

Title: **Academic Development ‘at the edge of chaos’ –
what does it look, feel and sound like?**

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Abstract:

Session Learning Outcomes

Participants will engage with processes which will provide them with the opportunity to reflect on different ways of seeing their practices and engage differently with others. In particular, they will experience, reflect and collaborate through a range of activities and engaging with different materials and ideas.

Session Outline

This session starts from the premise that the title of the conference is, perhaps intentionally, ambiguous and that we could usefully explore what is meant by ‘changing’ and ‘new’. Are we really interested in ‘change *for the better*’ and doing things *differently* rather than just new things? How does change happen in large, complex institutions (Macdonald & Joughin, 2009)?

At the May 2009 conference I led a plenary which explored how we might promote and enhance academic practice through research and scholarship by using metaphors, stories, music and pictures. In this session I would like to give participants the opportunity to explore this approach in their own practice, whether as a teacher, academic developer or in other roles.

After describing an event which used ‘Ready, Steady, Cook!’ as a metaphor for reflecting on learning and teaching, we will use some pictures, stories and music to see what meanings we can extract for our own practices (Ferrante et al, 2008; Lakoff & Johnson, 2003; McCarron & Savin-Baden, 2008; McDury & Alterio, 2002).

Participants will spend much of the time thinking about their own examples, sharing them with others and exploring how the approach might be used in their day-to-day practice (Bain, 2004). By doing so we can focus further on ‘change for the better’ by doing, or at least thinking about, things ‘differently’.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

Through a series of individual, small group and plenary engagements participants will experience a variety of approaches and take away ideas on which they have reflected and received feedback to enable them to use them in their own practice. My role will be to facilitate the activities and introduce stimulus materials rather than making an input in the traditional sense.

References

Bain, K (2004) *What the best college teachers do*. Harvard University Press

Ferrante, K et al (2008) Students' metaphors as descriptors of effective and ineffective learning experiences. *Practice and Evidence of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, **3**, 2, 103-128

Lakoff, G & Johnson, M (2003) *Metaphors we live by*. University of Chicago Press

Macdonald, R & Joughin, G (2009) Changing Assessment in Higher Education: A Model in Support of Institution-Wide Improvement, in Joughin, G (ed.) *Assessment, Learning and Judgement in Higher Education*. Springer.

McCarron, K & Savin-Baden, M (2008) Compering and comparing: stand-up comedy and pedagogy. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, **45**, 4, 355-363

McDrury, J & Alterio, M (2002) *Learning through Storytelling: using reflection and experience in Higher Education contexts*. Dunmore Press.