Publications

Brown, T., Wagenheim, G., & Crispo, A. (2013), Creating learning and change through reflective conversations

Feeling My Way: Teaching Business Ethics in a Liminal Age

ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores what is required to teach undergraduate business ethics more effectively in the present climate of rapid change, increasing complexity and cultural diversity. In such a context, the world must be continually re-interpreted and the self successively re-invented, thus the project of education must be re-invented as well, changing from one that focuses on knowledge transmission to one that facilitates personal transformation. In the Faculty of Business, the ethics course is well positioned to respond to these new challenges, but adjustments to both curriculum and pedagogy will be required. The author argues that the curriculum must be broadened to incorporate the recent synthesis in moral psychology that gives rise to Haidt’s Moral Foundations Theory. Based on research by Kegan, Baxter Magolda, and others, the author finds that the course is currently taught at a level that likely does not take sufficient account of the epistemological development stage profile of the typical third-year business undergraduate class, in which large numbers of students may be operating at a developmental level a stage or more below what is required to meet course expectations. Accordingly extra support for these students is required. Of potential interest to other undergraduate business ethics instructors are: one, the author’s process for incrementally incorporating pedagogical innovations from the Team-Based Learning (TBL) literature; and two, the author’s process for managing reflective learning journal assignments in a large (~100 students) culturally diverse class, in which as many as two-thirds of the class are EAL students. In addition to traditional academic writing, the author employs story-telling and poetry in order to evoke an emotional response from the reader and highlight a central theme of this dissertation: that ethical decision-making is often as much or more a matter of the emotions as it is a matter of deliberative rational thinking. Finally this dissertation can be read as an extended personal reflection on the author’s engagement with business ethics as an instructor and as an individual undergoing his own transformational journey from teaching for knowledge transmission to teaching for self-authorship.

Academic Record

1994 – MBA, Simon Fraser University

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