

Title: **‘An experienced map reader’: the academic developer as traveller and other metaphors**

Presenter: **Colleen McKenna, Jane Hughes**
HEDERA

Session Learning Outcomes

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

- Reflect on the diversity of academic developers as a cohort
- Consider the implications of the academic developers’ conceptualisation of identities for supporting learning and teaching
- Identify ways of using metaphor as a means of exploring identity in relation to the rich and complex educational context in which we operate.

Session Outline

Key issues to be addressed are:

- Identity construction of academic developers in relation to the diversity of institutions
- Use of metaphor as a means of exploring role and identity construction for academic developers

The main conference theme that this workshop will address is ‘Innovative practice in educational development which takes advantage of diverse beliefs, values and cultures’.

In this session, we will take as our starting point findings from our recent SEDA Legacy Grant project: ExILED (Exploring Identities and Locations of Educational Developers). This research, involving national and international participants, explored respondents’ journeys into their educational development roles; the impact of their geographic and structural locations within institutions; and the formal and informal aspects of their work in relation to teaching, strategy and scholarship. Participants’ values and the impact institutional cultures emerged as prominent themes in the data analysis.

Following a brief overview of that work, we will focus on some of the results that relate to the ‘pleasures’ and ‘challenges’ of the role. In particular, we will explore the respondents’ perceptions that the ‘diversity and variety of colleagues’ has had a positive impact on the way in which educational developers define themselves and see their roles. Following a whole group discussion, we will move into small group activities drawing upon data from the research and considering its relevance for workshop participants.

We will consider metaphor as a device for exploring identity and we will look closely at metaphors for educational developers (from our research and relevant published work) that are built around being a ‘traveller’. Building on this discussion, participants will then work in small groups and firstly, look at

example metaphorical texts that emerged from the research and then work on creating their own metaphors to explore their experience with diversity and internationalization within their roles.

This will be followed by a further plenary discussion and close.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

The outline of the workshop is as follows;

- **Introduction to session** - 2 mins
- **Context** (discussion of the ExILED study) and framing of theme of academic developers as 'travellers' and 'map readers' that emerged from the research – 6 mins
- **Activity:** Diversity and metaphors (20 mins)
- In this section of the workshop, participants will work in small groups and read sample texts from the research with a view to engaging with ONE of the following themes:

a) the significance of diversity as a feature of educational development: How is diversity an explicit or implicit element of the accounts of academic developers that we have collected? How does this accord with workshop participants' experiences?

OR

b) the role and impact of metaphor for academic developers

Here, we will think more specifically about metaphors that emerged from the research and from relevant research such as Kinash and Wood (2011). Additionally, participants will be asked to generate their own metaphors for their role in relation to the workshop theme.

- **Discussion** – 15 mins
 - We will hear from different groups and we will share some of the metaphors generated in the small group activity and consider the value of this exercise, particularly in relation to its use in participants' day-to-day work with colleagues. We will also reflect on the theme of diversity more broadly in relation to the work we've done as a group.
- **Conclusion** – 2 minutes

References

Kinash, S. and Wood, K. 'Academic developer identity: how we know who we are'. (2011) IJAD 18:2 , 178- 189.