

# EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

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## SEDA Fellowship, triads and Continuing Professional Development

**Marita Grimwood**, SEDA Fellowship Coordinator

SEDA's Fellowships Scheme and its annual CPD requirement have been very important to my own professional identity and development since I first joined it in 2007, so I was delighted to take on the role of Fellowships Co-ordinator last year. But in my new role I found myself wondering if others found the annual CPD process as effective as I did. And if there were any issues, how might they be overcome?

### SEDA Fellowships CPD – A guide for the uninitiated

When SEDA's Fellowships scheme was first set up, 'continuing reflection' was felt to be 'just as important as initial accreditation' (Baume, 2015). It was also felt that peer support would help professional effectiveness. As many readers of *Educational Developments* know, SEDA Fellowship holders maintain their good standing, at Fellowship, Senior Fellowship or (from 2015) Associate Fellowship levels, by writing a 1-2000 word reflective report on their past year's CPD, which they then share with two peers. The subsequent triad discussion can be online or face to face, and at its best both supports participants and challenges their thinking.

This process happens with minimal intervention. CPD reports are submitted to the SEDA office, triads are allocated – sometimes at participants' request, more often randomly – and then an email is sent to each triad by way of introduction, with the triad members' reports attached. No-one outside the triads reads the reports. When their discussions are complete, a triad member informs the SEDA office. Given this facilitative approach, not much is known about the variety of experiences of the scheme year on year.

### What are the benefits?

In January and February 2015, thirteen participants shared with me their experiences of SEDA CPD triads. I quote extensively from them here. For reasons of confidentiality, I have not indicated which comments come from the same respondents. However, where I give two or three quotations together, they are from different people.

Of thirteen respondents, ten had almost entirely positive experiences. Some had chosen to contact me because they particularly wished to share them:

*'Our electronic conversation went on for two months. We carried on, probing assumptions, we'd both been in situations that chimed...It was such a focused time.'*

**SEDA Supporting and Leading Educational Change**

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Others reported important emotional and professional support:

*'My first triad report included admitting this:.. "I still don't know what I am doing and believe I am working on instinct and group work experience rather than a deep understanding of learning and teaching theory. If I am successful as a teacher I am worried that it is more by luck than judgement..." I received instant support...When I came to write my second triad report...the comments I wrote are so much more upbeat. I used the word "inspired" in two different places.'*

A combination of peer empathy and specific suggestions for reading resulted in a new outlook:

*'The achievement in a perceived disaster, the reminder of how far along a path I did get even if not to the end; also perspective for me in terms of not being the only one struggling with particular issues.'*

For others, the triads had had a particular importance in forming their professional identities:

*'Discussing educational development with people in more traditional educational development roles is important in my hybrid role – confirming myself as an educational developer and engaging in discussion on practice in a meaningful way.'*

Nixon and Brown (2013) have explored the ways in which SEDA functions as a 'community of practice', including its importance to professional identity, and it's clear that, to some participants, CPD triads are an important space for this to happen.

However, this was not the only benefit cited. Several people, like the three quoted below, gave more concrete examples:

*'I became aware it was a long time since I'd taken a proper theoretical look at pedagogy. I started a blog looking at key ideas. It's something I committed to in the report. Developing that as an idea was discussed in the triad.'*

*'One [triad member] suggested a journal for the paper I was writing, which I've now submitted to. I was struggling.'*

*'In my first triad both members encouraged me to do the SEDA courses, and one of them warned me to keep at it, all of which I found useful.'*

Yet even some of those who identified tangible outcomes resisted the idea that such benefits were the main 'point' of triad CPD. The most commonly mentioned benefit – and, to some, the most valuable – was the opportunity to review the year:

*'We all carry out some form of CPD activity. For me this [SEDA process] is more reflective, makes you think carefully about what you've done and its impact on your practice.'*

*'It hasn't changed my practice – I don't see it as fulfilling that function. It is beneficial in the genuine reflective sense. It puts a stop on the year. You look back on [your CPD report from] the year before and think "Did I feel that? What's changed?"'*

This opportunity to write confidentially – and outside the frameworks of accreditation, promotion, or annual review – was valued as a rare opportunity:

*'It's always a good marker to have an "authentic appraisal" – for me it's time for me – like the university appraisal – with two others who really do know what*

*the job entails. To my line manager I'm just one more resource-hungry individual. [In the SEDA triads] people have lived through what you're going through.'*

*'My annual appraisal process is...a very negative experience so it is essential that I have a means by which I can reflect on my year, my practice, my successes and failures and plan for the future. The triad process is doing that for me. To the extent that I can influence my appraisal the triad process does, but really this IS my appraisal process.'*

*'I get input what I'm doing from people I respect who are involved in the same sort of thing. People in the same team might not be able to be so honest. It's very affirming – "That's fantastic" "Have you thought about...?" – an external objective view that you're doing an OK job.'*

Most respondents experienced profound and wide-ranging benefits. At its best, the process seems to fulfil the potential of 'individual learning biographies' as described by Scherto Gill:

*'Allow[ing] teachers/educators to break away from destructive and paralysing stories about the past...to examine the ways they have structured their meanings and actions. They can use emerging stories to undo such negative stories and together they can create a new way of understanding and engaging in education and learning.'* (Gill, 2014, p. 225)

It is this powerful potential that two respondents recognised, making them keen to introduce a similar model into their own institutions.

## What can go wrong?

Despite the many positive stories, three people reported more 'mixed' experiences.

*'I've had about three really good [triads] and a couple of disappointing ones. [In] the worst...the triad folk just get the feedback and don't bother to do any for me once they receive theirs.'*

Yet the same person describes being 'inspired by some of the best ones':

*'My peers have been so generous in sharing their time, quick to respond and willing to comment on what I am doing...Last year, I was shamed into improving my report because the first one I received was so beautifully set out, and so deeply personal. It inspired me to...get writing truthfully and reflectively about my own experiences. As a result we connected at a personal level. It was a lovely experience.'*

So what are the factors behind disappointing experiences?

### Self-disclosure – getting it 'right'

One important triad 'success factor' identified is the level of self-disclosure in which colleagues are prepared to engage:

*'For whatever reason, more colleagues than not have been reluctant to share openly, to accept and engage with probing questions, and generally act in a self-reflective way. It's been a shame.'*

Different assumptions about this can be very obvious from the style of CPD reports. Here are two contrasting views:

*'Some people are quite confessional – I see it more as a public document...I take the view we remain confidential... [My other triad members] were a lot more open than I was about things not going so well.'*

*'My pieces are extremely self-revelatory to the point where people have said "don't do this..." but that's the way I've found to make it work.'*

Getting the level of self-disclosure 'right' seems to be key to an effective triad. If your CPD report and discussion take too much the form of what one person called a 'laundry list', then you're unlikely to learn anything – your triad needs something to engage with. Equally, it's wise and ethical to be careful about what you say. Rather than naming names and criticising individuals, it is often possible to frame discussion of issues you face in more general terms. Ultimately, there will be things that it is impossible to discuss. One long-standing member of SEDA offered the following insight:

*'There was only one year when my triad was not very useful for me. That was because what I was involved in doing in my institution was so confidential I couldn't talk about it to anyone. So that year in my report I wrote quite generically about my writing projects and included a list of CPD I'd done, but I couldn't talk about the really important stuff.'*

The usefulness of the CPD triads is underpinned by some necessary limitations.

### Anxiety and uncertainty

Two people talked about their sense of uncertainty when engaging in triads for the first time. One, already very experienced when they first gained SEDA recognition, was conscious of exposing their thinking to a community of peers, and of the fact that their line manager might be in their triad. Another commented:

*'In my first [CPD report] I felt the need to put lots of references in. Now I'd only put them in if it felt appropriate. It was about credibility.'*

A third described being too 'intimidated' to contact a more senior triad member when they failed to contact them and, as a result, finding their first triad a highly unsatisfactory experience. This was not a universal feeling: another respondent described how 'nice' it had been to have had 'a biggie in the field' in each of their triads.

### Time

Time is another commonly cited issue. As one person put it, 'even though it's not arduous, having time to think about the

best things to raise' can be challenging. It's clear that this can have a significant impact on the quality of the triad discussion:

*'This past year was probably the least satisfactory with one of the three people involved evidently very stressed and pushed for time. That meant that after one brief email that person really didn't contribute to the process any more. The other person and I tried to ask questions and probe a little but we didn't get very far and in the end we (I) took the view that I would be asking too much if I asked for anything more.'*

Two people wished there was time for more triads to meet more frequently:

*'I always plan to contact triads again. Once a year is too occasional to be an action learning group. I've had contact details, and said "let's do it again" but haven't organised it. Maybe an interim six-monthly thing would help you recognise what you wanted to do. Keeping each other on track. Only once [a year] is great in terms of time, but I would enjoy extra discipline imposed on it.'*

Negative experiences often reflected lower levels of participation from triad members – whether this was simple non-responsiveness, or insufficient disclosure to facilitate a reflective discussion. Anxiety and uncertainty can be a particular problem for those new to the process, and it is true that the positive potential of this CPD model as (part of) a community of practice does not make issues of power and trust disappear (Roberts, 2006). Rather, each individual has to negotiate their own mode of engagement with those issues.

### Taking ownership

Respondents often seemed to be happy with their triads when they felt a sense of ownership of the process. In its simplest form, this means 'someone always has to make the first move' and get the triad going.

Another aspect of taking ownership is that, while many people find working with different people each year to be enriching, others actively choose to be more selective:

*'I feel confident talking about parts of my work I feel less confident about. Also I'm able to say when I feel good about something. They have context – not starting from scratch each time. If we're at a conference we'll get together, which is quite nice.'*

The process of owning and determining the process of their third triad comes more naturally to some than to others:

*'When triads for Fellows were advertised on SEDA JISC I emailed up saying what about new fellows and a couple of other people responded to my email saying the same as me – and so we asked if we could be our own triad – as easy as that. We were told that we didn't need experienced Fellows as part of our triad but my two colleagues are more experienced than I work-wise anyway.'*

A third choice, there is the matter of deciding what to disclose and, as a result, what you expect in return. One respondent, who has had consistently positive experience of the triads, observed, 'Perhaps I influence the help I receive because I am prepared to share honestly and therefore am more likely to receive help that gets closer to the root of the problem...' Another is selective about what to include, deciding to focus clearly on 'what would help me...I didn't want to pick things just for the sake of it'. Overall, those who mentioned making positive, active choices about managing the process linked this to beneficial triad experiences.

### CPD report and triad format

This scope for tailoring triads to individual needs and preferences extends to the practical details of how a report is presented, and how people 'meet'. One respondent noted:

*'How differently each person in the triad presents their CPD summary. I really like seeing other ways of doing it. This year [one person] used images and photographs to communicate and it was most effective.'*

There is diversity in the format of discussions, which can be in person, by video or conference call, or email discussion:

*'Because of where I am [geographically] it's always email, telephone Skype.'*

*'Last year I had my first reasonable triad. We met up and that worked really well...you can read people face to face – tone, body language. The other two knew each other quite well, but it was a very inclusive process. I enjoyed that and got a lot of feedback...I would try to get the triad to meet together.'*

Broadly speaking, people found email triads less effective than Skyping or meeting up. The few whose triads had managed to meet up – in London or at conferences – rated it as a particularly valuable experience. Yet, as the very first quotation in this article shows, meetings or video calls are not essential for triads to work extremely well.

### Conclusions – Making the most of your triad

Based on the views I gathered, here are some tips for triad success:

- 1) *Engagement.* Going in with an open mind, and being prepared to commit two to three hours (in total) to writing a report and feeding back to colleagues.
- 2) *Ownership.* Those who most value the process have often consciously decided what benefits they want from the triad process, and how to achieve them. It may be worth discussing this upfront with your triad, and encouraging them to consider untried formats – for example Skype or a face-to-face meeting.
- 3) *Openness.* Being prepared to be open and to share problems in a way you are happy with, as this is what enables colleagues to support you.
- 4) *Respect.* The SEDA values include 'practising in ethical and professional ways' and one of the guidance points



on this is 'developing and using practices that show respect and concern for others' (<http://www.seda.ac.uk/further-guidance-seda-values>). Tempting as it may be to vent your frustrations about particular individuals, avoid identifying people and adopt the level of discretion you wish your own colleagues to apply to you.

### Next moves

It is clear that participants find much to value in our current approach to staying in good standing. Yet, perhaps characteristically of our field, we also expect rather a lot of ourselves. Members of the SEDA community experience the same anxieties, insecurities and frustrations as other learners.

With this in mind, I have created some resources for the SEDA website. These include two brief videos of Senior Fellows talking about their experiences of the CPD process. There will also be two anonymised CPD reports from different Fellows and Senior Fellows, giving examples of how report writing can be approached.

To help overcome time constraints, we'll trial a longer lead-in time, with an email going out in March or early April to encourage people to put time in their diaries for report writing in July or early August. Finally, we will send out a January prompt to invite triads to contact each other for a mid-year discussion, if they have agreed to do so. I am also

hoping to offer a 'suggested' virtual meeting time for triads in July, adjacent to a SEDA webinar. This would be optional, but many people welcome the idea of a fixed time they can schedule in.

Above and beyond the question of 'good standing', the CPD scheme is there for the benefit of all SEDA Associate Fellows, Fellows, and Senior Fellows. I would very much welcome any feedback on these suggestions, or other ideas you might have to support a process that, with minimal intervention, is providing a valuable source of professional support. As one interviewee put it, 'We should hype it. It works.'

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# Students engaging in the community

Colin Bryson and Katie Pipe, Newcastle University

We begin this article by acknowledging the generosity of colleagues and the rich advice they provided when we consulted the SEDA and NTFS community about our plans to offer a module based on students working with partners in the external community. Student reps on Combined Honours at Newcastle had suggested this module to Colin, and one of them, Katie, acted as consultant to enable the pair of us to co-design this. That wider advice has been supplemented with views from other students.

### Why should students engage in the community?

It now seems quite quaint to consider a time when (some) academics advised students to ignore extra-curricular 'distractions' and focus only on disciplinary academic study. In

this more enlightened climate, there is a widespread view that the sort of experiential learning that takes place through a host of extra-curricular and 'co-curricular' opportunities is highly valuable, indeed essential. Colin recalls shocking senior managers when compelling evidence from a small project at Newcastle showed that students developed their graduate attributes rather more through such activities than they did from their courses!

The reader seeking a more comprehensive analysis of the topic of accredited community-based learning (CBL) should look at two recent publications (Mason O'Connor and McEwen, 2012; Millican and Bourner, 2014). Such reviews explore the scholarship underpinning this area and distinguish from, but also note, overlaps with, other practices such as:

service learning (with a long history in the USA but a rather broader term and range of activities); community-based research (traditionally undertaken only by academic staff but now starting to include student participation too); citizenship education and education for sustainable development; learning-linked volunteering (Squirrel, 2009); and placements in community settings (a feature of vocational and professional courses). A key feature of community-based learning is that it is mutual, there are benefits for all parties. So what are these benefits?

### Benefits to students:

- Engaging with the region and connecting to the wider community, building a sense of belonging with that locale. Getting out of the 'student bubble'
- Developing capacity for lifelong learning by building autonomous

- learning, and reflective learning and practice
- Raising awareness of important issues faced by members of society, and awareness of diversity and inclusion
- Building self-knowledge and metacognition, and developing own values, ethical position, morality and beliefs
- Enhancing skilful practices in the context of a real situation. Links to developing professional capacity
- Developing emotional resilience and capacity in dealing with a wider variety of situations
- Possibly enhancing cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary understanding if collaborative learning is enabled in a multi-disciplinary group or setting
- Creating good opportunity for transformational learning – the sort of learning that is the true purpose of Higher Education.

**Benefits to universities:**

- Developing key graduate attributes for their students

- Enhancing student engagement and thus, satisfaction
- Offering opportunities which will attract student applicants (particularly local applicants)
- Meeting strategic objectives and mission to be a civic university and to contribute to economic, social and cultural dimension of the region (and thus meeting expectations by government)
- Building better relationships with local community (and enhancing their own reputation).

**Benefits to the community:**

- Tackling and addressing objectives and issues which otherwise they could not do
- Community partners gaining tangible resources and expertise to assist their own objectives – the students’ direct contribution of time, energy, knowledge and innovation
- Developing students so that they might contribute further after graduation
- Building good relationships where community, universities and students respect and appreciate each other.

To illustrate that such an opportunity is attractive to students, when we asked the first year on Combined Honours whether they would take a CBL module, over one-third were keen to do so. They identified a wide range of areas that they would like to contribute to, which frequently did not link to the subjects they were studying.

**Practices that enable community engagement**

So how are colleagues across the sector working with their students to enable community-based learning? Responses to our enquiry fell into two categories: embedding CBL within a module or accrediting it as a co-curricular activity.

**Linked to an accredited award**

There are now many universities that offer an extra-curricular award scheme through which students are accredited with a sort of formal certification for undertaking successfully a variety of voluntary activities. We collated activities of this type into Table 1.

	Subject	Year	Activity	Organisation	Outcomes/Further info
Exeter	Inter-disciplinary	all	Each year a number of thematic ‘Challenges’ are open to students to participate in	Student leaders work with other students and academics to set up a week of working together on projects in June	<a href="http://www.exeter.ac.uk/grandchallenges/">http://www.exeter.ac.uk/grandchallenges/</a>
LSE	Cross-disciplinary	all	LSE GROUPS	Final 2 weeks of summer term – social theme, cross-disciplinary, cross-year group researches and produce conference paper	<a href="http://tinyurl.com/nlth8lv">http://tinyurl.com/nlth8lv</a>
Manchester Metropolitan	Nursing	3	Students volunteer to offer professional advice to the clients of local charity	Offered twice a year and expanding to students in other health-related disciplines	
Nottingham Trent	Education	1	Fund-raising activity for specific charity	Student led but facilitated by tutor	Building belonging and peer relationships
Plymouth	Maths	all	Matching students with clients in third/public sector	Staff-supervised projects which run for a few weeks	Developing into a final year module which will be multi-disciplinary
Sheffield Hallam	Health and Wellbeing	all	A number of projects involving students aimed at supporting local groups including e.g. care homes, Dementia Awareness, children in care	Variety of opportunities for students to get involved, on voluntary basis, in ongoing projects	Draws in a wide range of students, including those from English and Sport too
Sunderland	Childhood Studies	all	Fund-raising activities for charities, participation in and organising events	Voluntary for students, with staff support and liaison. Summer project abroad opportunity too	Students gaining valuable professional experience

Table 1 Examples of community-based co-curricular activities

## Inside the curriculum

Colleagues informed us of many modules based on CBL, or where that was an option as part of a more flexible project-style module. In general these modules were isolated initiatives championed by an individual. Some subjects have a tradition of offering such modules as part of professional development (the category of placements inside the curriculum), particularly within the fields of business, health and education. Some universities had adopted a broader strategic approach to developing a curriculum which included such a community focus, e.g. Brighton, Leeds, Sheffield, and Sheffield Hallam.

A spectacular example of a very wide and inclusive initiative is Professional and Community Engagement (PACE) at Macquarie University in Sydney. The university works in partnership with the Australian Volunteers International to offer a plethora of opportunities for students at home and abroad to work with many different types of organisation (over 900): from helping local councils in Sydney to develop community engagement strategies to building schools in Peru. Faculties offer their own PACE modules and a student can take any such module in the second or third year. They can work in groups or individually. These modules can also be taken on a not-for-credit basis (and during the vacation).

Another approach which overlaps considerably with CBL is students undertaking 'real' or 'live' projects. The Live Projects Network definition:

*'A live project comprises the negotiation of a brief, timescale, budget and product between an educational organisation and an external collaborator for their mutual benefit. The project must be structured to ensure that students gain learning that is relevant to their educational development.'*

Some universities have been offering their own versions of such projects to their student for many years. The Live Projects Network offers a way, across the sector and international borders,

for any staff member or student, to get involved in such a project and to facilitate the process of setting up a partnership.

There is a wealth of interesting approaches to CBL modules going on across the sector (see Table 2).

## Enabling success

What considerations are there in developing a CBL module? Of course there is rich diversity of contexts in HE, and one size will not fit all. We share some thought about these issues in this section.

## Module aims

We note that these aims may focus on: employability or enhancing work-based skills; developing graduate attributes, which tend to combine both the academic and the practical; developing a more interdisciplinary perspective; or gaining insights and experience into the community organisation setting; and possibly others! We caution against overloading the module, and the staff and students, with too many aims at once. In our own context we have alternative modules student can take that focus on employability, and on graduate attributes, thus our focus will be on the community engagement dimension. We want to attract students who are less likely to do these alternative modules, and through an immersive experience in CBL, to open their eyes to wider issues. Adopting a multi-disciplinary team approach should also enable them to see the application of different disciplinary lenses, in a more subtle way rather than 'teaching' them interdisciplinarity, which has been found to be rather challenging. All CBL modules, being experiential, will have the aim of promoting and practising deep reflection.

## Supporting the students

However able or experienced the students are, it is essential to have an induction period to prepare them for CBL. This usually takes the form of workshops, providing training on project management, being professional, ethical and emotional resilience. This period also permits the group to bond and form trust

relationships with each other and with the staff. It is advisable for all the students to undergo a CRB check too. It is important that staff are not too prescriptive, and allow the students to take some responsibility and exercise choice in scaffolding them towards more autonomy. Another activity that can be arranged at this stage is excursions to the local area so that the students become familiar with cultural history, or perhaps just more familiar and sensitive to the locale, all round.

At this early stage too, students will be selecting projects and starting to form relationships with a community partner. A key stage is working out and agreeing a mutual brief, what the students will actually do, how they will do it, and the scoping and setting of objectives. At this time too, the student group will be deciding how each member can contribute to delivering the project. This is another opportunity to avoid prescription and allow the students to take responsibility but in low risk and safe environment, before they go out there.

There will be supervisory roles for staff in the module team and in the community partner, and it should be worked out in advance who is doing precisely what. On no account should the module team just leave the students to get on with it entirely by themselves and regular communication should be maintained throughout the community experience. This also provides an important source of formative feedback for the students too, and that should also come from the community partner.

Note that working on modules like this might be rather a new type of experience for many staff, requiring different skills and dispositions from managing traditional modules. This is very much a mode of working with 'students as partners' (Cooke-Sather *et al.*, 2014). Staff are likely to require support too.

## Assessment

Particular thought and care needs to go into the design of the assessment. As it is important to provide something tangible and beneficial to the community partner, this is likely to

HEI	Subject	Year	Activity	Mode	Outcomes/Further info
Bath	Maths	3	Communicating maths to the local community e.g. charities	Project	Running for 13 years
Bradford	Creative Technology	2	Live project including social enterprise	Project creating web-site, game or video/animation for client	<a href="http://tinyurl.com/nvkldhp">http://tinyurl.com/nvkldhp</a>
Brighton	Any	2 or 3 or M	Placement in local community	Seminars, assessed by plan, participation, report, CV and presentation	<a href="http://tinyurl.com/pf2safn">http://tinyurl.com/pf2safn</a>
Canterbury (Christchurch, NZ)	Geography/Education	1, 2, 3 and 4	A range of modules based on CBL (Community Based Learning) some related to earthquake relief	Group PBL approach with emphasis on research and reflection in assessment	<a href="http://tinyurl.com/pxe6s94">http://tinyurl.com/pxe6s94</a>
Huddersfield	Youth and Community Work	all	Significant amount of placement and 'fieldwork' built into course	Students undertake 900 hours placement (and need to pass) plus have project modules based on fieldwork	This is typical of such courses in other universities too
Leeds	History	2	Students work with community partner to create events and resources	Group projects supported by workshops	<a href="http://tinyurl.com/nms2zeb">http://tinyurl.com/nms2zeb</a>
Leeds	Any	all	Interdisciplinary discovery modules	Broad range of themes under banner of Leeds for Life Scheme	<a href="https://leedsforlife.leeds.ac.uk/Broadening">https://leedsforlife.leeds.ac.uk/Broadening</a>
Middlesex	Business/Art	3	'Consulting to organisations' module where students work in teams	Students are assessed on report and presentation to partner, peer assessment and reflection	Running for 14 years
Roehampton	Dance	3	A module in which students to teach dance to community groups	In first term, training, then actual practice in the community doing the teaching, reflection a key part of the process	Key is: setting up an environment of challenging oneself and daring oneself to go further out of comfort zone in autumn term really helps the students manage the steep learning curve in spring term
Sheffield	Business	3	Information research on behalf of community partner	Group project with written report and reflection	McKinney P. and Sen B. (2012) 'Reflection for learning: understanding the value of reflective writing for information literacy development', <i>Journal of Information Literacy</i> , 6(2), pp. 110-129.
Sheffield	Computer Science	2	Software development for partners e.g. charities	Project	
Sheffield	Any	2 or 3	Business idea for social enterprise	Project assessed by pitch, plan and reflective report	<a href="http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/als/current/civiccurriculum">http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/als/current/civiccurriculum</a>
Sheffield Hallam	Humanities	2 and 3	Modules which enable students to participate in 'work-based projects'	All year modules – as this allows students to build relationships and confidence	McHale, A. (2010) 'Work based projects in the humanities: autonomous learners and satisfied students?', in Bramall, M., O'Leary, C. and Corker, C. (eds.), <i>CPLA Case Studies Vol. 2</i> , pp. 159-168 ( <a href="http://tinyurl.com/pzxmaqh">http://tinyurl.com/pzxmaqh</a> )
St Andrews	Geography	3	Part of a wider initiative, Observatory for People, Place and Environment	Students do dissertation as researcher for partner in community	<a href="http://tinyurl.com/oytoej7">http://tinyurl.com/oytoej7</a>

Table 2 Examples of community-based modules



take the form a product, such as a report. It feels natural to assess this but actually this may be quite difficult to place value on in the form of grades. Evaluation by the community partner may contribute to assessment also, although this is burdensome for them and often difficult to translate into a grade. All such modules are likely to have some sort of process assessment, predominantly a reflective exercise, such as a blog or e-portfolio.

This is a great opportunity to deploy peer assessment and perhaps self-assessment too. It is also very much in the ethos of CBL to deploy partnership between students and staff in co-determining the assessment design and criteria. We will be doing this in Combined, and also recognising that each project is different by permitting criteria to be bespoke for each project report, which we will allow to be presented in a wide range of formats.

Students presenting their projects at a conference with an audience including the community partners and prospective students to the module offers an excellent way to showcase CBL. Note that is yet another demand on the students in a demanding module and perhaps this should be a celebration rather than another form of assessment.

### Finding and maintaining community partnerships

Mutual trust is essential in building and maintaining ongoing relationships with community partners. They may be charities but they can't be expected to be too altruistic in offering projects where the resource costs to them are

not balanced with genuine benefits. Indeed the university might need to offer some investment or reparation for the up-front costs of getting involved.

Ideally all the community partners will be in place with a variety of projects before the module begins but this might take considerable time to organise. Note that the projects should not be too cut and dried so there is some opportunity for the students to shape them, and have some choice between projects and partners so that there can be a strong match of interests.

As we do not have many such relationships yet in our own setting we are running a pilot version with only one or two projects in the first year in partnership with the City Council. Some universities have a much more strategic approach to building an infrastructure to community engagement. The CUPP unit at Brighton is a fine example. Other universities have created dedicated central roles to undertake the groundwork of finding and collating partners and of promoting this approach and supporting faculty staff in getting this off the ground. Colleagues in such roles in Edinburgh, Leeds, Sheffield, and Sheffield Hallam gave us great advice (and made us wish our university would adopt such an approach!).

In conclusion, CBL modules are resource intensive, but this needs to be considered against the powerful and transformative learning and wider outcomes they deliver for the students; how fulfilling it is for the staff to work with such engaged students, link to the external community and facilitate

such worthwhile projects; and for the university in fulfilling its civic mission and extending its learning communities.

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## Educational values: Looking for Marianne

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SEDA's recent review of its values, summarised by Stephen Bostock and Pam Parker in the December 2014 issue of *Educational Developments*, was carefully implemented (Bostock and Parker, 2014). I say that with two deliberate meanings of 'carefully' in mind. First, of course, it was careful in the sense that it was undertaken thoroughly, with wide consultation and avoiding any impetuosity or one-sidedness in its implementation. Second, the review was undertaken care-fully. That is to say, it was undertaken in a fulsome spirit

of care: care for the ideas that we, as members of SEDA and stakeholders in valuable educational enterprises, hold dear; care for the implications for others – our past, current and future colleagues and students, who also have a stake in the education that we collectively provide and support; and so, ultimately, with care for all those individuals themselves. Education is fundamentally about care, so the values of educators – the ideas which we consider valuable – have to be considered with care.

I was very pleased that SEDA – we, all of us who thought or talked or wrote about values during the review exercise – managed to do that. We can find evidence of a determination to handle our values with care on the SEDA website where they now sit for reference, with the attached postscript:

*‘These SEDA values are not an attempt to prescribe what we think or believe or feel. But they are intended to inform our actions, whether as a teacher, a supporter of learning, or an educational developer. They are sometimes about what we do; sometimes about why and how we do it; sometimes about what our actions are intended to achieve.*

*So, the SEDA values are a guide for action. They are also a basis for monitoring and evaluating our actions and our achievements, as individual professionals and as an organisation.*

*The SEDA values do not claim to be an exhaustive list of the values which should underpin our practice; although SEDA has embraced these values, with minor changes, for over twenty years. As appropriate we should add our own, whether personal, professional or institutional. And we should be explicit about these additional values, so that we, and those with whom we work, can test the values and test what we do in relation to them.’*  
(SEDA, 2014)

That careful statement says something important about values, which other attempts by professional bodies to articulate values do not, by and large. It says that values are not fixed, and are not to be learned, taken for granted, and regurgitated thoughtlessly on demand. Values have to earn their keep by withstanding constant challenge, interpretation, and contextualisation. So while SEDA’s careful approach to its consideration of shared values lends them a rigour to stand a reasonable test of time, they also invite challenge, as the way of allowing those who challenge them to interpret, re-interpret, and contextualise in ways that are meaningful and valuable in themselves.

Here I offer some observations that may encourage some of that personal interpretation and contextualisation, with a particular emphasis on the role of care.

- 1) *Institutional values statements take a number of different forms: what does that say about the way those ‘values’ were drafted and are interpreted?*

Formal statements of values from different institutions, even when they are commonly focused on the needs of higher education, tend to take inconsistent forms. For example, educational values are variously presented as:

- concepts or things (e.g. ‘Scholarship, professionalism and ethical practice’ – SEDA, pre-2014)
- expected behaviours (e.g. ‘We look for innovative solutions and learn from our mistakes’ – NMC, 2010)
- ideal or aspirational conditions (e.g. ‘Every student has the opportunity to contribute to the shaping of their learning experience’ – QAA, 2015).

This seems a little surprising – a value is presumably a thing, or an *idea*, which is *valued* by somebody, or some people. On that argument, the old-format SEDA example above is more obviously ‘value-like’ in its construction and presentation than the others. It’s still there in the new values set, but in the ‘behavioural expectation’ format: ‘practising in ways that are scholarly, professional and ethical’. It doesn’t take a great leap to accommodate the two formats, but I would argue that it’s important to do so deliberately and consciously. What SEDA does in the way its values are presented (which others don’t, incidentally), is invite us to ‘monitor and evaluate our actions and achievements’ through the lens of these values, however they happen to be articulated.

Whereas most institutions present their ‘shared values’ as prerequisites to be adopted wholesale in exchange for membership of some sort, I argue that the fundamental notion of values includes an axiomatic requirement to challenge them. How can we value something that we don’t interrogate and test? Only then can we restate the same values with conviction to others. This is a concern I find with the professional values of the UK Professional Standards Framework (HEA, 2011): presented in the standards document itself as a dimension of the framework to which a commitment is *required*, the values are explained in the guidance documentation as ‘professional Values that someone performing these activities should embrace and exemplify’ (HEA, 2012). That may be very reasonable on the face of it (and I have nothing against the sentiments expressed in the UK PSF values), but in *mandating* our worldview as the UK PSF does, rather than inviting us to reflect on and share each other’s worldviews (which is what SEDA does), the values are diminished because they are imposed. They become regulatory in nature. Such extrinsic values, as I call them, can never mean as much to us as intrinsic values, which we shape and define ourselves in an identity-forming process.

- 2) *Values shape the relationship between the institutions which proclaim them, and the audiences at whom the proclamations are directed. They also shape the relationships between individuals.*

When institutions proclaim a set of shared values, they are speaking to two audiences. One is an audience of ‘outsiders’, and the proclamation serves to explain the institution’s position on certain things to those outside audiences. That may be a useful thing to do, for the sake of understanding. The second audience is internal, in the community of individuals who constitute the institution. In principle, these individuals collectively determine the values set which the institution then proclaims on their behalf. This is what SEDA has done through the process we have seen and participated in ourselves. If we take the UK PSF, a similar situation pertains, at least nominally. The current form of the UK PSF, including the professional values, was published in 2011 after a consultation exercise. However, the institutional relationship with its internal audience is less clear. The UK PSF is ‘owned’ by the UK HE sector (HEA, 2012), so its internal audience is made up of the hundreds of thousands

of people who represent that diverse meta-institution. However, only a minority of that internal audience have so far demonstrated their commitment to the values expressed in the UK PSF by seeking recognition for that commitment. There is a disconnect here between the community the UK PSF purports to represent and the reality of how that representation is captured in a set of genuinely shared values.

A contrast may be seen when we look at relationships between individuals. In this case, each individual is responsible for articulating his or her own values, and for deciding how well they align with those of others in the relationship. Care has a role in governing our management of this values alignment. Nel Noddings explains, using the idea of motivational displacement:

*'In motivational displacement, our motive energy flows toward the needs or projects of the cared-for. We put our own projects aside for the moment in order to help. If, as sometime happens, the expressed need or project of the cared-for does clash with our moral beliefs or is thought to be unwise, motivational displacement takes a different form. We cannot help in his project, but we can nevertheless try to establish or maintain a caring relation. We can explain our position and attempt to persuade him of its validity. Or we can accept irreconcilable differences and still pledge ourselves to work together on mutually acceptable projects.'* (Noddings, 2010)

So, care is central to how we align our own values with those of others – including the institutions we belong to. Care allows us to share our values, and also to reconcile us with others who do not share them.

### 3) *Values fundamentally shape our sense of educational purpose.*

For educators, a key point about intrinsic values, which form as part of our developing professional and personal identity, is that we determine for ourselves the purpose of the education we support as a function of those values. When values are mandated extrinsically, we accept that the purpose of education is determined by institutions above and beyond our control; to an extent at least. To claim the right to state our own conception of the purpose of education, as I suspect most of us do, we have to articulate our own values. Some may develop very complex, values-based models of the purpose of education. I prefer to simplify it as much as possible, to be able to state what it is that I value in educational purpose as concisely as I can. After some thought I came to sum up the purpose of education as 'transformation': what I really value about educational purpose is the transformation of people and communities which education makes possible. We can always debate that, of course; the point is that it is through a process of reflection on values statements, and challenging them, on an iterative basis, we can each develop an intrinsic values framework which we can relate to the various competing extrinsic frameworks which lay claim to our commitment.

### 4) *Values help us connect the purpose of education with our ideas of educational process.*

Valuing the purpose of education does not help us provide that education, and how to provide an education which achieves the human purpose of transformation is, of course, SEDA's food and drink. The extrinsic values sets provide some guidance regarding the 'how' of education, but what makes this guidance a value, rather than simply a statement of good or effective practice is unclear. The NMC (2010), for example, claims as a value the following:

*'We are professional:*

- a. *We are known for our expertise and work to high standards in all we do.*
- b. *We look for innovative solutions and learn from our mistakes.'*

I am sure most NMC members would align their personal values closely with that idea of professionalism, as an attribute that encompasses expertise, setting and achieving high standards, innovation, and learning from experience (amongst other things). For many, professionalism will be an important value, which captures their concept of how to view the world and how to behave in it. The specific arguments may start with debates over definitions of 'expertise and high standards'; here, necessarily sector-managed mechanisms of process come into play, which seems to take the discussion very quickly out of the realm of values and into that of management. Each individual has to be able to have a personal conception of what professional practice means to him or her, and to base that on what they value about their professional identity. My argument is that we cannot 'download' our articulation of that value from an institutional statement, but must construct it from intrinsic evaluations which challenge such statements. You may legitimately disagree with me of course; in doing so you are engaging in exactly the sort of challenge I'm talking about, so that's fine!

SEDA ('practising in ways that are scholarly, professional and ethical') and the UK PSF ('use evidence-informed approaches and the outcomes from research, scholarship and continuing professional development') tie the value of scholarship in with professionalism and (in SEDA's case) ethics. I find that I am broadly comfortable with these statements – or am I? In the case of the UK PSF it feels like it's 'evidence-informed approaches' that are the concept of value, with scholarship and professionalism being the instruments of the evidence base. So when I reflect on this 'mandated value', I find myself questioning it and then challenging it, despite my satisfaction with its underlying good intent. I find myself asking what is the essence in this that I really value, and I conclude that it is scholarship itself. In the same way that 'transformation' is the one-word starting point for my discussion of the purpose of education, 'scholarship' becomes the one-word starting point for my discussion of the process of education.

So far then, in response to SEDA's exhortation to add my own values, and to 'be explicit about these additional values, so that we, and those with whom we work, can test the values and test what we do in relation to them', I have come up with two values of my own: 'transformation' and 'scholarship'. They are not really 'additional', but in this form



they are at least mine. On their own, they are insufficient as a framework for professional action. There seems to be a philosophical gap, which I think I can fill with the idea of 'care' that I have already alluded to. To summarise this idea I might go to a number of writers, but one of the most persuasive of these is Nel Noddings, already cited above. In particular, there are two things Noddings says about the ethic of care which I find helpful. The first of these is to make a distinction between 'virtue care' and 'relational care' (Noddings, 2012). Virtue caring (described by Noddings in the context of teaching) focuses on the 'conduct or character of the teacher, not the relation'. We give 'moral credit for caring' to teachers who work hard for others, but who base their care on the assumed needs of those others ('teacher knows best'). Relational care, in contrast, is based on an understanding of the other's needs which arises from listening and the creation of a caring relation.

Following from relational care is the idea of motivational displacement, already outlined above:

'Approaching the world through the relational ethic of caring, we are more likely to listen attentively to others' says Noddings (2010); we can 'put...aside [our norms and values] in order to listen.' And then, 'If the cared-for's needs do not clash with our most deeply held moral convictions, we may experience motivational displacement [when] our motive energy flows toward the needs or projects of the cared-for.'

What is it that we should value so much that prompts us to develop relations of care, in order to listen to the values of others and thereby support their transformation through education? The third one-word leg of my values framework, and the one that answers this question for me is 'community'. It is because we value community – whether communities of learning or community in general – that we experience motivational flow and adopt a relational perspective of care towards others. Relational care arises from and within valued communities, and communities are strengthened through relational care.

In summary, my reflection on the variety of forms and subjects of values described and mandated by the various institutions we belong to has led me to a very simple list of personal educational values, which I can use as the basis for shaping my idea of professionalism and professional behaviour. Transformation, scholarship, and community are three ideas which have personal meaning for me, and which I can use to find meaning in the sometimes confused and even rambling statements of values that the institutions present.

I had been concerned for some time that this might be an unnecessary or inappropriate simplification of educational values. Am I wrong to argue for a simpler, intrinsic statement of values as a more meaningful framework for each of us to work to? I found an answer to that question while writing this article in January this year, when Paris was shocked by violent attacks on the offices of newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* and a Kosher supermarket. While I was worrying about my minor preoccupations, journalists repetitively asked one citizen

after another for their perspectives...so many distraught French people, asked for their reaction to the tragedy, gave similar responses. They cited Marianne, the French national allegorical icon who encapsulates the national values of 'liberté', 'égalité' and 'fraternité'. The simple idea of Marianne, and the three powerful, one-word values that sum up the rationale of the French nation, seemed to help these people come to terms with a traumatic event in their shared experience, and to shape their moral responses to the tragedy. The two contexts of the French disaster and our everyday educational development priorities hardly bear comparison, of course. However, I couldn't help thinking that more complex, didactic constructions in forms similar to some of the convoluted statements we are expected to embrace as educators would not have helped the communities affected as persuasively as Marianne's simple values have done. We can learn from the manifest power of a simpler expression of intrinsic values. It is worth asking: who and what is our Marianne?

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# Visioning the Digital University – From institutional strategy to academic practice

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Following the SEDA Annual Conference in November 2014, and a well-received workshop from which we have retained the title, this article provides an overview of recent work that has been concerned with conceptualising the ‘Digital University’ and which has subsequently helped to inform and shape strategic conversations and consultations across a number of institutions.

After addressing the current context within which the idea of the Digital University can be considered, we then describe a ‘conceptual matrix’ that identifies important dimensions of the Digital University and which provides a framework for critical and strategic discussion and analysis. The conceptual matrix provided the initial focus for an extensive ‘digital futures’ consultation that was undertaken within a modern Scottish university, and the nature and key outcomes of this work – which addressed what being a ‘Digital University’ would mean for the university in question – are presented as an institutional case study. We then conclude by outlining the next steps being taken by the authors in further exploring the Digital University.

## The Digital University

The notion of the Digital University has gained traction in the last few years as a key topic in the discourse of organisational and educational development in Higher Education around the world, and as a focus for academic research in areas including learning literacies, teaching practice, and technological developments (e.g. McCluskey and Winter, 2012; Goodfellow and Lea, 2013; Selwyn, 2014).

The concept of the Digital University – in broad terms the Higher Education institution that is digitally enabled

and digitally agile in practice and thinking – is being widely debated within the sector, and different perspectives on what ‘being digital’ means are becoming embedded in the policy, provision and futures planning of higher education institutions. However, trying to understand what being a Digital University might look like is hampered by the term often being used in narrow contexts, mainly relating to digital technology and infrastructure, or to developing skills and digital literacies.

We propose that a fuller consideration of the concept of the Digital University offers the potential to explore central issues for strategic development in a more holistic manner, and to further articulate the implications for institutional strategy and policy, learning and teaching, student support, and staff development.

In asking ‘what do we mean by the Digital University?’ we believe we are also asking the fundamental question ‘what is a university for, in the 21st century?’ Is the university for contributing to economic growth as defined by government strategic policies, through concentrating resources on research and teaching in disciplines seen to be economically useful (e.g. STEM)? Is the university for serving a public good, with broad objectives such as education for global citizenship and making the benefits of Higher Education as widely available as possible? Is the university a means of enhancing culture through promoting good practices and nurturing an information literate society? Or should the university serve all of these purposes?

In asking such questions of the university, the digital (in terms of practice, place, policy and pedagogy) becomes a lens for exploring the

contemporary Higher Education landscape. A lens that we can use to identify strategic trends, and to channel our account of the concept of a Digital University to *describe how it might be implemented in practice* – not to *prescribe how it should be implemented*.

## How digital are our universities?

The question of how ‘digital’ our universities currently are was central to our workshop at the SEDA Conference, as it has been in our wider discussions when presenting our work to date. It is a question that elicits a range of common responses around the extent to which universities are harnessing their Virtual Learning Environment and other institutionally-owned technologies, policies concerning strategy and compliance with respect to technology-enhanced learning and the utilisation of social media, and the nurturing of what we can broadly refer to as ‘digital literacy’. Other areas often highlighted, although less consistently, include staff development in different aspects of digital practice (predominantly learning and teaching, but also scholarship), digital resources for learning and teaching (including library provision), and the development of online services for student support, remote and mobile access, and communications.

However, what has become apparent in our work is that there are different, often competing, understandings about the nature of the ‘digital’ as it relates to the university and Higher Education. These diverse perspectives, often informed by the responsibilities that different individuals or departments have for specific aspects of digital practice within the institution, represent a form of ‘value pluralism’ (Johnson and Smyth, 2011) that

presents a key challenge in taking a broader view – and perhaps an aspirational one – of what it means for a university to ‘be digital’.

### A Conceptual Matrix for the Digital University

During 2012, two of the co-authors of this article set out to develop a strategic model which would provide a multi-dimensional, holistic view of the concept of the Digital University, and one which could offer a flexible tool for engaging staff in identifying and formulating systematic programmes for change through harnessing, or developing, digital spaces, practices, and provision. This work was instantiated within a series of blog posts entitled ‘A Conversation around what it means to be a Digital University’ (MacNeill and Johnston, 2012), and which explored the nature of higher education, technology-enhanced learning, social media and other related issues and phenomena in terms of strategic development within universities.

The Conceptual Matrix for the Digital University that emerged as the key outcome of this work (Figure 1) is based on four key constructs – digital participation, information literacy, learning environment, and curriculum and course design – and the interrelationships between them.

The Conceptual Matrix sets out to develop the constructs so as to identify

the key dimensions of the Digital University. Of the four constructs, or categories, digital participation and information literacy receive less attention in organisational discourse than notions of learning environment and curriculum. The matrix sets out to redress this by giving more attention to participation and information literacy, and illustrates the need for a broad, balanced perspective on ‘the digital’ going beyond the familiar categories of technological infrastructure and applications in teaching.

With respect to the interrelationship between the categories, the matrix positions Digital Participation as involving public engagement by the university with government digital policy, and the growing potential of social and ‘consumerist’ interactions offered by digital technology and the Internet. Information Literacy enables Participation through developing skills, and identifies those both of academic relevance and relating to personal development. Both Digital Participation and Information Literacy are channelled through the university’s Learning Environment, which is conceived in both technological and, critically, in academic and pedagogical terms. All three then influence and condition Curriculum and Course Design.

The Conceptual Matrix can be used to ask key questions relating to each of the four quadrants. For example, how is Digital Participation managed in

the university – is this within widening access initiatives or lifelong learning provision? Where is Information Literacy visible in the university – is this in library programmes, or perhaps staff and student development provision? How is the Learning Environment currently conceived in the university – as a unified concept or divided between infrastructure and estate, or teaching and learning? And who has the locus in Curriculum and Course Design, development and management – where do decisions reside, and how influential are overall institutional objectives on outcomes common to all courses (e.g. employability, citizenship) in shaping practice at ground level?

These questions are illustrative of how the Conceptual Matrix can be applied, the important point being that the matrix and the dimensions within it can help channel key activities such as: synthesising relevant pedagogical literature and evidence; analysing particular institutional contexts and settings; and identifying plausible lines of action for change. Ultimately, the Conceptual Matrix is intended to support the exploration of the overarching term and concept of the ‘Digital University’, and offer the potential to act as a catalyst for fundamental change throughout an institution from administration to learning and teaching, and from policy formation to practice.

### Visioning the Digital University at Edinburgh Napier

The Conceptual Matrix, and its associated tools, have successfully been applied in aiding strategic discussions and scoping possible future developments at a number of universities in the UK (including the University of Dundee, University of Greenwich and Glasgow Caledonian University), and also at Macquarie University in Sydney. However, perhaps the most significant application of the Conceptual Matrix thus far has been in the Digital Futures consultation undertaken at Edinburgh Napier University between 2013 and 2014.

Edinburgh Napier University is a modern (post-1992) multi-campus

Digital Participation	Information Literacy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Glocalization</li> <li>*Widening access</li> <li>*Civic role and responsibilities</li> <li>*Community engagement</li> <li>*Networks (human and digital)</li> <li>*Technological affordances</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*High level concepts and perceptions influencing practice</li> <li>*Staff &amp; student engagement and development</li> <li>*Effective development and use of infrastructure</li> </ul>
Curriculum and Course Design	Learning Environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Constructive alignment</li> <li>*Curriculum representations, course management, pedagogical innovation</li> <li>*Recruitment and marketing</li> <li>*Reporting, data, analytics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Physical and digital</li> <li>*Pedagogical and social</li> <li>*Research and enquiry</li> <li>*Staff and resources</li> </ul>

Figure 1 Conceptual Matrix for the Digital University (MacNeill and Johnston, 2012)

university that offers predominantly vocationally-orientated courses, with strong links to industry and the FE sector, and a growing overseas presence. Edinburgh Napier University also has a strong reputation nationally for the work it does around technology-enhanced learning and teaching, and in other areas of digital practice and innovation.

However, there was a sense at Edinburgh Napier University that the institution, while engaged in a range of good digital or digitally-enabled activity, did not have a full and clear enough internal picture of current practice and provision to inform future developments. In our experience of working with the Conceptual Matrix this situation is common across the sector, both for the reasons previously noted in relation to ‘value pluralism’ and also due to the simple fact that institutions (and the Higher Education sector itself) are still grappling with ‘the digital’.

Edinburgh Napier University therefore convened an internal meeting in autumn 2012 to discuss the position of the institution in relation to current digital practice and provision, which drew together academic and student representatives alongside student support staff, colleagues representing IT and the library, academic developers, and senior managers. The Conceptual Matrix, and accompanying written material (MacNeill and Johnston, 2012), provided the guiding framework for discussion, including an initial mapping of internal practice, provision and resources.

The matrix proved invaluable in this context, providing a means to both reflect on the institution’s position and to begin identifying possible directions for Edinburgh Napier as a ‘Digital University’. The application of the matrix in the initial dialogue helped establish an understanding that being a ‘Digital University’ was not about being digital in all that the institution set out to do, but was instead about being a university that could ‘harness current and emerging digital technologies and practices to enrich and extend learning and teaching, student support, communication and outreach, and

knowledge generation and exchange’. The outcomes from the initial dialogue, including potential priorities and developments, were further explored at a university-wide Digital Futures Symposium in December 2012 at which the Conceptual Matrix was used to initiate discussion and feed into parallel planning activities that were facilitated on the day.

A key outcome of the symposium was the formation of a Digital Futures Working Group which was tasked with ‘taking stock’ of current activities in the areas of digital engagement, innovation, and digital skills development, identifying short-term initiatives that could build on existing good practice, and proposing possible future developments and opportunities with associated recommendations for action.

The Digital Futures Working Group, led by one of the co-authors of this article, comprised representatives from across all three faculties, professional services, and the Napier Students’ Association, with one of Edinburgh Napier’s graduate trainees providing additional project management support in the role of Project Officer. Also central to the membership and operation of the group were two of the co-authors of this article, who were invited to join in the role of external critical friends due to their work in developing the Conceptual Matrix (MacNeill and Johnston, 2012).

Using the Conceptual Matrix and the outcomes of the Digital Futures Symposium as a starting point, the working group identified six broad but interrelated themes to be explored in the consultation: developing digital literacies; digital student support provision; digitally-enhanced education; digital communication and outreach; digital research and leadership; and digital infrastructure and integration. These themes were seen to encompass key areas of current and future importance at Edinburgh Napier University. In pragmatic terms the themes also identified areas of ‘lead responsibility’ that could be allocated to different members of the working group.

The consultation itself was an extensive one, comprising these stages:

- Identifying and refining of the themes to be explored within the consultation (the main focus of the first two meetings)
- Development of ‘Position Statements’ capturing current institutional practice and key issues within the six themes, authored by different members of the group in consultation with colleagues
- Development of three Faculty Position Statements relating to the theme of ‘digitally enhanced education’, authored in collaboration with Assistant Deans and Faculty Executives groups
- Internal consultations within each Faculty, which included Digital Futures Open Events featuring presentations, break-out discussions, and ‘World Café’-style facilitated discussions that were captured through dialogue sheets
- Consultation and dissemination undertaken by the convenor and other members of the working group with the students’ association, subject groups, and with colleagues across professional services.

This was all complemented by extensive desk research into national policy, external developments and initiatives of interest underway at other universities.

In terms of key outputs from the Digital Futures consultation, the working group produced three main documents (<http://tinyurl.com/n6rnvxx>):

- An ‘external benchmarking’ document summarising national policy, key reports (e.g. APS Group Scotland, 2013; NMC, 2013) and examples of practice within the sector relevant to the themes
- A ‘rich picture’ report that defined the scope of the working group and summarised current digital practice, provision and issues at Edinburgh Napier
- A final report setting out recommendations for short-term priorities and initiatives up to 2016/17, and a set of future recommendations, consistent



with the academic and wider aspirations of Edinburgh Napier, to be considered for implementation in the period up until the academic year 2019/2020

Taken collectively, these reports were intended to capture where Edinburgh Napier University stood in relation to their own practice, and to provide the basis for making 'evidence-informed' decisions about future developments that could be based upon collective internal knowledge and external environmental scanning.

### Emergent issues and aspirations at Edinburgh Napier University

While the final report from the Digital Futures consultation provides more detail than can be summarised here, it may be useful to highlight some of the short- and longer-term issues and recommendations upon which the consensus was strongest.

Many of the short-term recommendations were focused on the consolidation and enhancement of current digital practice and provision, and included:

- Greater consistency of the student online learning experience, not with respect to uniform use of the VLE and other technologies across modules and programmes, but in relation to appropriate use of technology to support active learning and engagement across all modules in a programme of study
- Addressing the wide distribution of support for staff to engage with technology-enhanced learning, teaching and assessment across professional services, schools and faculties, through the creation of a single integrated 'hub' for accessing resources and support for good and innovative practice
- Embedding the development of digital literacies within programmes of study, with a focus on general and also 'discipline-specific' digital literacies and greater opportunities for learners to harness discipline-specific technologies
- Improving the use of digital approaches to scholarship, research and knowledge transfer,

including through enhanced staff development provision.

Longer-term recommendations of a more aspirational nature included:

- Providing structured opportunities within every programme, and at various levels, for learners to engage digitally with the professional and discipline-related communities that they will ultimately become part of
- Locating 'the digital' in a programme-focused approach to curricula including cross-cohort learning and learners contributing to digital bodies of knowledge
- Locating discussions about digital practice in professional review
- Establishing a digital innovation fund for rapid piloting of digital innovations and positioning the university as one that embraces digital practice
- Strategic funding in key areas of digital research and scholarship, knowledge transfer, and expanding online continuing professional development
- Harnessing 'open educational practices' in ways that make sense for a post-1992 institution with a strong widening-access agenda

As to how the longer-term aspirations in particular might be instantiated within a 'vision' of Edinburgh Napier as a Digital University, the final

recommendation of the Working Group was to explore the potential of the 'digitally-distributed curriculum' (Figure 2) as an organising concept for future developments.

The idea of a digitally-distributed curriculum was defined in the final report as 'one that provides an innovative learning and teaching experience, extends learning and teaching across cohorts and communities, can meet diverse needs around work-based learning and CPD, and that is digitally sustainable as well as pedagogically progressive' (DFWG, 2014, p. 17).

The various recommendations of the Digital Futures Working Group are now being taken forward at Edinburgh Napier University through the DigitalU (or the Digital University) project which was formed in January 2015, and for which an implementation group and governance structure are currently being put in place.

### Future directions in understanding the Digital University

Our work in conceptualising and visioning the nature of the Digital University has taken us on a journey from the development of the Conceptual Matrix, through the application of the matrix in the genesis

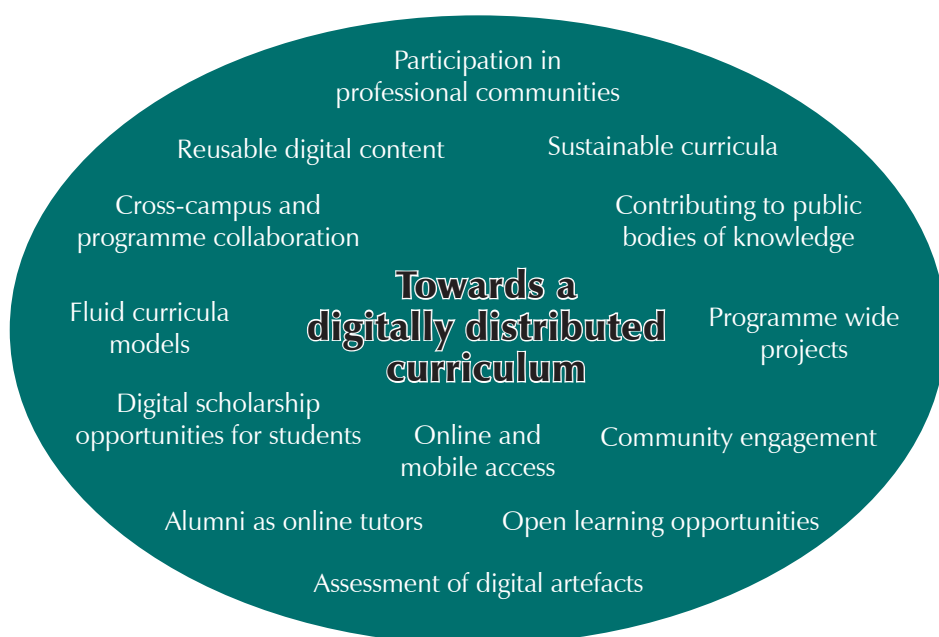


Figure 2 Towards a digitally distributed curriculum (DFWG, 2014)



and development of the Digital Futures consultation at Edinburgh Napier University, to furthering our collective thinking and ideas about the nature of the Digital University. The Edinburgh Napier consultation process and outcomes have in turn informed a similar process of consultation at Glasgow Caledonian University, with Figure 3 capturing key stages in our collective work to date.

As we move on to the next stage of our work in exploring the concept of the Digital University we intend to further develop the concept of the 'digitally-distributed curriculum' and also the concept of digital university ecosystems as alluded to in Figure 3. An important part of our future work will be to broaden out our dialogue and collaborations to involve other colleagues and institutions in coming to a more informed shared perspective on the realities, challenges and possibilities of the Digital University. We view this as critical, and as one of us has already proposed, 'I am more and more convinced that one of the key distinguishing features of a digital university is the ability of staff and students to have a commonly shared articulation and experience of the

digitally enabled processes they engage with on a daily basis, and equally a shared understanding of what would be missing if these processes weren't being digitally enabled' (MacNeill, 2014).

### Acknowledgements

Thanks to Petra Klawitter (Project Officer for the Digital Futures Working Group at Edinburgh Napier University) for her input in co-ordinating the consultation process at Edinburgh Napier and producing outputs drawn upon here.

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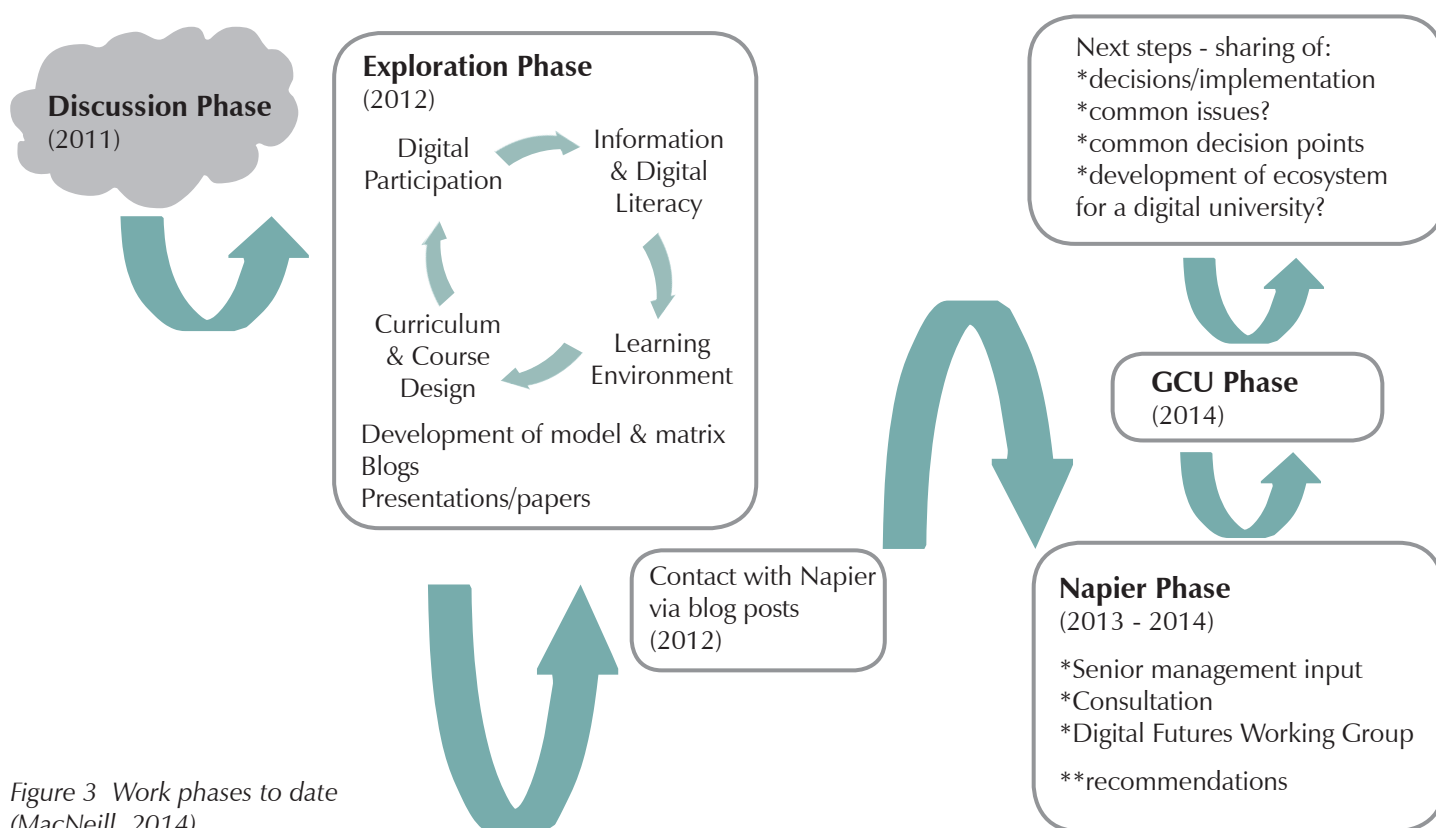


Figure 3 Work phases to date (MacNeill, 2014)

# Engaging with e-students

**Ellie Russell**, National Union of Students

Technology-enhanced learning is an area that is ripe for partnership with students. Students' practices with technology are varied, challenging and innovative and their digital know-how should be utilised as a resource by institutions. Technology is also an area of rapid development for the higher education sector as institutions seek to respond to trends and improve their strategic approaches to technology in learning and teaching, and sector agencies look for ways to support them to do this.

Student engagement practitioners are increasingly showing an active interest in or being called upon to help answer some key questions in relation to technology:

- How to engage students in ongoing conversations about their needs and expectations?
- How to involve students in the design and delivery of interventions to improve or extend the use of technology?
- How can technology be used to support the student voice?

The findings of JISC's HE Digital Student Study firmly support the need and readiness of students to co-construct their digital environment, not only because this 'helps to develop resilient individuals, but more to the point it produces solutions that are better for everyone'. On the surface it might seem that engaging students in a discussion about their experiences of technology could be facilitated quite easily and without much ruminating. However, insights and ideas that could effect change and contribute to strategic approaches to technology will probably be harder to obtain and require stimulating, relevant and probing conversations. Assumptions and experiences of learning and teaching more broadly are likely to be surfaced and these findings should be promoted to educational developers and students' unions where possible.

A step beyond an ongoing dialogue with students about their needs and expectations is working collaboratively with them on designing interventions and enhancing practice. There are some useful lessons from projects delivered through Changing the Learning Landscape here. For new interventions, as you would probably expect, involving students from project conception usually mitigated the need to tweak solutions later on. If the approach was top-down, with the institution defining problems and scope, then issues picked up during consultations with students later down the line were often absent from the initial considerations and did not allow for proactive suggestions from students at a flexible interval. As with any change process involving students, institutions should be considering how they will be supported to lead elements of the project and develop solutions as well as providing feedback. Are there any specific skills or knowledge the students involved will need

and therefore be supported to develop? Is there a role for the collective student voice and the students' union, as well as for individual students who might play an active role? How will different student groups be affected?

The ways in which technology can be used to support student voice, by which I mean students shaping their learning environment and influencing decision-making, is an area of growing interest but from what I've observed one lacking in innovative ideas and practice. The main driver that I often hear reported for exploring the use of technology in this area is engaging 'harder to reach' groups of students, such as distance learners. Maximising limited time and resource available for supporting student representatives and engagement processes is also often cited, particularly in relation to the development of online learning and making better use of VLEs. As thinking and practice on this evolves, insights on how and to what effect technology is being used with the outcome of improving student engagement in learning can help contextualise and support its use in student voice. For example, a common use of social networking sites in higher education has been in the exchange of information between peers and staff and students, whether this is clarifying course information or assessment requirements, discussing timetabling or suggested reading content. In a students' union context, social networking sites have been used to share information, raise issues, gather opinion and as a closing-the-feedback-loop mechanism. Concerns that rather than encouraging communal participation social media can be appropriated for the passive consumption of information by 'social media spectators' feeding off the small minority that actively contribute, will be relevant in both of these contexts. On that basis, this is an area where educational developers and student engagement practitioners alike might benefit from sharing ideas and experiences with each other.

If you have any thoughts on these questions, please get in touch with [ellie.russell@nus.org.uk](mailto:ellie.russell@nus.org.uk).

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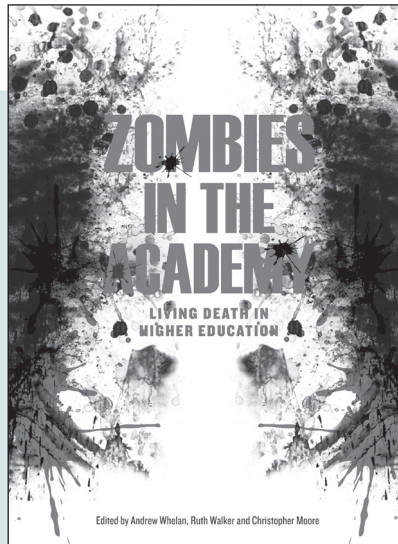
# Book Review

## Zombies in the academy: Living death in higher education

Andrew Whelan, Ruth Walker and  
Christopher Moore (eds.)

University of Chicago Press

ISBN 978 1 84150 714 9



What a great title! Zombies generally and in the academy (I think I have seen some!) can be defined by (1) inability to think, (2) loss of individual control and (3) contagion with the zombie metaphor useful in producing different understandings of society. This book claims to confront the 'living death' of higher education, a system, the authors claim, that is collapsing under the weight of imposed scarcity created by competition under the guise of ensuring quality.

Three things really disappointed me with this book; firstly, no mention of the obvious zombie song (The Cranberries – *Zombie*), secondly, the occurrence in almost every second chapter of a definition or description of what a zombie is, and thirdly, the wildly uneven content. About the second point – apparently there are two kinds, those in voodoo who are created and controlled by a 'bokor' (zombie master) and those that roam around in movies (post 60s) having been infected by something (in the 'comedy' *Zombieland*, for example, it is a transgenic mutation of mad cow disease).

The two quotes below might almost be a summary of the first six chapters, including one fictional, that are included in the corporatisation section and it is the material in this section that I rather expected the whole book to be about.

*'Given the speed and enthusiasm with which corporatisation [particularly bureaucratisation and neo-liberal imperatives] of many universities has taken place...the means through which academics are reduced to zombies also bears a resemblance to the [zombie] virus.'* p. 61).

*'As the degree becomes increasingly commoditised and understood through its exchange-value rather than its use-value, the social relations inherent in its production are forgotten. Instead of being about the personal and intellectual transformation of the individual, HE has become about investment in human capital, so that the degree is now simply a tradable token of cultural capital. As a result, universities are becoming factories for the mass production of graduates.'* (p. 140).

The technologies section examines the use of digital technology within HE. Academic developers reading the chapter by Pearce and Tan will find themselves nodding in agreement at the comments about the worst aspects of VLEs – that is commodification, but also with the potential freedom that technology might offer for individualised learning. However, with some of the other chapters the coherence of the book begins to unravel. For example, 'mapping zombies' moves from comments about the state of HE into an academic

analysis and discourse about zombie terminology in cyberspace.

Section three and four's eleven chapters are hugely diverse dealing with a wide range of academic 'HE' topics (from hypercitation to pedagogical reflection via English for Academic Purposes) as well as academic papers that use the zombie trope (from mathematical modelling of an outbreak to student 'zombie' protests via queer pedagogies). The modelling chapter, which I understood amongst the formulas, suggests that zombie contagion will not overwhelm humanity, if recognised early enough (phew!). Aside from this diversity, section three also provides one of the better chapters in terms of solutions.

*'For students to avoid becoming corporate capitalist zombie followers, they must develop critical thinking skills and question the process they are submitting to even while envisioning alternatives.'* (p. 194).

Unlike the knowing, fourth-wall breaking, advice in the movie *Zombieland* (the narrator in both voice-over and in 'inserted' screen text outlines his survival rules, for example, rule 18, 'limber up'), this book generally is a little short on how to overcome HE's living death. However, both thinking and openly sharing ideas along with students undertaking metacognition in relation to themselves as independent thinkers and their role and responsibilities in the learning process are offered for consideration. The brilliant spoof final chapter, an academic article looking back from the future on a viral-Z outbreak, also 'reports' open source working and collaboration, rather than protected moneymaking, as the actual 'solution'. The book is almost worth the cover price for this chapter alone.

For academic developers this is variable fare although I will be using the final chapter in future teacher-education classes.

**Peter Gossman** is a Principal Lecturer in Academic CPD at Manchester Metropolitan University.



# iFeedback – Exploring staff experience of using GradeMark on the Turnitin iPad app

Catherine Wasiuk, Manchester Metropolitan University

## Introduction

The move from paper-based to electronic management of assessment (EMA) is undergoing a massive shift within the Higher Education sector in the UK. Harnessing technology into the assessment and feedback process has been recognised as having a transformative effect on key stakeholders within the HE sector. Although institutions and students generally prefer EMA, it is less popular amongst academic staff due to concerns relating to marking online (JISC, 2013) such as health and safety issues and changes to established working practices. Within an institution where the assessment of large classes (over 250 students) is increasingly common, some of the challenges academics face when marking work include:

- Increased time marking – per individual paper and per cohort
- Increased volume of papers – to physically carry
- Ensuring consistent standards in marking but also providing high quality, individual feedback
- Ensuring students receive their feedback within the institutional marking window (4 weeks).

With these considerations in mind, part of my remit as a Technology Enhanced Learning Advisor (TELA) is to look at ways to support academics in this paradigm shift by exploring new technologies that can address the challenges of providing feedback to students within the assessment life cycle.

Turnitin is a web-based plagiarism detection software launched in 1997. Turnitin's online marking tool, GradeMark, was launched in 2007 and the iPad app was introduced in August 2013. Although staff have used GradeMark itself in the past to provide feedback to students, the Turnitin iPad app provides further benefits to some of the challenges staff face when giving feedback. This includes the flexibility for offline marking and the potential benefit of speeding up the marking process (due to the iPad interface).

During the 2013/14 academic year, I supported six early adopters in the emerging academic practice of using the Turnitin iPad app to grade and provide feedback on a summative assignment for cohorts of between 20 and 250 students.

The intended outcomes of using the Turnitin iPad app to provide feedback were to:

- 1) Speed up the process of marking using the iPad interface
- 2) Provide flexibility for offline marking for staff
- 3) Provide high quality, rich feedback for students.

Staff experience was captured through formal interviews.

## Project results

A number of positive experiences for staff came from using GradeMark on the Turnitin iPad app:

### Speed

The iPad interface (the method in which you move through the papers (through swiping) and add comments (through tapping)) speeded up the process of marking compared to marking on paper. One member of staff said that her marking became 'considerably quicker' and estimated that she saved around 10 minutes per script, 'which when you're talking 100 scripts, it's quite a saving of time'. All staff noted that the Turnitin app saved them a considerable amount of time marking. As the marking was quicker, staff felt they were doing justice to their students as they could give better feedback when they were less tired, and students do not need to decipher bad handwriting.

The visual layout of the iPad app also helped with speeding up the process of marking. The app clearly shows how many assignments have been 'Graded' and 'Ungraded' and this feature helped one academic plan her work:

*'I set myself goals, set targets and play games with myself like "I'll do all the As" or "I'll get up to H today" or "I'll mark 15 in one day". And to see that chipping away is really good.'*

In addition to the voice comment that is in-built into the Turnitin iPad app, the iPad also has a native audio-to-text application called Siri that you can use to dictate comments. Therefore, the Turnitin iPad app in conjunction with Siri offers a potential to speed up marking even further, although this was somewhat experimental amongst the early adopters.

### Flexibility

The flexibility of marking afforded by the offline marking facility of the iPad app was one of the key positive themes that emerged from the interviews, especially with large cohorts. The instant access to assignments allowed staff to mark a few assignments whenever they had spare time without having to be connected to a large device, to the internet, or even to Wi-Fi. One member of staff said that if she had spare time and wanted to mark 5 or even 20 assignments, she could do so as she always had her iPad with her.

There were plenty of examples where staff had used their 'dead time' as one academic termed it, to mark work on their iPad:



*'My commute varies from 50 minutes to an hour and what I found myself doing was getting my iPad out and marking 2 or 3 assignments. When you've got big numbers (our first year might be topping 200) this saves time.'*

Another example of this is when one member of staff downloaded a bulk of dissertations onto his iPad so that he could mark them on a plane, rather than 'carry a suitcase full of dissertations'. There is no volume involved except the volume of the iPad.

Another unexpected advantage of using the Turnitin iPad app is that it provided staff with added flexibility of providing feedback to students. Having the marked assignments at their fingertips, staff could respond to student queries concerning their feedback instantly. One member of staff said that this was particularly useful at the end of lectures instead of students making an appointment to see her.

### Quality of feedback

Staff felt that the iPad app allowed them to provide higher quality of feedback for students using GradeMark. In one example, a member of staff was able to provide detailed feedback to students using the institution's QuickMark sets on referencing:

*'All of that information can be included with literally one or two seconds' worth of input. You can give really good detailed feedback to students very quickly.'*

In addition, the feedback provided to students using the app is clear and legible. Several members of staff commented that their handwriting can become illegible after marking hundreds of scripts:

*'My feedback wasn't very good handwritten simply because my hands were aching and I was tired and I was also sick of repeating the same thing again and again. That's not really fair on the student who happened to be in the middle of that pile when I was tired so they've got bad feedback as opposed to the student at the start of the day who happened by sheer luck to be at the top of the pile when I was spritely.'*

Another added benefit for staff who team mark is consistency. Staff were able to view each other's marks and feedback without having to be in the same room:

*'Before Turnitin we would have had to physically get together, read more scripts and then argue about the results. Now we can just do that straight away online and just dip in and out.'*

Therefore, the Turnitin iPad app contributed to greater standardisation of feedback across large cohorts within a marking team and provided reassurance for each individual marker that they were marking fairly. In addition, the iPad interface made it easier for staff to review their own feedback and marks, compared to paper, as it is easy to digitally flick back through all the submissions, which are all together in one place.

## Negative aspects

Despite the number of positive experiences for staff that came from using GradeMark on the Turnitin iPad app, staff did encounter some issues using the Turnitin iPad app for the first time:

### Turnitin downtime

As Turnitin is a third-party system, any downtime is beyond the control of staff and is especially problematic when it coincides with a submission deadline or marking period. One of the main benefits of using the Turnitin iPad app is that you are able to download the assignments and mark offline, then sync when Turnitin is back online. However, the potential loss of marking if the sync failed meant that staff were unwilling to take the risk of using the app during this time and therefore further investigation is required to test the sync when Turnitin is down.

### Syncing issues

Staff experienced some issues with the sync between the iPad app and Turnitin. One member of staff had some problems because she had not updated to the most recent version of the app but others found that syncing large assignments at once caused issues, especially with a slow Wi-Fi connection.

### Staff unwilling to mark electronically

A small number of staff expressed some resistance to electronic marking during the assessment process. Some members of the marking team were initially unwilling to mark online due to health and safety concerns. However, this was overcome by taking a sensible approach to the issue, for example, by taking regular breaks from the screen when marking. In addition, during the moderation process, some moderators would be unwilling to mark electronically and the manual process of printing copies for moderators negated some of the time saved when marking.

## Conclusion

The overwhelming consensus from staff is that using GradeMark on the Turnitin iPad app to provide feedback to students was a positive experience and demonstrated that utilising technology can enhance their practice. All staff stated that they would continue to use the app, which gives an indication of the potential transformative nature of using an app for feedback. Staff felt that the app increased the speed of marking, provided greater flexibility of marking (due to the offline function offered by the iPad), and most importantly, staff believed the app provided them with the opportunity to provide a higher quality of feedback to students. That is, staff were able to drag, drop, tap and swipe standard comments using QuickMark sets, provide personalised feedback using general comments, and release feedback to all students at a specified date. Considering these findings, it is possible to suggest that this technology has the potential to transform the way that staff provide feedback as well as supporting a better student experience.

However, the use of such a technological tool is not without its potential pitfalls. Turnitin is a third-party service that sits outside the institution's technological infrastructure, although

it is integrated with the institution's VLE and staff are supported in the effective pedagogical use of the technology. When there is a disruption to the service, academic staff who rely on Turnitin for electronic submission, marking and feedback return are at risk of downtime and potential loss of work. Therefore, although staff have seen the pedagogical gains in providing electronic feedback to students using the app, there are still some technical issues concerning reliability and scalability. In addition, it needs to be taken into consideration that not all staff have an iPad. Although some of the affordances of using GradeMark can be utilised via Turnitin directly (for example, higher quality of feedback through using QuickMark sets and rubrics), some of the main benefits with regards to greater flexibility of marking only comes from using the iPad to mark offline.

### Recommendations

Although the GradeMark interface on the iPad is intuitive, using the Turnitin iPad app to provide feedback to students is a change in academic practice and there are some things to be aware of when using the app for the first time. From supporting staff during the feedback process, I have put together a list of findings in the format of recommendations for successful use of the app:

- 1) Ensure versions of the app and iOS are up to date
- 2) When possible maintain connection to the Internet (via Wi-Fi) enabling automatic (every 5 minutes) sync of changes between the iPad and Turnitin

- 3) Be prepared that some staff will be unwilling to mark work electronically
- 4) Prepare for syncing of large assignments by either:
  - a) Ensuring that you have good Wi-Fi connection
  - b) Downloading each assignment individually
- 5) Prepare QuickMark (QM) sets and rubrics in advance of marking and share these with colleagues
- 6) If marking in teams all markers should be aware that there can only be one voice comment, one rubric and one General Comments section per script and agree a protocol for how they will be used
- 7) Consider using Siri (the iPad's native voice dictation tool) for comments to speed up marking
- 8) Check Turnitin for service status updates and plan marking schedule around potential service downtime
- 9) Ensure there is a 'Plan B' in case of technology failure.

### Further information

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# Shaping a contemporary undergraduate employability programme in Sport: Influences, design and impact

**Richard Cheetham**, University of Winchester

## Introduction

In the preparation for a new academic year, the words 'work ready' became the driving force, rationale and philosophy behind key components of a departmental employability strategy. How prepared would the students be upon graduating for the challenges of the workplace and the employment market? What was in place to support them as additional activities or embedded into degree modules? And how could we provide undergraduates with not only a degree but a 'degree of difference' from others they would compete against in the future workplace. These questions

operated as a 'compass' that guided our decisions around an enrichment employability-led programme.

We gathered reflections from those sports alumni who had subsequently gained related graduate employment. The focus was on the advantages of work-based relevant skills attributed to their degree and how they reinforced certain key factors they felt contributed to and enhanced their successful career development.

Subsequently, these views were used to underpin the choices of activities and further reinforce support for

students beyond taught modules and curricula with supplementary opportunities.

The review of and innovation in such strategies are essential for meeting employer and industry demands because as they change so then should the nature of the activities involved in the preparedness of the undergraduates.

The project therefore aimed to reflect upon the success of previous activities, gain a deeper understanding of their 'impact and value' and introduce a series of new events targeting all

sport students which would provide employment-based activities and learning opportunities.

### Highlighting the importance of enhancing employability skills

One of the main challenges with embedding specific employability skills or programmes was highlighted as the lack of relationship to a 'module outcome'. Yet a wider more holistic approach to the student experience can successfully integrate both. There is also reliance (as identified here) on the student taking the initiative on opportunities outside timetabled lectures and assessment-driven tasks. Employers need to be able to differentiate graduates from similar degree pathways by the range of enrichment activities they have become involved with, initiatives taken by individuals, skills gained and specific personal development. It could also be viewed as extremely important that references can be acquired from those they have worked for in volunteering, internships or placements, to support the 'traditional' academic reference. This can help to provide information on practical application, work-based skills and their suitability for the post.

In line with recommendations from the Burgess Report (2007) the rapidly changing market place needs to be met with the adaptation of degree programmes to provide for and represent both informal and formal learning opportunities as achievements. Trought (2012) refers to the 'currency of experience' which is crucial when being faced with the 'do you have any experience' question on the application form or at interview (p. xxii). A 'strong knowledge base alone does not guarantee a new graduate employment' (Bell *et al.*, 2003, p. 191, cited in Fleming *et al.*, 2008, pp.189-201). Trought (2012) and High-Fliers Research (2011) both found gaining practical work experience an invaluable requirement for those entering the employment market. Employers want and have an expectation of an aptitude that differentiates graduates from non-graduates and that, regardless of the programme, they will display skills and attributes essential for the workplace.

### Employability programme: The initial content

The previous employability initiative which the research group reflected on comprised the following initiatives and opportunities:

- Promotion of the Student Ambassador role
- Inclusion of guest speakers from specialist areas in sport (employers, paralympians and former Olympians as well as practising sport psychologists have been invited in the past)
- The opportunity to complete sport governing body coaching awards (from the traditional sports of Rugby Union and Tennis to the more contemporary sports such as Ultimate Frisbee and Futsal)
- Gaining accreditation in sport science through British Association of Sport and Exercise Scientists (BASES)
- Contributing to research projects in partnership with staff as part of the Winchester Research Apprentice Project (WRAP).

All of these were designed to provide an initial enrichment programme valued by staff, students, the University and the future employers.

### Research methodology

Reflection on the student experience can be an invaluable source of guidance and feedback within any faculty or department. The following methodology highlights the process used to collate such feedback. Twelve former students (7 female and 5 male) who completed degrees in the Sport Studies department from 2009 to 2013 and who were currently employed in the UK in related careers, were asked to complete a four-question qualitative questionnaire adapted from that used by Universities Scotland (2010). The questions were related to opportunities taken and experience gained while studying that have served them well in their quest for employment, a reflection on things they wish they had taken advantage of and advice they would give current students. These were sent via e-mail with the rationale behind the research project. The careers the alumni were involved in

included postgraduate study (PhD) and lecturing, sports marketing, elite sports performance, sports development and sports coaching/teaching. All qualified as graduate employment careers.

### Research findings

Of the twelve contacted, nine provided responses in the time set in order to complete the research. The key responses from the data collected were used.

#### Question 1: I feel the following opportunities/activities/skills which enhanced my employment prospects the most were...

Volunteering, being a student ambassador (supporting a variety of marketing activities at the University including open days and school visits), being involved in sport societies, and work placements were all identified as both significant and essential. These provided experiences that underpinned academic studies and allowed students to have contacts from outside the department and the University:

*'Being a student ambassador enhanced my CV and enabled me to work with school groups, which is ultimately the career path I chose. It helped me decide where I wanted to go.'* (Alumni B)

Any link between work and learning can strengthen connections especially through volunteering which develops skills and gains recognition from the partner organisation. As Alumni H stated:

*'It was always my dream to work in high performance sport and when a voluntary placement with the LTA (Lawn Tennis Association) came up, I jumped at it.'*

Minten (2010) and Yorke (2006) believe that only by exposing students to these experiences can they appreciate the demands and expectations required. Consistent with research findings (High Fliers, 2011), meaningful related work experience was regarded as crucial. Volunteering can help to form an opinion about



career choices. A BA (Hons.) graduate in fine arts response within the Universities Scotland (2010) research commented 'take advantage of everything' and that the 'transferable skills would help me get other jobs in the future' (p. 12). Trought (2012) emphasised that with the findings on graduate employment in 2011 over a third of 'entry level (graduate) positions' were filled by those who had already worked for them through either placements or internships (on a voluntary basis).

### **Question 2: The knowledge and skills I gained from my degree which helped me significantly in my career and career development included...**

In terms of knowledge gained from the degree, presentations were noted as exceptionally useful in succeeding at job interviews and helped in teaching. These are one of the key assessment requirements on each of the four sports disciplines and their relevance was stated by Alumni B:

*'Presenting was a key skill which I developed at University. At the time some people can feel uncomfortable doing them but the more you do them the more normal they feel. I've gone on to use this skill regularly since and it is a fantastic skill to have in your armoury in the work environment but also not forgetting almost every interview I've ever been to has included having to do a presentation.'*

This was for many a new experience and yet one they preferred to perfect in front of their peers as opposed to leaving it to any future interview or work-based activity.

### **Question 3: Was the use of guest speakers useful and relevant? Please could you provide details to support your comment?**

The inclusion of guest speakers has come through a concerted effort to provide contemporary and practical insights into each of the disciplines covered. Feedback about one particular speaker proved that his

talk was extremely inspirational and the practice of using guest speakers was clearly vindicated. Alumni N had obviously benefited from one such invited guest:

*'Speaker S1 was particularly inspiring. Hearing the challenges that he faced after his accident and how he fought to succeed in his goals was inspirational in a society that focuses on inability rather than ability. Seeing what someone else could achieve in a physical condition far less able than myself has challenged me to push the boundaries of what I believe I am capable of achieving.'*

Of the same speaker Alumni K reinforced this further:

*'Guest speakers at Uni were extremely influential and definitely encouraged my motivation. In particular, a guest speaker that left an imprint in me was the gentleman who became paralysed through cliff diving, yet broke down all of his barriers and drove around Africa which originally was perceived as impossible. When I find it difficult to break down barriers for clients to engage them in recreation, I take a step back and think about other ways to problem solve... If the guest speaker was able to break down such unimaginable barriers to physically drive through Africa then there is no reason why I can't find a way to engage individuals who have a disability into their local community in a valuable capacity. He was a true inspiration.'*

The use of guest speakers aims not only to be 'inspirational', as students are often appreciative of the lecturing staff's efforts to identify and invite guests who can instil confidence, encourage thinking and lead to change in aspirations.

An industry specialist who had visited to discuss local sport initiatives also highlighted the internships and placements available in sport development. The speaker invited

students to apply and one of those questioned for this research was successful:

*'Whilst carrying out internship roles, although I wasn't paid, I was placed on many courses and my hard work eventually paid off as it led to a paid role. Job searching was a full-time job in itself! But it definitely paid off and was undoubtedly worth all the effort. Networking is absolutely essential in terms of getting your name out there so that when opportunities arose, people knew who I was and I had built a positive reputation for myself.'* (Alumni K)

### **Question 4: Based upon my experience my advice to current sport undergraduates would be...**

The final question asked of the Winchester Alumni centred on the advice they would give to those currently studying for their undergraduate degree.

*'Get as much relevant experience as possible. You need to stand yourself out from a large crowd.'* (Alumni K)

*'Use the networks of the staff in the university and maintain good working relationships.'* (Alumni L)

*'The key to working in any area is gaining experience...and most of the time you need to be prepared to do this in your own time and for free.'* (Alumni L)

*'So many people want to get into Sports Development that you need to get your foot in the door early! Get as much experience as possible by coaching, volunteering, offering to help with council/school sports events etc. Whether you want to get into Sports Development or not it's important to be proactive and get as much experience in your field or as many areas as possible so you stand out!'* (Alumni E)

The results supported findings from employers (Yorke, 2006, and

Minten, 2010) who emphasise the need for experience, and the qualitative comments found from recently employed graduates in the Universities of Scotland (2010) study. They talk of ‘setting yourself apart’, appreciating the lecturing staff as an invaluable source of knowledge and experience as well as maximising what is on offer throughout the degree and university life.

### Innovation in employability strategy – The use of research findings

Strategy development needs to be led by ‘what could we do?’ and ‘what will the likely impact be?’ Subsequent ‘impact’ findings after any strategy need to measure the difference it has made to all involved. Reflective practice is an essential element in the modification, development, promotion and sustainability of this and any new initiative. Crucial was the collaborative approach with external partners, lecturing staff, the careers service and the students themselves. These have been shown from the views and opinions of those who have benefited from the degree programme. Transferable skills, influential contacts, gaining valuable experience and speakers as sources of inspiration were evident as some of the emergent themes from the interviews in relation to the early programme initiative.

A structured programme of activities, information sources and events has subsequently been developed to support the courses based upon the research findings as well as new developments. We feel that this will be the beginning of a continual review and evolving intervention in order to maximise impact and benefit to the students.

The new employability project contains the following:

- 1) Alumni Presentation (all year groups) – ‘Graduate experiences – life after University and the search for employment in sport’. A workshop designed to provide support and advice from former

Sport Studies Undergraduates on preparation for careers in sport and how best to make the most of the course and the University

- 2) A dedicated ‘employability’ site on the departmental homepage designed to post work-related opportunities, forthcoming courses, graduate employment fairs and student ‘stories of successes’
- 3) ‘Preparing for the workplace’ – a collaborative approach with the careers service which encourages students to reflect upon their ‘work readiness’ and encourage engagement with employment-related activities in the local community
- 4) An optional ‘study abroad’ module and exchange in partnership with Eastern Illinois University in the USA
- 5) The Employer Workshop – ‘what the industry wants – insights and expectations’ where a number of employers from local and national organisations have been invited to meet current undergraduates. The purpose is to discuss what enhances employment prospects and the changes and developments in the sport and leisure industry sector.

### Conclusion

As has been stated, employability activities designed as part of the course and embedded into programmes are vital aspects of provision for undergraduates. The challenge when embedding employability programmes is ‘to discover the combination of knowledge, skills, capabilities, qualities, dispositions and other attributes necessary to have effect in the world’ (Jackson, 2011, p. vii, cited in Kemp and Atfield, 2011). Therefore we hope that the findings from this research will give confidence and help to colleagues when designing their own course-related/specific employability direction through the sharing of good practice. Higher Education, as with the employment market, is a dynamic and changing environment, therefore the requirements of graduates and

the work place are a relationship that needs continually to be reviewed and strengthened.

The strength of the sport degree programmes aims to be measured by the skills gained by the students, the preparation it gives them for the workplace, a chance to use their initiative and make the most of the opportunities available. It takes time to manage, sustain and continually evolve the programme to make it contemporary and dynamic but the impact is significant on individuals and course reputation. Degree ‘worthiness’ should be measured not only in terms of academic standing but also in the ‘work readiness’ it provides.

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# Sisyphus had it easy

**Kieran Kelly**, University of the West of England

Sisyphus had it easy; at least he knew where the rock had to go and where it would be when he came back the next day. In contrast academic developers are continually attempting to read minds, negotiate policy, comprehend visions and strategies and negotiate disciplinary boundaries. Depending on which discipline we come from, we may also have to adapt our own understanding of Higher Education to encompass entirely other world views. When it comes to what works in learning and teaching it can be difficult to find good practice, to make it relevant, and always, to disseminate. When faced with the problem of supporting teaching and learning in my own large university, part of my response was to look for ways to manage the mass of teaching knowledge that exists in the organisation and then to make it available to over a thousand academic staff.

Our local response has been to create an online curatorial space to aggregate and share material created both within and without the organisation. It might be useful to share the technical aspects of the development but there are a multitude of public spaces including blogs, YouTube and Facebook as well as many in-house systems to do this work. In any case any approach suggested in such detail in these pages would rapidly become out of date. So instead what follows is an exploration of the role that knowledge management techniques, common in the private sector, can play in identifying and making explicit implicit knowledge in learning and teaching. If we manage the knowledge we might just have a chance of knowing where the rock rolled to today.

## Knowledge Management

A simple example of Knowledge Management is the ability to capture information that may otherwise remain implicit. Think of the head round the door, or the corridor conversation, 'Does anyone know how to...?' The FAQ model is a simple version of this practice; it can be done via publishing or by the capture of widely circulated questions. However, in reality to go beyond the location of the stationery cupboard or the best place for coffee requires a bit more investigation. A recent paper (Cardon and Marshall, 2014) suggested that twenty per cent of companies already have seen sharing tools including social media exceed email as the tool of choice for intra business organisation.

The paper by Huy and Shipilov (2012) in the *Sloan Management Review* argues that social media use in organisations is heavily influenced by the management and executive culture of the organisation. In particular, that it must, if its introduction is to be effective, represent an engagement with the 'emotional capital' of the organisation. In a university the devolved and disciplinary nature of structures and loyalties means that the importance of the emotional engagement factor is even greater at a local level.

Universities already contain well-developed knowledge generation and knowledge management systems. In

particular discipline boundaries, peer review and academic learned societies and journals perform a range of knowledge management functions particularly as guarantors of quality. These systems almost exclusively face outwards from institutions and, other than in some aspects of curriculum development, have little impact internally. It is worth noting that the congruency of Awards and Research areas (so-called silos) therefore exists for a purpose. They are a combination of existing practice, validity testing, assessment and training of new entrants and contributors and quality control at the discipline level. Any proposal to surmount these boundaries should be carefully examined before being enabled. It is worth considering that the main reason Facebook has been so successful is not because it lets everyone in but because actually it is possible to keep out everyone except those you choose. It is privacy settings failures that cause Fb and others significant PR problems.

The model of Knowledge Sharing that is proposed is one which helps to avoid simply replicating existing groups but rather encourages and enables the creation of new communities in real life as well as online. Overall, universities have considerable expertise that supports, and enables, knowledge sharing and management when applied to appropriate intra-university purposes. However, there is no inevitability about this process; it needs to be supported. It seems to be reasonable to base our development on assumptions about the ubiquity and speed of networks, availability of mobile devices, cheapness of processing power and the availability of storage. In that universities already have many of these capabilities, it cannot be considered to be a great problem. The real issue is what current practices might act as a stepping stone to this kind of use?

It is important to note that Knowledge Sharing is not being offered as a panacea, rather that the capabilities evident in some usage are well suited to a large, diverse, but actually highly structured organisation such as a university. There is also considerable experience demonstrating that it remains difficult to capture tacit knowledge or to make the implicit explicit. Therefore, systems that encourage and enable a simple query/response model may also be beneficial.

Another element in the discussion is that if information systems are to become useful parts of people's working lives, then the users need to be involved in their initial development. This is obviously true in learning and teaching, in that the approaches to be championed must be part of the practice and cultural inheritance of the organisation. Successful Knowledge Sharing also requires that the ownership of the tools and their adoption is dependent upon the participation of users in developing the structures and their deployment. Fortunately, there is an approach in Communities of Practice which is both familiar and which it is wise to support.



## Communities of Practice

Communities of Practice are based on the idea that the groups of professionals who come together to solve particular issues also develop as communities in which knowledge is shared and disseminated. Although it sounds obvious it does exemplify the conscious deployment of group work familiar to us through student projects and assessment.

The literature on Communities of Practice (CoP) is considerable, commencing with Lave and Wenger in 1991. Put simply, a CoP is intended to 'create, expand, and exchange knowledge, and to develop individual capabilities' (Wenger *et al.*, 2002, p. 42). CoPs are dependent upon Knowledge Sharing but their spread has been coterminous with easy access to email. Work on 'Enterprise 2.0', *i.e.* the application of knowledge sharing tools such as social media to business, identified some important characteristics. In particular, social media provide tools that are especially beneficial for a Knowledge Management strategy: they enable virtual sharing via informal interaction and communications, are intrinsically flexible and widespread and exploit organisational network effects (Yates and Paquette, 2010; Sutton *et al.*, 2008).

Considering the interaction between Knowledge Management and Social Media, Annabi and McGann have argued that:

*'KM in CoP are evolving from the traditional practice of harbouring individual knowledge, and taking on more of a strategic role. Business leadership clearly sees the value of CoP in promoting strategic goals, such as: (1) more effective knowledge collection, retention, and dissemination, (2) increased levels of innovation, (3) higher levels of collaboration, (4) better cross-functional training, and (5) more accurate decision making. From a SM perspective, the literature supports our contention that SM use in CoP has tremendous strategic potential, as they inherently emphasize strong relationships, encourage social interactions, and promote streamlined, widespread communication between community members and executive leadership.'*  
(Annabi and McGann, 2013, p. 63)

It has been argued that CoPs are only effective if they are autonomous and self-generated; however, it has also been noted that the creation or sponsorship of CoPs does not necessarily make them ineffective. It is essential, however, that they are self-organising. It is this aspect of CoPs that social media is best able to support by enabling structures and activity without the necessity of complex and expensive administration. Many models of ICT use, both in document management and in social media, will be able to support these groups particularly where they function across Faculty, Departmental and Service silos. Overall, the ability to make explicit personally-held knowledge for the use of workgroups and teams is a strong reason to make use of such tools in professional services in the university. This is explored in Razmerita *et al.* (2014) wherein a typology is offered for the affordances of different forms of Knowledge Sharing in large organisations. We can summarise the discussion as follows:

1) Knowledge Sharing is an essential tool for the development and distribution of knowledge in an

- otherwise vertically delineated organisation
- 2) Knowledge Sharing is a potentially significant aid to the improvement of learning and teaching and student satisfaction
  - 3) Individual members of academic staff and professional services make up structured and unstructured networks and communities
  - 4) The ability to construct and deconstruct informal networks is essential to the development, and sharing of good practice
  - 5) The ability to rapidly construct and deconstruct informal networks is essential to creativity and innovation
  - 6) Communities of Practice are important tools for the further development of capabilities in a wide variety of endeavours including innovation in learning and teaching and in sharing good practice
  - 7) Communities of Practice must be supported with social tools appropriate to the availability of staff time and the need to support communication and development activities.

## Personalisation

It is impossible for our graduates to make use of these techniques if their tutors and mentors are not themselves highly skilled user of ICTs. Most academics are interested in the use of technology but uncertain how to make the best of its capabilities and affordances. Fortunately, the solution lies in meeting another set of demands on academics: how to enable creativity, entrepreneurship, inter-disciplinary working and new ideas in general?

The idea at this point is to identify the constituent parts of networks, *i.e.* individuals. A formal intranet replicates the formal structure of the organisation *i.e.* faculties, departments, clusters award teams, professional services and so on. In turn the communities of practice rely upon bringing together colleagues with shared interests, *e.g.* learning and teaching, management functions, professional practices, that

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are by their nature cross-cutting of these boundaries. It is at this point that the communications needs of the individual must be considered in IT development processes, *i.e.* at the level of the individual. They will need to be aware of events of interest, news in their field, initiatives that require support from a range of colleagues and services and so on. Individuals also need to be able to make colleagues aware of their interests and abilities. Within a controlled environment it should also be possible to distribute calls for interest, opportunities to participate and requests for information or support to those who have indicated their areas of interest and responsibility.

Universities were early adopters of ICTs both for business processes and for organisation of existing practices in knowledge management, particularly research networks. The capabilities of social media combined with fast networks, ease of storage and rapid searching allow for a step-change in the use of ICT. However, the models upon which innovation may be implemented are highly varied and uncertain in impact. The development of approaches to the use of Knowledge Sharing in a digitally agile manner requires the exploration of existing capability and adaptability to existing practice while enabling innovation in both business process and curricula. Therefore the recommendation of this article is actually rather restrained. It is that we should identify the existing capability in our systems that can support the creation of discrete member-controlled communications groups, document management, calendar management, and publication to intranets.

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# SEDA News

## New SEDA Fellowship Holders

Congratulations to our new Fellowships holders:

- **Kath Botham**, Manchester Metropolitan University
- **Dr Rosalina Chiovitti**, Humber College, Canada
- **Dr John-Paul Foxe**, Ryerson University, Canada
- **Neil McPherson**, University of the West of Scotland
- **Dr Anna Mountford-Zimdars**, King's College London
- **Chetna Patel**, University of Sheffield
- **Alexandra Pitt**, Middlesex University
- **Jayne Richards**, Rose Bruford College of Theatre and Performance
- **Dr Pauline Rooney**, Dublin Institute of Technology
- **Dr Rachel Scudamore**, University of Nottingham
- **Eloise Tan**, National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching, Republic of Ireland

## SEDA Research and Evaluation Small Grant Winners

Competition for our small grants this year was stronger than ever and we've awarded the following five grants. Congratulations to the successful candidates.

- **John Dermo, Dr Sean Walton and Ruth Whitfield:** Investigating educational developers' perceptions of assessment literacy
- **Florence Dujardin, Professor Rob Walker and Gurpreet Gill:** Capturing the digital imagination of UEA's leaders in technology-enhanced learning
- **Lisa Hayes, Charlie Hughes and Josh Habimana:** Exploring the role of student reviewers in the Professional Teaching Scheme (PTS)
- **Emily Parkin, Dr Kelly Sisson, Dan Derricott, Dr Karin Crawford, Reece Horsley and Nicole Hosking:** Evaluating the role students can play in peer observation of teaching practice
- **Dr Sarah Walpole, Dr Frances Mortimer, Dr David Pearson, Stefi Barna and Dr Trevor Thompson:** Sustainability learning outcomes for medical students: Turning theory into practice

## SEDA Committees

SEDA wishes to thank **Sue Beckingham FSEDA** and **Bridget Middlemas** who have recently stepped down from our Conference and Events Committee; and to welcome **Karen Strickland** to the same committee.

## SEDA Events

SEDA's Annual Conference this year will be at the St David's Hotel and Spa in Cardiff from 19-20 November 2015 on the theme of **Scholarship and Educational Development: the importance of using an evidence base for learning and teaching.**

## SEDA Course

SEDA is piloting a new course: **Supporting HE in College Settings.** This new course aims to support all practitioners – managers, teachers and educational developers – working in college higher education. The course will be led by Dr Becky Turner and Dr Angus Carpenter, both leading figures in the field. The course will run from 28 September to 18 December 2015. You can sign up at [www.seda.ac.uk](http://www.seda.ac.uk).