EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

20 YEARS

SEDA
STAFF AND EDUCATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

Contents

It is an important part of who I am: The SEDA Fellowships Scheme

Shân Wareing, Buckinghamshire New University

Nearly 20 years ago, I found myself in the middle of middle England, in what I recall to be a tin shed outside Telford, with a group of people I'd never met before and who were passionate about teaching and learning to an extent I hadn't previously encountered. A number of these people were being celebrated for completing a process to recognise their professional achievements and skills and I still recall the pride and emotion that they demonstrated. It was 1995, and I'd witnessed the first SEDA Fellowships being awarded.

> 'I felt recognition of the educational developer's role was important. I still have my portfolio as I was proud of what it showed about what I had achieved.'

I now have the role of SEDA Fellowships co-ordinator, a fascinating and privileged position which allows me to work across the SEDA community, and find out about the extraordinary work of SEDA Fellowship holders around the world, alongside my day job as Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Learning and Teaching at Buckinghamshire New University.

The SEDA Fellowships Scheme is the process for recognition and development of people engaged in staff and educational development. SEDA Fellowship holders have proven commitment and expertise in bringing about educational change and are a global community of professionals who lead and support such change. 109 people worldwide are current holders of one of the three categories of Fellowship.

> 'It feels good to have confidence in your own sense of professionalism.'

The Fellowships scheme is built on the SEDA values of:
- An understanding of how people learn
- Scholarship, professionalism and ethical practice
- Working and developing learning communities
- Working effectively with diversity and promoting inclusivity
- Continuing reflection on professional practice
- Developing people and processes.

There is a version of the scheme for anyone supporting in any way staff in educational change, which operates at three levels: Associate Fellowship, Fellowship and Senior Fellowship.

> 'It allowed me to reflect on how I had framed my identity, to explore what was important to me.'

SEDA Supporting and Leading Educational Change

Associate Fellowship

Associate Fellowship tends to fit people who are either new to their role or in a role which has an element of educational change leadership in it, such as early career academic developers, or departmental learning and teaching co-ordinators. Some holders provide learning support, others are involved in change initiatives in their institutions. The requirements for Associate Fellowship are to document a year's continuing professional development and plan for your future development. All Fellowship holders are entitled to use post nominal letters – Associate Fellows use AFSEDA. For many, AFSEDA is a stage on the path towards achieving SEDA Fellowship.

'I embarked on the SEDA fellowship journey to "professionalise" my career in academic staff development.'

Fellowship

SEDA Fellowship results from successful completion of SEDA's Supporting and Leading Educational Change course, which is designed for anyone in a learning and teaching development role or in any kind of professional development role in any organisation where the education and training of adults take place. Holders are entitled to use the post nominal letters FSEDA. Remaining in good standing involves an annual report and discussion of reports in a triad. We have considered whether we should include a more independent route to Fellowship via a professional portfolio. However, such a route would still incur the costs of assessment, and require some support in the form of mentoring and formative feedback, so would not cost considerably less than the course, and the benefits of the course participation and the sense of community are so valuable that we've maintained this as the route to Fellowship.

'Fellowship via "supporting and leading educational change" was a transparent way of practising what I preach.'

'I am very confident what SEDA has endowed me with will help me face the challenges with ease.'

'Doing the Fellowship helped towards affirming my identity to me as an educational developer and helped me to see that I was becoming credible in this role.'

Senior Fellowship

Senior Fellowship is for people who are well established in roles where they bring about educational change. Because it assumes a career or role which demonstrates that experience and seniority, the assessment process is kept fairly light. Submissions consist of a personal account which shows how your work is informed by, and promotes, the SEDA Values and that you have demonstrated the relevant range of SEDA's outcomes. The continuing professional development process is the same as for Fellowship. Holders are entitled to use the post nominal letters SFSEDA.

'SFSEDA identifies me to myself as a member of the most nurturing professional community I have ever met.'

So what does SEDA Fellowship offer?

What Fellowship holders tell us that they value is the sense of becoming an active participant in a professional community. The CPD process particularly allows people to have what is often a very restorative dialogue with people who share their priorities, their values, and can really acknowledge both achievements over the previous year, and difficulties and dilemmas. Our professional identity grows through the application process and through the CPD.

'It was a highly developmental process that encouraged me to reflect deeply.'

For some, it presents a welcome chance to become much more scholarly in approach, through conversations, collaborations and activities in the SEDA Fellowship community.

'My practice was about academic and educational development, so...I also wanted to position my identity and knowledge base within that field.'

Once people have achieved their SEDA Fellowship or Senior Fellowship, they usually approach their first annual CPD process with its triads with some excitement, since it is rightly regarded as a real perk of holding either kind of Fellowship.

'That spirit of peer review and peer support has characterised my experience of becoming and living as a SEDA Fellow throughout the last seventeen or so years.'

'The CPD process continues to affirm my belonging whilst always pushing me to question more.'

'Our triad resulted in powerful reflection and insights on all our parts...At the end we agreed that we had each obtained so much from the dialogue that we wanted to share it with you all.'

One of the things people value most about the SEDA Fellowships is the sense of having earned explicit professional credibility in the wider community. It seems common to people involved in educational support and change that it can be hard to explain the nature of our roles to others, and the Fellowships help by giving: 'some external frame of reference to an area of work that sometimes people I work with struggle to understand or tie down.' It converts our activity into a currency which is more easily recognisable in the outside world:

'It felt good to be able to say "SFSEDA is my professional qualification in academic development from my professional association".'

So where next for the scheme?

We would like to grow the AFSEDA, providing greater structure and some continuing professional development activity year on year, while still encouraging holders to progress to the Supporting and Leading Educational Change course, and a SEDA Fellowship. We are also considering putting some option for all year round peer support into the Fellowship and Senior Fellowship. There was clear interest expressed this year, if we can combine meeting people's needs with something not too complicated and not too onerous. And we need to reinforce the processes for peer group mentoring for SFSEDA, where peer support can help with orientation and understanding the standards needed, in this otherwise independent process.

I will be moving on from my role as Fellowships Co-ordinator in November 2013 and the position will be advertised. If you think you'd be interested in supporting this interesting and valuable scheme, do get in touch, and keep an eye out for the advertisement on the SEDA JISC mail list.

For further details see http://www.seda.ac.uk/

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(Editor's note: The 'tin shed' was Motec – the Road Transport Industry Training Board's Multi-Occupational Training and Education Centre – a surprising venue for a SEDA residential conference.)

Editorial

Welcome to edition 14.3 of *Educational Developments.* SEDA has almost come to the end of its 20 year celebrations but it is interesting to note that *Educational Developments* has not been published for that length of time. The first edition was published in January 2000 and, amongst others, featured articles by Graham Gibbs on teaching and learning strategies, Brian Smith on what constitutes outstanding teaching and David and Carole Baume on national initiatives such as the National Teaching Fellowship, SEDA accreditation and the Institute for Learning and Teaching. In fact, *Educational Developments* was created following a merger of the SEDA Newsletter and *The New Academic* which began in 1991 – two years before SEDA was created. This magazine itself contained

articles such as 'Eight Myths about Assessment' by…. Graham Gibbs! As well as pieces on 'greening' geography by John Bradbeer and 'Teaching without Lectures' by Mick Healey.

Plus ça change one might say. Of course there are enduring topics and issues for the staff and educational developer to engage with such as assessment and feedback, accreditation and working with national initiatives. In this edition for example, Shân Wareing reminds us about the importance and accessibility of the SEDA Fellowship Scheme and Debbie McVitty refreshes our thinking about SEDA values and suggests a partnership with students in relation to SEDA's first value – 'an understanding of how people learn'.

A further enduring theme in the articles to be found in *Educational Developments* is the importance of being creative in our practice and Digby Warren outlines how one can use pictorial representations to support the development of new and early career tutors. Support for new tutors is also a theme of David Walker and Karen Strickland's article where they look at academic writing and the opportunities offered by *The Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice,* a new, online open access journal where the whole mystique of academic writing might be challenged.

Over the last twenty years we have grown accustomed to the changing role of technology to support learning and teaching. The very first edition of *Educational Developments* in 2000

had a short piece by Stephen Bostock (the new co-chair of SEDA) reviewing virtual learning environments. This edition shows how far we have come with an article by Sue Beckingham and Joelle Adams demonstrating the use of Twitter to support student learning, and Lawrie Phipps discussing the ways in which one's 'presence' is enhanced through the use of social networking in the 'post-digital' university.

Educational Developments brings us new ideas about enduring topics and has published a series of discussions about the use of Appreciative Inquiry as an approach to development. In this edition Claire Taylor demonstrates how AI might be adapted to engage with the need to be evidence based in our work. Developing new ideas through adaptation has been a consistent feature of *Educational Developments* and Tim Maxfield, Richard Painter and Dr Carl Evans describe how they have piloted the use of alumni to mentor postgraduate students. Similarly, my article examines how appropriate leadership approaches are contingent and how evidence from overseas might be adapted to support leadership development in higher education institutions facing a 'crisis' in the UK.

Educational Developments, of course, engages with a diverse range of staff, educational and academic development practice in the UK and overseas and it is fitting that this edition also has an article written by David Ross *et al.,* describing the work of the Scottish Heads of Educational Development community and their links with SEDA over the last 20 years – a relationship that led SEDA to award SHED the Legacy team award. Our congratulations go to SHED and let's hope for another 20 glorious years.

Steve Outram, Higher Education Academy.

SEDA in Scotland

David Ross, University of the West of Scotland, **Ginny Saich,** University of Stirling, **Lorraine Walsh,** University of Dundee, **Darren Comber,** University of Aberdeen, **Stuart Boon,** University of Strathclyde, and **Charles Neame,** Glasgow School of Art

The SHED (Scottish Higher Education Developers) community has existed and collaborated formally since 1992 and has developed very useful links with SEDA over the last 20 years. The SHED community has always provided support, mentoring, and development opportunities for individual members, with its broad and inclusive representation deemed a particular strength. The group has worked at achieving this by proactively reaching out to colleagues and at the start of this outreach, Lorraine Stefani (then Strathclyde University, now Auckland University) and Bob Matthew (then Glasgow University, now Stirling University) made contact with SEDA, then based in Birmingham, the result of which was the establishment of SEDA Scotland.

SEDA Scotland's first foray into organising events was 'Critical Reflection in Action: A Scottish Perspective', held in June 1999. This event explored the nature and role of reflection in continuing professional development (CPD) as a part of taught course work and as an essential part of ongoing CPD. Key issues under discussion were: 'What is reflection?'; 'Good practice in taught courses and CPD'; and 'Tackling challenges in reflective practice'. All the speakers and presenters came from Scottish institutions and included many well-known names in the field, including John Cowan, Ray McAleese, Lorraine Stefani and Judith George. This event was judged by both SEDA Scotland and the SEDA executive to be a successful and profitable event, laying the foundations for further collaborative working.

The Scottish SEDA scene continued to grow and the burgeoning group set about creating an impact, which was realised by their successful bid to host the SEDA Annual Conference in April 2001 at the University of Glasgow, entitled 'Challenge to change: enhancing the practice and scholarship of learning and teaching'. Hosting the SEDA/ SEDA Scotland conference at an ancient, research-intensive establishment was a challenge, but one which ultimately proved very successful, with the keynotes laying the foundations of what were to become significant areas of interest for the sector. The keynote speakers were Professor Alastair MacFarlane (then Acting Principal of the University of the Highlands and Islands Project, and formerly Principal of Heriot Watt University), author of the 'MacFarlane Report' (MacFarlane, 1992) which at the time was under active discussion in Scottish HEIs. The other keynote was Dr Peter Wright, Assistant Director, Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), who spoke on 'Giving Voice to Academic Standards: the essential role of the reference points for standards in the new method of external quality assurance for HE' – which became the starting point for the QAA work on the development of the academic infrastructure and forerunner of the Quality Enhancement Framework in Scotland. The event was a great success, drawing the largest attendance a SEDA conference had yet attracted.

Subsequently, since that initial Scottish conference, the SHED community has continued to grow and develop, and to work closely with SEDA. A formal arm of the SHED network was created in 1992 with the establishment of an educational development sub-committee of the Committee of Scottish Higher Education Principals (COSHEP), later replaced in 2000 by Universities Scotland. The creation of a formal sub-committee (the Universities Scotland Educational Development Sub-Committee (USEDSC)) of an established, sector-wide body, has provided a 'voice' for the wider

community of educational developers in Scotland and a sounding board and communication route for external agencies. Over a number of years this has afforded the development of important connections with the (then) Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (ILTHE), the Higher Education Academy (HEA) and the QAA (Scotland), in addition to SEDA. In particular, the help and support of Brenda Smith from the ILTHE's Learning and Teaching Support Network (LTSN) Generic Centre was very much appreciated. It was during the early years of the sub-committee that individual members established contact with SEDA, as witnessed above, and many colleagues began to engage with SEDA through attending meetings and conferences, contributing to publications such as SEDA Specials and *Educational Developments,* and continue to do so today.

Staff making the transition from teachers of students to teachers of staff, and staff new to the field of educational development, have found the SHED group to be both friendly and inclusive. Additionally, SHED welcomes engagement from colleagues working in roles such as e-learning, library, and student learning advisors, and our meetings and conferences over the years, including those supported by SEDA, have been enriched with valuable contributions from these colleagues from the wider community of practice.

The first collaborative sector-wide initiative was the development of professionally accredited PG certificate in teaching and learning/equivalent programmes in the late nineties/early new millennium, with many HEIs mapping their programme to the SEDA Professional Values, as a useful and insightful set of statements. When the new Quality Enhancement Framework emerged in 2002, SHED engaged with the ideas with their usual enthusiasm, viewing the enhancement-led approach as a highly positive and significant move for educational developers, especially the Enhancement Themes.

Extensive engagement by SHED has been apparent throughout the lifetime of a number of Themes, with colleagues undertaking scoping studies, research and consultancy as well as facilitating focus groups, engaging as institutional representatives on steering and advisory groups and presenting at QAA (Scotland) events, including its annual Enhancement Themes conference. Throughout all of this, collaborative working continued with SEDA at every opportunity, accessing small grants when available, and generally using the network that SEDA provides to disseminate our progress and to share with and learn from others. In this, SHED colleagues view themselves as others associated with SEDA see themselves, as change agents within our own institutions and at a sector level.

These activities have developed into advisory, research, consultancy and lobbying roles through relationships with QAA (Scotland), the Scottish Funding Council and Universities Scotland, backed by both HEA and SEDA. The SHED community has also been active in taking the enhancement message and related practices to the wider

international HE community, disseminating the concept, related research and effective practice through presentations at a number of conferences, including those of ICED, HERDSA, IFYE and EFYE, in addition to numerous journal publications.

Change, however, remains the only constant. A recent committee restructuring by Universities Scotland will result in the removal of USEDSC from August 2013. Rather than mourning its demise, however, the SHED community is excited by the challenges and opportunities presented by this development. In particular, colleagues have indicated an interest in strengthening the existing activities, exploring further networking opportunities and extending current partnership working. Within this context, the current USEDSC convenor has been approached by representatives from SEDA, the HEA, QAA (Scotland) and Universities Scotland indicating a desire to continue work with the SHED community as it moves forward. This, in itself, reflects a high level of recognition for the expertise residing within the community and respect for the contribution that its members can make and have made across the sector.

A number of collaborative enhancement initiatives (both funded and unfunded) have been undertaken by members of the SHED community over the years, in many ways paralleling the development of SEDA. Outputs from all of these activities have been regularly disseminated within the SHED group and the wider community through a variety of formal and informal means, including contributions to *Educational Developments.* These have included:
• The Effective Lecturing Resource Pack for Staff Development (ELRSD) (Matthew *et al.,* 2001)
• The Use of MANs Initiative (UMI) (http://www.use-of-mans.ac.uk/index.html)
• Student Enhanced Learning through Effective Feedback (SENLEF, 2004)
• Professional Recognition of Methods of Promoting Teaching and Enhancing Learning (PROMOTE, McArthur *et al.,* 2004)
• SHEDLOADS, a project to develop an experimental Learning Objects repository
• Scottish Higher Education Research (SHEER) Reports to the HEA, Phases 1 and 2 (Walsh *et al.,* 2007; Comber and Walsh, 2008)
• Higher Education Research in Scotland (Bovill, Sheward and Smyth, 2012)

This latter report, in particular, highlights some of the important work that SHED has been developing in Scotland around building capacity in pedagogic research (in all its forms). Walsh and Comber (2011) report on one of the many Scotland-wide events that have been organised under or around the auspices of SHED to promote this important area of our work.

Throughout all of these years the SHED community has reflected the SEDA Values and pedagogical principles of continuing reflection, and working with and developing individuals and learning communities have remained at the core of what we do.

During its long history the SHED community has been populated by a wide range of educational development colleagues, some of whom have now retired, while others have moved into different roles/remits or relocated to other areas of the UK or further afield. This constant ebb and flow has brought 'new blood' to the group, yet SHED has also retained its sense of community and shared purpose that has never relied upon any one individual for its sustainability.

In addition to engaging with and supporting academic colleagues and the wider educational development community, the SHED group has explored and developed processes to facilitate early development and CPD among its own practitioners. An example of this includes running an annual forum, usually held on Skye and hosted by the University of the Highlands and Islands at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, the Gaelic College, open to all interested colleagues. This reflects the inclusive, open culture of SHED and recognises that 'educational development' can encompass a wide range of activities, roles and remits. Recent forum themes on Skye have included Internationalisation (2009), Lecturers for the 21st Century (2010) and Reframing Educational Development: One Size Doesn't Fit All (2011).

Today, the SHED community has many members and the collegiality remains as strong as ever. The group is now building on this and is currently discussing the possibility of an 'expertise list' to facilitate reciprocal peer support. A pilot project is currently underway, wherein SHED colleagues within HEIs in the west of Scotland support and facilitate each other's institutional CPD Frameworks by providing externality to the review process. Our community is possibly unique, but has many transferable characteristics, as highlighted in a well-received SHED seminar presented at the SEDA conference in 2011 (Boon and Saich, 2011).

We are honoured that our work to date has been honoured with a SEDA Legacy Award this year and we take this as recognition of the collegiality and mutual sharing we have built up over 20 years. As for the future, who knows, but others in the SHED community will take this up in future *Educational Developments* articles. It has been a fruitful first 20 years – roll on the next phase!

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Dimensions of leadership

Steve Outram, Higher Education Academy

Picture the situation. You are the Dean of Teaching and Learning at Madeley University in North Staffordshire, a former college of education that became a university in the 1990s, with about 10,000 students. As a member of the senior management team, you have been asked by the vice-chancellor, who was appointed from outside the university 18 months ago, to deploy your considerable facilitation skills to lead a senior management team away day to develop a leadership strategy to manage the challenge the institution now faces. For the second year in a row it has failed to recruit 250 undergraduate students. The vacancies are not evenly distributed across the undergraduate provision and the viability of a number of courses is now in question.

The executive, comprising the vice-chancellor, deputy vice-chancellor and three executive deans, is riven. On the one hand, the vice-chancellor wants to adopt a strong leadership stance and unilaterally start to take executive decisions as quickly as possible. Conversely, the other members of the executive want to involve the whole senior management team which includes the four associate deans, the directors of services and the university secretary, in the decision-making processes, including consultation with the rest of the university.

The senior management team, including the vice-chancellor, are agreed that the first step is to find a consensus about which of these leadership approaches is the most appropriate in this situation. The purpose of the away day is not to resolve the crisis in one day, but to agree a leadership approach and start to work on a programme of actions. The vice-chancellor recognises that the other members of the executive and senior management team have been at the university for a long time and he needs to get 'buy in', whichever way the discussion goes. The other SMT members would have brought in a consultant to facilitate these discussions but there is neither the time nor the resource to employ one,

so it's your job! What can you do? Here are some ideas.

Firstly, it might be worth getting an acknowledgement that the methods that the institution used to find solutions to challenges up to now may not be appropriate here since the situation is much more serious. A new approach is warranted. Secondly, one might review current thinking about leadership, not least to ensure that the facilitation is evidence based. A text book answer is likely to suggest the content of Table 1, below.

Of course, the senior management team are keen to get the matter resolved and do not have the time to engage with the intellectual analysis of current leadership models. They are also confident that they have been good leaders in the university, engaging with matters such as vision and mission building, strategy creation and adapting and adopting the ideas developed by Graham Gibbs,

Christopher Knapper and Sergio Piccinin in relation to departmental leadership of teaching and learning (Gibbs *et al.,* 2009).

An obvious place to seek an evidence base on leadership within the context of UK higher education is the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education (LFHE). Ewart Wooldridge CBE, the first Chief Executive of the LFHE, who retired at the end of 2012, has shared the lessons he has learned from the nine years he led the LFHE. In his final piece for *Engage* 31, the house periodical of LFHE, he concluded:

> *'The critical skill is about managing uncertainty, coping with emergent change, as opposed to planned strategy development. There is a need for more agile approaches to scenario planning…Above all, the challenge is to be able to create a more entrepreneurial and enterprising culture in the*

From	To
Few leaders, mainly at the top; many managers	Leaders at every level, fewer managers
Leading by goal setting	Leading by vision – new directions
Downsizing, benchmarking for low cost, high quality	Also creating domains of uniqueness, niche markets
Reactive/adaptive to change	Anticipative/futures-creative
Designer of hierarchies	Designer of flatter, distributed, more collegial institutions
Directing and supervising individuals	Empowering and inspiring individuals, facilitating teamwork
Information held by few decision-makers	Information shared with many, both internally and outside partners
Leader as boss, controlling processes and performance	Leader as coach, creating learning organisations
Leader as stabiliser, balancing conflicting demands and maintaining culture	Leader as change agent, creating agenda for change, balancing risks and evolving the culture and technology base
Leader responsible for developing good managers	Leader also responsible for developing future leaders, serving as leader of leaders

Table 1 Likely model of twenty-first century leadership
(adapted from Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus, in Gill Robinson Hickman (2010)
Leading Organizations: perspectives for a new era, 2nd ed., Sage)

institution without losing the concept and values of the university.' (Wooldridge, 2013)

In his valedictory piece for the Higher Education Policy Institute (Wooldridge, 2013), Ewart also identifies a number of vitally important dimensions to effective leadership in higher education. He points out, for example, that many senior management teams simply do not function as a team and, given the possibility of different types of senior management team, it is crucial that dysfunctional SMTs, such as the one at Madeley, spend time developing a shared understanding of what type of SMT they are – the Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Group, the Chief Executive Officer's Board, the Executive Board or the Academic/Administrative Committee. He asserts that:

- *Top leaders need to be clear which type of senior leadership group and culture they want and assess how to reach that point quickly*
- *Some form of 360 degree feedback process could underpin the new culture by increasing individual and team self-awareness*
- *Enhancing the relationship between the SMT and the rest of the wider management and leadership group was a critical priority*
- *There were also wider and equally critical issues about the relationship between the senior team and the governing body.* (Wooldridge, 2013, paragraph 19)

The report also goes on to suggest that the role of vice-chancellor is now multi-layered and 'messier' than the role of chief executive in other sectors and that the vice-chancellor is maybe more powerful at the same time as being more responsible and accountable. The contemporary vice-chancellor may well be in charge of internal management, academic leadership, public relations and fund raising. An effective vice-chancellor needs to address the following issues:

- *Being clear what kind of relationship they want with their top team and how this colours the engagement with the wider leadership and academic community*
- *Placing even greater importance*

on the personal relationship with the Chair and the whole governing body
- *Assessing how many different roles they want to have internally and externally and the implications of this for overload*
- *Achieving the right balance between chief executive of a business and focal point of an academic community.* (Wooldridge, 2013, paragraph 26)

Ewart Wooldridge also stresses the need to engage with the 'third space', where academic staff and professional/administrative staff work together in supporting the student learning experience.

In relation to leading change, Ewart describes the change approaches that he has found particularly helpful to informing change in universities including Peter Senge's 'reactive, adaptive, generative' model; Kurt Lewin's 'unfreeze/refreeze model'; Kotter's Eight Steps – particularly the notion of a 'guiding coalition'; and Charles Handy's notion of organisations having to maintain 'tight/loose' boundaries – that we need to understand how to make 'tight/loose' work in balancing the academic and business domains.

Giving attention to an institution's governing body is also a significantly important lesson that Ewart shares in the HEPI report:

> *'My experience is that the increased pressures of competition, internationalisation and uncertainty, all of which heighten the risks surrounding institutional effectiveness, are placing a dramatically increased responsibility on university governing bodies. They are undergoing a quiet revolution, with the need for greater focus engagement with the business coinciding with a reduction in size.'* (Wooldridge, 2013, paragraph 42)

Ewart Wooldridge concludes that the new, competitive higher education environment requires that university leaders develop new leadership skills including: making sense of the complex internal and external agenda we now work with in higher education and developing a compelling story for one's institution; being

enterprising without compromising the institution's values; both challenging and supporting colleagues in relation to the need for change; building confidence with staff and energising them in relation to these necessary changes and fostering new alliances – both internally and externally – to engage proactively with the needs of a university in the twenty-first century.

This is all helpful advice for the Dean at Madeley and there are now a number of things that can be done at the away day. It is clear that the whole notion of university leadership needs re-framing. The question remains, however, of how to convince the vice-chancellor that a new leadership approach is warranted. What is the evidence?

Drawing on her leadership of the LFHE Leadership Foundation Fellowship Programme and discussions with Fellowship holders, Professor Stephanie Marshall, now CEO of the Higher Education Academy, is clear (Marshall, 2007) that 'dispersed leadership' or 'leadership at all levels' is more likely than 'heroic' leadership to achieve transformational and lasting change in a higher education institution. There is also evidence from recent organisational development studies that successful leaders are 'emotionally intelligent' people who are able to navigate the 'permanent white waters' that characterise the changes taking place in higher education globally. Such an approach stresses the social skills a leader has that enable them to motivate the endeavour of others. These core skills, according to Feldman (1999), comprise:

- Knowing yourself
- Maintaining control
- Being able to 'read' others
- Perceiving accurately
- Communicating.

And also include a capacity to:

- Take responsibility
- Generate choices
- Embrace a vision
- Have courage
- Demonstrate resolve.

These all have a potential for development in the planned away day but there is still something missing; something that will engage completely

with the sense of crisis that now pervades the institution. The answer may be found by looking overseas at what colleges are doing in different countries to tackle the churn that is taking place in higher education. In the USA, particularly, there is now considerable experience of higher education institutions being forced to close – especially small, faith-based, community colleges. There are also lessons to be learned from Australia and Canada leading to the identification of the skills necessary for 'turnaround leadership' (Fullan and Scott, 2009; Martin, Samels and associates, 2009).

In the USA, there is now a sufficient body of evidence to identify the skills of a 'turnaround leader'. Indeed, this evidence has also revealed some of the indicators one might look for to identify an institution that is likely to be 'at risk' of impending closure. While indicators might not readily transfer from the USA to the very different higher education systems in the UK, there are a number of elements that might be common. The drivers leading to risk obviously include changed state funding but also factors such as 'churning presidents'! In the USA, university presidents are older and staying in post for a shorter time, fewer than six years. This leads to a focus on the transition from one president to the next rather than the generation of appropriate strategies to improve the quality of the student experience. Other indicators include poor retention with students and also with academic staff, demonstrated by the proportion of academic staff with 'terminal qualifications' (that is, highly qualified and experienced academic staff either leave such institutions or do not apply for positions there in the first place). The average length of time working at the institution is also an indicator – where the leadership team averages more than twelve years (out of touch and 'stuck in familiar ways') or fewer than three years (insufficient experience to avoid the pitfalls). Not having any online provision is also seen as an indicator in the USA. Clearly, one of the activities at the away day will be to draw up a list of such indicators and discuss where the institution might be; benchmarking with competitor institutions is also important.

So what are the lessons to be learned from successful 'turnaround leaders'?

Whilst there is not yet a complete consensus in answering this question and, as mentioned previously, some skills may not be appropriate when transferred to the UK, a number of possible skills might be identified. Of the large number of suggestions that are now emerging a number of priorities have been identified. These include having a focus on the institutional mission rather than on admissions. This is likely to include examining the institution's strengths and reputation, and building on that at the expense of poorly recruiting programmes and programmes with a poor reputation. Put starkly, these will need to close as the institution develops a high quality niche presence. This might be perceived as a need for robust and strong leadership and it is clear that the evidence one might bring to the away day is not automatically going to resolve the issue. Secondly, and it may seem obvious, effective 'turnaround leadership' understands fully the institution's finance system. There is evidence that such competence is often not found in 'at risk' institutional senior management teams. Thirdly, successful 'turnaround' includes the use of detailed quality management systems whose data can inform effective and timely interventions. For example, having a 'dashboard' system enables one to monitor retention rates as well as record successful achievements. Having an eye for detail is a vital 'turnaround' skill.

A further important skill already mentioned is working with the Board of Governors and making sure that the Board itself has colleagues with the skills appropriate for 'turnaround' activities. Importantly, there is evidence that successful 'turnaround' includes being candid with the Chair of the Board and not attempting to disguise what is really going on, and also having a Board that could act quickly when necessary. This presents a challenge in itself for Madeley University where the governors are all volunteers and the Chair was originally a governor for the institution when it was a college of education. Above all, there is evidence that successful 'turnaround' includes a complete focus on students, the student experience and the inclusion of students in 'turnaround planning'.

With all of this evidence, one might start to envisage how an away day to develop the leadership approach to engage with the crisis at Madeley University might begin to take shape, including the need for indicators of risk, identification of what is working well and enjoys a good reputation, and leadership for envisioning and scenario planning. The participants in the away day might include the obvious academic and professional heads and directors of services but ought also to ensure the inclusion of the student voice and also representation from the Board of Governors. The evidence for a preferred leadership approach is still ambiguous but, as facilitator, your role is to enable the senior management team to generate a solution that they can all subscribe to.

Footnote

Madeley University is, of course, fictional. However, there was a Madeley College of Education that was built in 1962 and was used, originally, to train teachers of Physical Education. It remained in use until 1982, when it was moved to the Physical Education department of Staffordshire Polytechnic (now Staffordshire University) at Stoke-on-Trent.

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Introduction to Twitter for educational developers

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Love it or hate it, Twitter is becoming an ubiquitous force in educational development activity. This article introduces educational developers to the variety of ways Twitter can be used to enhance academic practice, from keeping abreast of new scholarship to building international networks. From the conversations we have had with many of you over the past year or so, we know that some educational developers are resistant to Twitter, others are open to it but unsure how to use it, and others use it in a wide range of ways. We hope that this article will help you make the best use of Twitter for your purposes or better understand how and why others find it useful, even if you're still sceptical.

What is it?

Twitter is an online social media platform that enables people to connect and communicate in short, bite-sized chunks. There is a 140-character limit to each 'Tweet', but messages often simply link to full-length articles or photos by including a URL. For example, in the image of Joelle's Twitter 'feed' or homepage below (Figure 1), the QAA, Guardian, Universities UK and Jisc Tweets all provide a link for followers to click on, leading to detailed content.
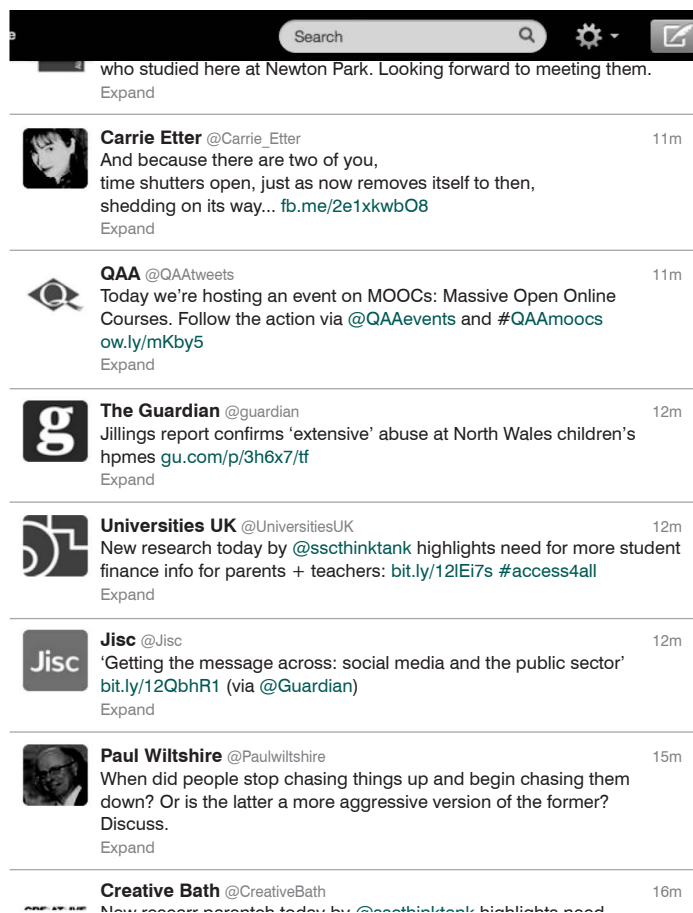

Figure 1   Joelle's Twitter 'feed'

Users choose who to 'follow' based on their interests; you do not have to follow people who follow you (though it is polite to 'follow back', at least for a little while). Looking at individuals' or companies' biographies can help you choose whom to follow (you may want to complete yours, too). Taking a look at the topics of a user's previous Tweets will also give you an indication of potential shared interests. Once you are 'following' another Twitter user, you will see their messages on your homepage when you log in to Twitter, along with any messages they have 'retweeted' from others. Only people who follow you will automatically see your Tweets in their feeds, but your messages are also visible on your profile for others to find, unless you make them private.

Most people use Twitter as a marketing tool (explicitly or implicitly), though some users mix business with pleasure. For example, Joelle tweets about life in Bath, issues in higher education, well-being, and current events; Sue, meanwhile, regularly participates with weekly Tweet Chats where people share information on topics such as social media and technology use in education. Some users, though, prefer to keep separate personal and business accounts, or simply use Twitter as a marketing tool for work and avoid personal messages altogether.

Getting Started

1. sign up at www.twitter.com and complete your profile
2. find some people to follow (see our suggestions below)
3. watch what's happening in your Twitter feed
4. start chiming in!

How do I use Twitter for scholarly purposes?

You might use Twitter to help keep abreast of new articles, trends, and developments in higher education. If you manage your followers well (it is okay to 'unfollow') you should end up with posts that match your interests. You might, for example, follow the Higher Education Academy, SEDA and HEFCE for news about policy developments and upcoming scholarly events. Often these organisations will post links to emerging reports as they are released. You can then see who re-tweets these or comments on them for ideas of other people to follow.

Some journals now run Twitter accounts and will post messages about articles, calls for papers, and editorial positions. The new *Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice* (@JofPAAP) has recently Tweeted about their editorial board, writers' guidelines, and upcoming issues, while *Research in Learning Technology* (@Research_in_LT), the open journal for the Association of Learning

Technology, also makes good use of Twitter to communicate with the sector.

Educational developers and researchers can also use Twitter to ask for ideas, input, and support; for example, Joelle put a call out for ideas for this article and received several responses and new followers.
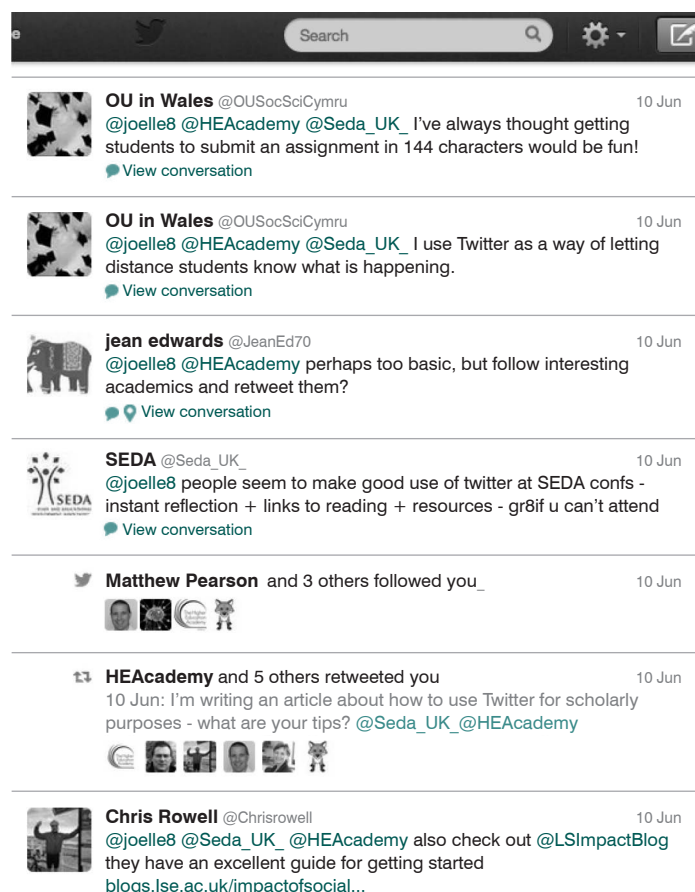

Figure 2   Joelle's 'call for ideas' and responses

Joelle included @HEAcademy and @SEDA_UK_ in her Tweet above (Figure 2) to get the attention of those organisations and encourage them to retweet to their large groups of followers, thereby increasing the potential audience. This resulted in several retweets and new followers.

A 'hashtag' (#) is another useful tool to increase appropriate audiences for a Tweet. Hashtags are any string of characters or words without spaces, preceded with #; they denote a keyword or topic and can occur anywhere in the Tweet: at the beginning, middle, or end. Hashtags are a way of organising messages on a similar topic or a particular event because all the messages containing those keywords can be grouped together. They are often used at scholarly events and conferences.

By searching for a hashtag you can collate all the Tweets containing it. Hashtagged words that become very popular are often referred to as 'trending'. Try not to overuse hashtags. Do make use of capital letters to avoid confusion and provide clarity (when joining words together). Popular educational hashtags include #edtech, #elearning, #highered, #STEM, and #diglit.

Twitter can also be a way of disseminating your work to a wider audience and encouraging engagement with ideas. For example, when presenting at conferences, Sue uploads her talks to Slideshare.net and then shares a link via Twitter to the presentation slides. She also writes a blog on social media and uses Twitter to share links to new posts.

How do I use Twitter to build my professional network?

Twitter is a great way to build relationships with people you might meet infrequently (or never!) in person. For example, Joelle was tweeting from the SEDA 2012 Spring conference using the conference hashtag, as were two colleagues she had never met: Karen Strickland from Edinburgh Napier University and Kathrine Jensen from the University of Huddersfield. Their Twitter activity about Becka Colley's keynote led to a conversation about inspirational teaching and the role of students in teaching development. Since that initial Twitter 'meeting', the three have gone on to collaborate on an article, a research project, and a bid for other research funding.

Similarly, Sue was unable to attend the SEDA 2011 Spring conference, but followed the conference hashtag and the 4 or 5 tweeters writing about the conference and built up a dialogue with David Walker from the University of Dundee. They went on to submit a proposal for the next SEDA conference and presented on using social media to develop professional learning networks. Because global interactions are possible, Sue has also built international connections through Twitter which have led to collaborations on international conference submissions and invitations to speak.

Tweet Chats are another example of where Twitter can be used by educators. These are organised timeslots where through Twitter and the use of a hashtag (to filter the Tweets) participants can engage in a chat or dialogue about a pre-determined topic. The topic is usually communicated a week or so before the next chat, along with a reminder of the date, time and hashtag. Very often those leading the chat will post questions to facilitate a semi-structured conversation. Participants then answer those questions and engage in a debate around them. It is fairly fast-paced, but an excellent way to learn and share with others. The inclusion of links to websites, articles, books, images, video and podcasts makes it all the more rich. Popular educational examples include:

- #PhDchat – postdoctoral students share ideas, good practice, debate and support each other
- #edchat – educators from schools, colleges and universities
- #helivechat – this is led by the Guardian Higher Education Network and takes place most Fridays between 12 and 2.

Through Twitter it is possible to build upon your own professional learning network, that is, connections with other educators with whom you can share information, ask or answer questions, collaborate and crowd source ideas or feedback on projects via tweets. Users can also send connections private messages which are called 'direct

messages' or 'DMs'. It is not unusual for a conversation to commence via Twitter but then continue by email, phone, Skype or a Google Hangout…or even in person!

It has become a popular practice to recommend people to follow on a Friday. This is done by preceding a tweet with #FF (which is short for 'follow Friday') and the Twitter names of those people suggested. Follow Friday is an excellent way to grow your network on and off Twitter. Most people find it flattering to be included in an #ff message and you can see who your favourite Tweeters recommend. For example the tweet may look like this: Looking for ideas to improve learning and teaching? #FF @HEAcademy, @rjsharpe, @SEDA_UK_.

It is likely that you may have shared interests with various groups on a range of topics. By organising the people you follow into lists (or groups) you can view the Tweets of any one given group at a time. This can be easily set up from your profile page.

How do I use Twitter in my teaching?
A cohort might share information such as links to relevant articles, websites and videos. By including an agreed module hashtag and including this in each Tweet, it is possible to aggregate all these Tweets in one stream. Twitter can also be used by students or session participants to raise questions during a lecture, with a running stream of Tweets shown on a screen for the facilitator or speaker to refer and respond to.

The growing use of mobile devices such as smartphones, tablets, and notebooks has enabled users to access the web and Twitter on the go. Much use is being made of these tools on field trips, where photos can be taken and communicated via Twitter using the same portable device. This is an excellent way for students to collaboratively gather and share information. Again, hashtags can be helpful to organise responses, images, and videos.

As with conferences, where delegates tweet interesting information during keynotes and workshops, students can be asked to tweet key points from lectures or peer presentations. Again, with the inclusion of a chosen and shared group hashtag, these Tweets can be collated and reviewed during and after an event. Tools such as Storify and Paper.li can be used to share the collection of Tweets in a storyline or newspaper layout. The craft of writing succinct tweets can help students develop their communication skills. Educators using Twitter have said that capturing information within a tweet at events is useful for them to refer back to and reflect upon.

Twitter can also be used to promote student blog posts, websites, or projects if they wish to share these with a wider audience for feedback or collaboration. Clever promotion by lecturers, organisations, institutions, and groups can lead to a wide range of engagement with student work.

What issues arise? What are the practical considerations?
It is very important to realise that Twitter is a public communication channel. It is possible to use Twitter's search

facility and bring up Tweets from people you do not follow and who do not follow you. You can look at the Tweets on an individual's profile to see what they are Tweeting without having to follow them (unless the user has chosen to set up protected Tweets, in which case only those connected can see the tweets). Once you have posted, anyone can then re-tweet your message, sharing this with his or her own followers. Should you decide to edit or delete your Tweet, any re-tweets are not removed or changed. As with anything that is conveyed digitally through social media channels, you need to consider what you share and how this information is phrased. Think before you Tweet!

Social media guidelines are useful as a reminder to new users and to those Tweeting on behalf of their institution or organisation. A good practice guide is often more beneficial than a social media policy which might focus on what you 'shalt not do'. We have to remember that Twitter is still a relatively new communication channel and, just as when many of us started using email, guidelines and exemplars can be useful. Check with your institution or professional organisation for any official guidance and look online for tips about etiquette.

Depending on your interests, Twitter can also be used in a more social context to discuss wide-ranging topics of interest such as sport, music and TV programmes. Sometimes individuals prefer to separate these conversations by having two different profiles – one for professional work use and another for social and more personal use. That said, many people can and do balance the two. An injection of everyday banter can have a very positive impact, just as it might if you were having a conversation face to face.

How can I optimise my profile?
Most users of Twitter are more trusting of new users where a photo or avatar has been uploaded to replace the default icon. Additionally, creating a biography to provide some information about your interests will help others make the decision to follow you, just as it will help you when looking at others' profiles. If you have a website or blog, it is a good idea to include a link to this in your profile bio. Alternatively, you might choose to include a link to your LinkedIn or institutional profile.

Symbols and abbreviations

Handle = your username
@ = precedes any username
Feed = the stream of tweets you see
Mention = when a @username is in a tweet
RT = re-tweet
MT = modified tweet
DM = direct message
HT = hat tip
| = useful separator
#FF = follow Friday
= hashtag

Conclusion

We hope that this article will help you get started with Twitter or at least encourage you to consider trying it out. Remember that it is a public forum with a permanent record, but that it's okay to make small spelling mistakes or express opinions. Feel free to 'listen' for a while and see how others use the service, what they are saying, and the tone of conversation. Don't be afraid to have fun, try things out, and join in. Happy tweeting!

Twitter Tips

- use # to organise topics/events
- don't just 'sell': contribute
- reply to others' tweets to start interactions
- re-tweet on topics that might interest your followers

Recommendations for Tweeters to follow

Higher education
@SEDA_UK_
@HEAcademy
@HEA_Events
@GdnHigherEd
@QAA
@HEFCE

Educational development: some of our most active Tweeters
@chrissinerantzi
@David_Baume
@drdjwalker

@JofPAPP
@julieh8
@helenbeetham
@kshjensen
@rjsharpe
@smythkrs
@strictlykaren
@suebecks
@joelle8

Learning technology
@daveowhite
@dajbelshaw
@gconole
@hopkinsdavid
@timbuckteeth

Others as a starting point to educate, inform and entertain
@BBC
@StephenFry

Other resources
This set of 24 printable cards provide key tips to anyone wanting to get started with Twitter: http://www.slideshare.net/suebeckingham/getting-started-with-twitter-23557615. This is a guide published by the LSE for its academic staff in 2011: http://tinyurl.com/18r.

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Individual as institution

Lawrie Phipps, Programme Manager, JISC

Imagine a scenario where the public window on your university, the point at which it is most visible, is through the individual voices of its staff.

The immediacy of technology

The world has changed, and is changing. Access to a ready means of publishing – social media – is being used by many aspects of society, from governments and campaign groups to the individual who has something to say. Publishing information, responding and engaging in conversation are now potentially instant.

This aspect of technology is being exploited by a minority of academics and academic-related staff who can

be identified and recognised through the online promotion and increased visibility of their work, and importantly, through interaction and collaboration with others:

> *'My online network keeps me up to date professionally, invites me to speak at conferences, to write papers and chapters for books, and offers opportunities for research collaboration, sometimes with people I've never met.'* (Alan Cann, University of Leicester, http://scienceoftheinvisible.blogspot.co.uk/)

Activity using social media has led to many successes, with individuals

receiving funding, gaining book contracts and invitations to deliver keynotes through recognition of their expertise, being cited in breaking news articles, *etc.,* all of which in turn leads to even greater exposure and impact of their work.

Practice in educational institutions has long been influenced by many external factors, policy and political change, technology and economics. Recently the in-vogue phrase 'digital' has been used to differentiate the impact of the web and computers (including mobile phones, tablets *etc.*), from non-technology-based practice. However, many individuals have already gone beyond that tech-focused distinction.

To them 'digital' is already invisible; new forms of digital technology are not conceived of in terms of the 'digital' but in terms of the opportunities they provide to promote and extend their practice. They recognise that it is not the technology itself that is making something new, rather it is the capability and capacity that the digital brings that allows change in practice. They see these tools as an artist would see the brush and canvas; they are there to be used to create and articulate individual practice. This approach is increasingly becoming known as post-digital.

What this means for institutions?

The ability to communicate and collaborate directly via online networks has removed the institution from the 'flow' of much scholarly interaction. The web shifts the emphasis and power from the institution to the individual who can then connect directly with their audience or network. This *'individual as institution'* behaviour becomes part of the workflow of the individual, but for some institutions it becomes a risk that requires managing. The phrase 'the views expressed here are mine and do not reflect the views of my employer' has migrated onto Twitter, where it is often used as a response to risk-averse institutional 'social media policies'. These policies have the effect of further distancing the individual and individual thought from host institutions.

Post-digital institutions may be characterised by their recognition that technology can be a vehicle to express motivation and practice, and their understanding that individuals are chaotic, responding to small changes that may drive them in different directions and lead to new knowledge, learning and outcomes. Rather than setting rigid strategic directions with regards to technology, the post-digital institution remains agile. It allows practice with technology to ebb and flow depending on the individual, recognising that it is not the technology *per se* that is important, but the way in which individuals adopt and adapt it into practice.

Where academic practice is now played out on an increasingly digital canvas, organisations need to recognise individuals as their profiles emerge, and work to support them. Strategic plans, policies and objectives will only succeed if they are flexible enough to accommodate the emerging technology and practices being exploited by these individuals.

In the past, the individual may have had strong associations with an organisation, institution or even research group. Now, as a direct result of the opportunities brought about through the web and social media, the post-digital nature of these relationships may change, becoming more fluid, more agile, allowing for *ad hoc* relationships to develop and fade as required for the task at hand:

> *'I no longer think of my profile as being "online" or "face to face". I try to pull the right communications tool out of my pocket at the right time, be that a handshake or a link. That being said, there's no doubt that the connective technologies on the web have allowed me a much deeper pool of people to connect with, for much more sustained periods. And it's those relationships that drive my work, however they are fostered.'*
> (Dave Cormier, University of Prince Edward Island, and originator of the Term MOOC (http://davecormier.com/)

Emerging collegialities

The post-digital paradigm recognises that 'digital' sits beneath practice, and for all intents and purposes is transparent; in this environment the affordances of digital rise to the surface and are exploited by individuals. Social media is littered with academic shrapnel, blogs and tweets from individuals that show how they are thinking and developing their research. This gets distilled down into other pieces, linked across platforms, creating new networks and sometimes new knowledge. As the individual's portfolio grows, so does their network of collaborators and their audience.

This does not diminish the importance of the institution to an individual; the credibility it may bring and the structures to support individuals form the platform upon which profiles are built. However, the traditional relationship is changing. It is now much easier for collaboration to occur as social media acts as a basis for working in the open and geography is no longer a limiting factor on who you are working with, and as an individual grows in their profile it is also less important who they work for.

For institutions working with staff who have developed highly visible online profiles, successful strategies will recognise that rather than controlling those voices they need to facilitate them. They must also recognise that for many individuals the only driver for them to work in this open way is the narrative that they are creating. The asset for institutions to associate with is the whole, and potential, narrative. For staff responsible for developing and supporting academic practice there is now a duty to ensure that we are providing the skills and critical evaluation to allow an informed personal choice to be made in how they create the online presence that will grow with their career. This is true for all staff, but it is essential that an approach is developed for early career researchers and new lecturers as a priority and before they become subverted by existing dogma.

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Pathways to publishing – Supporting and developing scholarly discourse in academic practice

David Walker, University of Dundee, and **Karen Strickland,** Edinburgh Napier University

Introduction

Publishing in academic journals and serving as reviewers for, or editors of, periodicals are among the main methods of engaging in the scholarship of learning and teaching. However, the academic publishing process can be one of mystique and high pressure, particularly for new academics or early career researchers working to secure tenure. While the engagement in research can greatly enrich academic discourse and support the sharing of good practice across the sector, opportunities to gain experience of scholarly activities such as peer review can be challenging.

The *Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice* is an online open access journal that seeks to help demystify the academic publishing process, provide a supportive platform for new and established scholars to develop their academic voice, broaden their experience of review and editorial processes and support the educational research infrastructure.

Background

Academic publishing is going through a period of profound change. The established rules and routes for dissemination of research and scholarly work are being disrupted, driven by technological innovation and political reforms which are changing the way that publicly funded research is made available. The value of publishing in high quality peer-reviewed journals remains constant however, continuing to represent the dominant currency of higher education and one of the main vehicles for career advancement within the academy (Clark and Thomspon, 2012). Technological advancements, such as the rapid rise of social media, have provided both authors and publishers the means to make work more readily available (Weller, 2011) and with a speed and reach which contrasts sharply with the cumbersome mechanics of conventional 'closed' academic journals (Clark and Thompson, 2012).

The Finch Report (2012) was commissioned by the UK Government to investigate ways to expand access to published research. The report supported a positive shift towards open access with recommendations that all publicly funded research outputs be made available subscription free to anyone wishing to read them. The report also recommended that this move be funded by implementation of article processing charges (APCs), and recognised that there would be tensions between different stakeholders and that interests of all parties may not be aligned. The recommendations, widely endorsed by the Government, and the open access proposals which have since followed, have not been met with universal approval by those in the higher education sector. Many in the Academy have questioned the means by which the report's aims are to be achieved (Scott, 2013), while others have raised fears about the impact of the new payment system on early career researchers, PhD students and those in disciplines not in receipt of substantial grant income (Shaw, 2013).

Two main routes have emerged to support making research materials available via open access. The gold route, endorsed in the Finch Report (2012), requires that an APC be made in advance of publication (to cover publication services) either by an individual or the institution, resulting in the publication being made immediately freely available (not forgoing the process of peer review). Funding for this route has so far taken the form of block grants to Universities by the major funders (e.g. RCUK) or by researchers incorporating costs into grant applications. Critics of the gold model have raised ethical concerns that institutional needs to secure prestige and income through audits – such as the Research Excellence Framework (REF) – may take precedence when decisions are made as to how to allocate funding to support open access publishing (Parker, 2013). The alternative green route involves an author or an institutional intermediary depositing published outputs in a disciplinary or institutional repository providing free access to the research findings. This may follow an embargo period required by publishers before the output is available for open access. Copyright requirements of specific journals may inhibit the option of the green route.

The established practice of blind peer review which has long underpinned the publication process is similarly in flux. Critics of blind review have pointed to the potential for bias and abuse (Peters, 2013) and called for an end to a non-transparent process (Cann, 2012) which can have a morale-sapping effect when non-constructive or negative feedback is received by the author. It is argued that the value and integrity of peer review is maintained not through anonymity but the reciprocal benefits to author and reviewer (Biagioli, 2002), and as such the concept of openness should be extended to the review process to encourage greater transparency, accountability and collegiality. Indeed results from a randomised trial investigating the effects of open peer review on the quality of reviews reported in the *British Medical Journal* concluded that there was no negative effect on quality and that ethical considerations were of greater significance than perceived practical limitations (Van Rooyen *et al.,* 1999).

It is clear that the drive towards open access is significantly altering the academic publishing landscape and that academics (of all career stages) are increasingly faced with making critical decisions about where to disseminate their research findings. Publishing choices must be made in the context of a rapidly expanding range of journals (of varying quality and credibility), with different APCs and green open access requirements, combined with frequently changing conditions stipulated by the various funding bodies.

About the Journal

The *Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice* is a collaborative initiative involving Edinburgh Napier University, Aston University, the University of Auckland and the University of Dundee, with members of each institution represented on the Editorial Board. The Journal, which has an ISSN and is indexed by the major scholarly databases, was originally conceived as a vehicle to encourage and support individuals studying on postgraduate education courses, many of whom often produce scholarly work of publishable (or near publishable) standard, to disseminate that work. As a consequence of the changes to academic publishing resulting from the Finch Report and subsequent political reforms supporting open access, it became apparent that there was a need for a high quality outlet for scholarly work but one which would also support those at the early stages of their academic career to build confidence and gain experience of the publishing process. The Journal represents a cross-institutional initiative which complements the many local initiatives introduced at the institutional level to support scholarly practice and engagement in learning and teaching (Kreber, 2010).

Developmental ethos

The Journal has a unique developmental ethos which is a natural extension of both the discipline and the background of the Editorial Board, who are all experienced academics or academic developers working within the broad field of academic practice. The Journal exists to extend the circulation of original research, case studies, opinion pieces and other outputs relevant to the scholarly discourse of academic practice and to build capacity in the educational research infrastructure by providing opportunities for early career academics to gain experience as reviewers or editorial interns. As such the Journal offers a new and innovative approach to developing staff in the scholarship of learning and teaching.

Authors are encouraged to contact the Journal prior to submission to discuss the suitability of potential topics, with the editors willing to provide guidance on appropriate submission types, formatting and how ideas might be further developed to make them suitable for publication.

Openness is extended to the peer review process. An open call for reviewers (to serve for a period of 2 years) with appropriate experience in academic practice or the thematic areas of the Journal but with little or no experience of reviewing, has helped establish a pool of qualified individuals who will gain experience alongside an invited group of experienced academics with established credentials in academic peer review. To support the development of these new reviewers the Editorial Board have offered open webinars providing guidance on how to critique submissions and provide feedback to authors that is meaningful and constructive – even where submissions are ultimately rejected. In addition, at the conclusion of each issue the Editorial Board will review the comments provided by all reviewers (new and experienced alike) to identify areas for development and examples of good practice, which can be fed back to reviewers to further their development and enhance the quality of feedback received by both authors and editors.

The Journal has adopted a process of open peer review with the names of author(s) and reviewers made known to each other during the review process. The belief is that the sharing of identities makes for a more transparent and ethical process, encouraging more constructive feedback and discouraging abuse of the system. Involvement in peer review can provide great insight into an individual's own academic writing and what represents a publication-worthy submission (Tarrant, 2012), and it is hoped that the provision of these opportunities will help nurture the quality of academic discourse.

A new route to open access

While the gold route to open access publishing may present barriers in the form of APCs that may be insurmountable to staff in certain disciplines or at early stages of their career, the *Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice* is wholly open access, offering immediate free access to its content. New authors can consider the Journal as an appropriate source for their work, free from the concern that they might be engaged in a form of 'vanity publishing' – marked by minimal editorial oversight and light-touch peer review (Clark and Thompson, 2012). In support of green open access, the Journal offers authors joint copyright over their work which allows them to republish elsewhere (with appropriate acknowledgement), for example via their own blog or by self-archiving in an institutional repository.

Future plans and how to get involved

The first issue of the Journal was published in June 2013 with the next issue scheduled for November. Two special issues on the topics of open educational resources and HE in FE have already been agreed with guest editors from the Open University and Newcastle College, respectively. Publication of these special issues is planned for spring and autumn 2014. The Editorial Board welcomes suggestions for special issues and CVs from both new and experienced colleagues in the academic development field who would like to express interest in being reviewers. If you're a tutor or course leader on a postgraduate certificate programme or equivalent and have a student who has submitted a high quality piece of action research or reflective analysis, encourage them to consider building on the work with a view to submitting it to the Journal. We're also interested in taking full advantage of the Journal's digital format by receiving interactive submissions including audio, video or multimedia-based materials.

The Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice is available online at http://jpaap.napier.ac.uk, and the Editors can be contacted via email at jpaap@napier.ac.uk. You can follow the Journal on Twitter (@jofpaap).

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Book Review

University Teaching in Focus: a learning-centred approach

Editors: Lynne Hunt and Denise Chalmers

Routledge
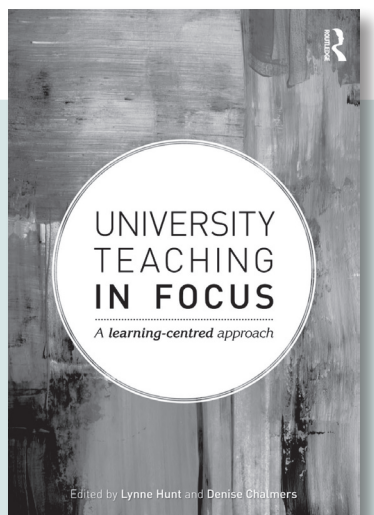
This book is like listening to Bob Dylan's *Live at the Budokan.* If you are unfamiliar with Dylan, this album from 1978 is a reworking of old songs in slightly revised ways. As I read this book I found myself nodding with the familiarity of the content but soon recognised that I was not the intended audience. As a book for a new academic it is like Bob at the Budokan, an essential introduction to all that is good in the literature in the field. There is ageless material ('Mr Tambourine Man'/research-based undergraduate curricula), more modern material ('Is Your Love in Vain?'/designing online and blended learning) and classics ('Like a Rolling Stone'/understanding learning theories).

The book is divided into four sections which focus on: teaching, curriculum, students, and quality and leadership, with each one containing five or fewer chapters written by a veritable team of experts – if they were a group, they would be 'super'. The first chapter, 'Understanding learning; theories and critique', sets the tone and is difficult to fault in terms of style and content (selection and coverage). I was making mental notes of page numbers to copy and then discuss with a PGCE HE group of students, for example: the practical applications of the various perspectives. This happened frequently with subsequent chapters too. I was less engaged by the 'your thoughts' sections that looked like worksheets. Stylistically and tonally

the editors have done a great job with a wide range of contributors and the 'your thoughts' goes someway to providing coherence.

However, the pause in the sections created by the 'your thoughts' varies in scale and scope. For example; 'How will I teach?' is a huge question when compared with the more focused 'To what extent are intended learning outcomes learning-centred?' Or the knowledge based (or challenge to find out): 'what positive discrimination projects exist at your university?' A chapter in the 'focus on students' section also contained a rather buried piece about teacher self-awareness which noted '[T]here is a need for university teachers to reflect on their own values, and how these apply to teaching' (p.185), which seemed for me to beg a 'your thoughts' prompt and was worthy of rather greater coverage.

The question on positive discrimination is also from the 'focus on students' section and contained within this was one of the most intriguing chapters – 'Indigenous knowers and knowledge in university teaching'. Intriguing because it demands thought about the nature of knowledge and notes that indigenous knowledge is 'something that you *do* rather than something you *have*' (p. 215, original emphasis). There is also

a practical discussion about bringing indigenous knowers and knowledge into the curriculum which lucidly provokes consideration of how one teaches. The chapter reflects the editors' Australian base and indeed many of the writers currently work at or have worked at Australian universities.

There are also some topics that I thought might have been covered: employability, internationalisation of the curriculum and sustainability as aspects of HE teaching might have merited consideration. This is, however, a minor quibble. A more major one was the inclusion of academic integrity and plagiarism within the section on international students; far better to have separated it so that it does not come across as a solely international student issue.

This book provides, and does it well, exactly what it claims to on the back cover – 'a foundation springboard for early career academic preparing to teach'. I would go further and recommend that all such new academics read this book before setting foot in a classroom or lecture hall. And if you need an introduction to Dylan, *Live at the Budokan* is a good place to start.

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How relevant are SEDA's values to students?

Debbie McVitty, National Union of Students

I recently had the pleasure of attending the SEDA@20 symposium in Leeds. There I took part in a workshop questioning the ongoing relevance of the current SEDA values and exploring what an updated set might look like, taking into particular account students' perspectives and experiences. What follows is the first of a series of personal reflections on selected SEDA values which we hope will stimulate debate in the SEDA community on how the values might develop for the next 20 years.

SEDA value 1: An understanding of how people learn

A somewhat cheap point to make initially is that 'understanding' relates to the domain of knowledge, not values. Yet for colleagues in the educational development community it is easy to see the roots of this value in student-centred learning. It speaks to an honest desire to place the student's experience of learning at the centre of pedagogical practice, rather than the drive to cover content or establish the teacher's expertise at the expense of students' understanding.

As a novice lecturer and tutor during my PhD, the basic insight that the point of lecturing was to help students to learn was genuinely transformative. Like many of my peers, I was so obsessed with my own (lack of) knowledge and whether I would be caught out by the bright young things who were looking to me for insight, that I had very little time to spare for putting myself in the students' shoes. Once I let myself focus on understanding their learning rather than my teaching everything became, if not easier, certainly more fun.

The emphasis on understanding reminds us that 'how people learn' is a complex and contested field. Attention to the evidence base, creation of assessments that test for understanding not just knowledge, consideration of student diversity and seeking feedback from students about their learning experiences, all contribute to a growing understanding of how people learn, which pedagogical choices tend to support learning and which tend to hinder it.

And yet, as it is currently constituted the value implies that 'how people learn' is essentially knowable if enough effort is invested. The idea of the teacher as subject expert is replaced with the teacher as pedagogical expert, who knows more about the cognitive function of the students than the students themselves. There is no sense that students may grow their own understanding of their own learning, or that they might engage productively in dialogue with their teachers about that learning.

I am personally not very comfortable with the idea that students are oblivious to the choices their teachers are making, that they aren't expected to think about what learning means to them, that they don't have any awareness of the structures or theories underpinning learning and teaching. Not least because without a language to discuss teaching and learning choices, it is very difficult to be critical of oneself or of the learning environment in a meaningful way. I am sceptical of the idea that understanding how people learn goes far enough in supporting students to create their own learning.

I am also struck by the way students talk about their learning and teaching. Through the NUS/HEA student-led teaching award project we have a growing body of evidence of what students consider to be excellent teaching. The most heartfelt nominations for great teachers talk about enthusiasm and engagement in academic knowledge, yes, but they also talk about engagement with teaching on the human level, particularly when students face a significant life event, crisis or challenge. Teachers who take the time to respond to students as human beings overcoming life obstacles rather than learning-brains-in-jars seem most likely to contribute to that student's resilience, enthusiasm for learning and ultimate academic success.

If the task is to rethink the value first, so it actually is a value and second, so that it includes students as active agents in learning, we could do worse than to use the idea of partnership as a framing concept. I would argue that learning is already a partnership: no matter how much teaching happens, no learning can occur unless students consent to the most basic engagement as learners. How that minimal consent can be nurtured and transformed into enthusiastic and active engagement is the task for teachers in higher education today to grapple with.

For NUS, partnership between academic and students means recognising a shared responsibility between academic staff and students for the learning environment and for the quality of learning and teaching that happens within it. Partnership, rather than asking students retrospectively whether they were *satisfied* with their learning, asks students up front what they *care* about. It asks teachers and students to seek and explore ways of teaching and learning that allow the emergence of shared values and aspirations between students and teachers –

working together for a common (learning) cause rather than miscommunicating and misunderstanding each other.

The prospect of students and teachers working together in partnership to make learning better excites us no end, but it does require there to be conversation in which the teacher has to relinquish some control of the narrative, some claim to expertise. Rather than trying to understand how people learn, s/he would need to focus on helping people to understand how they learn – and further, growing that understanding would be seen as a precursor to productive conversation about how that learning could be improved, not as an end in itself.

So if I were to rewrite SEDA's first (and thus, implicitly, most important) value, I would suggest as a first punt: 'A commitment to fostering partnership between students and academic staff in understanding and creating transformative learning experiences'. It's clunky, and can be polished, but I think it covers the bases.

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Challenging the perceived value of alumni by developing a peer-mentoring scheme to support student learning

Tim Maxfield and **Richard Painter,** University of Worcester, and **Carl Evans,** University of St Mark and St John

While peer-assisted learning and peer-mentoring schemes are commonplace in HEIs, the use of alumni in supporting postgraduate students is a new and innovative development. This article describes a recent initiative at a post-92 university involving the use of alumni from the MBA programme to act as mentors for incoming part-time MBA students.

Utilising alumni to support the changing values in HE
Studies on alumni tend to focus on their ability to provide financial support and advocacy for the university, their contribution to performance and destinations data (Brennan *et al.,* 2005) or their perceptions of the learning experience received (Stowe *et al.,* 2012). Nonetheless, it has been shown that alumni can be useful in supporting new university students through a

formally established mentoring and support scheme (Wepner *et al.,* 2009). It is this notion of peer mentoring and support of new students that yields tremendous opportunities for involving alumni, since they have already been through the university learning process and have therefore gained useful skills and knowledge to impart to new entrants. Consequently, peer mentoring can be especially useful in raising confidence levels among new entrants (Giordana and Wedin, 2010), and in helping students orientate to the academic rigours of study (Fugate *et al.,* 2001; Loots, 2009).

Moreover, the interaction between students, staff and ex-students is particularly interesting. As Kay *et al.* (2010) note, the importance of the relationship between students (and ex-students) and the HEI is vital in changing values in HE, especially

with the contribution that students can make to improving educational experiences. Moreover, Staley (2011) feels that given the changing contemporary HE landscape, universities now need to add recognisable value to their respective degrees.

The utilisation of alumni therefore yields opportunities for forging lifelong partnerships between student and institution. In addition, MBA graduates not only have experience of the learning programme and managerial experience to offer new MBA students, but also have contacts in the wider business community, which yields opportunities of networking for both parties.

Initialising the process
The use of MBA alumni as mentors was suggested by the student

representatives during an MBA periodic review. This was supported by those coming to the completion of their part-time MBA studies, as a means to continue an association with the University. Since MBAs are a type III business Masters award (http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastrucure), experience is deemed a prerequisite of entry. However, not all enter the programme with prior academic qualifications and for those who have previously studied at university, some years could have elapsed before embarking on the MBA. Benzies and Mowat (2012) note that a mentor is a valuable resource in all sorts of ways for individuals and at different stages of their career. It was therefore seen that a mentor could help reduce initial anxiety, and provide individuals with confidence in addressing the typically work-related assessments that are commonplace on MBAs.

The notion of an MBA mentor was suggested to the new MBA intake and responses included:

> *'Yes, I am interested. They will be of value in terms of being able to ask them questions about the course/module; they can help give us a bit of initial confidence with someone to bounce our concerns/thoughts off.'*

> *'I would love to have a mentor. Perhaps just someone I could turn to for advice when putting together my assignment.'*

> *'I think it is a great idea. I think it will be handy to have someone we can talk to on an ad-hoc basis throughout the programme.'*

Developing the scheme

There were five volunteer mentors derived from the last cohort of MBA graduates. Their respective experience of mentoring varied, ranging from those who assume this responsibility as a key function of everyday work-life, to those who were developing their mentoring approach as a new skill. Only three had studied the optional coaching and mentoring module as

part of the MBA programme, although this was not made a mandatory prerequisite of participation. The five alumni were offered the opportunity to gain the Chartered Management Institute (CMI) Level 5 award in Management Mentoring. With registration fees paid by the university, this was felt to provide an incentive to contributors, since it supported their continuing professional development (CPD) activities.

Matching the alumni mentors with year one mentees was undertaken by the MBA Programme Manager, based upon work environments, academic background and personality. The importance of matching should not be underestimated, with Clutterbuck and Megginson (2004) relating mentoring to the 'identification and nurturing of potential for the whole person', as opposed to coaching, which relates to 'performance improvement, usually in a specific skills area'. Ensuring a suitable match is therefore considered paramount to ensure the mentee, who owns both the learning objectives and process, is supported rather than hindered through an imbalanced relationship or over-lapping of skills between the mentor and mentee.

It is noted that there are numerous instruments or audits available (such as the Strength Deployment Inventory (http://tinyurl.com/ohdc6xw)) to determine a preferred behaviour and these have often been utilised as part of a selection process, particularly in the commercial environment. Whilst such an approach was not used here, the Strength Deployment Inventory, for example, can be used to determine respective motivational value systems and identify whether a person was motivated by valuing relationships primarily involving altruistic, assertive or analytical behaviour. This is important, since conflict can arise if behaviour is misinterpreted and relationships can be affected by incongruence of personal values with others, and so the use of a suitable instrument or audit to assist matching mentor to mentee is recommended.

Launching the scheme

Introducing alumni mentors to their respective mentees took place in early November 2012 via an informal session that enabled both parties freedom to explore roles and boundaries, along with developing an appropriate programme of meetings. Guidelines were not issued to either participant and the approach was akin to a democratic style of interaction rather than a prescriptive programme of events. Furthermore, the duration of programme meetings and longevity of events were left to the participants; it could be a relatively short interaction or it could continue throughout the academic year.

Following introductions, the alumni mentors participated in a tutor-led training programme that included a review of mentoring models, boundaries, ethical and confidentiality considerations. The European Mentoring and Coaching Council guidelines (2008) for mentoring were adopted to provide the necessary ethical code against which behaviours and expectations could be measured (http://www.emccouncil.org).

Mentee perceptions

Towards the end of the spring term, a mentee focus group took place to reflect on their observations and experiences of the scheme. In general, the mentees were approving of the scheme and many spoke of their ambition to act as mentors to future MBA entrants. They were unanimous in their support for a continuation of the scheme, even if interaction with their respective mentor was limited by choice. They all recognised the scheme as positive and supported embedding the scheme within the MBA to provide an integral and sustainable entitlement for future cohorts. Comments included:

> *'I found it helpful talking with someone who had been there and done it.'*

> *'I think for the first assignment it was nice to know there was someone there to turn to for*

advice, and we did find it useful speaking to him with regards to practical things like the layout of the assignment for example.'

'Encouragement from a qualified student adds to the encouragement from the lecturers.'

Conversely, mentees also stated they were unsure 'how much' to use their mentor or in what capacity. Some had tried to gain feedback on formative assessment work only to find their mentor referred them to a tutor, which was correct mentor action following the boundaries and ethics requirements covered in the tutor-led training programme. Mentees also considered there should be some consistency on the type and nature of feedback proffered by the mentors, which may have resulted from expectations following consistency of feedback from course tutors. While the importance of bringing mentors together in a mutually supportive and confidential environment to share broad experiences, discuss interventions, develop consistency in approach and commonality of experience was recognised as good practice, the widespread geographic locations and senior managerial responsibilities of the mentors precluded formalised face-to-face meetings, and the standardisation of mentor feedback was identified as challenging when considering the coordination of the scheme.

Mentees also commented that the formalisation of the process and introduction to their mentor had taken place too late in the programme and would have been better as part of their induction in September 2012. Since initial meetings took place in November 2012, with the first assignment due in early January 2013, this inevitably influenced the nature of the discussion at the outset.

Whilst the authors had envisioned the focus of early meetings to be dominated by the assignment to mirror the key anxiety reported by entrants to this professional type of qualification (given the characteristics of the target group), this could prove somewhat limiting when encountering the initial stages of a mentoring relationship, namely establishment, goal-setting and clarifying situations (Clutterbuck and Megginson, 2004).

Mentor observations

The mentors, on the other hand, via a series of telephone interviews conducted during May 2013, reported the mentees now seemed better supported as a result of the scheme than they themselves had been during their early MBA studies. One mentor offered the example of their mentee who, as an Executive Director, had copious experience but no academic qualifications, and by helping their mentee with 'some big questions and how they step into this new world of evidence-based research' was seen as fulfilling in itself.

Communication via e-mail proved to be the most frequent form of engagement between the mentor and mentee due to the difficulties of diary management or meeting on neutral ground. There was a perception from the mentees in particular that face-to-face meetings might have been more effective in helping to build the relationship. Indeed, a sustainable model emerged within one 'cluster' of mentees who commented that the success of the relationship with their mentor was attributable to a mutual commitment to diarise a face-to-face meeting shortly after their initial introduction to maintain momentum. The relationship in this case was still strong, even though on occasions, the meetings had not taken place in the coffee bar prior to a timetabled MBA session, but in a more virtual sense. In another example the mentor had established the mentoring relationship with a face-to-face general awareness-raising meeting, focusing upon the aims and expectations of the scheme, with a subsequent meeting focusing upon the requirements and personal commitments of the assessment process, before turning to more focused discussions in later meetings according to an agenda of specific questions suggested by the mentee. Other effective models involved calendared face-to-face meetings pre- and post-assessment with occasional e-mails from the mentor pledging support.

Mentors were clear on their role as 'helping them to navigate their way through their MBA to complement other support' and despite the clear message from the majority of mentees that more structure and guidance be provided (for the scheme), one mentor spoke of their preference for an informal mechanism as the relationship with their mentee 'felt more natural this way'. One mentor noted they learned a great deal from their mentees since all were from sectors beyond their own domain: 'The calibre of the students is great and you're always learning something from them.'

Points of learning

In this programme, alumni were selected on the basis of their willingness and enthusiasm to act as mentors rather than successful completion of dedicated coaching and mentoring modules or academic attainment on their MBA programme. This does raise questions about potential acceptance (by their mentees) and authority to act as a representative of the University. It may, for example, be important for a mentee to know the grades achieved by mentors during their MBA programme and therefore how qualified they feel their mentor to be in advising upon assignment preparation. One of the non-participating mentees commented: 'When I have had questions, they have generally not been the type that I could put forward in a succinct manner and answered with a simple e-mail response. Therefore, I have tended to ask these directly to staff members.'

Another described the academic process and their mentor's role: 'I think that the whole academic process is quite a personal journey and

perhaps as a result, one that you have to travel (to some extent) on your own. It takes time to find your "academic feet". You can get many practical tips about how to search for references, but when it comes to writing your assignments, you're pretty much on your own.' Using the first assignment as the focus of early mentoring interactions may have impeded the more fulsome development of the mentee-mentor relationship. As one mentee noted: 'I personally found it a difficult relationship to sustain as I believe the advice and guidance the mentors can give is limited and in my opinion the relationship has a short life span.'

An earlier start to the process with introductions taking place as part of the induction process, as suggested by one mentee, would have possibly helped. The mentees might not be concerned about their imminent assignments and both participants would feel more relaxed about developing the programme for the mentoring relationship.

Also, whilst subsequent interactions took place in the majority of cases, it was not unanimous amongst participants. With hindsight, and on the basis of feedback received from the participants, together with programme tutors, advocating regular formal meetings may have provided structure and increased efficacy of the scheme.

Future development

Due to the exploratory nature of this scheme a mentor-mentee contract was not stipulated. Normally, a mentoring contract would include the anticipated frequency of meetings, scope and confidentiality of the mentoring relationship and perhaps the duration of the relationship. The informality of the scheme, whilst easier to manage from the perspective of the University, may have introduced flaws mitigating the overall success of the venture. It would therefore be our intention to formalise arrangements with the next intake to ensure greater structure and guidance.

The process of matching mentor with mentee deserves further

consideration. While ensuring mentors are appropriately qualified and experienced is important, equally important are the personal characteristics such as emotional intelligence and self-awareness. Had mentors been identified who the authors considered unsuitable for mentoring, resulting in potential harm to the mentee, the viability of the scheme would be jeopardised and the potential for such situations should be carefully considered before utilising alumni for mentoring. There is evidence to support the mentor-mentee relationship was more successful when the mentor had previously completed the MBA Coaching and Mentoring module. In future, mentoring might be restricted to those alumni who have completed this module.

On reflection, the number of mentor-mentee relationships that prospered outweighed those that faltered, though it must be assumed those which faltered did so for a reason. As one mentee noted: 'It was certainly useful for the first module, but I think it will be less applicable as the year progresses. I generally get more benefit from talking with the rest of the class, as we are on the learning curve together and can share experiences/ideas.' Consequently, a programme team should be confident about what we do in relation to students' learning to accept that less than a 100% take-up is acceptable. Mentoring should therefore not be obligatory where individuals believe they have sufficient emotional resilience to cope with academic study without the support mentoring offers.

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The value of Appreciative Inquiry as an educational development tool

Claire Taylor, St Mary's University College

Introduction

Educational Developments is no stranger to articles covering Appreciative Inquiry, a methodological approach that appears to be increasing in popularity as a research, development and change tool amongst the educational development community. Earlier this year, issue 14.1 contained an account of student researchers as educational developers (Tutton and Snell, 2013), using Appreciative Inquiry as an investigative tool, whilst issue 13.2 saw an account of Appreciative Inquiry used in workshop settings to support CPD for the internationalised curriculum (Caruana, 2012). This account brings a further perspective on the use of Appreciative Inquiry as an educational development tool. It presents an example of using Appreciative Inquiry to transform an event (in this case, a university open day) and considers the potential for Appreciative Inquiry to uphold key SEDA values as well as the challenges faced when engaging with Appreciative Inquiry. Finally, I seek to look 'beyond Appreciative Inquiry', suggesting that the methodology could be enhanced by combining it with other tools – in this case 'Evidence-Based Appreciative Inquiry'.

What is Appreciative Inquiry?

Appreciative Inquiry is a powerful and positive way to enable change, which starts by looking at what works and how to make this better. The approach mobilises strategic change by focusing on the core strengths of an organisation or situation, then uses those strengths to reshape the future. It was developed by David Cooperrider and his associates at Case Western Reserve University, USA in the mid-1980s. Appreciative Inquiry recognises, seeks to better understand and values the contributions or attributes of what already exists (situations, people, systems for example) and seeks to be open to new possibilities for improvement and development.

A key assumption and principle underpinning the Appreciative Inquiry approach, is that reality is created in the moment – a constructionist approach. Cousin (2009, p. 170) states that 'AI researchers, following constructionism, take the view that we are as likely to co-create reality with others as we are to discover it'. Appreciative Inquiry assumes that there are multiple realities, possibilities, practices and solutions, rather than definitive absolute truths and therefore the approach values differences in how reality is viewed and enacted. Overall, the approach is founded upon a positive and ideal view of 'what can be'. Appreciative Inquiry thinks in terms of good, better, possible and keeps the big picture in view, focusing on an overview of what the ideal is and how its roots lie in what is already working. In addition, Appreciative Inquiry assumes that an organisation is a source of limitless capacity and imagination, creating an appreciative culture.

It is worth considering that Appreciative Inquiry does offer an alternative and quite different approach to more traditional problem-solving approaches. For example, problem solving tends to promulgate a 'deficit model' by focusing on 'what to fix' and relies upon a framework bounded by the discourse of problems, symptoms, causes, solutions, action plans and interventions. Traditional problem solving breaks issues into pieces and fragments responses, assuming organisations are constellations of problems to be overcome. Cousin (2009) suggests that problem-solving approaches lack the self-conscious situated negotiation of reality and possibility central to the Appreciative Inquiry approach.

The 4-D cycle

Fundamental to the Appreciative Inquiry is the 4-D cycle of Discover-Dream-Design-Destiny, represented in Figure 1. The discovery phase is underpinned by the fundamental question 'What gives life here?' The aim during this phase is to identify and appreciate the best of 'what is'. In the context of organisational change, Cooperrider *et al.* (2008, p. 43) suggest that 'This task is accomplished by focusing on "peak times" or high-point experiences of organizational excellence – when people have experienced the organization as most alive and effective'. Cousins (2009) describes the effectiveness of gathering stories from academics in order to capture the 'what gives life?' aspects of systems, cultures, practices *etc.* This could also be achieved through visual depiction of positive aspects and group or individual interviews. The dream phase seeks to identify 'what might
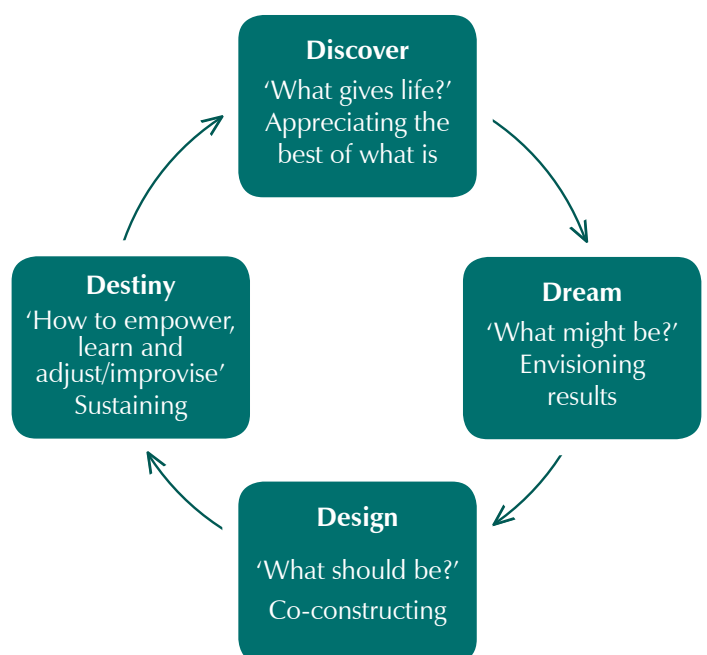

Figure 1 The 4-D cycle

be'. During this phase, participants craft propositional statements based upon the stories told during the discovery phase. The aim is to extend participants' sense of what is possible and to envision a future from the core findings. In the design phase, the ideal is identified through the generation of 'provocative propositions that integrate discovery and dream ideals' (Cooperrider *et al.,* 2008, p. 45). Finally, the destiny phase realises the dream and design outputs; it seeks to deliver the identified ideal collectively and purposefully.

Appreciative Inquiry in practice

Caruana (2012) provides a good example of how to use Appreciative Inquiry in a workshop setting, applying the 4-D cycle in a half-day workshop. Useful steps and key questions are provided to guide the reader through the process used. I offer a slightly different example, of a change project that spanned several months. The focus was transformation of an event, in this case a university open day. The project spanned three months from first 'Discover' session to 'Destiny' in the form of a re-modelled event. The change team was drawn from across the institution and consisted of: Dean of Students (Senior Management Team member); Head of Recruitment and Admissions; Recruitment Officer; Senior Lecturer; Academic Head of Department; Events Manager; Student Union President.

The initial session lasted around two hours and consisted of a brief introduction to Appreciative Inquiry – origins, key principles and the 4-D cycle. This led straight into the initial 'Discover' session, which asked the group to articulate what was great about Open Day events now – what works well, what is successful, what are the best bits? Following this we tackled our 'Dream' scenario for Open Day, imagining the future and using prompt questions such as:
• How would the dream open day look?
• How would teams work together?
• What would be achieved on an open day?
• What contribution would teams make?

In articulating the new vision we asked ourselves the following:
• Is it provocative? Does it stretch, challenge or innovate?
• Is it developed from real-life examples?
• Do people feel passionate enough about it to defend it?
• Is it stated in bold, positive terms and in the present tense?

Over the next 2-3 weeks this exercise was continued through further 'Discovery and 'Dream' interviews with subgroups and then the team came together to share feedback and to challenge whether propositions were truly provocative. The team then worked together to co-determine 'what should be', or the 'Design', achieving consensus regarding principles and priorities and designing a plan to create the different desired future.

The best questions to ask at this stage were quite practical ones:
• What do we need to do in order to achieve the dream?
• Are there resource/training needs?
• Will there be changes to procedures, roles, responsibilities?

Over the next 6 weeks self-selecting subgroups elected to implement aspects of 'Destiny' in order to achieve sustainable change. This stage was about 'making it happen' – the opportunity to put into practice the visions and propositions devised during the dream and design phases.

A pragmatic approach was taken to implementation, using prompt questions for each aspect of the project such as:
• What needs to be done to achieve this?
• Who needs to be involved?
• Where should it be implemented?
• When does it need to be done by, and by whom?

A third session brought the group together to monitor progress. Overall, feedback from participants (none of whom had experienced Appreciative Inquiry before) was positive:

> 'I think it was really useful. It helped me think outside the box and re-visit the whole idea of what an Open Day should be like. You can become blinkered when you have done something in the same way for many years. Open Days have certainly improved since the exercise…'

> 'It was a good motivating technique as it was "wish list" thinking and I felt a lot of positivity coming out of it.'

> 'Appreciative Inquiry is an excellent method of systematically reviewing a system or process which has been operating over many years. It forces the participants to begin with a dream which might at first appear impossible to achieve. This might be because operational constraints appear to be so overpowering, or perhaps because change itself is daunting…It is particularly useful when working with a cross-cutting group from a variety of levels in the institution because the normal power relationships with the group which govern what is achievable are swept away…It also allows those with less "history" or "baggage" to have an equal voice, perhaps a more persuasive voice, in the discussion.'

Values and challenges

It does appear that Appreciative Inquiry is a useful vehicle for demonstrating and upholding the SEDA values (available at www.seda.ac.uk), which are:

• An understanding of how people learn
• Scholarship, professionalism and ethical practice
• Working with and developing learning communities
• Working effectively with diversity and promoting inclusivity
• Continuing reflection on professional practice
• Developing people and processes.

For example, Appreciative Inquiry supports continuing reflection upon professional practice and promotes inclusivity by drawing upon alternative perspectives and actively promoting free thinking in a safe and inclusive environment. Appreciative Inquiry genuinely values all contributions and by so doing has the potential to develop people, processes and learning communities.

Feedback from participants (above) reinforces this, with one participant identifying that 'the normal power relationships with the group which govern what is achievable are swept away'. Appreciative Inquiry works as a development tool because it invites people to engage in building the kinds of organisations and communities that they want to live in. Through alignment of formal and informal structures with purpose and principles, it translates shared vision into reality and belief into practice.

However, Appreciative Inquiry is not without its challenges. Having said that the approach is an inclusive one, the example outlined above did reveal that, initially, default expectations with regard to participant roles were in operation. Although it was clear that normal power relationships were indeed swept away, some initial deference from certain team members was evident which needed to be sensitively addressed and it was important to be very clear that the process was one where all contributions were recognised and valued.

In addition, there was a further challenge around the difficulty that some team members had to 'think freely'. Sometimes, members defaulted to a position of needing to consider operational detail too early in the process. However, it was important to recognise that key issues were significant to individuals and therefore these points were captured for discussion at the appropriate point in the 4-D cycle, rather than discarded permanently.

Beyond Appreciative Inquiry

Cousin (2009) helpfully outlines, and addresses, some theoretical concerns that have been raised with regard to Appreciative Inquiry. For example, it can be difficult to engage with the language of Appreciative Inquiry, which does not always mirror expected academic norms and conventions. This can lead to a perception that the approach lacks rigour, is too subjective and is not robust enough. In defence of Appreciative Inquiry, I commend Cooperrider (2008) and Cousin (2009) to you and encourage you to 'have a go' and judge for yourself.

One way of harnessing the positive aspects of Appreciative Inquiry is to combine the key principles and activities of the approach with other research frameworks. For example, Cousin (2009, p. 169) suggests that Appreciative Inquiry is 'both an extension and a critique of action research: it extends action research as a participative, solution oriented process; it critiques action research for its tendency towards problem-centeredness'. I would like to suggest a further approach which has the potential to enhance Appreciative Inquiry: namely, Evidence-Based Appreciative Inquiry.

Traditionally, 'evidence-based' research or inquiry takes an approach that tells you what is working, how well it is working and what is not working. By grafting an evidence-based loop onto the Appreciative Inquiry 4-D cycle, there is the potential to be taken beyond the generation of non-evidence-based beliefs (or even worse, anecdotes) towards an approach that explores possibilities whilst respecting sound facts. Evidence-Based Appreciative Inquiry would

therefore have the potential to combine and integrate Appreciative Inquiry findings with the best external evidence from systematic research, thus bringing an element of validation to the 4-D cycle. This approach is outlined in Figure 2.
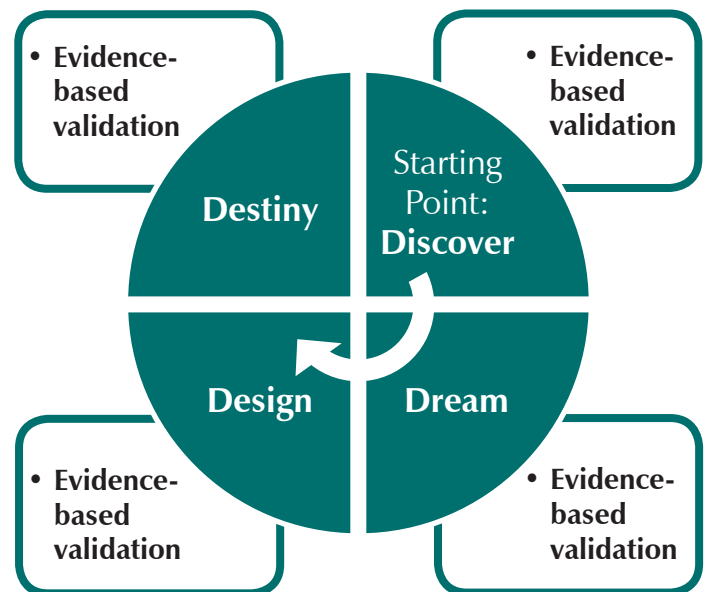

Figure 2 Evidence-Based Appreciative Inquiry

I suggest that Evidence-Based Appreciative Inquiry could draw upon research in relevant areas at each point of the 4-D cycle. By validating decisions at each stage against an evidence base, there is a real possibility the opportunity for optimal 'change' outcomes is considerably enhanced. This is an emerging model, but in practice a series of questions could be applied at each stage of the 4-D cycle (*i.e.* for each of the discover, dream, design and destiny phases) in order to 'test' outcomes. For example:
- Has the D been evaluated in a peer-reviewed journal?
- Has the D been replicated across other settings and participants?
- Are there other Ds that are better researched or more effective?
- Has the D been shown to produce outcomes like the ones intended?

By applying such validation checks, the effectiveness and impact of each 4-D phase could be evaluated and further refined for maximum impact. This would then create the potential for new inputs to each of the 4-D phases, based on new ideas, new data and evidence-based trends from beyond those generated by the immediate participant group.

However, it is important for practitioners to retain a sense of the unique context of the situation in order to retain the key generative, constructionist and positive principles of Appreciative Inquiry. Evidence-Based Appreciative Inquiry does not require a 'one size fits all' approach; but it does require the practitioner to consider the wider research literature *and* the outputs of each 4-D phase in tandem. By following this approach, there is real potential to add further value to the use of Appreciative Inquiry as an educational development tool.

With thanks to Phil Race for sowing the seeds of an idea around Evidence-Based Appreciative Inquiry.

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Using the arts for transformative learning

Digby Warren, London Metropolitan University

As part of the module on curriculum development I run for our Postgraduate Certificate in Learning in Teaching in Higher Education (accredited by the Higher Education Academy), for a workshop exercise I ask the staff participants to draw an image of the ideal graduate in their subject area. Typically, their reactions range from curiosity and readiness to attempt this task to bewilderment and reluctance, with protestations about not being able to draw! Patiently and persistently, I explain that is it not necessary to be skilled at drawing, that it is a conceptual exercise; it's the emerging ideas not artistic merits that count.

Participants pair up to discuss their drawings, and a few of them share their sketches with the whole class. By then the point of the task has become clear: it is a device to foster fresh thinking about the qualities (knowledge and understanding, values, skills *etc.*) that particular disciplines seek to develop in their graduates. These qualities represent the learning aims and outcomes around which programmes of study are designed. Of course, I could have simply asked my module participants to make lists of graduate attributes, which tended in the past to produce commonplace responses.

However, the use of drawing stimulates more creative and holistic thinking. We are invited to imagine our curriculum design and associated educational practices around students/graduates as whole people who have (potentially) integrated all facets of learning, rather than on the basis of dry, disembodied criteria or intended outcomes. In my experience, the drawing exercise enables this more creative approach because it opens up new insights and connections, often through the metaphors and symbolic elements that participants capture in their drawings. In addition to expanding their thinking, I also introduced the task in order to provide the staff participants with a taste of an alternative pedagogy.

This exercise is a small example, from the domain of academic professional development, of the use of the arts as a method of learning in non-arts fields. This kind of approach is increasingly embraced in professional disciplines especially where there is typically a focus on reflective practice. It has been labelled 'arts-based inquiry' by Louise Younie, who adapted the term from the research literature. She defines it as 'student practical engagement with any art form – poetry, photography, painting, narrative, sculpture, dance, music *etc.* – as they reflect on their experiences' (Younie, 2013, p. 25).

A variety of examples of arts-based inquiry may be found in the collection of case studies which I have co-edited with Paul McIntosh (McIntosh and Warren, 2013). These include: art/image-making (medical and healthcare education, marketing, early childhood studies), video/photography (teacher education), cinema (economics), music-making (leadership and management), drama (applied ethics), poetry (business studies, healthcare), story-telling (social work, healthcare) and the use of a labyrinth as a contemplative space for deepening reflection and creativity in various disciplines.

Drawing on my thematic analysis of these case studies, in this article I briefly highlight the goals, processes and outcomes of arts-based inquiry. I also wish to foreground the underpinning values associated with this approach. As an antidote to didactical teaching and passive learning, it shares many objectives of any student-centred pedagogy, for example, to:

- stimulate student engagement and maximise learning potential
- facilitate deeper understanding / 'ownership' of key concepts, theories and values, exploring relevance to practice and students' own lives
- foster student reflection, self-knowledge, creative thinking and metacognition.

Beyond that, however, practitioners of arts-based inquiry often seek to accentuate the human, cultural and ethical dimensions of their subject/

professional field, as a counter-balance to techno-rationalist and depersonalised models of education. While good educational design should indeed be rational – in the sense of resting on coherence between aims, learning processes and assessments – the concern here is that an overemphasis on standardisation and outcomes-driven models can stifle opportunities for flexible and creative teaching and learning. Arts-based inquiry uses embodied learning to connect senses and imagination with analytical learning; its focus on whole person development also aligns this approach with transformative learning. Broadly speaking, this is an approach to pedagogy from different theoretical orientations (cognitive, psycho-analytic, feminist, radical, ontological, holistic) that share the common goal of promoting personal and social transformation.

As multisensory, multifaceted forms of expression, arts-based methods can enable transformative learning by generating rich insights through unlocking unconscious ideas, feelings or memories, and producing new awareness beyond existing cognitive frames. They do so by employing the power of metaphorical thinking at both theoretic (reasoning) and poetic (imagination) levels. Symbolic objects – poetry, song lyrics, images, sand sculptures, masks, stories *etc.* – serve as tools for activating metaphorical and analytical thinking. Creative methods facilitate experiential learning, whether as vehicles for exploration of and reflection on prior experience, or as activities which in themselves constitute direct forms of experiential learning – for instance, learning about teamwork via collective music-making

or reflecting on one's life 'script' through story-telling.

There are also some challenges associated with the use of arts-based inquiry. We need to be mindful that metaphors, as well as being potentially generative, can also constrain ways of seeing; and stories can be oppressive, for example if used to proselytise or control. Like the participants on my curriculum development module, some students may feel blocked by lack of artistic skills or their 'internal critic', and/or there may be some initial anxiety or possible resistance. It is important to stress that the purpose of the exercise is engagement, not aesthetic assessment. Sometimes the process may result in the uncovering of unconscious emotions, attitudes or beliefs; while this can often be cathartic, there might also be mixed reactions from individuals who are uncomfortable about confronting their feelings.

Certainly, the evidence from the case studies included in our book points to many positive outcomes of using arts-based methods. These include enhanced interaction and co-learning among students and teachers, and greater confidence, self-belief, resilience and creativity stimulated on the part of students. Signs of transformative learning were the students' deeper awareness of their own values, emotions and inert prejudices and their increased openness towards others and to alternative perspectives.

In enabling such outcomes the role of the lecturer is to establish clear boundaries and ground rules, as a basis for creating a safe space, and to

provide careful facilitation for building rapport and trust. The lecturer needs to be a questioner and challenger, as well as a supporter, clarifier and explainer, and to demonstrate authenticity through being open and honest in their conduct and responses. When it comes to providing guidance about assessment expectations, it is necessary to ensure that students' assumptions about creative work are explored and the potential learning benefits of creative approaches are clarified.

So, what is the merit in introducing arts-based inquiry into professional development activities or programmes for academic staff? Firstly, it can provide a stimulating form of experiential and reflective learning, as shown in case studies of other professional courses (as well as in my introductory anecdote). Furthermore, it can serve to model the process and potential of creative methods. Finally, it can engender review and debate of our values and vision of higher education which underpin our educational philosophy and practice.

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theory. The chapters include useful illustrations that help to conceptualise the narrative, as well as researcher reflections which offer real examples of the research theory in practice for the reader to consider. The researcher reflections are drawn from a range of international researchers in higher education, with a wide variety of professional disciplinary backgrounds, including educational development. In addition to the reflections, there are boxes with tips offering practical advice, as well as reflective questions to help prompt a spirit of enquiry, and lists of useful resources

for further reading. This makes for an interesting and engaging text – how often can one say that about a research text?

In a climate where there is ever-increasing demand for evidenced-based educational development and outcomes, this book may well be a useful reference resource.
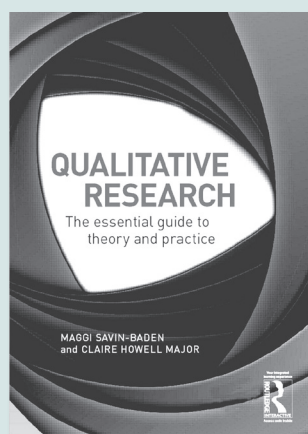
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Book Review

Qualitative Research: The essential guide to theory and practice

M. Savin-Baden and
C. H. Major

2013, Routledge

When I got this book to review my first question was, do we really need another book on qualitative research? The authors acknowledge their book is pitching against the plethora of qualitative texts available but assert that the need for the book was born out of their own struggle to find a comprehensive text that deals with a range of issues which face qualitative researchers. They suggest the complex array of texts on offer result in students of qualitative research becoming confused and making choices which fall short of their learning needs. This book is offered as their solution to the problem. Set as a comprehensive introductory level text, this book should provide sufficient breadth of qualitative research approaches to be a one-stop resource for those new to qualitative research.

While the book is aimed at novice researchers seeking an overview of the theory and practical considerations of qualitative approaches, it may also be useful for academic staff studying towards postgraduate teaching qualifications, or those conducting Masters level dissertations. For educational developers, the sections on phenomenography, action research and collaborative approaches (which includes appreciative inquiry), are welcome and well grounded in researcher examples. My only warning is that some may find the depth of theory too light but the authors point to a list of useful further reading.

Although presented as a series of chapters, the book may be viewed as three distinct sections: the first covering a historical overview of research approaches from positivism through post-postivism to 'philosophical mashups'; the second which focuses on the researcher perspective; with the third providing the theory and practice of research, following the research process. This book plumps for breadth over depth in relation to theory, but in doing so provides a useful overview of the background research theory and addresses the common practical decisions researchers must make at key stages of the research process.

The book is written in a clear, accessible style in a way which demystifies the sometimes complex research philosophy and

SEDA News

SEDA Executive Committee

Following the AGM in May, the new Co-Chairs of SEDA are Stephen Bostock and Pam Parker. Julie Hall is outgoing Vice-Chair and Joelle Adams is incoming Vice-Chair. We also welcomed Penny Burden, Clare Power and Sally Bradley to the Committee. Sally is the new Chair of the Conference and Events Committee, along with Claire Taylor.

All of SEDA's Committee members are listed on our website.

Upcoming SEDA events

18th Annual SEDA Conference: Creativity in Educational Development

14-15 November 2013,
Mercure Bristol Holland House Hotel
Booking now open

SEDA Spring Teaching, Learning and Assessment Conference 2014: Engaging Students: Engaging Staff

15 May 2014, Copthorne Hotel Newcastle
Call for proposals now open

Workshop: Building staff capacity for university community engagement

23 October 2013, Woburn House, London

Professional Development

Congratulations to Rachael Carkett, Senior Academic Staff Developer, University of Bath, who has recently been awarded Senior Fellowship of SEDA.

The University of Basel in Switzerland have recently achieved recognition through SEDA's Professional Development Framework scheme. We welcome them to the SEDA-PDF community.

Projects

In July 2012, the Higher Education Academy commissioned SEDA to conduct an evaluation of the impact of the UK Professional Standards Framework. The impact study report can now be viewed at: http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ukpsf/impact-study.