridging the theoretical ideas of the formal teaching setting and the pragmatic issues of practice. Of course, they also serve to strengthen the students perception of the teaching academic’s personal commitment to the particular professional affective attributes.

Case Studies: Throughout the study a number of the participants mentioned teaching and/or assessment activities that can broadly be called case studies. These took a range of forms, but in general they all allowed students to experience a particular event from a different perspective. The case studies provided opportunities to enter these experiences in more than just an academic manner as the students had to engage with affective, conative, behavioural and cognitive concerns simultaneously. As such, the case studies provided learning situations that were more akin to the complexity of professional practice, including to some extent, the emotional, ethical and values dimensions.

Emma (Policing) used a form of case study to allow students to empathise with the situations of others and to connect with the non-professional side of their lives (e.g., as sons, daughters, parents, someone in need of assistance). In entering into and studying these cases, the students were able to appreciate and understand their professional role from “the other side”, and be conscious of the affective attributes that they would want in a police officer. In other disciplines, cases from the professional field were used so students

could grapple with the ethical issues involved, and learn to make moral judgements within the safe confines of a hypothetical or historical situation.

Role Playing: Another popular way to allow students to enter into the experiences of others was through role playing. While some participants reported that some students were a little shy of acting with, and/or in front of their peers, it was seen as a powerful tool for engaging students affectively in particular professional situations. In many ways, a role play is similar to a hypothetical case study, but the students have to respond physically and in the moment, meaning it can be more “real”, but it also has the potential to go beyond the confines of the particular subject of interest. One of the participants recounted how she used a role play so students had to engage with a situation where there were competing values, and they had to negotiate to come to a collective decision.

They get given the story of John and they are the multidisciplinary team. I put them in a circle and they have to be whoever they have been given and what they believe. Then they actually have to make a decision about John. (Alice, Nursing)

Through this role play activity, the students learn that it is just not as simple as acquiring the appropriate beliefs, values and attitudes for your field, but in professional practice you will also need to engage in negotiations and debates with others who may not share your views. These sorts of activities require students to move from just a knowledge of ethics towards affective traits that enable them to make professional and ethically sound decisions.

First-Person Writing: A final teaching approach that was mentioned by more than one participant was first-person writing in assessable and non-assessable tasks. For a number of the participants, this sort of writing was done in some sort of journal. This teaching approach did not have the spontaneity or immediacy of the role play, but it did allow the students to really consider their values, beliefs and attitudes, and express them in a personal manner. The power of this sort of writing is that it requires the student to write about themselves rather than “teachers” or “scientists” or “midwives” in general. The students need to express what they feel, value, think and value, rather than some generic-type statements about professionals in their field. The consensus amongst those who employed this teaching strategy was that the students still needed to engage with the appropriate theory and literature, but they had to move beyond mere understanding and knowledge to personal commitment and proposed action. As such, the students’ writing was usually value-laden, and affective to some degree, in nature.

Concluding Comments and Recommendations

It has been obvious through this study that the development of affective qualities is an integral and important part of students’ education at CSU. However, it is equally clear that affective development is complex and difficult, particularly within the tertiary context. Furthermore, it is debateable as to whether the university and academics can evaluate and comment upon graduates’ affective attributes with any degree of certainty. That said, this doesn’t diminish the need to promote the development of desirable affective qualities within the university’s programs, particularly given the large number of programs that are professionally oriented. Moreover, students are learning values, beliefs and attitudes through their tertiary education, and this debate is really about being more overt and deliberate about those affective traits that are seen as desirable and even essential.

As part of this study, nine academics from across the university have been interviewed in-depth, and in each case they have presented a range of coherent and thoughtful views on affective development within their discipline. In every case they were also able to articulate a range of teaching approaches that they employ to promote affective growth amongst their students. Furthermore, the participants were acutely aware of their own ethical responsibilities and concerns as they sought to engage students about values, beliefs, attitudes, morals and dispositions. As one participant stated; “I still need to allow people to make up their own minds. ... Forcing someone to believe in what you believe in is not ethical or moral.” (Alex, Science). The participants were also clear about their limitations in trying to facilitate affective development, as indicated in this proverbial statement: “You can lead a horse to water, but you cannot make them drink” (perhaps one could add, “but you can make it thirsty”!).

Recommendations

The following recommendations come from the trends, ideas and issues that emerged from the study

Recommendation 1: That academics in discipline areas discuss and clarify the desirable affective attributes that underpin their field: In each discipline area there seemed to be, to a greater or lesser extent, some presumption of a shared understanding about what were considered desirable, or even essential, affective attributes. However, these values, beliefs, dispositions and attitudes did not appear to be discussed or debated and so the knowledge and acceptance of these affective qualities were largely tacit. Given the importance of developing these desirable affective traits, it would seem important that academics discuss and debate these things so they may have some clarity about what attributes are indeed shared, and the affective qualities that they themselves still see as debateable. In part, this may occur as the CSU Graduate Attributes are incorporated into all programs over the next while.

Recommendation 2: That the practice architectures of the university and its courses and subjects be reviewed to see if more flexibility can be found to accommodate affective qualities. It was clear through the study that it is difficult to promote affective development within the current practice architectures of the university (and indeed, the tertiary sector in general). In particular, it seems very hard to assess affective qualities in any formal way, thus the affective is often marginalised when considering what is actually seen as important.

Recommendation 3: That more research and development be undertaken into teaching strategies and approaches that facilitate affective development. This study has begun to explore the teaching approaches employed by some academics to promote and facilitate the development of desirable affective attributes. It is clear that in general this is not that well understood, as is evidence by the limited literature available on the topic. Furthermore, it would be important to understand these issues from the student and employee perspective as well.

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Affective Development in Tertiary Education Project
Funded through the CSU Scholarship in Teaching Fund

Financial Reconcilliation

Budget Item	Budget	Actual
Teaching Release: Marking	2925.36	4406.06
Administrative Assistance	5581.37	2130.40
Consumables: Photocopying & printing ¹	400.00	15.14
Consumables: Phone	50.00	0
Audiotapes ²	50.00	0
1 overnight trip to Bathurst	411.00	334.49
1 overnight trip to Albury ³	279.00	141.30
Taxis and car transport	100.00	0
Total:	9796.73	7027.39

Notes:

1: Batteries for MP3 recorder

2: Audio-tapes not required because MP3 recorder used.

3: Day-trip meant no accommodation required.

Dr Peter Grootenboer

4 February 2008.