

**Title:**                   **Doing it for ourselves: Collegially-developed professional educational development opportunities as a means of self-care**

**Presenter:**       **Sally Brown, Kay Sambell, Linda Graham**  
Independent consultant, Edinburgh Napier University,  
Sunderland University

### **Session Learning Outcomes**

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

- Review a range of opportunities that exist for self- and professional development that can be undertaken for low- or no-cost;
- Determine some self-generated activities that will enable them to bring back a sense of joy to our work;
- Consider how we can apply the concept of academic altruism to our everyday working lives, 'paying forward' to the next generation the support we have ourselves received in the past;
- Engage in purposeful and playful learning.

### **Session Outline**

HE is in a period of rapid change with ebbing funding, soaring fees and mounting expectations about what we will 'deliver'. There's a growing body of work highlighting the frenetic qualities of our working lives, as we grapple with these pressures, particularly so in the learning and teaching domain. In the past, in the UK and elsewhere, there was ample funding to support this work, but now this is no longer the case, here we explore how we can use mutually generated low-cost or (ideally) cost-free opportunities for developing ourselves and others in the domain of learning, teaching and assessment, including particularly scholarship of teaching and publications opportunities.

Tougher times demand creative solutions: working across diverse universities in the UK and beyond, we are increasingly encountering academics and professional/learning support who feel embattled, with seemingly little access to funding for additional projects or professional development. Accordingly, we have started to identify some of the alternative and creative ways to find mutually derived solutions.

Such activities, we argue are grounded within academic altruism, that is, through those who have benefited over time from the support of others 'paying forward' with gratitude the help we've received ourselves. In this workshop we will explore examples where we

have witnessed positive and powerful outcomes achieved by questioning whether embarking on ongoing CPD for ourselves and others always necessarily requires permission, substantial funding, accreditation and formally allocated time.

*Inter alia* we will discuss:

- Collegiality as a constructive form of self-defence;
- Academic altruism to support the next generation;
- Using diverse and sometimes unexpected serendipitous opportunities for CPD;
- Building informal mutually-supportive learning communities;
- Using networking opportunities, including at conferences productively to help ourselves and each other;
- Mentoring.

Thus, HE systems can be subverted by individual and collective action for the common good which in itself is enjoyable.

### **Session Activities and Approximate Timings**

Within the 45 or 90 mins we are allocated, this highly participative workshop will include no more than five short elements of presentation (maximum 5 minutes) together with a range of activities for participants to help them review available opportunities and be creative in seeking and using CPD opportunities.

### **Preparation before the session**

Prior to attending the session, it would be useful for participants to review any recent performance review/appraisal documentation and bring along identified learning needs for shared consideration of how these could be worked on using this approach.

### **References**

- Clutterbuck, D., 2014. *Everyone needs a mentor*. Kogan Page Publishers.
- Graham, L., Sambell, K. and Brown S. (2019) in production, 'Collegially-developed professional educational development opportunities: making space for mutually learning within a challenging academic environment' .
- James, A., 2019. *The Power of Play in Higher Education: Creativity in Tertiary Learning*. Springer.
- Moore, S., 2003. Writers' retreats for academics: exploring and increasing the motivation to write. *Journal of further and higher education*, 27(3), pp.333-342.
- Murray, R. and Newton, M., 2009. Writing retreat as structured intervention: margin or mainstream?. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 28(5), pp.541-553.
- Nerantzi, C., A WATERFALL OF QUESTIONS Or can we afford not to play in HE? Chrissi Nerantzi and
- Sword, H., 2017. *Air & light & time & space: How successful academics write*. Harvard University Press.