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Abstract

The aim of this article is to shed light on some aspects of professional responsibility by investigating students' visions of future work and notions of professional responsibility. The data is based on interviews with samples of freshmen in three educational programmes at the University of Oslo in Norway. The data has been analysed in relation to two theses claimed by Steven Brint: 'The rise of a utilitarian ethos' in higher education and the movement from 'social trustee professionalism' to 'expert professionalism'. The findings show that the students in our sample do not think of higher education primarily as a means to get credentials that will be useful in the labour market. An intellectual interest in the discipline is the most prevalent reason for the students' educational choices. Furthermore our findings support an orientation towards 'expert professionalism' rather than 'social trustee professionalism'. But, embedded in the perspective of an expert there is an emphasis on ethical knowledge, moral and/or societal responsibility and the wish to do good for others. However, the students' sense of responsibility seems to be restricted to certain 'localism' of their specific

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occupation. Based on the findings we argue that the students reveal a moral awareness that should be taken seriously by the educational institution in order to foster critical rationality and professional commitments. (HRK / Abstract übernommen), Solbrekke, Tone Dyrdal, E-Mail: toneso@ped.uio.no