

Title: **Habitus, Power, Epistemology and the UK Professional Standards – can critical pedagogy help us understand the challenges of current educational development practice?**

Presenter: **Julie Hall**
Roehampton University

Abstract:

Session Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- View their work in the context of the critical pedagogy
- Consider the HE Professional Standards Framework in terms of the contested nature of professional development
- Compare conceptions of the 'professionalisation' agenda in HE with that in Schools and Adult Learning

Session Outline

Key issues to be addressed are:

A key current area of interest and challenge is the development of professional development frameworks aligned to the UK Professional Standards (as witnessed by recent SEDA Conferences and events). For many educational developers the implementation of the standards in their HEI's has been fraught. It has highlighted a number of issues linked to supporting and leading change, the contested role of EDU's, and professional learning. How should we respond?

Contributions at past SEDA conferences and my own workshop two years ago highlighted a desire to be more critically reflexive and to pay attention to the myriad assumptions, power relations, values and perceptions which lie behind this task in particular. A SEDA grant has allowed me to review some of the recent critical pedagogy literature, particularly from the worlds of school and adult learning. As Tamsin Haggis (2008) argues in a recent Think Piece for a South African Learning and Teaching Conference 'We need to do everything we can to get out of our own comfortable cultural milieu in terms of discipline, in terms of field, in terms of epistemology and even in terms of ontology.' (<http://www.closeup4.uct.ac.za>)

Critical pedagogy is not overtly evident in UK educational development writing and I offer this discussion session in an attempt to share my findings in a way which may help illuminate further some of the issues experienced on the ground in our institutions. In doing so I hope to contribute to a richer understanding of the contested nature of what is meant by professional development in HE and the role of EDU's at a difficult time for HEI's. The session will provide educational developers with a number of conceptual frameworks from outside the immediate scholarship of our discipline to aid us in understanding the resistance and challenge of introducing professional standards to our colleagues.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

10 mins – introduction and small group exploration of the notions of ‘habitus’ (Bourdieu)

20 mins – Discussion paper - using concepts from critical pedagogy literature in schools and adult learning to help us understand issues around UK professional Standards

10 mins – applying the concepts to your work – whole group discussion

Indicative questions: how do issues of power manifest themselves for you in your role? What is the tension between perceptions of ‘managerialism’ and ‘professionalism’? Do you agree that EDU’s have a ‘comfortable cultural milieu’?

5 minutes conclusion

References

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