EDUCATIONAL
DEVELOPMENTS

The Magazine of the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA)

Issue 19.4
December 2018 ISSN 1469-3267
£10.00 Cover price (UK only)

Contents

1 **Extending and reinforcing good practice in teacher development: An Erasmus+ funded project.** Vicky Davies and Roisín Curran

4 **Student-staff partnership in educational development: A source of hope in dark times.** Leoarna Mathias and John Peters

7 **The experience of being a student partner in educational development projects.** Aaisha Akhtar

9 **Gonzo assessments: Equalising the inequality in assessment design.** Nick Botfield and Dr David Mathew

13 **Engagement, partnership, and collaboration in Higher Education.** Glenn Fosbraey

16 **In defence of higher education teaching qualifications: Reflections on studying for the degree of MA in Academic Practice, ten years on** Christopher Wiley

18 **Triggers to reflection.** Peter Gossman

20 **SEDA Conference Spring 2018: Understanding and improving the student experience: Making a real difference in the new age of metrics.** Dr Jenny Lawrence

22 **Waving not drowning: Reflections from an in-house journal.** Virendra Mistry

25 **21 indicators of Student Success – Exploring a new sector priority in an age of student outcomes.** Tom Lowe and Maria Moxey

28 **SEDA News**

SEDA
Woburn House,
20 - 24 Tavistock Square
London WC1H 9HF
Tel 020 7380 6767
Fax 020 7387 2655
Email office@seda.ac.uk
More information about SEDA's activities can be found on our website:
www.seda.ac.uk
A company limited by guarantee and registered in England, No. 3709481. Registered in England and Wales as a charity, No.1089537

Extending and reinforcing good practice in teacher development: An Erasmus+ funded project

Vicky Davies and **Roisín Curran,** Ulster University

This article provides an overview of the key activities that have been carried out in the first two years of this three-year project (2016-2019) Erasmus+

Project background and aims

Although formal professional development for learning and teaching in higher education is well established in the UK and some other European countries (Pleschová et al., 2012), other institutions within the European Union, such as those in Eastern Europe, do not necessarily have a record of such formalised support, particularly with regard to support for early career educators. More than two decades since the change of regimes in Central and Eastern Europe, universities in these countries are still, to a certain extent, playing catch-up in terms of academic development. Those new to higher education teaching tend to emulate teaching styles and techniques of more senior teachers, which, in turn, can hamper the introduction of more effective teaching methods and approaches, and adversely impact the student learning experience. This exciting project, led by the University of Economics in Bratislava (Slovakia) seeks to offer professional development opportunities to early career university educators in countries where this was hitherto lacking. It comprises a range of partners from across Europe that bring their own expertise and perspectives to the project delivery and intended outcomes:

- University of Economics, Bratislava (EUBA) (Slovakia)
- Central European University, Budapest (Hungary)
- Masaryk University, Brno (Czech Republic)
- University of Lund (Sweden)
- University of Tartu (Estonia)
- SEDA (UK).

The Project Partners

EDUCATIONAL
DEVELOPMENTS
The Magazine of SEDA
Issue 19.4
2018

Editorial Committee
Amy Barlow
University of Portsmouth

Dr John Bostock
Edge Hill University

Dr Carole Davis
Queen Mary University of London

Dr Peter Gossman
University of Worcester

Professor Alison James
University of Winchester

Steve Outram
HE Consultant and Researcher

Ellie Russell
National Union of Students

Professor Claire Taylor FSEDA
Wrexham Glyndwr University

Professor James Wisdom
Higher Education Consultant

Dr W. Alan Wright
University of Windsor, Canada

2018 (Vol.19)
Annual Subscription Rates

Individual subscriptions are £40 sterling per year (4 issues) within the UK. Overseas subscribers should add £5 sterling postage and packing for delivery within the EU or £8 sterling for the rest of the world.

Packs of 10 copies (each copy containing 4 issues) are available for £290 sterling.

All orders should be sent to the SEDA Office, either with payment or official order.

NB SEDA members automatically receive copies of ***Educational Developments.***

Building on past professional development pilot projects undertaken by the University of Economics and Masaryk University, and their resulting recommendations, the project aims ultimately to enhance the student learning experience by providing professional development for early career university teachers in countries where didactic learning and teaching styles remain prevalent. The main objectives of the project are to:

1) Offer an educational development course, which is designed to help participants transition from a teacher-centric perspective towards more active, student-focused approaches

2) Evaluate the factors that support and/or inhibit the transfer of knowledge and skills from formalised academic development to lived practice

3) Prepare a group of local professionals that could replace in the future foreign academic developers and run teacher development courses for their institutions.

The second and third objectives are still a work in progress, so here we focus on the considerable progress that has been made with regard to Objective 1, and look at some of the feedback that participants have provided on the programme, and the impact for their own professional development.

Teaching programme

The design of the overall programme – through face-to-face and virtual meetings – was undertaken in 2016-2017 by colleagues across the project partnership in readiness for its first delivery in August 2017. As previously mentioned, the underpinning principle of the programme as a whole is to promote student-centred approaches to learning and teaching in Higher Education, and encourage the adoption and development of those approaches by early career educators within the University of Economics (Bratislava) and Masaryk University (Brno).

The programme starts with an eight-day face-to-face summer school during which participants have the opportunity to discuss essential theories in higher education, and are encouraged to apply that knowledge through active formative activities such as planning individual sessions, learning activities, and assessment and feedback approaches. As part of the summer school they also carry out a short teaching demonstration which is peer and tutor critiqued, and are encouraged to use the feedback from this experience to reflect on how they might enhance their professional practice. The summer school is facilitated by colleagues from across the project partnership, including two SEDA representatives.

The second part of the programme is an online coaching programme that covers the whole of the academic year and which provides support to the participants in the daily challenges of their teaching. During this segment the participants work with an individual coach, drawn from the pool of summer school facilitators, who supports them through the process of designing, implementing and evaluating a learning and teaching innovation.

A key factor in the overall ethos of the programme was also the desire to make overt linkages to the wider educational development community, and show that this activity is valued in its own right, and that appropriate accreditation is recognised internationally. As a project partner, SEDA was ideally placed to facilitate this formal recognition, and the project, under the auspices of the Services and Enterprise Committee, was successfully accredited by the SEDA Professional Development Framework (SEDA-PDF) in relation to the Supporting Learning Award in August 2017.

Background of participants (cohort 1, 2017-2018)

This initial cohort who successfully applied to take part in the programme participated in an eight-day summer school held in Bratislava, Slovakia during Autumn 2017. The cohort came from different discipline backgrounds and places of study. Three participants study/work at EUBA, three at EUKE (Košice Kampus), and twelve at Masaryk University. They also represented a highly international group, coming from: Slovakia, Czech Republic, Albania, Ghana, Poland, Croatia, Germany and Russia. The students they teach also come from a wide range of countries. Some participants teach in English, whilst others teach in Slovak or Czech. The language of instruction at the summer school and related assessment tasks was English.

Prior to engaging in the summer school, participants were asked about their expectations from the programme. The responses included *inter alia*: to help them become better teachers, design sessions, encourage students to participate, facilitate discussion, think critically, read, to deliver interesting courses/sessions, help students to stay focused during the entire class, create safe learning environments – a relaxed, yet productive atmosphere in a class.

The participants appreciated the opportunity to have a mentor/coach assigned to guide them beyond the summer school for an extended period and from which they would receive feedback on planning, executing and evaluating their teaching innovation. They also valued highly the opportunity to work towards and achieve an internationally recognised award – the SEDA-PDF Supporting Learning Award.

Interestingly, and as noted above, some of the participants were aware of deficits in their own teaching approaches and recognised that there didn't exist a culture of 'discussing teaching with colleagues'. This apparent lack of the scholarship of teaching (Trigwell *et al*., 2000) was something that the summer school and overall programme planned for, and was successful in addressing.

Feedback from participants in cohort 1

An evaluation was carried out in relation to objective 1 of this project. Participants from this first group were asked a series of questions after completion of the online coaching programme – designed to provide support to the participants in the daily challenges of their teaching. Table 1 (below) offers a snapshot of the data gathered from this evaluation and includes direct quotes from some of the participants in relation to their opinion of the overall programme.

- *Keep organising this course. It's very valuable experience for any beginner or even experienced teacher.*
- *Please, offer the programme to the regular teachers at the University of Economics in Bratislava.*
- *Thank you very much for all the efforts, advices, encouragements. I am very thankful for having the opportunity to learn from you and I recommend the course to people around me.*
- *I think this programme should extend to Kosovo. I would be ready to assist in any respect.*
- *I consider the whole programme to be very valuable for my current and future teaching.*
- *It is just great, very well prepared. The programme is very beneficial.*

Table 1 Feedback from cohort 1 participants

A second cohort who successfully applied to take part in the programme participated in an eight-day summer school held in Brno, Czech Republic, during August 2018. Similar to cohort 1, this group of 19 PhD students came from different discipline backgrounds and places of study: 13 from Masaryk University and 6 from EUBA. They too represent a highly international group, originating from Slovakia, Czech Republic, Ghana, Nicaragua and Canada.

Participants at the summer school in Bratislava, August 2017

Further evaluation will be carried out in summer 2019, when this second cohort complete the online element of the programme. It is intended that once all data has been collected and analysed, further dissemination of this will be carried out.

Online book

Another exciting output from the project concerns the innovation projects that the 2017-18 participants completed as part of their Supporting Learning Award. These project reports have been further refined, and are now being incrementally published as online book chapters by SEDA, and were launched at a drinks reception at the SEDA Autumn 2018 conference in Birmingham. Not only does this demonstrate the valuable contributions and insights that early career educators are able to bring to the SEDA community, but also allows the participants to take ownership of the development and dissemination of their own scholarship in learning and teaching.

Professional development

Participating in this three-year project has brought professional development for the programme leaders and coaches too. Like the participants, this group of project leaders represent an international group coming from: Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Slovakia, Sweden, and the UK. From a SEDA perspective it has allowed us to widen our understanding of higher education cultures – an important consideration when looking at how SEDA-PDF awards are shaped for and interpreted by an international audience. It also allows the SEDA values to permeate a new initiative and shape the evolution of educational development in Central and Eastern Europe, and welcome new members to the SEDA family. From a personal perspective it has allowed us to 'live' the reality of teaching in a multicultural setting – pushing beyond our comfort zones at times – and allowed us to participate in a community of practice (Wenger *et al*., 2002) beyond our familiar 'significant networks' (Roxå and Mårtensson, 2009).

References

Pleschová, G., Simon, E., Quinlan, K. M., Murphy, J., Roxå, T. and Szabó, M. (2012) 'The professionalisation of academics as teachers in higher education', Strasbourg. European Science Foundation (available at: http://tinurl.com/y6veku8e, accessed 4 October 2018)

Roxå, T. and Mårtensson, K. (2009) 'Significant conversations and significant networks – exploring the backstage of the teaching arena', *Studies in Higher Education*, 34(5), pp. 547-559 (DOI:10.1080/03075070802597200).

Trigwell, K., Martin, E., Benjamin, J. and Prosser, M. (2000) 'Scholarship of teaching: a model', *Higher Education Research and Development*, 19:2, pp. 155-168, (DOI: 10.1080/072943600445628).

Wenger E., McDermott, R. and Snyder W. (2002) Cultivating Communities of Practice: a guide to managing knowledge, Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Project website

https://www.seda.ac.uk/extending_and-_reinforcing_good_practice_in_teacher_development

Vicky Davies PFHEA SFSEDA (v.davies@ulster.ac.uk) is a Professional Development Manager at Ulster University and Vice-Chair of SEDA's Professional Development Framework (PDF) Committee.

Dr Roisín Curran PFHEA (r.curran@ulster.ac.uk) is a Professional Development Manager at Ulster University and Co-Chair of SEDA's Professional Development Framework (PDF) Committee.

Student-staff partnership in educational development: A source of hope in dark times

Leoarna Mathias and **John Peters,** Newman University, Birmingham

As David Kernohan set out in his SEDA spring conference keynote, we face dark times working in educational development. In England, this is 'the first year since 1988 that there has been no direct funding for teaching quality enhancement' (Kernohan, 2018). Ring-fenced educational development funding has been replaced by an increasingly entrenched Government position, that universities are competitive providers of higher education to individualised student consumers, and an accompanying tide of dubious quality metrics from the Office for Students. For the academic discipline of educational or academic development, which grew up in the period of external enhancement funding, this poses serious challenges, particularly if we wish to uphold SEDA's mission: 'the advancement of education for the benefit of the public, particularly through improvement of educational and professional development in higher education' (SEDA, 2018). How do we uphold the public benefit of education, when the political climate is so hostile, or improve educational development, without the driver of external funding? At Newman University we have found working on partnership projects with our students to be a beacon of hope in challenging times. Our student-staff partnership scheme is built on Paulo Freire's idea of hope-full action, engaging students and staff as colleagues in communal rather than individual development projects, and has been received institutionally and externally as a source of hope that we can collectively be more (Freire, 2007).

The Academic Practice Unit at Newman University has now funded more than 80 student-staff partnership projects

since its inception in 2014. Given that Newman is a higher education community of around 3000 staff and students, this means there have been projects in every discipline area and touching all aspects of student learning. Students and colleagues working in partnership have focused on issues both within and beyond Newman: the range includes decolonising of the curriculum, exploring youth provision in our local community, delivering Children's University, increasing student understanding of assessment feedback, student motivation, programme evaluation, the experiences of mature students, disabled students, Muslim students, commuter students, and exploring the potential of peer mentoring for student support and retention. A satisfyingly rich diversity of partnership working examples has led to the development of resources that benefit the student community, to the publication of peer-reviewed research, and to changes in teaching and learning practice, amongst many other outcomes.

The principles that underpin student-staff partnership working have been set out before in Educational Developments (Peters, 2016). Our six principles for a pedagogy of partnership are drawn from the works of Paulo Freire and can briefly be summarised as:

1) **Building from a shared hope** – belief that we can collectively make a positive difference

2) **Establishing a shared dream** – having a vision of what that positive difference will be

3) **Promoting respectful dialogue** – listening to uncomfortable truths and hearing under-represented voices

4) **Engaging in co-investigation** – adopting critical curiosity to question the way things are, to reveal unspoken assumptions and to generate new possibilities

5) **Co-construction of solutions** – working collectively to act for the benefit of our community

6) **An ongoing collaborative process of transformation** – emphasising that the process is never finished and that collective action can spill out into all aspects of university life.

This nourishing vision of student as partner is intentionally set against the desiccating idea of student as customer – buying a metrics-measurable higher education for their own individual benefit. In contrast, we argue for both the social and intangible benefits of higher education and conduct the partnership scheme to emphasise these. We thus seek to resist the domesticating tendencies of the dominant discourse. In this we draw on both the conviction of our patron, Blessed John Henry Newman, and the expressed position of the National Union of Students.

In the mid-nineteenth century, Newman famously championed the importance of the educational relationship between tutor and student. He also challenged those who 'insist that Education should be confined to some particular and narrow end, and should issue in some definite work, which can be weighed and measured. They argue as if everything, as well as every person, had its price; and that where there has been great outlay, they have a right to expect a return in kind' (Newman, 2013). While the NUS's Manifesto for Partnership may not have Newman's pedigree, it too argues convincingly against student as customer, proposing instead partnerships based on 'a meaningful dispersal of power' (NUS, 2012, p. 8). At Newman University that dispersal of power is signalled by the expectation that a student be the first named author of applications and by the payment of students, rather than staff, for their project development work.

After four years of student-staff partnership working at Newman, there was a need to understand the impact of this work within the institution. As John was synonymous with partnership working within the university, a research partner was needed, and Leoarna stepped into that breach. Between March 2017 and April 2018, she conducted three focus groups with staff participants, and two with student partners, as well as a small number of individual interviews. Together, we set out to consider whether the experiences of those engaged in partnership working within the university in any way reflected the six Freirean principles set out above, and, crucially, whether this work was making a positive difference to the life of the institution and individuals within it.

Happily, there were clear points of contact between the collected data and the principles. There was a clear sense of how our approach to partnership working was, in contrast to the domesticating tendencies of some institutional programmes, challenging the power differentials between lecturer and student and moving us towards the creation of a hope-full learning community. Some colleagues reported genuine impact upon their pedagogy, as they witnessed students take on a new, more central role, capable of influencing how the university can and does see itself, as well as mapping out how it could transform. Relationships have been forged across faculties, departments, professional roles, and all elements of the student body, bringing a genuinely diverse range of voices to the fore.

There has been real pleasure and pride in the work undertaken through the projects, with an accompanying sense that students are engaged in the meaningful learning of investigative skills that will serve them within their studies, and after they graduate. Students have written and presented in contexts and forums that they would not have predicted possible prior to their participation. We have earlier seen examples of the range of outcomes from the projects, but beyond these tangible outputs, there was also a sense in the focus groups and interviews of student partnership having established itself as a source of real contribution to the life of the institution.

We paint a broadly positive picture here, but that is not to say that we have not encountered criticism of some aspects of the programme. There was a thread of frustration that some messages that had come out of the research undertaken in partnership contexts had not penetrated further into the institution, and a worry that partnership working itself was not as deeply embedded across the institution as it might be, given its perceived benefits. And we share a fear of partnership working being domesticated or operating as a fig leaf for less enlightened practices; however, we remain hopeful that it is gaining traction.

The conduct of this research into our partnership practices has given us an opportunity to share this approach to partnership, with our colleagues at conference, and through our joint

writing. As a result of the research, we held our first student-staff partnership celebration day at Newman in June 2018. Opened by the Vice-Chancellor, this year's project teams each presented a poster of their work and we met collectively to discuss our principles, consider how to build our community, and further promote the benefits of partnership working across the institution. As ever at such events, the energy, enthusiasm and sense of purpose from the students were palpable. It provided yet another reminder that each cohort of students comes with a new hope and that students are much less jaded by the dominant rhetoric than we are, if only we are willing to listen to their hopes and dreams (Peters, 2013).

The conduct of the research has given us an opportunity to present our work at conferences. At the recent Change Agent Network conference in Winchester, our audience were quick to grasp the principled intentions behind our approach: as Professor Tansy Jessop tweeted, 'Students seeing behind the curtain. Students experts in their own experience. Powerful talk from Newman. Ending with being and becoming'. We then presented on our student-staff partnership research for the second time at this year's Spring SEDA conference, this time focusing on what the data collected with student participants had to tell us about the nature of their experiences. As we spoke of the conceptual, theoretical underpinning for this model of partnership, colleagues responded positively to our sources of inspiration. Jo Peat tweeted, 'Newman [Cardinal John Henry], Freire and NUS: what a trio to consider when talking about student partnership!'. As we shared our data with colleagues in the room, there was a palpable sense of their being able to quickly see that the model is clearly grounded in authentic practice: as Jess Gagnon wrote on Twitter, '[John and Leoarna] presenting what real students as partners/co-creators might look like, rather than tick-boxes/lip-service being paid to the concept of partnership and co-creation'. We are appreciative of the warm reception our papers have received, and are glad to have kick-started a conversation about maintaining optimism in our classrooms and institutions, as we exchanged ideas, via the hashtags #hehope and #loveseda, with colleagues across the SEDA community and beyond.

Since returning from SEDA, the (digital) conversation around 'hope' has continued, and we have reflected upon the positive response we meet each time we share these hope-filled principles with our sector colleagues. As is often the case, a conceptual understanding that has become an everyday shared language in one context, can take on new meaning, be re-understood, in another. As teachers in higher education, we are part of a group of student and staff colleagues who meet regularly in our University to consider the role hope-full critical pedagogy can play in our work and study. Our membership of this group, and the weekly conversations had therein, allow us to (possibly mistakenly) assume that our sector-wide colleagues are also finding ways to maintain hope, and to find contexts and spaces within which to do this important work. The response to our discussions at SEDA and other conferences suggests otherwise.

We know that the 'academy is not paradise' (hooks, 1994, p. 207). While every generation believes that the crises they live through are the worst there may have ever been, we are nevertheless witnessing extraordinary times in English HE. Having responded to a seeming societal and policy-driven need for a greater number of institutions and a greater diversity between institutions in the last 40 years, and to an evermore urgent 'need' to demonstrate our value to society in economic terms, each and every university is now competing for its place in a crowded market. In these metricised times, it is hard to respond with anything other than preoccupation for our individual survival (Winn, 2015). What room is there for collegiality, for hope, for democracy against this tidal wave of individualism?

We acknowledge that such demoralising stratification (Cates *et al*., 2018) of our university sector is operating to undermine teaching and learning at every turn. And in this climate, it is possible for partnership working to be absorbed, appropriated and instrumentalised; projects can become 'facades… mask[ing] the power structures of HE, with minor choice presented as student empowerment' (Cates *et al*., 2018, p. 40). Student Partnership becomes as vulnerable to fashion as any other element of educational delivery. On this, White holds strong views: for him, partnership working has become a tool used by universities to obscure 'any suspicion of fraud' (White, 2018, p. 168), and projects often represent, at best, a 'non-moral, thin, functional conception of higher education [that acts to] preclude trust' (p. 170). Student Partnership is thus always and already at risk of being appropriated for domesticating purposes (Peters, 2018). If we are not mindful, then, as Freire reminds us, our hope will be 'pulverised in the immobility of the crushing present, some sort of stop beyond which nothing is possible' (Freire, 1997, p. 101).

For us, the existence of this tidal wave, this domestication, this crushing present, is the very reason we should, and must, maintain hope. We acknowledge that our employment within a small institution, characterised by its social justice mission, and Catholic ethos, enables us to live out our hope in ways that may not be open to others. But we believe that 'collegial and mutualist behaviours can flourish in commercial environments' (Callender and Scott, 2013). In living out hope through the practice of student-staff partnership, we are endeavouring to meet Neary's call that we should 'think much harder' about how we do higher education (Neary, 2012, p. 164), and speak with, and to, those both within and without the academy (Docherty, 2014). Student-staff partnership can be a glorious counter-narrative to the dominating market-speak we are met with, it can disrupt siloed competitiveness (Cates *et al*., 2018) and help us to embrace a 'radical collegiality' (Fielding, 1999), as it invites us to be at peace with the uncertainty and fluidity, and trust in the value of the process.

Our role, then, is laid before us: to acknowledge the hope that each new cohort of students brings to our institutions, and to lift ourselves up to meet it. The call to arms from Freire is clear: 'I must not leave for a random tomorrow something that is part of my task as a progressive educator right now' (Freire, 1997, p. 75). It is vital that educational developers continue to maintain their own hope in the possibility of transformation and transformational education for the benefit of all. In these dark days we need also to provide hope to colleagues, and build hopeful activities with students and staff. As Freire asserts: 'In my view, "being" in the world means to transform and re-transform the world, not to adapt to it. As human beings, there is no doubt our main responsibilities consist of intervening in reality and keeping up our hope' (Freire, 2007, pp. 4-5).

References

Callender, C. and Scott, P. (2013) *Browne and Beyond: modernising English higher education*, London: Institute of Education Press.

Cates, R., Madigan, R. and Reitenauer, V. (2018) '"Locations of possibility": critical perspectives on partnership', *International Journal of Students as Partners,* 2:1, pp. 33-45.

Docherty, T. (2014) *Universities at War*, London: Sage Swifts.

Fielding, M. (1999) 'Radical collegiality: affirming teaching as an inclusive professional practice', *Australian Educational Researcher*, 26:2 pp. 1-34.

Freire, P. (2007) *Daring to Dream: toward a pedagogy of the unfinished*, Boulder, USA: Paradigm Publishers.

Freire, P. (1997) *Pedagogy of the Heart, New York*: Continuum.

hooks, b. (1994) *Teaching to Transgress*, New York: Routledge.

Kernohan, D. (2018) 'After the goldrush: thirty years of teaching quality enhancement' (available at: http://tinyurl.com.ydcxvfgs).

National Union of Students (2012) *A Manifesto for Partnership*, London: NUS

Neary, M. (2012) 'Beyond teaching in public: the university as a form of social knowing', in Stevenson, H., Bell, L. and Neary, M. (eds.) *Towards Teaching in Public*: *reshaping the modern university*, pp. 148-164, London: Continuum.

Newman, J. H. (2013) *The Idea of a University*, London: Lulu.

Peters, J. (2013) 'Hearing voices and seeing visions: why the conversation with students matters for higher education', *Educational Developments*, 14.1.

Peters, J. (2016) 'The pedagogy of partnership: six principles for action', *Educational Developments*, 17.4.

Peters, J. (2018) 'The pedagogies of partnership: from Blair to Freire?', in A. Melling and R. Pilkington, *Paulo Freire and Transformative Education*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

SEDA (2018) 'Core mission and values' (available at: http://tinyurl.com/y8txn8xf).

White, M. (2018) 'Student partnership, trust and authority in universities', *Educational Philosophy and Theory*. 50:2, pp. 163-173.

Winn, J. (2015) 'Academic labour and the capitalist university: a critique of higher education through the law of value Lincoln depository' (PhD thesis available at: http://tinyurl.com/ybsld37x).

Leoarna Mathias is Transition and Retention Programme Co-ordinator and **John Peters** is Head of Academic Practice, both at Newman University, Birmingham.

The experience of being a student partner in educational development projects

Aaisha Akhtar, a second year undergraduate English student, reflects on working as a student partner for Newman University's HEFCE-funded innovation project 'Collaborative development of pedagogic interventions based on learning analytics'.

Half-way through my first year at Newman University I received an email from my lecturer, Kerry Myler, regarding a student partnership project. As someone who was looking to get involved with the institution outside of her studies, I was intrigued at the prospect of working on a research project as an actual partner, despite my 'inexperience'. In saying this, however, I was slightly apprehensive too because I had very little idea of what the actual project would be about. I did not want to be investing my time and energy into something I simply had no interest in – whether I was getting paid for it or not. I agreed, therefore, to attend the first workshop and then come to a decision afterwards. As a first-year student it was somewhat daunting sitting in a room full of academics from across the institution – despite the presence of other students. But it was not until we analysed and discussed literature concerning student engagement that I settled in and knew that this was something I could happily sink my teeth into.

The workshop explained that Newman University Birmingham's HEFCE-funded innovation project – 'Collaborative development of pedagogic interventions based on learning analytics' – aimed to use student engagement activity data to drive pedagogic innovation. So, while a lot of other projects around learning analytics have previously concentrated on developing the data, this project was more concerned with how that data might be used to inform pedagogic innovation in support of student success. Hence the main project was based around a number of student-staff partnership projects in individual subject areas. I was to be part of the team for English, working alongside teams in Youth and Community Work and Sports. The key to the approach was that the student-staff projects would consult with students about the sort of interventions they wanted to see as a result of using engagement data and then to design, implement and evaluate the interventions.

Interestingly, despite the wide set of literature and the options for possible interventions that were put before us, the three

subject areas involved in this research project all chose to adopt mentoring as their form of intervention. This was perhaps because of the strong evidence about the effectiveness of mentoring, provided by the literature. In doing so, we were all able to work closely together as we were all undertaking similar projects. It is important to note that the intervention was used in different ways for each of the three subject areas: the research project for Sports was focused on first year students; the project for Youth and Community Work took place on a programme level; English was much more micro – the intervention was specific to a second year module. These differences allowed us to compare our experiences and not only build relationships outside of our own subject areas but it also allowed for multidisciplinary work. For instance, the student and staff partners of each of these projects, including myself, have presented together at numerous conferences over the last six months alone, from Digifest to SEDA, to the Newman Campus itself. As someone who initially could not maintain eye contact with the audience she was addressing, getting involved with this project certainly has improved my confidence in public speaking – so much so it is actually something that has seeped into my life outside of university – which is odd considering I would never have imagined myself addressing rooms full of people prior to this student partnership project.

Presenting at these conferences meant that we were able to share our findings with other institutions. The immense feedback and support we received ranged from guests approaching us at the end of our presentation to congratulate us, to people tweeting about how important it is to have student keynote speakers. Many resonated with the three core principles which underpinned this project:

- Students are real, diverse people who cannot be wholly defined or limited by their visible data nor any interpretations of it
- Using data is an ethical practice and aligns with our focus on formative education that seeks to develop the whole person through transformative learning
- Interventions should be pedagogically focused and supportive — not punitive.

In fact, one guest tweeted the following: ‘Three exceptional points that should underpin any efforts to harness learner analytics. Students are people too, we will do well to remember it’ (#brumdigistudent). This was perhaps the biggest takeaway for many of our guests and rightfully so, as it is these principles that have allowed all three subject areas to be successful in undertaking their projects. For instance, English had a submission rate of 93% this year compared to last year’s 74% - that’s almost a 20 per cent increase. Similarly, in comparison to last year, more students were willing to challenge themselves by tackling the ‘trickier’ approaches in their assignments instead of playing it safe and sticking to what they know – this requires active engagement – engagement that was facilitated by the mentoring system, by students and staff working collaboratively to ensure that we’re all able to make the most of our learning experiences. And I think that’s what it comes back down to – putting your students at the forefront of such interventions, whether that be by encouraging your students to get involved with staff-student partnerships or by simply developing student-centred approaches where students are viewed as actual people and not just statistics.

Much of the success the English project experienced was due to the willing participation of students across its subject area – *i.e.* the mentors (they were all students from the year above) and then you have the actual students that were taking the very module this project was concerned with. There’s much debate surrounding data protection and confidentiality, but we gave our students the choice of opting in or out and they all agreed to opt in. I think this is because from the very beginning we were open with our students. This meant they were heavily involved and aware from the ‘get go’. As a result of this, they were just as invested in this project as Kerry and I were, improving not only my relationship as a student partner with Kerry but the overall student-lecturer dynamic in English. It’s created this warm and friendly – but most importantly — engaging classroom environment, thereby resulting in a more enjoyable learning experience.

Lastly, working on this project has really added to my university experience. It has provided me with an invaluable insight into the world of academia by allowing me to work with members of staff and students from across Newman, whilst also enabling me to network outside of this institution. Additionally, I have developed an appreciation for what lecturers do outside of teaching and in understanding how universities work. Working on this project has meant that I have been able to hone a varied set of skills including public speaking and teamwork as previously mentioned, but it has also led me to tap into areas that I otherwise would not have done. For instance, a large part of this process was having all those involved reflect and think critically throughout the duration of the project – rather than just at the end of it. This ensured that this entire process was a proactive one, where the work we were doing was both meaningful and successful. On a final note, I’d like to remind academics that simply consulting students does not equal partnership. The key to a true and successful student-staff partnership is one where the contributions of both student and staff partner are equally valued and respected.

Aaisha Akhtar is an undergraduate English student at Newman University, Birmingham.

Information for Contributors

The Editorial Committee of Educational Developments welcomes contributions on any aspect of staff and educational development likely to be of interest to readers.

Submission of an article to Educational Developments implies that it has not been published elsewhere and that it is not currently being considered by any other publisher or editor.

The Editorial Committee reserves the right to make minor alterations during the editing process in order to adapt articles to the house style and length. Such alterations will not affect the main content of the article. A proof copy will not be supplied to authors prior to printing.

For more information please see: www.seda.ac.uk/publications

Gonzo assessments: Equalising the inequality in assessment design

Nick Botfield and **Dr David Mathew,** University of Bedfordshire

'What's it all about… Alfie?' (Cilla Black)

Introduction

Gonzo journalism is characterised by the writer's direct involvement with the events on which they are reporting. It seeks to 'equalise the footing between observer and observed' (Caron, 1985). Gonzo assessments seek to redress the balance of input that the assessment creators and students have over the design of the assessment.

The notion of giving students a more active role in creating their own learning is one that has been gathering pace for a number of years. Emerging from the pedagogical movement towards student-centred learning, approaches such as 'co-creation' and 'students as partners' have become increasingly used in 21st century education as a method of increasing student engagement and enhancing metacognition. Most assessment of student learning is, however, 'undertaken with little or no consultation with students' (Stefani, 2006) and if national guidance now recommends 'students should be offered greater partnership in assessment' (HEA, 2012), then it is this imbalance that Gonzo assessments seek to counter.

This case study builds on a 2017 pilot that found a positive correlation between student satisfaction and Gonzo assessments. It gauges the impact of introducing a co-created, summative assessment into one unit of the newly created Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching in Higher Education. One of the new units was entitled Assessment and Feedback in Higher Education (AFHE); however, this unit soon became known by its sobriquet 'Alfie', and it is Alfie that forms the basis of the discussions in this submission.

(Any inferences drawn by the reader with regards to links between the friendly personification of a unit and the supportive environment in which we ask learners to collaborate with us on their assessments are not coincidental.)

Rationale

In part, 'Alfie' grew out of some feedback that learners on the 15-16 cohort had provided on the subject of assessment. This feedback, at best, was lukewarm; it was often critical. Examples include the following:

- *'I am waiting for the feedback about the different tasks in order to improve my assessment'*
- *'More simpler [sic] and easy to follow assessment criteria would be better…'*
- *'I feel it is highly over assesses [sic] for the credits granted'.*

Clearly, a good deal of improvement was essential. We decided to allow the learners to co-create their own assessments, using tools provided as part of the 'Alfie' unit. However, even this decision was not without its issues, not least because there would seem to be no broad consensus among our learners of what actually constitutes an assessment. The situation could be seen as the equivalent of Jastrow's duck-rabbit: a visually ambiguous drawing that can be perceived as either a duck or a rabbit but not as both at the same time (Kihlstrom, 2017).

The pertinent question started to sound almost like the feedline for a joke: when is an assessment not an assessment? Which of course implies the more obvious one: when is an assessment an assessment?

Literature review

The question was answered by one student educator as 'when the enjoyment in the teaching and learning process is temporarily put on hold' and, although there was an element of completing the set-up with a punch line, there was a lot to unpack in his response. The general consensus amongst educators is that 'nothing we do to, or for our students is more important than our assessment of their work' (Race *et al*., 2005). However, in the NSS, students consistently rate assessment and feedback as the area of teaching and learning with which they are least satisfied. In addition, assessment has been said to be one of the least sophisticated aspects of teaching and learning in higher education (Carless, 2009), which needs to move from the exclusive domain of assessors into the hands of learners (Boud, 2000).

Since the turn of the 21st century, the applied theory has led to intensification in institutional and individual emphasis on increasing student engagement. Mann's (2001, in Kahu, 2013) study 'identifies contextual factors such as disciplinary power, academic culture and an excessive focus on performativity, which can all lead to the disconnection of students within higher education'. Kahu (2013) felt that the process of assessment was a 'disciplinary power, a process of hierarchical and normalising judgement in a relationship of unequal power that risks alienating (the) student'. Thomas (2002) argued that student alienation or disengagement could be caused by the education system being 'socially and culturally biased' and went on to recommend that institutions 'promote inclusive attitudes and teaching, learning and assessment procedures'.

The amplified emphasis of inclusivity in higher education has come as a result of growth in globalisation and internationalisation, as well as democratisation within the sector which 'has been greatly influenced by mass social movements, for instance, civil rights, women's rights, indigenous rights' (Blessinger, 2016). Inclusive pedagogy

seeks to be flexible in its approach to teaching, learning and assessing students, and 'embraces a wide range of differences and is attuned to the impact of pedagogical initiatives on individual learners' (Evans *et al*., 2015). With regards to inclusivity, Waring and Evans (2015) discuss the differences between adaptive and adapted learning resources, arguing that the former will allow the students the opportunity to use and engage with the resources and approaches in a way that suits them. This notion then leads to a key component of Waring and Evans's (2015) 'Personal Learning Styles Pedagogy' (PLSP) framework 'supporting learner autonomy: offering choices in learning and listening to the student voice'. The PLSP framework is an 'inclusive participatory pedagogy that supports the development of the self-regulatory practice of learners and teachers' (Waring and Evans, 2015).

A complementary framework to PLSP is the Embedding Equality and Diversity in the Curriculum (EEDC) model from Hanesworth (2015). This model seeks to give practical application of the EEDC framework to higher education professionals by promoting approaches and methods in all areas of teaching, learning and assessment. Hanesworth (2015) recommends that educators 'assess students' learning using multiple methods, allowing, where possible, for student choice in assessment method'. It is within both of these frameworks and the notion of 'student choice', that Gonzo positions itself, considering both the inclusivity and active learning positions and striving to apply the models and frameworks to create an assessment approach which involves the partnership of both students and staff. In considering partnership, Gonzo seeks to place equality between students and teachers and Gonzo assessments seek to fill a gap in the concept of partnership, which has been so far largely neglected (Sambell, 2016). Through the lens of inclusivity and active learning, partnership in the teaching and learning areas of the curricula has been gathering pace for a number of years. Approaches such as 'co-creation' (Bovill, 2014), 'students as producers' (Neary, 2010) and 'students as partners' (Healy *et al*. 2014) have become increasingly used as a method of increasing student engagement and enhancing metacognition. Assessment, however, seems particularly resistant to change, and remains one of the most conservative features of university education (Bloxham, 2016).

Methodology

Through examining the literature and completing the pilot we believed Gonzo to be a worthwhile method of assessment creation, and we wanted some tangible data to see how we could improve 'Alfie' for future cohorts. We decided on a small-scale study on the effectiveness of Gonzo assessments, by gaining some feedback through quantitative data using questionnaires and qualitative data through semi-structured interviews. Interview data were analysed thematically to allow for key topics to be extrapolated, reviewed, and organised before being compared against the quantitative data collected from the questionnaire (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis has been criticised for allowing too much flexibility and so guidelines (such as in Braun and Clarke, 2006) were adhered to.

Quantitative findings

The opening comment was: 'The Gonzo assessment process…':

1) Allowed me the opportunity to break down barriers to engaging with assessment
2) Allowed me the opportunity to clarify my understanding around assessment
3) Allowed me the opportunity to use prior knowledge when engaging with the assessment
4) Allowed me the opportunity to co-create an assessment in a format I feel comfortable completing
5) Allowed me the opportunity to co-create an assessment so that it aligned with my preferred method of expressing myself
6) Allowed me the opportunity to think strategically about my assessments
7) Increased my engagement with the assessments on this unit
8) Encouraged me to reflect on and evaluate my learning goals
9) Provided me the opportunity to self-assess and self-regulate my learning.

Q	*Agree strongly*	*Agree slightly*	*Disagree slightly*	*Disagree strongly*	*Number of reponses*
1	1	8	0	0	9
2	5	2	2	0	9
3	4	4	1	0	9
4	1	8	0	0	9
5	2	6	1	0	9
6	2	7	0	0	9
7	1	6	2	0	9
8	4	4	1	0	9
9	3	3	3	0	9

Table 1 Quantitative findings

It can be seen (Table 1) that the majority of results were positive, featuring either in 'Agree strongly' or 'Agree slightly'. For the authors, this was gratifying to learn. In particular, Statement 2 – which asks the participant to gauge his/her understanding of assessment – scored the highest in 'Agree strongly'. No results were recorded as the 'Disagree strongly' option. Statement 9 is interesting. It would seem to be the statement on which it is hardest to reach a consensus.

Qualitative findings

The qualitative findings from both the questionnaires and the six semi-structured interviews (P1-6) were thematically analysed and the following themes were discovered.

Excitement and apprehension

When asked to describe their thoughts on completing a co-created assignment, the participants showed a mixture of feelings which could generally be summarised as excitement and apprehension. Participants described their feelings of the idea as ranging from 'nice' (P6) to 'good' (P3) to 'brilliant' (P1). Some participants felt it was 'really good to have been able to do it' (P6) whilst others were 'quite excited to do it' (P2). The main reason given for this excitement was 'down to this idea of flexibility' (P2) and 'the aspect of having a choice' (P6). In the main, the thoughts were positive, but with excitement came an air of apprehension.

One of the participants particularly felt 'a bit overwhelmed by it, didn't know where to start' and felt that too 'many options makes me panic', adding that 'the power the consensus could have gone against me…it's never going to be one size fits all…that worried me' (P4). Another participant admitted that 'in the beginning I was a bit nervous' (P1) and felt this was because 'I was made to do the teaching and do more than just sit back and learn and I was like "I'm not quite sure what I'm doing now"' (P1).

Creativity and (dis)comfort

A further key theme was having to contribute towards the creation of the assessment, rather than it being something of which you were a recipient. The invitation to be creative, and the flexibility that co-creation offered, were two of the main reasons participants seemed to contribute. P5 stated that (s)he 'liked the invitation to create my own assessment to give me a level of autonomy over the way I want to demonstrate my knowledge and my skills and my values that I think I can show differently out of a traditional academic group' (P5). Other participants noted the ability to think outside the box and consider different types of assessments, stating that 'it was nice knowing there was scope to try other things…it did help me think more creatively and more independently because I felt there weren't such rigid structures that I had to stick with' (P2), and 'I'm not particularly creative but we came up with some crazy creative idea and I thought "I'm never going to do this" but [if it was chosen] I would have done it' (P6).

The co-creation element was not comfortable for all participants, however, with P4 stating that 'when people were coming up with creative things it was becoming too diverse and out of my comfort zone' and feeling like (s)he 'didn't have much to contribute as I'm a "path of least resistance" kind of person'. (S)he did go on to say that 'when I saw the comfort zone was an option it was an easy choice and it was cool' (P4) but her earlier feelings were echoed by P3 who 'struggled to understand where people's thoughts were coming from'. That is not to say, however, that ideas did not coalesce and 'there was a feeling within the group that people are different learners and we should be able to respect each other as different learners' (P5).

Responsibility and control

After co-creating the assessment, the participants indicated that they then felt a responsibility when completing their assignment. P5 said 'I went ah! The University are prepared to take a risk' and, after discussing his/her own part in the co-creation stated, 'that's what I took away from it, and it made me more determined'. This notion of responsibility was echoed by P3 who felt that the assessment gave 'me the information to form how I feel I should be assessed', 'allowed me to bring in clarification on my perspective' and 'that allows me to feel responsible, in my own way'.

It was these two participants (P5, P3) who particularly mentioned the notion of control. P5 found herself 'struggling to make my creative idea fit with the assessment brief', feeling that 'the thresholds and criteria fitted better…with a more traditional model'. P3 echoed this by saying 'the assignment had to fall within...comply with a boundary of control' and 'boundary of control has to be flexible…we have to make allowance for everybody's needs'.

The concept of control was discussed in a different way by other participants who felt that time was a mitigating factor in their ability to make the most out of a co-created assessment. P1 felt that the process was 'very very time consuming', whilst P2 felt that his/her choices were restricted by time factors, 'I sat down and said "realistically that's not going to happen this time"'. Finally, P6 mentioned that the co-created assessment was 'a good idea' but was 'not sure it was at the right time'. Considering using it with his/her own students, P4 felt 'I don't think I can get my students to engage in it deeply enough to make it fit…without extra time'.

Change and adoption

As the participants are also HE lecturers, it felt appropriate to ask them to reflect on their experience of co-creating an assessment in terms of their current practice as educators. P2 stated that the experience 'opened her eyes to what else we could be doing' and felt (s)he may have previously been unintentionally 'rigid'. (S)he went on to consider her current assessment practice and state that the co-creation could have an 'impact on several units I've had rethinks for', particularly 'knowing the student base and the students we have…it really has made me think a lot more, this is what we should be doing'.

P1 reiterated this idea of adopting elements of the practice, feeling that, whilst the whole co-creation element may not be appropriate for her students, 'lots of ideas have come from it that I'll certainly put in for my students'. P4 felt that 'it's a good idea because it could be replicated in our own practice', whilst P5 noted that 'I'm quite interested in experimenting with different ways

myself in order to be able to diversify for students of my own to show how they have learned rather than through traditional academic routes'.

Conclusion

The participants of this case study found the experience of co-creating an assessment challenging but ultimately positive. The process allowed the participants the opportunity to seek clarification and to use prior knowledge when engaging with their assessments. The participants were also clear that the process encouraged them to reflect on and evaluate their own learning goals and teaching methods. This is not to say that the process was by any means perfect and issues around time spent completing the co-creation, and student comfort levels, are both important pieces of feedback that will need to be considered by anyone considering the Gonzo method. Nevertheless, the enthusiasm of students to adopt elements of the Gonzo method signals to the writers that the process has been relatively successful in encouraging a more inclusive, partnership approach to assessment creation.

References

Blessinger, P. (2016) 'Creating a culture of inclusion in higher education', *University World News* (available at: http://tinurl.com/j716cxq).

Bloxham, S. (2016, June) 'Central challenges in transforming assessment at departmental and institutional level', keynote address at the Assessment in Higher Education (AHE) seminar day, Manchester.

Boud, D. (2000) 'Sustainable assessment: rethinking assessment for the learning society', *Studies in Continuing Education*, 22:2, pp. 151-167.

Bovill, C. (2014) 'An investigation of co-created curricula within higher education in the UK, Ireland and the USA', *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 51(1), pp. 15-25.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) 'Using thematic analysis in psychology', *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3 (2), pp. 77-101 (available from: http://eprints.uwe.ac.uk/11735).

Carless, D. (2009) 'Trust, distrust and their impact on assessment reform', *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 34(1): pp. 79-89.

Caron, J. E. (1985) 'Hunter S. Thompson's "Gonzo" journalism and the tall tale tradition in America', *Popular Culture Association in the South*, 8(1), pp. 1-16.

Evans, C., Muijs, D. and Tomlinson, M. (2015) Engaged Student Learning: *high-impact strategies to enhance student achievement*, York: Higher Education Academy.

Hanesworth, P. (2015) *Embedding Equality and Diversity in the Curriculum: a model for learning and teaching practitioners*, York: Higher Education Academy.

Healey, M., Flint, A. and Harrington, K. (2014) *Engagement Through Partnership: students as partners in learning and teaching in higher education*, York: HE Academy.

Higher Education Academy (2012) *A Marked Improvement: transforming assessment in higher education*.

Kahu, E. (2013) 'Framing student engagement in higher education', *Studies in Higher Education*, 58(5), pp. 758-733.

Kihlstrom, J. F. (2017) 'Joseph Jastrow and his duck – or is it a rabbit? (available at: http://tinyurl.com/y7k7w8nz).

Neary, M. (2010) 'Student as producer: a pedagogy for the avant-garde; or, how do revolutionary teachers teach?', *Learning Exchange*, 1(1).

Race, P., Brown, S. and Smith, B. (2005) 500 Tips on Assessment, 2nd edition, London: Routledge.

Sambell, K. (2016) 'Assessment and feedback in higher education: considerable room for improvement?', *Student Engagement in Higher Education Journal*, 1(1).

Stefani, J. (2006) 'Assessment in partnership with learners', *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 23(4), pp. 339-350.

Thomas, L. (2002) 'Student retention in higher education: the role of institutional habitus', *Journal of Educational Policy*, 17(4), pp. 423-442.

Waring, M. and Evans, C. (2015) *Understanding Pedagogy: developing a critical approach to teaching and learning*, Abingdon, Oxford: Routledge.

Nick Botfield and Dr David Mathew are Educational Developers in the Centre for Learning Excellence at the University of Bedfordshire.

Joining the Editorial Committee of Educational Developments

The Editorial Committee of Educational Developments is looking for a new member. Ideally this would be someone who brings new elements to the group, whose members at present have a range of interests in managing or being part of units, running PGCerts and other courses, educational development consultancy and the application of new technology, with links to the National Union of Students.

The magazine works through four planning meetings a year in London at which proposals are made, ideas are discussed and articles are commissioned. There is a lot of email traffic as articles are followed up, read and edited. One or two of the group take responsibility for editing each issue, which involves dealing with any problems, preparing the articles for printing and reading the proofs after the issue is designed.

We are looking for someone with a broad knowledge of the 'world' of educational development and who is attuned to our readership and their needs. The crucial skill is commissioning: persuading busy educational developers to write articles quickly! Educational Developments is a topical magazine with quite rapid responses.

As with all SEDA committees, members must be able to dedicate time to attend meetings (exceptionally through Skype) and to support the planning and review process that underpins publication. Next year's meetings will take place on 14 March (at which all applications will be considered), 20 June, 26 September, and 5 December (all meetings in London from 10.30am-3pm).

If you are interested in joining the committee, please describe (in less than 500 words) your interest and what you might bring to the task in an email to office@seda.ac.uk by **28 February 2019**.

Engagement, partnership, and collaboration in Higher Education

Glenn Fosbraey, University of Winchester

Engagement

Whenever I start planning a lesson, my immediate thoughts turn to an image of myself in the classroom – younger, fitter, more hair, waiting for the class to begin. Another version of me enters the room, starts up the PC, and prepares to begin the class.

How can I get student me to engage with the lesson content? And what do I want him to get out of this class?

Every lesson I write, every module I plan, begins with these questions. I pitch each dummy lesson to student me, and see how he reacts. What would I have wanted back then? What would have engaged me, made me listen, got me energised, made me leave the room on a high and looking forward to the next class?

Angela Brew posits that 'when people put themselves in the position of being learners or teachers, they bring all their past experiences of being both a learner or a teacher (Brew, 2006, p. 115), and I believe it's important to remember what we liked when we were students (and what we didn't like), and for these experiences to influence how we conduct ourselves in future.

Of course, this approach brings with it some issues that need to be addressed before the lesson goes 'live' in front of the students. Firstly, I haven't been a student for a long time now, and with each passing year, the accuracy of my memories is getting less and less reliable.

Secondly, even if all my student experiences could be recalled in perfect detail, HE has changed a great deal since then, and so have student expectations, so how relevant are they anyway? Diversification of lesson plans, the current mood of the student body, up-to-date benchmark statements, mental wellbeing, Faculty agenda, class size: all these things are vital to how a lesson runs, and are subject to change every year.

Thirdly, what really worked for me might not have worked for another student in the same class who had a different approach to learning.

Even though there is much more to lesson planning than my initial consideration of what I would have wanted as a student, and even though my answer to this question is getting more and more blurred as time passes, I still believe such a process to be crucial. I always say to our students that they will only write to the best of their abilities if they love what they're writing, and I believe the same is true for lesson planning: if I don't love the content, and the way I'm planning to present it, I'll alter it until I do. If I can't make myself excited about the material, how can I expect anyone else to be? To engage others with my lessons, I must first be able to engage myself.

Partnership

Stranger at party: *So, what do you do?*

Me: *Err… I'm a Facilitator. At a University.*

Stranger at party: *What's that?*

Me: *Well, it's teaching classes.*

Stranger at party: *So, you're a Lecturer?*

It may say it on my contract, and it's most certainly the terminology most commonly applied to what I do for a living, but very rarely do I 'lecture' in the old-fashioned 'chalk and talk' way. Nor do I 'teach', per se, as that also suggests a 'one-way communication' (Fawbert, 2003, p. 162). In the Creative Writing classroom in HE, for a student to produce their best work, a lot of the material has to come from within, and it's the tutor's job to get the student into the position where they are able to bring that out of themselves, allowing them to 'show initiative, to take responsibility… make decisions, and communicate effectively' (Fawbert, 2003, p. 163). That's why, if pushed, 'Facilitator' would be a better fit: facilitating the students' journey through the subject matter in pursuit of creating original opinions and content.

I see myself as part of the classroom rather than its focal point, sharing information through a constant dialogue rather than monologue. I find the best way to get across a theory is to begin a discussion on a wider theme, allowing the students to voice their opinions, then introduce said theory as part of that dialogue, offering it as one possibility of many, which allows students, through engaging in elaboration and self-explanation, to make links between the material, their life, and previous knowledge (Gurung and Schwartz, 2009, p. 108), then feed that into their writing (both critically and creatively).

I have always been a great believer in the importance of regarding students as 'partners' in their studies, and the challenge is to constantly seek ways, both individually and at programme level, to actively engage them in their studies, rather than allowing them to be passive observers in their own education. After all, 'positioning students as peers who have valuable perspectives in learning is key to supporting equitable partnerships between educators and students with the goal of improving practice' (Elkington, 2014, p. 178). However, even though I encourage student participation and collaboration, boundaries are necessary in the teacher/ student relationship. It takes one class, induction session, or tutorial to lay the foundations of the three years of my teacher/student boundaries and during this first session I will show that I encourage a laid-back atmosphere but don't encourage apathy, lack of engagement, or tardiness; I encourage informality, but don't encourage the idea that I am their friend; I encourage the passionate sharing of ideas and opinions, but I don't encourage the sharing of unnecessarily personal information; I encourage criticism of other students' work, but I don't encourage the notion that this critique is necessarily right.

Once the boundaries have been set, I am able to break down the barriers between tutor and student (and therefore teaching and learning) in a number of ways. Firstly, my preferred class-room set-up, if the class size is small enough to permit this, is a boardroom-style arrangement, where I sit as part of the group (in amongst, not out in front), and lead the session without it seeming like I'm leading it. In this way, students feel much happier to take risks with their theories and opinions as they feel less judged and don't have the fear of getting something 'wrong', but I can influence and steer the discussions without being authoritarian. This set-up ties in with my preferred method of knowledge exchange, which involves providing students with 'learning-by-doing opportunities [where]… students practice things, have a go, and learn by making mistakes and finding out why' (Race, 2001, p. 4).

With tutorials or dissertation supervisions (not personal tutor sessions where private or sensitive information is being shared), I always offer the student the opportunity to choose between meeting in my office or one of the public areas around campus, where we can sit opposite one another at a table, discussing the project in an informal, relaxed manner, with a collaborative sharing of ideas and strategies.

Collaboration

For many years, through classroom exercises, workshops, feedback sessions, and debates, I had been involving the students as active collaborators in their education, rather than them simply being passive participants, and the next logical step was to allow them the opportunity to help shape the structures of the modules they were taking. After attending a 'Co-Creating Curricula' keynote lecture by Cathy Bovill at a Learning and Teaching Day, I was suitably inspired to road test her theories on a Creative Writing/Professional Writing module, and after checking the module descriptors for those which lent themselves to this method of teaching, I settled on the Level 5 Professional Writing module 'Professional Writing 2'. There was enough 'freedom' in the module descriptor (outside the mandatory areas) to allow for co-creation, and the subject area lent itself to increased student participation and engagement.

Bovill draws attention to the fact that although the term 'co-creation of curricula' implies a 'sharing of the design process involving academic staff and students, it may not be equal' (Bovill, 2013, p. 462), and in this situation, where the module descriptor had already been validated, the co-creation was never going to be completely equal as a number of elements had already been decided before the students were even involved.

In advance of the first class, having spoken with the Director of Academic Quality and having informed the students via our Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) that this module will involve 'co-design', I set about determining which elements of the module were available for proper collaboration, and which were non-negotiable due to the mandatory elements of the module descriptor. This represented the first challenge in using this type of module construction, as I was very much working within a framework whilst trying to make available as many elements as possible in order to make the design truly collaborative. I was able to open up the following to the students for discussion in Week 1:

- Module handbook: students were presented with a list of areas we needed to cover so as to achieve the module Learning Outcomes, but the specifics, and the order in which they took place were open for discussion.
- Assignment details: Students were given the following information:

  - Assignment (50%): A piece/pieces of professional writing of no more than 2000 words in total
  - Assignment (10%): A 2-minute oral presentation of the writing submission You will be assessed on: TBC
  - Assignment (40%): A 2000-word self-reflective essay
- In each case the further details were:
  - You will be assessed on: TBC
  - Submission deadline: TBC
  - Work will be marked by: TBC

As is evident, although the module descriptor didn't allow the freedom to create new assessment types or patterns, we were able, as a class, to collaborate on the marking criteria and submission deadlines, including the order in which the assignments were submitted. Although the words may suggest a freedom in deciding the return date, we are bound to central regulations in that all hand-ins must occur during term time, and within working hours.

Week 1

Students were given the module objectives and I followed this up with a presentation on Splendid Fred Records, the University's record label I set up in 2015, and the real-world 'project' they'd be working on for the duration of the module. We talked about what Splendid Fred had done to date, its budget, and its ambitions. It's important to note at this point that I didn't suggest any future endeavours, but simply gave a broad list of intentions.

In any activity where a class is called upon to make decisions together, a tutor must be wary of situations where one or two of the most vocal students speak on behalf of everyone else, leading to a skewed 'agreement' where only a fraction of the class has participated, and many may not agree with the verdict but don't have the confidence to challenge it. A way to limit this is to split the class into small groups (three or four maximum), and then feed back to the whole group via a nominated spokesperson.

In their groups, I got the students to mock-up their own module handbook, designing content structure, assignment specifics (including setting limitations re Assignments 1 and 3), marking criteria, and submission dates. I thought it important during this process not to offer any guidance at all, or to show them examples of existing handbooks. I was more interested in their complete freedom of expression and how they wanted the module to look, not what they thought it should look like. A number of the students were quite panicked and confused by the prospect of designing a module, so I interacted at this stage more than I had intended, mainly to calm them by re-iterating that they were neither being judged nor graded on such an exercise.

Although I instructed the students to think as freely and ambitiously as possible, the majority came up with ideas that were very 'sensible', and when we came together again as a bigger group and discussed all the proposals, every one resembled what they were already used to so far at Uni. In this way, then, it wasn't quite the 'imaginative, inventive,

and resourceful' process outlined by Bovill (2013, p. 463), but in designing the marking criteria, it certainly got the students 'co-defining what a good piece of work should comprise…[whilst] also…[helping them] to understand assessment expectations' (Bovill, 2013, p. 467).

After we'd agreed on a draft structure for the handbook, I typed it up and brought it in for approval the following week. The module was then designed and ready to run, but I was keen on the collaboration to continue *throughout* the module, rather than just this first week, so I decided to use a slightly different approach to the classroom set-up in order to achieve this.

Weeks 2-10

As the module involved the students all working for a single outward-facing company, and the class size was small, I decided to run the lessons themselves as board meetings, where the lesson content itself (my lecture) was an item on a wider agenda. Professional Writing 2 thus became a Splendid Fred Records Committee, set up so that every week there would be a different student 'chairing' these meetings, and a different one taking minutes. Using this method, the teacher/ student dynamic was re-imagined, and I became simply another member of the committee, led by whoever was chairing that particular week.

In Week 2, I chaired and took minutes myself, spending time giving a talk on both roles so as to provide examples of what I was expecting (including minute-taking style guidelines, an example of a set of action points, and an example of an agenda), but from Week 3, the students effectively ran the classes, and when the 'lesson content' item on the agenda came up, I gave my 'lecture' before re-joining the committee. In advance of the next week, the minute-taker would get their minutes approved by the chair, then upload to our VLE along with next week's agenda and action points. Using this method, the students were not only actively engaged at all times, but also, through the committee discussions, determining their own roles within the Record Label, thus ensuring that their learning was 'participatory, dialogic, collaborative, authentic, active and critical' (RAISE, 2018). We continued this method of working up until workshopping weeks at the end of the module, where the complete focus needed to be on nothing but the students' work.

Although I am delighted that our collaboration (both regarding design and delivery) matched every one of Chickering and Gamson's (1991) seven key components for ensuring the best possible student experience in HE, as well as RAISE's '10 Principles of Engaging Students', such projects must take on board student feedback to ensure one is not simply pursuing innovation and change purely for the sake of it. There was an initial resistance from the students regarding both the curriculum design and the board meeting set-up, and although the majority fed back that they saw how the module was 'valuable to future employment', there were still some who rejected such approaches, with one asking why I, as the tutor, 'didn't just design the module' myself, and another who asserted these were 'lessons, not board meetings'. I would be both foolish and arrogant to ignore such comments, but educators must weigh up the positives and negatives of any venture then make a judgement call on whether or not a) they were successful, and b) whether they should be attempted again.

In conclusion, staff-student collaboration is a valuable tool to enhance the student experience, but when it comes to co-creating module content, things become much more complicated. Whilst a tutor is able to tweak lesson content year on year without it negatively impacting the students, with the co-creation model, which is still new and largely untested beyond thought experiments in text books, a tutor runs the risk of the students becoming test subjects in an experiment, and they must constantly be on their guard to ensure this doesn't happen. After all, whilst pedagogic innovation is to be applauded, it must never come at the expense of the student experience. I would strongly recommend, therefore, that the co-creation technique be used only by experienced tutors, and preferably in classes where the tutor already knows the students from previous modules so trust has already been established. The students must feel confident that although the structure isn't what they're used to, their learning will not be jeopardised, and they will, with the support of the tutor, come out of the module having had a unique, rewarding experience, armed with employability and transferable skills that will enhance their CVs. If this doesn't happen, then it's experimenting for the sake of experimenting, and that should never be what education is about.

References

Bovill, C. (2013) 'Students and staff co-creating curricula: an example of good practice in higher education?', in Dunne, E. and Owen, D. (eds.) *The Student Engagement Handbook*, Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Brew, A. (2006) *Research and Teaching: beyond the divide*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Chickering, A. and Gamson, Z. (1987) 'Seven principles for good practice', in Chickering, A. and Gamson, Z. (1991) *New Directions for Teaching and Learning: Vol. 47. Applying the seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Elkington, S. (2014) 'Academic engagement: engaging who and to what end?', in Bryson, C. (ed.) (2014) *Understanding and Developing Student Engagement*, Oxon: Routledge.

Fawbert, F. (ed.) (2003) *Teaching in Post-Compulsory Education*, London: Continuum.

Gurung, R. A. R. and Schwartz, B. M. (2009) *Optimizing Teaching and Learning*, Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

Race, P. (ed.) (2001) *2000 Tips for Lecturers*, London: Kogan Page.

RAISE (Researching, advancing, and inspiring student engagement) (2018) '10 principles of engaging students' (http://tinyurl.com/ya4oz8ro, accessed 14 July 2018).

Glenn Fosbraey is a Senior Lecturer and the Programme Leader BA (Hons) Creative Writing and BA (Hons) Creative and Professional Writing at the University of Winchester.

Copyright

Copyright for all published material is held by SEDA unless stated otherwise.

Contributors may use their material elsewhere after publication without permission, but the following note should be added: 'First published in Educational Developments, issue number and date'. Permission is required for use by a third party.

Articles in Educational Developments have been refereed for quality and edited for publication by the Editorial Committee. We welcome articles that have been created through open electronic media such as personal blogs and discussion lists. Once published in Educational Developments, such articles should be acknowledged in the format described above.

The publishers have endeavoured to find the copyright holders of all material in this magazine. If we have infringed copyright, we shall be pleased, on being satisfied as to the owner's title, to pay an appropriate fee as if prior permission had been obtained.

Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy in all published material. However, the Editorial Committee and the publishers cannot accept any liability for any inaccuracy accepted in good faith from reputable sources.

Any opinions expressed are those of the authors.

In defence of higher education teaching qualifications: Reflections on studying for the degree of MA in Academic Practice, ten years on

Christopher Wiley, University of Surrey

It's incredible for me to think that a whole decade has passed since I enrolled on the opening module of the MA in Academic Practice programme at City, University of London. It's been a remarkably fruitful ten years, and the degree has opened up a range of new avenues for my career that I never would have envisaged back in 2008. In this article, I reflect on the value of higher education teaching development qualifications as well as identifying some of the ways in which my work in the academic profession has been substantially enriched by being immersed in the fascinating field of pedagogic research.

This narrative is developed from a case study on researching my academic practice contributed to the second edition of Kahn and Walsh's (now Kahn and Anderson's) Developing Your Teaching (2006), part of Routledge's Key Guides for Effective Teaching in Higher Education series. I am grateful to the authors for permission to publish an extended, differently focused version of my text here.

Sitting in a vibrant classroom back in October 2008, on day 1 of the 'Learning, Teaching, and Assessment' module of the HEA-accredited MA in Academic Practice programme at what was then City University London, I chanced to encounter for the first time the use of electronic voting systems (EVS) in a higher education setting. Little did I know that my pursuit of this qualification would eventually lead teaching to occupy a prominence within my own career that I simply could not have anticipated when I entered the academic profession as Lecturer in Music, some 15 years ago.

That single session, for instance, inspired me to introduce EVS within my lectures the next week, to great success – the students had never experienced anything like it! The years that followed saw me championing EVS widely, facilitating teaching and learning workshops externally at a dozen UK universities, delivering conference papers across Europe (including a Keynote address at the University of Exeter in 2016), and broadcasting webinars to reach North American audiences. Having been appointed as an International Distinguished Educator with Turning Technologies (the global leader for EVS) in 2012, their first ever worldwide from the Arts and Humanities disciplines, I was awarded funding three years later to publish a report for the Higher Education Academy (HEA) (Wiley, 2015) on my pioneering use of audience response technology in non-STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) subjects. Higher education teaching qualifications have come under repeated scrutiny, not least given the relative dearth of formal accountability for teaching across the UK university sector (for which the typical qualification for entry to the profession is the PhD, a research-based degree), coupled with the absence of a single nationally acknowledged standard analogous to the PGCE for secondary education. There exists a widespread, if infelicitous, perception that in the academic profession, teaching is a less valorised activity (and less well recognised and rewarded) than discipline-specific research (see e.g. Kreber, 2010); and the availability of excellent, more readily obtainable alternatives such as the HEA Fellowship professional recognition scheme (HEA, 2018), may lead academics to overlook the developmental possibilities of more sustained programmes of study.

Then there is the evergreen question as to whether such courses genuinely produce real-world gains in terms of generating excellence in teachers and teaching (see, for instance, Baughan, Lindsay and Parker's (2015) instructive literature review examining research on teaching development programmes). This case study illustrates how the constituent modules of my own degree have indeed transformed associated areas of my teaching practice in a broad spectrum of different ways. Moreover, the training I received drew me into the domain of pedagogic research and enabled me to share academic practice widely by participating in major conferences, and ultimately pursuing peer-reviewed publications, as well as opening up exciting new directions for my career that in certain respects have eclipsed my discipline-specific activity as an internationally acknowledged researcher and educator in musicology.

Many academic-related staff I have encountered on postgraduate programmes of this nature at various higher education institutions have either not sought to progress beyond the introductory module or have taken only the first 60 credits in order to gain the PGCert (or equivalent) qualification, often driven by the need to fulfil the stipulations of their probation. Conversely, my own approach has been to go beyond the minimum requirements and identify a unique route through the Masters degree, proceeding straight from module 1 to module 7 on 'Information

and Communication Technology in Higher Education' before doubling back to module 2, so as to align my studies with those areas that were focal points of my teaching career at specific times.

Hence I deferred module 2, 'Professional and Personal Development Planning', until 2009-10 as a means of supporting my introduction of PDP to the BMus Music degree upon becoming its Programme Director during that academic session. In parallel, I pursued the module on 'Academic Leadership' (now 'Developing Leadership and Your Reflective Practice') to facilitate my assuming a senior managerial role for the first time in my life. The next year, having reached the career stage at which I was taking on principal supervision of significant numbers of doctoral students, I followed the 'Research Supervision' module to develop myself in this area as well. That led to my receiving the University's prestigious Student Voice Award in 2011, on the basis of multiple nominations from my supervisees, evidencing the immediacy with which my work for the teaching qualification directly impacted positively upon the students' learning experience.

Later modules of the MA programme – 'Research Methods' (now 'Researching Higher Education') and the Dissertation (now 'Educational Research Project and Publication'), the latter offering a bespoke route combining external conference presentation with submission of an article to a refereed journal – facilitated my engagement with the dissemination of scholarship of teaching and learning in international forums. This, in turn, led me to revisit some of my work previously undertaken for the degree to prepare it for publication on the recommendation of the internal markers (and, in one instance, the external examiner), leading to multiple conference papers as well as two journal articles (Wiley, 2014a, 2014b), with another currently under review with a major publication. The second of these, a reflective essay on programme leadership, was encountered a couple of years later by an academic colleague who suggested that I investigate autoethnography as a possible research method. I have since published two further articles on the subject (Wiley and Franklin, 2017; Kinchin and Wiley, 2018) and organised an international conference exploring autoethnography's potential within music studies, from which an edited volume is presently in the planning stages (University of Surrey, 2018).

The pursuit of my teaching qualification paid many other dividends in terms of career progression, even within a relatively short space of time. The programme's research-oriented modules dovetailed neatly with my part-time secondment in 2011-12 as a University Learning Development Associate, which expanded my scholarly activity into new areas including assessment and feedback and student evaluation of teaching. In addition, the MA was instrumental in securing my appointment in 2013 as Director of Learning and Teaching in the School of Arts at the University of Surrey, which accorded me a much wider cross-disciplinary remit than my previous role, incorporating oversight of teaching across a range of arts disciplines. It also enabled me to demonstrate the excellence in teaching that ultimately led to my being awarded a National Teaching Fellowship (2013) as well as Senior (2015) and Principal (2017) Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy.

My comprehensive experience of teaching equipped me to move towards APEL (Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning) to accrue credits for the remaining modules – 'Student Support and Personal Tutoring' and 'Curriculum Development and Evaluation' – so as to graduate with the full MA degree. That notwithstanding, my principal motivation in pursuing formal postgraduate studies had always been that of continuing professional development rather than post-nominal recognition. After all, there are far easier ways to acquire additional letters after one's name than five years' hard study undertaken in tandem with a full-time, research-led academic position!

A teaching qualification may be more than merely a means to an end, mandatory training for a lecturing post or an official certificate ostensibly validating an academic's competency to perform a job that most of us will have already carried out successfully for some years by the time of the programme's completion. Pursued strategically and with an holistic view taken as to the areas of study that are most relevant at any given moment in an individual's professional development, such courses may function primarily as highly effective vehicles for lecturers continuously to cultivate excellence in teaching across a medium-term timeframe as well as potentially activating new, high-profile trajectories for their wider career.

References

Baughan, Patrick, Lindsay, Siân and Parker, Pam (2015) 'Common themes and missing pieces: the educational value of postgraduate teaching development programmes', *Compass: Journal of Learning and Teaching*, 7(11) (http://tinyurl.com/ycsc88qd).

City, University of London (2018) Academic Practice MA Course (http://tinyurl.com/y8agwoju).

Higher Education Academy (2018) 'Higher Education Academy Fellowship supporting individual professional development' (http://tinyurl.com/y919otye).

Kahn, Peter and Walsh, Lorraine (2006) *Developing Your Teaching: ideas, insight, and action*, London: Routledge (2nd edn., by Kahn, Peter and Anderson, Lorraine, forthcoming).

Kinchin, Ian M. and Wiley, Christopher (2018) 'Tracing pedagogic frailty in arts and humanities education: an autoethnographic perspective', *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education: an international journal of theory, research, and practice*, 17(2), pp. 241-264 (DOI: 10.1177/1474022217698082).

Kreber, Carolin (2010) 'Academics' teacher identities, authenticity and pedagogy', *Studies in Higher Education*, 35(2), pp. 171-194 (DOI: 10.1080/03075070902953048).

University of Surrey (2018) 'Beyond "Mesearch": autoethnography, self-reflexivity, and personal experience as academic research in music studies' (http://tinyurl.com/y7ghdyxl).

Wiley, Christopher (2014a) 'Divided by a common language? Evaluating students' understanding of the vocabulary of assessment and feedback at a single UK higher education institution', *International Journal of Assessment and Evaluation*, 20(3), pp. 1-11.

Wiley, Christopher (2014b) 'Academic leadership in learning and teaching in higher education: a personal reflection on one programme director's professional development', *Learning at City Journal*, 4(2), pp. 39-49 (http://tinyurl.com/ych5t2qg).

Wiley, Christopher (2015) 'Using electronic voting systems in the Arts and Humanities', York: Higher Education Academy (http://tinyurl.com/h4o9179).

Wiley, Christopher (forthcoming) 'Standardised module evaluation surveys in UK higher education: establishing students' perspectives'.

Wiley, Christopher and Franklin, Jo (2017) 'Framed autoethnography and pedagogic frailty: a comparative analysis of mediated concept maps', in Ian M. Kinchin and Naomi E. Winstone (eds.) *Pedagogic Frailty and Resilience in the University*, pp. 17- 32, Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Christopher Wiley (c.wiley@surrey.ac.uk) is a Senior Lecturer and the Director of Learning and Teaching in the School of Arts at the University of Surrey.

Triggers to reflection

Peter Gossman, University of Worcester

A long time ago in a galaxy (city) far, far away (okay it was Manchester) I was a geography teacher. I was not overly troubled as to my identity nor was I concerned about why I taught geography, I knew. I taught it because I enjoyed the subject and had an understanding of what knowing some geography might do. Students I taught (or rather any student of geography) gains some sense of place and who they are within it. Perhaps an overly optimistic claim but the point is that the purpose, at least for me, was not to pass a geography test. The institute within which I worked did not question the value of geography nor question me as to the impact of the geography I taught. But they were concerned with the 'test', with attendance, pass rates, grade profiles and value added. Even a long time ago – this was over twenty years – colleges were working with value added (not learning gain!) and held heads of subjects to account about student performance in their subject.

Related to my geography teaching, I recently had a communication, due to the power of the internet, from a former student who for some reason felt moved to write 'thanks for keeping my wandering mind engaged enough to alter my life for the better'. Such material is fantastic and affirming to receive and one email in many years of teaching isn't a bad strike rate (is it!).

As a brief aside here, I always considered myself, at that time, to be a geography teacher rather than a teacher of geography and I have subsequently wondered if the arrangement of the words might have influenced my identity. Sometimes now I challenge teaching course participants to consider themselves teacher first and thus position their subject discipline as secondary to being a teacher. The claim is that small changes in language (such as changing the use of 'but' to 'and' and 'need' to 'want') are powerful ways of changing thinking. This perhaps feels a little 'new age' but as educators we must all be concerned with the use of language, for example, non-violent communication or transactional analysis.

Anyway, a few things have made me perhaps more reflective than ordinarily, and writing these thoughts down and making them public demands further thought. Recently, I have changed institutions but not actually the role I am employed to fulfil, that of course lead (or programme lead – interesting how institutions use different words for the same thing!) for a postgraduate certificate in learning and teaching in higher education. In both institutions, I regard and regarded myself foremostly as an academic staff developer, but am learning how to be a 'teacher of teachers'. We might discuss the appropriate terms here; I have used 'teacher' as a convenience, but this could equally read 'lecturer of lecturers' or 'facilitator of facilitators' – although behind these words lie arguably different conceptions of the role. To be clear, I will hereafter refer to PGCert student-teacher peers as participants. I have tried to illustrate my 'take' on the contrast between the two institutions in Table 1.

The intention is not to imply that one system is better or worse than another, just that approaches vary and these have an impact on the way the course lead role can or perhaps even should be conceived of and undertaken. In turn these aspects of the way the role may be conducted have identity implications for an academic developer. Furthermore, my jottings below cannot be solely attributed to where the PGCert was located, as other factors, for example the number of close academic developer colleagues, have also influenced my thoughts.

	'That' institution *PGCert 'lives' in central unit*	*'This' institution* *PGCert 'lives' in Education institution (Faculty)*
Role and scale	Programme lead for the PG Cert LTHE. Approx. 200 participants on highly flexible programme, 12 units offered over about 50 iterations per year. Approx. 120 graduates per year. 12 staff contributing to teaching/assessment. Normally one teacher per unit. Two core 15-credit units followed by 1*30 or 2*15 credit optional units.	Course lead for the PGCert LTHE. Approx. 30-60 participants on course, linear structure. Three modules offered once per year (2*15 followed by 1*30 credits). Approx. 30-60 graduates per year. Two core staff supported by tutors seconded into the course from the other institutes. Modules normally taught by one lecturer supported by a tutor team (for, e.g., participant observations).

University processes	*Quality reporting*	Via central process to Registrar.	Via normal faculty processes as a 'normal' course.
	Boards	Independent, but within University regulations (for example, constitution and quoracy regulations).	Via normal faculty processes – a discrete exam board and external examiners.
	Admissions	Applications first received by Development Unit administrative staff. Subsequent screening (and okay) by programme leader. Afterwards, applications forwarded to central admissions.	Central application, consideration of suitability by course leader after application (via central database).
	Recruitment	General call. Requirement (normally) for new to HE (i.e. less than three years' experience) staff to have started the programme within year of commencing employment.	New staff members, on appointment, are informed that they need (if required) to apply for the course. Decision based on years of appointee's HE experience. Less than three years requires (normally) new staff member to undertake the course.
	HR role	Informing unit administration of new appointments – to enable direct contact.	Advisory to appointing panel of University requirements for new staff with less than three years HE experience.
	Nature of appointment	Regular academic contract with teaching/scholarship/administration and contribution requirements.	Regular academic contract with teaching/scholarship/administration and contribution requirements
	Workload	No allocation model.	Within Institute allocation model.
Initial thoughts on 'identity'	*Feelings about 'location'*	Strong central contribution identity. Programme requirement to align with institutional strategy/drivers. Less strong academic discipline identity.	Strong academic identity with discipline 'belonging' to/within Education. Less strong central, although recognised, role in terms of contribution (e.g. HEA fellowships).
	Feelings about being an 'academic'	Stronger sense of role in terms of promoting and managing the programme.	Stronger sense of role in terms of making an 'academic' contribution.
	Conversations	Immediate concerns related to academic development and smooth running of the programme.	Sense of 'academic' imperative. Not so much be a researcher just of a more scholarly discipline focus.
	Office	Shared central development unit open-plan office space.	Own office (all course leads allocated sole occupancy offices). Play your own music.
	Feelings about identity	Academic developer – no problem!	Less certain but still Academic developer – moving (perhaps) to 'teacher of teachers'/'lecturer of lecturers'.

Table 1 Differences between the two institutions

I know that we academic developers like to agonise over and discuss 'identity'; IJAD is stuffed (I believe rightly so) with articles about this. It is just that up until now I have not quite been engaged by them. Perhaps it is an age thing, perhaps it is change of role, perhaps it is the thought of applying for senior fellowship of SEDA with its very strong reflection and sustained contribution requirement – perhaps it is all of these things and more. However, the language I apply to myself has taken on an importance and, as noted above, I believe it will influence the way I conceive of my role. Yet I still have a very strong belief in the impact and purpose of the PGCert lead and teacher role.

My conception of and for both of these programmes/courses was that it would/will provide a place for scholarly reflection and conversation about the nature and purpose of HE teaching in order for the students of participants to be more engaged (and thus learn more – not sure of what and of how but …). This may be simplistic, (how else is it going to be in one sentence?) yet it drives my practice.

What concerns me is the notion that I somehow should be having a measurable impact on the students of the participants. I do not disagree that there ought to be an impact, after all why would anyone be educated if the product of that education was not some form of impact on a single individual? If we are the patient of a nurse we do not consider the teacher of the nurse, the assumption is that learning has taken place and the nurse has 'become' a nurse by the nature of the learning (and its examined demonstration).

I think the issue with PGCerts may lie in the perception of who is paying. When university's 'pay', that is, provide the teaching resource (*i.e.* academic developers), for PGCerts they may be justified in asking us to outline our impact. However, to seek that impact in terms of its removed nature from PGCert participants suggests a simple linear causality, which may not exist, or if it does, it is so context and effect modified it is impossible to isolate. In addition, I have a feeling that it is also wrapped up in the indistinct nature of such courses being either a general qualification or a more formal licence to practise. Arguably, the aim of a PGCert, in most contexts, is to enable its participants to be more scholarly in respect of their teaching practice. As an aside, we might consider that aims are of course value laden and not all education, although it may 'change' an individual, is for either personal or common good.

There are many questions raised here, not least of which is the lack of definition of 'impact'. Any impact has an implied purpose – this returns to 'qualification' compared with 'licence'. For a PGCert these impacts must and can only lie with change engender in the participants as outlined by the programme or course learning outcomes. Of course, there are others too. The huge range of variables at play in the impact on the students of participants raises all kinds of issues with the causality of 'impact'. In addition, we all know that defining a measurement tends to lead to the gaming of that measurement (now the Government needs to monitor and perhaps control grade inflation because the proportion of firsts and 2:1s was a measure of outcome success!)

How does this relate to my 'identity' debate? The two courses I have been and am responsible for look very similar in terms of outcomes, assessments and content, but they are constructed and delivered in a different way. Firstly, having moved from a central unit into an Institute of Education seems, somehow, to distance me from impact on the students of the participants. The tier of the Institute seems to afford some filtering from the 'centre'. My feeling is that a PGCert, and implicitly some judgement of it and its teaching staff's value or worth, stands or falls on its own success with its participants, and that graduations from it (along with the concurrent AF or FHEA) is a sufficient starting point for 'impact'. Secondly, thankfully, neither of my two employing institutions have centrally involved themselves in mandating content or style. Each course has been accepted without a central critique of how it might contribute to the 'house' teaching style (as perhaps outlined in a T&L strategy). This leaves the teachers of such courses (me) free to conduct ourselves autonomously and in the manner of our own values and even our own considered purpose (see above) for a PGCert. I guess institutions might be assuming these are not too far from their own espoused ones. Long may this last.

A final couple of thoughts. My allocated time – I now am operating within a faculty workload model – is more closely administered and as such the running and teaching of the PGCert forms only part of my overall responsibility. Am I an academic developer only when I am doing PGCert-related stuff or always? I cannot see it like this and tend to 'think like a developer' (is there such a thing?) all the time. Within a faculty structure, and with line-manager support, I now feel more inclined to research. What will that research be focused on? Yes, academic development!

My former student also wrote, 'sometimes the narrowest of margins changes lives and teachers are the key to the outcome'. Measure that as an impact!

Dr Peter Gossman is a Principal Lecturer and Course Leader for the Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education in the Institute of Education at the University of Worcester.

SEDA Conference Spring 2018: Understanding and improving the student experience: Making a real difference in the new age of metrics

Dr Jenny Lawrence, University of Hull

SEDA conferences offer opportunities to zone out of the turbulent world of contemporary HE and focus on what is really important – the work of supporting and leading educational change. The 2018 Spring conference was no exception. 'Understanding and improving the student experience: Making a real difference in the new age of metrics' was a celebration of how to use hard data to make the case for innovation and partnership.

Wonkhe's David Kernohan opened the conference with a forensic exploration of educational development: 'After the Goldrush: Educational Development on the run 1998-2018'. Although presented on the first day with the dismal information that for the first time since the 1966 Robbins Report there is no, I repeat NO public funding for educational development in HE, on day 2 delegates concluded, 'Hope is a recurring motif'. How did we progress to such an optimistic end?

Student engagement: Democratising assessment

Rather than data 'measuring' effectiveness, it was suggested it is

better to encourage authentic student engagement. Josh Berlyne and Fabienne Collignon's session, 'Can Assessment be Democratised: A reflection on implementation', explored the notion of assessment as a violence to the student – that is something imposed from above, that does not allow the student to exercise agency. This was a staff-student presentation, which outlined student-led work reshaping assessment in a core Critical and Literary Theory module. Their work reaped exciting and positive results: students appreciated breaking down staff-student academic/power hierarchies, felt a stronger sense of ownership of the learning experience and were better engaged with study – reflected in student feedback and attainment data.

A student-centred approach to refining assessment and feedback practices bore positive reward for Stephanie McBurney and Sue Whittle. Their workshop, 'Don't let markers put a cross unless they're going to explain why' – Undergraduate attitudes to assessment and feedback', put the student voice as the foundation for changes to assessment and feedback practices, with impressive results – evidenced in improved NSS 'scores'. Stevie and Sue brought their work to the University of Hull. Ongoing discussions after their workshop have been crucial to re-imagining metrics as a useful catalyst for change.

Student engagement: Democratising educational development

SEDA conferences actively democratise educational development. Students present alongside teachers, and the SEDA Student Conference Paper and Bursary are now a mainstay. This year we heard from Angelina Cliff and Madeleine Pownall. Angelina presented her research 'Excellent Teaching: The student view'. Students from under-represented groups are less likely to apply to a TEF Gold HEI. Angelina speculated they felt unworthy of excellence and were at the same time concerned employers would look for graduate employees from Gold institutions. The TEF seems to be yet another exclusive value system working against specific groups. Further, Angelina suggests the TEF doesn't and can't measure what is actually important to a positive learning experience – that is, the friendliness of the teacher to the student. Madeleine picked this thread up in 'The Spectrum of Student Engagement: Looking beyond metric measures'. Here Madeleine outlined a pedagogy of partnership, where staff and students work together to make the university experience more transparent – staff are encouraged to recognise the student's 'multi-faceted identity' which can be 'turbulent' during the formative higher education years, and students are at the same time supported in 'understanding what universities do and how staff work'. Madeleine, in suggesting a contextual understanding of learning analytics are used to assess 'student engagement', and reminding us of the complexity of the student and staff experience, renews our awareness of our commonalities, and how important it is to acknowledge the shared challenges and rewards of a university experience.

In 'Evaluating the collaborative development of pedagogic interventions based on learning analytics' and 'Student Partnership: the ultimate expression of engagement?', Aisha Akhtar, Leoarna Mathias, Kerry Myler, and John Peters outlined how they worked toward the radicalisation of the learning community by creating a context where staff and students together engage in critical thought and action to destabilise power relations. In this way Newman University are bringing life to the NUS Manifesto on Partnership, where partnership is understood to be a 'meaningful dispersal of power'. By creating a sense of collective responsibility and mutual support to the learning experience, a challenge is set to notions of the liberal university serving only the individual. Collaboration and respect for community become central to the university experience, and graduate-ness. This was exemplified by Aaisha Akhtar's (a student) contribution; her account gave an authentic insight to the Newman ethos, where her 'contribution is valued'. She spoke with confidence, rigour and heart.

Heart, hope and higher education

The importance of heart was re-iterated by Claire Taylor's keynote 'Learning without Limits: Thriving (not just surviving) in Wonderland'. Reflecting on the importance of education as a shared endeavour, Claire outlined the Wrexham Glyndwr University Education Strategy, which is built on 3 core Cs: Care, Courage and Collaboration. She reminded us of the role we play in supporting and leading community engagement and service to society, and how the SEDA values are crucial to developing effective educational practices to this end. For Claire, it is simple: respect and concern for others, personal integrity and confidence 'speaks to the heart and soul' and provide a personally and professionally enriching educational experience for all. Beautiful words, met by the audience's tangible, almost viscerally powerful feeling of hope for the future of HE.

The SEDA community, through the papers and workshops offered at the conference, has responded to 'Success in a knowledge economy' with its heavily marketised, student as consumer discourse and the rigours of TEF, with a jubilant riff on how we use data to break down staff-student power-dynamics and inform a more democratic process for educational development, pedagogic practice and the construction of a mutually enriching learning experience.

If we consider 'hopelessness and despair are both the consequences and the cause of inaction and immobilisation' (Freire, 1992, p. 3), and here reflect on how the SEDA conference, in creating a platform for good practice, is informing, encouraging and enabling our professional practice, our action, can we conclude that SEDA is the seat of #HEHope for our learning community?

References

Freire, P. (1992) *Pedagogy of Hope: reliving pedagogy of the oppressed*, UK: Bloomsbury Academic.

Dr Jenny Lawrence PFHEA AFSEDA is a Teaching Enhancement Advisor at the University of Hull, an associate of the Higher Education Academy, and an independent consultant professional coach in academic practice. She can be contacted through twitter @jennywahwah or by emailing jenlawrencecap@gmail.com.

Waving not drowning: Reflections from an in-house journal

Virendra Mistry, Liverpool John Moores University

To those that edit or who sit on an editorial board of an in-house or institutional teaching and learning/higher education (IHE) journal, 2018 has caused a bit of a stir. That's because, early in the year, two such journals were released: *IMPact: The University of Lincoln Journal of Higher Education Research* and University of Leicester's *Journal of Learning and Teaching in Higher Education*. In this article, I outline the scale of such journals and thereby offer an update to an exploratory study undertaken on open-access IHE journals in the UK (Mistry, 2017). The remainder of the paper reflects and offers insight into the process of writing in the context of the interactions that take place between myself, as editor of Liverpool John Moores University's (LJMU) *Innovations in Practice*, and a prospective author. These interactions underline the distinctive qualities of an IHE journal: the intimacy associated with this small-scale publishing privileges an informal and relaxed sense of writers' beliefs, attitudes and values, and the trust and bond that ensues raises the likelihood of a calmer writing experience.

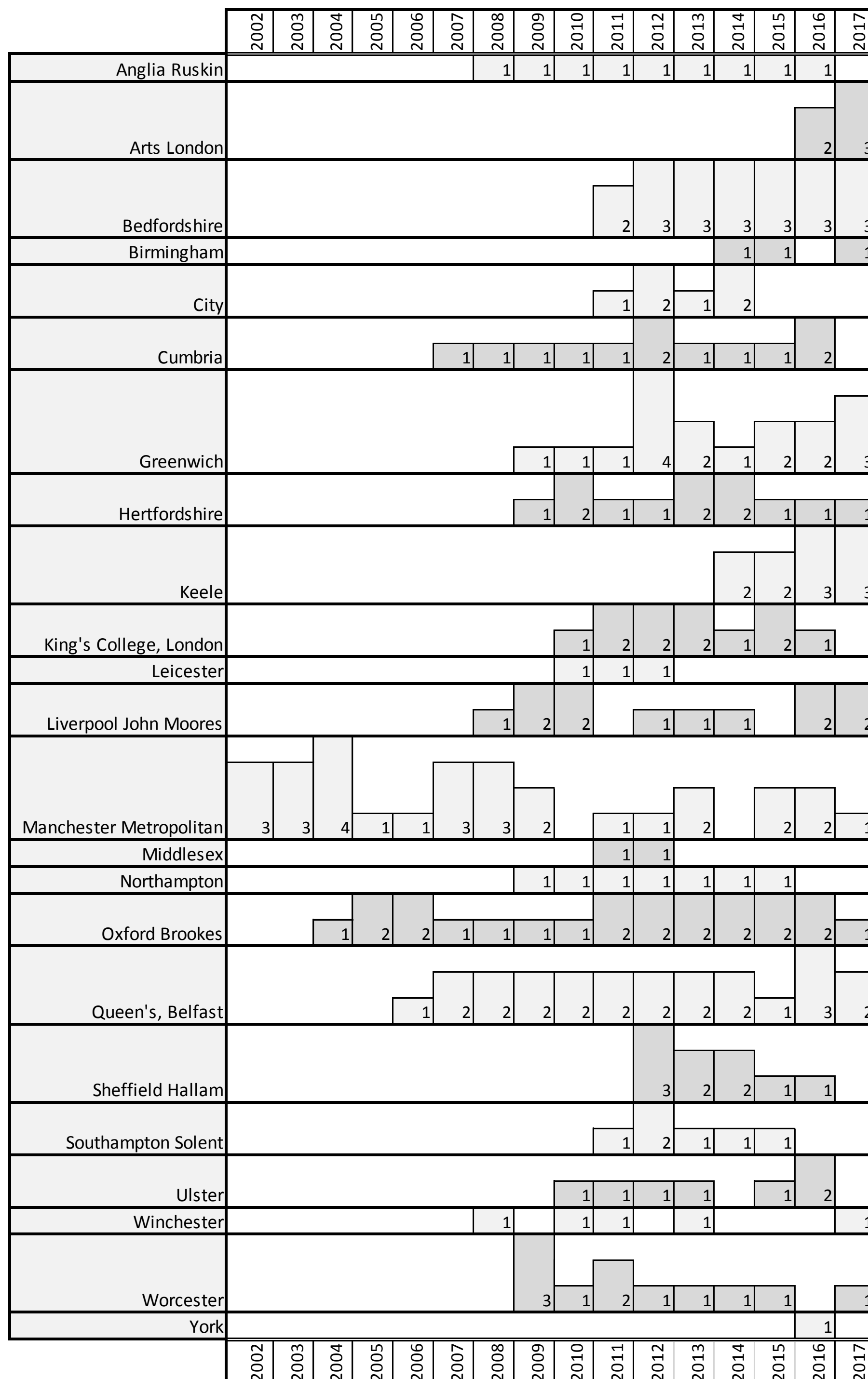
Scale of publishing

A small number of institutions have produced an IHE journal. In contrast to newsletters, a 'journal' has characteristics that have endured since the very first example, The Royal Society's *Philosophical Transactions* (March 1665), comprising the functions of: 'registration', 'dissemination', 'peer review', and 'archival record' (Mabe, 2009). Applying a simple search on the Internet, references were found to the following IHE journals:

Institution	*Journal*
Anglia Ruskin University	*Networks*
University of Arts London	*Spark: UAL Creative Teaching and Learning Journal*
University of Bedfordshire	*Journal of Pedagogic Development*
University of Birmingham	*Education in Practice*
Arts University Bournemouth	*Creative Pedagogies Journal*
City, University of London (The City University)	*Learning at City Journal*
University of Cumbria	*Practitioner Research in Higher Education*
University of Greenwich	*Compass: Journal of Learning and Teaching*
University of Hertfordshire	*Blended Learning in Practice*
Keele University	*JADE: The Journal of Academic Development and Education*
King's College, London	*Higher Education Research Network Journal (HERN-J)*
University of Leicester (previous journal)	*Journal for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (2010-12)*
Liverpool John Moores University	*Innovations in Practice*
Manchester Metropolitan University	*Learning and Teaching in Action*
Middlesex University	*Middlesex Journal of Educational Technology*
University of Northampton	*Enhancing the Learner Experience in Higher Education*
Oxford Brookes University	*Brookes eJournal of Learning and Teaching (2004-16), and Higher Education Journal of Learning and Teaching*
Sheffield Hallam University	*Student Engagement and Experience Journal*
Queen's University, Belfast	*Reflections*
Southampton Solent University	*Dialogue*
Ulster University	*Perspectives on Practice and Pedagogy*
University of Winchester	*Capture*
University of Worcester	*Worcester Journal of Learning and Teaching*
University of York	*York Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*

The IHE journals listed either are awaiting publication (e.g. Arts University Bournemouth) or have released at least one issue this decade. Some developed from Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETLs) (e.g. Hertfordshire's Blended Learning Unit CETL). Some are aligned with a particular programme of study (e.g. King's College, London's *HERN-J* is linked to the Enhancing Academic Practice module of a Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education Practice), whilst others (such as York) are reflective of emerging institutional cultures of scholarship in teaching and learning (SoTL) (Robinson-Self, 2018). One or two focus on particular themes (e.g. Middlesex on learning technologies). The likes of others, such as Greenwich's *Compass*, have developed to include submissions from colleagues beyond the institution. (This development follows a similar trajectory to that of the *Journal of University Teaching and Learning*, created by the University of Wollongong in Australia.)

Not all journals are active. Some, such as Sheffield Hallam's *Student Engagement and Experience Journal*, ceased publication partly owing to the establishment of the RAISE (Researching, Advancing and Inspiring Student Engagement) Network's *Student Engagement in Higher Education Journal*. As illustrated in Figure 1, publication has been patchy and it underscores the fact that, in spite of the best endeavours of the institutions, developing and sustaining an IHE journal is not straightforward as it requires significant commitment from a wide range of people (contributors, reviewers, plus individuals with key skills such as proofreading and layout design).



	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Anglia Ruskin							1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Arts London															2	3
Bedfordshire										2	3	3	3	3	3	3
Birmingham													1	1		1
City										1	2	1	2			
Cumbria						1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	
Greenwich								1	1	1	4	2	1	2	2	3
Hertfordshire								1	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	1
Keele													2	2	3	3
King's College, London									1	2	2	2	1	2	1	
Leicester									1	1	1					
Liverpool John Moores							1	2	2		1	1	1		2	2
Manchester Metropolitan	3	3	4	1	1	3	3	2		1	1	2		2	2	1
Middlesex										1	1					
Northampton								1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
Oxford Brookes			1	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	1
Queen's, Belfast					1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	3	2
Sheffield Hallam											3	2	2	1	1	
Southampton Solent										1	2	1	1	1		
Ulster									1	1	1	1		1	2	
Winchester							1		1	1		1				1
Worcester								3	1	2	1	1	1	1		1
York															1	

Figure 1 Institutions and number of IHE journal issues released

Innovations in Practice

Liverpool John Moore University's (LJMU) *Innovations in Practice* emerged from CETL (Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning) funding, when the University hosted the Centre for Excellence in Leadership and Professional Learning. After the closure of the CETL programme, the journal took the form of an open-access journal, sitting on the Open Journals System platform. Two issues appear each year, and these dovetail when conversations about teaching, learning and student engagement hit particular peaks within the institution. For example, the June issue is released during LJMU's Annual Teaching and Learning Conference and the December issue when the 'call for abstracts' to the Conference is publicised. The journal uses double-blind review for its research papers: the review team includes each of LJMU's Associate Deans for Education plus members of the University's faculty pedagogic research groups.

The journal has attracted submissions from both early career and experienced teaching staff (e.g. LJMU's National Teaching Fellows), professional services staff (e.g. the library, careers team) and some students (PhDs and student interns on internally funded projects). *Innovations* has, over time, adapted to include a variety of paper types: research papers (e.g. case studies and conceptual articles), opinion pieces ('viewpoints'), book and learning technology reviews. These subtle adjustments are part of a vision to reach out to all potential authors. Once writers feel they can make a contribution, and I normally advise new writers to consider doing a book review first, I endeavour to nurture a better appreciation and understanding of practice, as well as an enjoyment of the writing process. The technical aspects of writing are relatively easy to grasp; the emotional aspects less so.

A majority of the contributors to *Innovations in Practice* are sole authors. Many are new to writing about their teaching practice, and some are from disciplines imbued with conventions of writing that seem inimical to research in education and academic practice. What stands some staff in good stead is that they have used other formats to disseminate their ideas and thinking (this is often the stimulus to their expression of interest). Some have presented at the Teaching and Learning Conference, or been part of 'peer learning groups' when undertaking LJMU's Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education or, in a few cases, produced updates from various internally funded projects. Thus, generating discussions, debate, exchange of ideas and experiences provide a useful opportunity upon which to establish a rough outline for a paper. As editor, I see this as a chance to cultivate a relationship in a spirit that extends the conversations many staff are already having. This is, I think, the defining feature of the IHE journal compared with a larger publication. Whilst there are email exchanges, the meetings are face-to-face and informal. Thus, the drafts that are presented serve as an opportunity to develop intimate insights into peoples' values and beliefs in their practice.

Personal to consensual symbols

Cognitive psychologist Ronald T. Kellogg (1994), in musing on the biological and cultural uniqueness of *Homo symbolificu*s, describes writing as a form of symbol creation and manipulation revealing the very human process of giving meaning to the experience of life. Communicating through written text demands translation from personal and private symbols to the cultural and public, or personal to consensual symbols. Whether one is a seasoned writer or novice, the act of writing is itself a demanding cognitive feat and, as Kellogg concludes, representing one's inner experiences, feelings, beliefs and attitudes, such that they can be shared and understood in a public forum, is difficult and may never be completely successful. Coupled with this are the natural author anxieties that abound upon the realisation that '[written] texts become examinable objects in the physical world in a way that spoken utterances (without technological support) cannot' (Chandler, 1995, p. 47). It is, as Vygotsky once observed, the exactness, precision and detail in writing that can leave many novices in something of a shock.

On translating thought/speech to writing, linguist Walter Nash (1971) observed that, 'the different media of writing and speaking bring different devices and perceptions into play…the media are essentially distinct, and each has its own possibilities which cannot be developed or reflected in the other' (pp. 15-16). In short, conversations are socially situated. By engaging with an author, I have the ability to probe and to question so, what unfolds is a 'learningful conversation' (Senge *et al*., 1994). These conversations are rich and focused and take the form of a dialogue which, as Haigh (2005) reminds us, involves exploration and critique of the reasons and assumptions associated with a position (of inquiry). Haigh asserts, 'in a dialogue, positions represent a starting point for conversation rather than an end point to be defended; positions may be abandoned, modified or added to' (Haigh, 2005, p. 9). The dialogue forms part of the recursive process, particularly as the writer moves from drafting to revising a paper. There are dangers inherent here and, as editor, I acknowledge that there is a fine line to tread in ensuring that it is the author's voice that is amplified, and not my own inner thoughts. Limiting the number of meetings is important (two or three seem to be sufficient); my support is focused on keeping people engaged and motivated and to approach rewriting positively – people often see that writing is inevitably messy but an iterative process.

The process of writing for *Innovations in Practice* has opened many interesting questions raised by Haigh (2005) on the value of conversations, discussion or dialogue in professional learning. Clark (2001) notes that when the interactions are authentic they stimulate the participant to articulate 'experiences, implicit theories, hopes, and fears, in the intellectual and emotional company of others whom we trust' (p. 177). He proceeds, 'Good conversation feeds the spirit; it feels good; it reminds us of our ideals and hopes for education; it confirms that we are not alone in our frustrations and doubts or in our small victories' (p. 181). I hope, through the interactions, the crippling self-doubt that some new writers experience can be alleviated in some way, and that any difficult emotions felt, as the paper is sent out for review, are diminished.

Conclusion

'Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man, and writing an exact man.' (Francis Bacon, On Studies)

Writing and being published, as Gina Wisker counsels, is a form of academic rite of passage, and recognition in the published community 'signifies and enables wider acceptance into the communities of those who create, articulate and share knowledge: a powerful position' (Wisker, 2013, p. 345). For many staff who have contributed to *Innovations in Practice* it represents a journey of self-identity, discovery and personal belief and, as such, a finished article for *Innovations in Practice* almost entirely masks its evolution. Contributing to an IHE journal is a calm, but important, nudge for many into new terrain and into the domain of research into academic practice. I hope that by illuminating the 'backstage' of the process, our writers continue to evolve and to develop, and to set their aspirations beyond the IHE journal.

References

Chandler, D. (1995) *The Act of Writing: A Media Theory Approach*, Aberystwyth: University of Wales, Aberystwyth

Clark, C.M. (2001) 'Good conversation' in Clark, C.M. (Ed.) *Talking Shop: Authentic Conversation and Teacher Learning,* New York, NY: Teachers College Press, pp. 172-182

Haigh, N. (2005) 'Everyday conversation as a context for professional learning and development'. *International Journal for Academic Development*, 10(1), pp. 3-16

Kellogg, R.T. (1994) *The Psychology of Writing*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

Mabe, C. (2009) 'Scholarly publishing', *European Review*, 17 (1), pp. 3-22

Mistry, V. (2017) 'Publishing or perishing? The scale and scope of institutional teaching and learning journals in the UK', *Innovations in Practice*, 11(2), pp. 100-122

Nash, W. (1971) *Our Experience of Language*, New York, NY: St. Martin's Press

Senge, P., Kleiner, A., Roberts, C., Ross, R.B. and Smith, B.J. (1994) *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook: Strategies and Tools for Building a Learning Organisation*, London: Nicholas Brearley Publishing

Robinson-Self, P. (2018) 'In-house' journals and the scholarship of teaching and learning – thoughts from a discipline that is not a discipline', *Innovations in Practice*, 12(1), pp. 21-33

Wisker, G. (2013) 'Articulate – academic writing refereeing, editing and publishing our work in learning, teaching and educational development', *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 50(4), pp. 344-356

Virendra Mistry (v.mistry@ljmu.ac.uk) is based at the Teaching and Learning Academy at Liverpool John Moores University, and is Editor-in-Chief of LJMU's *Innovations in Practice*.

21 indicators of Student Success – Exploring a new sector priority in an age of student outcomes

Tom Lowe and **Maria Moxey,** University of Winchester

Introduction

Two colleagues from the University of Winchester recently ran a workshop at the Student Retention and Achievement Conference which asked the question: 'What indicates a successful student during a period in Higher Education obsessed with student outcomes?'

This workshop was inspired by the recently published Office for Students' (OfS) Regulatory Framework titled 'Securing Student Success', setting a target for all HEIs to ensure that 'all students, from all backgrounds, and with the ability and desire to undertake higher education…are supported to access, succeed in, and progress from, Higher Education' (Office for Students, 2018, p. 14). This statement is both ambitious and complicated. Ensuring total student success is difficult and also complex when it is likely that the HE sector and its stakeholders within (students, staff, community, management etc.) will all respond to this ambition in several forms by defining *Student Success* in different ways. This paper reports on that workshop, as it was conducted to begin opening up the differing ambitions and definitions of Student Success from those with an invested interest in HE. The authors thank the participants at the recent Retention and Achievement Conference at Southampton Solent University who have fed into this debate.

In a predominately American literature, an emphasis on Student Success is not something new, with scholars such as Tinto and Astin stating that for a student to truly succeed in and from higher education they must be integrated within the HE community through engaging in academic, social and developmental activities (Astin, 1999; Tinto, 1993). Wolf-Wendel and colleagues place the emphasis on the student to take steps to become engaged and integrated to the HE lifestyle,

with universities being tasked with ensuring campuses are ripe with student opportunities (Wolf-Wendel *et al*., 2009). Hunter *et al*. (2010) refer to 'student success' instead of employability, stating that the key to student success is complicated and includes a differing combination of factors beyond ability and motivation. Hunter *et al*. also emphasise out-of-classroom experiences including developing successful and supportive interpersonal interactions, which can be translated into soft skills e.g. teamwork, communication and problem solving (Hunter *et al*., 2010, p. 30).

Looking back at UK HE and scratching the surface further in recent policy publications from the Department for Education (which have informed the report from the OfS), it can be found that the Higher Education Act of 2017 holds a definition of Student Success as simply progressing on to the next academic year, completing the course of study and securing a graduate role. These measures are reflected through the recent Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework with greater emphasis on retention and student satisfaction. Therefore these provide a starting point for the following first two definitions of Student Success.

Government and policy makers

1) Progressing into the next academic year or student and/or completing the course of study.
2) Securing graduate employment.

Academics

Our teaching and research colleagues charged with facilitating learning in HE are continuously asked to report on how their programmes prepare students for the definition of success (above) in regards to how many of their students enter 'graduate employment'. Our workshop indicated that 1 and 2 were noted; however, the following indicators of Student Success for academics centred more on growth and learning:

3) To enable students to thrive in the discipline
4) To create critical and actively engaged students
5) To be fulfilled by the learning experience
6) A high attendance record.

Students

Obviously, if we are asking this question, policy and league tables aside, first and foremost any other indicator should not matter as long as the students themselves are achieving what they deem to be success. It is worth remembering that most students will have worked considerably hard just to get to HE level study in the first place, and this is success in itself. Yet often we assume students are obsessed with achieving high grades to stand out – which of course as a sector we are guilty of by putting such heavy emphasis on achieving a 2.1 and above, locking our students in a 'hierarchy of success' (Bovill, 2017). The responses from our workshop for students' indicators include the above and the following additional definitions:

7) Getting accepted to Higher Education study
8) A desired grade (often 2.1/1st)
9) Having a fulfilling life experience
10) Sense of belonging
11) Building valuable lasting relationships.

Central services

Increasingly, our education communities also depend on professional services and Students' Unions to enable Student Success, yet this is often to do with activities outside of the classroom which are seemingly just as important. When asked about the wider engagement of students at HEIs, the group gave the below indicators:

12) Help and supporting students/staff
13) Create a positive experience
14) Happy students with positive wellbeing
15) Keep up the University reputation
16) Provide enriching opportunities and engage students in their activities
17) Ensure student voice is heard.

Senior management

Looking beyond these definitions, managers of HEIs will have different considerations for Student Success. Of course Government indicators such as graduate employability and retention are measures of success which feed into the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework, but other factors such as student satisfaction, positive stories and creating a University reputation which attracts more students are of significant importance to managers. The workshop fed back and created the following indicators:

18) University reputation increase through successful student stories
19) Satisfied students to benefit league table positions.

Other stakeholders

During the workshop, additional categories were discussed which can often be overlooked when talking about HE, yet these stakeholders are heavy influencers on student choice and profile of Universities. These included Industry Partners, Parents/Family, Tax Payers and the media. Universities stand in the communities they serve and it is important to recognise these stakeholders' perceptions of Student Success in this debate if an institution is truly intending to recognise this agenda. Responses for these stakeholders included:

20) Gaining the right skills for industry
21) Value for tax payer's money.

Conclusions

What is clear from these conversations is that there are certainly differing definitions of Student Success from the different stakeholders and those interested in Higher Education. At this time it can be interesting to align varying motivations and definitions to see if any can complement one another, hopefully leading to greater student experiences and fulfilment overall. For the time being, it is clear that the sector has space to define and take these new indicators for success and shape them at our own institutions. Educational Development may take this opportunity to make Student Success more ambitious than just ensuring our students do not drop out of HE by enabling them to truly thrive in HE in whichever space they choose. This is the beginning of a new dialogue within Educational Development which colleagues should embrace but mould for their own purposes, taking into account the considerations above. The authors look forward to

further discussions in this area and welcome new indicators of success which could add to this discourse.

References

Astin, A. (1999) 'Student involvement: a developmental theory for higher education, *Journal of College Student Development*, Vol 40, No. 5.

Bovill, C. (2017) 'Maintaining criticality: attempts to stop an unacceptable proportion of students from feeling alienated', *Journal of Educational Innovation, Partnership and Change*, 3(1), pp. 14-17.

Department for Education (2017) 'Higher Education and Research Act 2017' (available at: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/29/contents/enacted [accessed 29th March 2018]).

Hunter, M., Tobolowsky, B. and Gardoner, J. (2010) *Helping Sophomores Succeed: understanding and improving the second year experience*, Chichester: John Wiley and Sons.

Office for Students (2018) 'Securing student success: regulatory framework for higher education in England' (available at: http://tinyurl.com/y8e6s93v).

Tinto, V. (1993) *Leaving College: rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition,* 2nd ed., Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wolf-Wendel, L., Ward, K. and Kinzie, J. (2009) 'A tangled web of terms: the overlap and unique contribution of involvement, engagement, and integration to understanding college student success, *Journal of College Student Development*, 50 (4), pp. 407-428.

Tom Lowe is the Centre for Student Engagement Manager, and **Maria Moxey** is the Students Union Sports Coordinator, both at the University of Winchester.

Book Review

An A-Z of Creative Teaching in Higher Education

by Sylvia Ashton and Rachel Stone
SAGE
ISBN-10: 1526401029

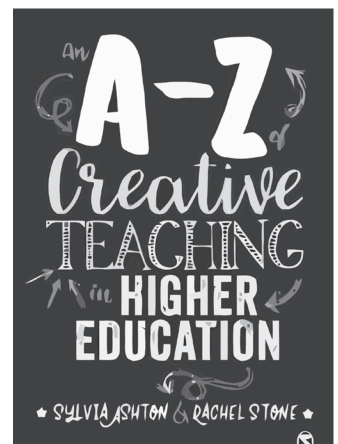
This book takes a no-nonsense approach to learning and teaching; if Mary Berry were to begin writing on academic development, this would be it. No overuse of academic language, theory integrated into the narrative, but most importantly written by consummate professionals – teachers with experience who share their story and give the type of holistic advice a new academic would receive following a teaching observation. For this reason, the book is to be recommended for those starting out on their teaching journey; it both supports and inspires students to make changes in their own professional practice and to give 'things a go'.

The lack of pretension in its use of language makes the book accessible and achieves the authors' aim of a book that is easy to dip into. The chapters are short, following an alphabet structure that address both usual and more unusual higher education topics, such as the design of space and putting joy into teaching. In fact, both the selection and structure are quite eclectic and it is best to read one chapter at a time in a short, immersive read, otherwise the lack of consistency of font and structure between chapters becomes jarring. The book does provide something of interest for everyone – from the inclusion of quiet learners to perfecting the art of storytelling.

For the developing student there is sometimes a lack of introduction to the accepted language of HE engagement e.g. 'the research-teaching nexus', and there are omissions in the reference links. Feedback is written from an anecdotal perspective, and although easy to grasp, the considerable body of evidence to support change in measuring understanding appears in another chapter, thus splitting the research-informed base between separate parts of the book. Taking a chattier style eases the impregnability of some of the lesser-known theory, but this can be at the expense of including references mentioned in the text which appear at the end of the book rather than in each chapter.

Overall, the book is an excellent introduction to learning and teaching with useful reflective points, up-to-date case studies and advice, as well as an essential foundation to some of the big theorists. It prompts new academics to good practice as well as providing teaching strategies for staff involved in academic development looking for a refreshed perspective.

Dr Dawn A. Morley is a Post-doctorate Researcher (Learning and Teaching) at Solent University.



SEDA News

Educational Development Initiative of the Year – Winner Announced

Congratulations to **Naomi Winstone** and colleagues at the University of Surrey whose Feedback Engagement and Tracking System (FEATS) was the winning initiative. Naomi and colleague **Emma Medland** were presented with the award by SEDA's Co-Chairs Jo Peat and Clara Davies at the November 2018 Conference.

Congratulations also to our three runners up:

- The Scholarship Project: Enhancing Scholarship in College Higher Education, which involved over 40 colleges
- Creativity for Learning in Higher Education led by **Chrissi Nerantzi** of Manchester Metropolitan University
- Embedding Critical Thinking in Curricula Using a Collaborative Learning, Teaching and Assessment Approach led by **Hilary Wason** of Kingston University

SEDA Roll of Honour

Congratulations to **John Lea** and **Celia Popovic** who have been added to the SEDA Roll of Honour.

John has, through his sustained commitment to educational development, made an outstanding contribution to the sector. His national, strategic-level work with SEDA has opened up access to educational development for teachers in the post-compulsory and college HE sectors. John has an extensive research record and has been at the centre of reappraising and shaping the way in which college-based HE considers the concept of scholarship through writing, editing and commissioning college HE publications. He was a driving force in the development of SEDA's 'Supporting Higher Education in College Settings' course and his advisory role on SEDA's Papers Committee ensured SEDA offered publications suitable for HE in FE. John has been a tireless advocate for educational development and scholarship and has been an inspiration to colleagues in college HE settings; through his work in this area he has exemplified SEDA's values.

Celia has been a key figure in SEDA for many years and, although based in Canada, she has continued to make rich and varied contributions to the work of SEDA. Through being deputy editor of the SEDA journal Celia has been able to champion the dissemination of evidence-based practices to enrich student experiences in diverse contexts. Her Programme Leadership of SEDA's Supporting and Leading Educational Change course has enabled individuals working in a range of settings to be recognised as Fellows of SEDA. Celia is passionate about what she does and she continues to make a difference to the educational development community as a whole. We are delighted to include her on the SEDA Roll of Honour.

SEDA Research and Evaluation Small Grants 2019

These grants are intended to support research and evaluation in staff and educational development with the goal of continued improvement in the quality and understanding of educational development practices. For 2019 we will be offering five grants of £1000 each for research into educational development practices.

See www.seda.ac.uk for further details including an application form. The closing date for applications is 12 noon on 28 January 2019.

Courses

SEDA's Online Introduction to Educational Change four-week online workshop, will be running from 18 February-15 March 2019. For further details, see: https://www.seda.ac.uk/onlineintroduction-educational-change.

SEDA Fellowships

Many congratulations to the following, who have been awarded Senior Fellowship of SEDA:

- **Dr Beth Beckman**, Australian National University
- **Christophe Douce**, The Open University
- **Dr Peter Gossman**, University of Worcester
- **Dr Kirsten Jack**, Manchester Metropolitan University
- **Dr Ide O'Sullivan**, University of Limerick
- **Helen Vosper**, Robert Gordon University

SEDA-PDF

Congratulations are also due to the University of West London which has been recognised to provide SEDA-PDF accredited programmes.

SEDA Spring Teaching Learning and Assessment Conference 2019

Collaboration to support the student experience and progression

Thursday 9 May to Friday 10 May 2019

The Clayton Hotel, Belfast