

**Title:**                   **Who are you and who do you want to be?**

**Presenter:**       **Sally Brown**  
                          Independent Consultant

### **Session Learning Outcomes**

Drawing Carol Dweck's work on fostering self-efficacy and Boyer's concepts of enabling scholarships, by the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- Make informed choices about the kinds of professional identity that work best for you in different contexts;
- Identify some strategies for positive self-identification in relation to professional competences;
- Determine personal strategies for making working lives not just manageable but also enjoyable and affirming.

### **Session Outline**

Over a career in higher education, many of us will adopt and use a range of professional identities including lecturer, supporter of student learning, guide, supervisor, mentor, programme leader, curriculum designer, appraiser, line manager, friend, challenger, enabler and many more.

We need to be fluid in our approaches and fluent in a range of discourses to enable us to undertake these different (and sometimes conflicting) roles effectively. Through the decisions we make about how we look, how we speak, how we behave in professional contexts, and what we choose to do or not do, we can have an element of control over how others respond to us, although extraneous factors can impact too in sometimes unpredictable ways.

As time passes and new roles are accrued, we commonly keep adding tasks without necessarily trimming out any which we may in any case see as being central to our professional identities ("I will always see myself at heart as a teacher" "Mentoring to me is a key way in which I can pay forward all the support I have received myself over the years" "If I am not perceived as an innovator, I might as well stay at home") But this can come at a high personal cost if we relinquish nothing while expanding our professional remits. We also want always to be true to our core beliefs, while nevertheless sometimes needing to compromise to some extent to achieve our goals.

How we can achieve all this is the focus of this workshop.

## Session Activities and Approximate Timings

No more than 20% of the time will be given over to a brief illustrated presentation setting out some of the key issues for discussion, which will be followed by individual, group and collective tasks designed to enable participants to review how we might be seen by others and how we can shape and direct these perceptions purposefully and positively. In the workshop we will consider, *inter alia* how to:

- avoid self-doubt and reject succumbing to the imposter syndrome;
- focus on capability rather than what we can't do;
- affirm and integrate the values we espouse;
- challenge ourselves to stretch beyond safe and comfortable zones of endeavour;
- create a collation of livable and mutually supportive identities for ourselves, rather than have these imposed upon us by other people's expectations.

The workshop will be highly interactive and will include practical play-based activities.

## References

- Boyer, E. L. (1990, reprinted 1997), *Scholarship reconsidered: priorities of the professoriate*, San Francisco: Jossey Bass, The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.
- Dweck, C. S. (2000) *Self Theories: Their Role in Motivation, Personality and Development*, Lillington, NC: Taylor & Francis.
- Nerantzi, C. and James, A., 2015. Waterfall of questions or can we afford not to play in HE?. *Exploring Play in Higher Education*.