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## Critical deciding factors and contributors which influence student perceptions around fair assessment

Linda Marron, Edge Hill University

### Introduction

This preliminary investigation explores the factors that students consider when determining the fairness of assessment (examinations, written assignments and presentations). As will be shown, previous investigations have sought student perceptions of what might constitute fair assessment (FA). However, this investigation explored actual claims made by students, and lecturers' lived experiences of student complaints regarding FA. Although this is only a short preliminary investigation, the data suggests that the critical point for judging whether an assessment is fair or not occurs post-grading.

The data highlighted three contributors that influence student decisions, namely: grade, effort and comparison. This suggests that some previous investigations into student perceptions of FA are in contradiction to students' actual judgements of FA. It also appears that students assess the fairness of grades rather than the fairness of assessments, indicating that students perceive marking and assessment as separate entities. This brings into question the appropriateness of question nine (Q9) of the National Student Survey (NSS), 'marking and assessment has been fair', which clearly sees marking and assessment as one entity. This investigation recommends that further research into the Critical Deciding Factor (CDF) and the contributors that influence student decisions to claim unfair assessment is required.

### Purpose of preliminary investigation

FA is an important topic within education and just as important is the student perception of fairness. Extensive research has been conducted in this area over the last few decades with the results being used to continuously inform and update university assessment and feedback policies (Chory *et al.*, 2017; Murillo and Hidalgo, 2017; Gini *et al.*, 2018; Gallagher, 2019). Previous research has tended to collate student perceptions through conversational strategies, such as focus groups and interviews or via surveys (Sambell *et al.*, 1997; McDowell and Sambell, 1999; Struyven *et al.*, 2005; Flores *et al.*, 2015; Murillo and Hidalgo, 2017; Nisbet and Shaw, 2019). These studies are very important, but they do not address 'how students decide whether they have been treated fairly' (Flint and Johnson, 2011, p. 5), and they fail to identify when the critical decision-making point occurs. In other words, at what stage of the student learning journey does a student decide an assessment has been fair, and what influences this decision? As Nisbet and Shaw (2019) state, the factors that influence these decisions are often overlooked.

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Nonetheless, student perceptions of FA are important, which is why Q9 of the National Student Survey (NSS) specifically asks whether 'marking and assessment has been fair'.

According to the NSS Summary Data 2019 ([officeforstudents.org.uk](http://officeforstudents.org.uk)), on average 74% of full-time UK undergraduate students have either definitely agreed or mostly agreed with Q9. This means that approximately 26% have not agreed with this statement. Given that approximately half a million students complete the NSS, this figure is quite staggering.

Universities recognise that 'assessment is important to students' (Flint and Johnson, 2011, p. 7) and actively seek the student voice (SV) through focus groups, student representatives and evaluations. Today, students expect to receive an assessment schedule, comprehensive feedback from both formative and summative assessments, and the opportunity to submit a draft as well as dialogical feedback opportunities. The assessment itself is usually subjected to internal accountability and is further monitored by External Examiners. Yet, despite these efforts, some students still report that marking and assessment has not been fair (NSS, 2019; [thestudentrooms.co.uk](http://thestudentrooms.co.uk))

## Methods

This study has attempted to investigate FA through actual claims of unfair assessments as experienced by students and lecturers. It has further sought to establish if there are any connecting themes between both sets of experiences.

Actual student claims of unfair assessment have been gathered from eight publicly available data found on the [thestudentrooms.co.uk](http://thestudentrooms.co.uk) website. This method of data collection was chosen for two reasons. Firstly, students can freely express their concerns without being led by specific questions and can do so without fear of reprisal. Secondly, the decision to post a comment is based upon a specific experience and any claims made can be considered to be reliable indicators of the contributing factors that students who claim unfair assessment have used when deciding an assessment is unfair. A search was conducted using the criteria 'unfair assessment' and the results were subjected to a thematic analysis.

Several lecturers from one university were approached and asked if they had ever had a student claim unfair assessment. Eight lecturers who responded with yes, were asked to complete a short Likert scale questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to identify the type of concern raised and when the critical decision-making point occurred. In summary, the questions asked if lecturers had ever had a student express concerns during any of the following activities:

1. Programme induction
2. During module induction
3. At the start of an assignment
4. Whilst in the process of producing an assignment
5. After grade release
6. Lecturers were also asked how often their students took the opportunity to discuss their feedback in an individually arranged tutorial.

Each question required a response rate of either *very frequently*; *frequently*; *occasionally*; *rarely*; *very rarely*; *never*. Comments boxes were also provided to allow lecturers to state what the concern was and to add any further information.

A thematic analysis was conducted on the information given, emerging themes were identified and cross-referenced with themes identified from the student claims of unfair assessment. The results are discussed below.

## Results

### Student claims

Data collected from [thestudentrooms.co.uk](http://thestudentrooms.co.uk) suggests that there are three contributors that influence student decision making for claims of unfair assessment:

- Contributor 1 (C1) is grade received. All student claims involved C1 and were mostly related to grades lower than expected, but also included capped grades.
- Contributor 2 (C2) involved effort applied. Fifty per cent of claims said that the grade did not reflect the effort that had been applied to the assignment.
- Contributor 3 (C3) involved comparisons. Eighty-eight per cent justified their claims by comparing their grades to either predicted grades, grades awarded for other assignments or other students' grades. (See Figure 1.)

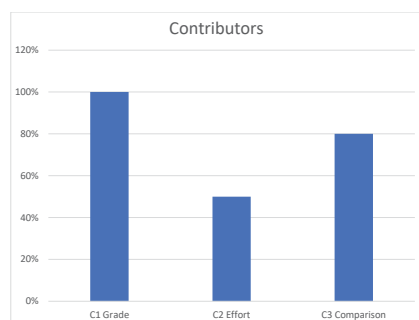


Figure 1 Percentage of unfair assessment claims by contributor

The claims consisted of a combination of the three contributors rather than an isolated factor. Fifty per cent of claims involved all three contributors. Sixty-three per cent involved C1 and C2. Eighty-eight per cent of claims included C1 and C3 (Figure 2).

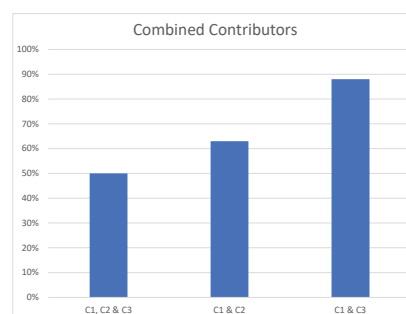


Figure 2 Percentage of unfair assessment claims by contributor combination

C3 found that fifty per cent compared their grade to their own previously awarded grades, twenty-five per cent compared their friends' grades and thirteen per cent compared the awarded grade to predicted grades (Figure 3).

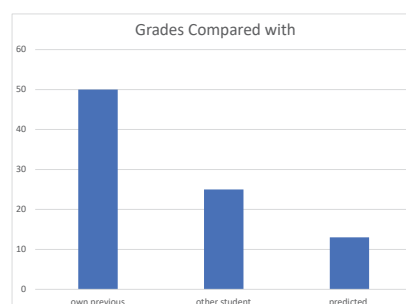


Figure 3 Percentage of unfair assessment claims by grades comparison

In all instances C1 was a contributor to the claim of unfair assessment. Table 1 highlights some of the actual student claims made as well as the contributory influencer for the decision. All comments can be found on [thestudentrooms.co.uk](http://thestudentrooms.co.uk).

Student	C1 – Grade	C2 – Effort	C3 – Comparison
S1	40% (...) was easily a 70+	about 100 hours ...	a mate got 78% for a generically boring piece of work
S2	a low mark...	investing a lot of time...	earlier this year and got 75%
S3	I got 2.71, 0.04 off a 2.1	grades aren't a true reflection of the work and effort I put into the research	I was predicted a 1st from 3rd year...
S4	a lower grade than anticipated		I was told not to pursue an idea but when a fellow student chose to pursue the same idea they were given top grades and I was given lower grades
S5	I got a 2:2	but I just get so hurt (...), knowing I put so much hard work into it	I have always got top grades throughout college and uni...
S6	degree classification and it was averaged at 58.99% (2:2) ! would need 1.1 of a mark on the average to be at 60%		
S7	I submitted work that isn't good enough and of course I failed and had to retake it		I got a first (73%) for my retake and it was capped at 40%
S8	...awarded a 2:1 with an overall average of 68 I'm slightly annoyed because I was SO close to getting a 1:1.		I also achieved a 1st for my 12,000-word dissertation

Table 1 Students' statements

**Lecturer experiences**

With regards to question 1, seventy-five per cent of respondents indicated that they had never experienced a student express concerns during programme induction, thirteen per cent responded with ‘occasionally’ and thirteen per cent responded with ‘rarely’. However, the type of concern stated was simply that ‘some students dislike written assessments’ (L1) which isn’t really a claim of unfair assessment, but merely a preference. (See Figure 4.)

For Q2, concerns expressed during module induction, eighty-eight per cent responded with ‘never’ and thirteen per cent responded with ‘occasionally’. Again, the reason given was ‘some dislike exams, others dislike presentations’ (L1) and, again, this isn’t a claim of unfair assessment.

Q3 investigated if concerns had ever been raised during the start of an assignment. Sixty-three per cent responded with ‘never’, thirteen per cent responded with ‘very rarely’, thirteen per cent with ‘rarely’ and thirteen per cent with ‘occasionally’. The student concern identified was ‘workload and timing’ (L7).

Q4 resulted in fifty per cent of respondents stating that they had never had a student express concerns whilst they were in the process of producing an assignment. Twenty-five per cent indicated ‘rarely’. The reasons given were ‘timeframe’ (L2) and ‘format’ (L7). Thirteen per cent indicated ‘very rarely’ and thirteen per cent responded with ‘occasionally’. The student concern expressed was ‘too many assessments’ (L1).

For Q5, post-grading, eighty-eight per cent of respondents indicated that they had experienced a student claim of unfair assessment post-grading. Only thirteen per cent of lecturers responded with ‘never’, thirty-eight per cent responded with ‘occasionally,’ thirty-eight per cent responded with ‘rarely’ and thirteen per cent responded with ‘frequently’. The student concerns identified were ‘student didn’t like the outcome’ (L5), ‘student got a pass, wanted higher’ (L6), ‘student wanted a higher grade’ (L4), ‘student thinks they should pass when they haven’t met the learning outcome’ (L8), and ‘assumed work deserved a higher grade’ (L2).

Q6 asked about the engagement level of students to participate in feedback discussions post-grading. Fifty per cent of lecturers stated that students rarely take up this opportunity, twenty-five per cent indicated ‘occasionally’

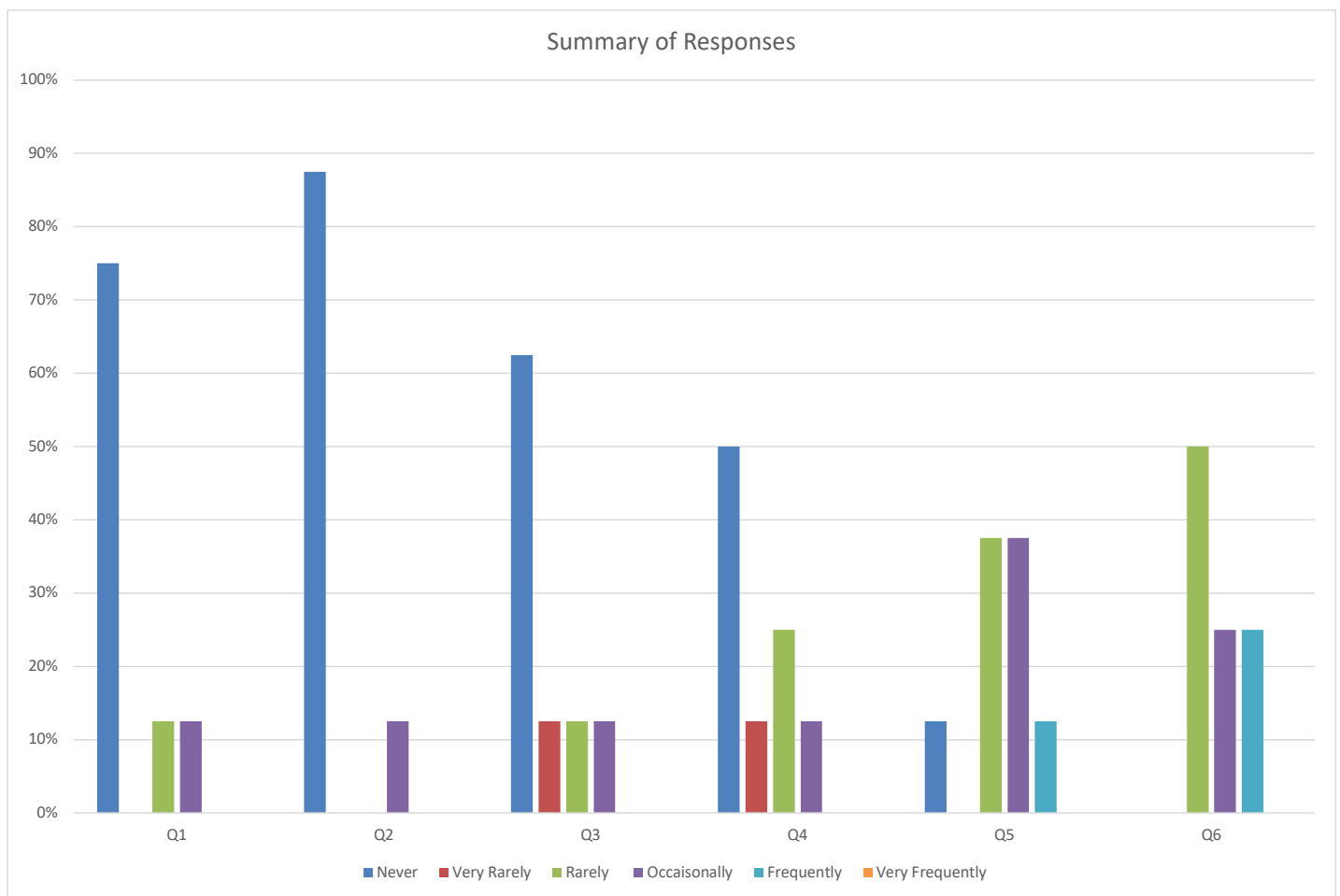


Figure 4 Summary of lecturers’ responses

and twenty-five per cent indicated ‘frequently.’

Discussions with lecturers revealed that unfair assessment claims were mostly made post-grading and mostly by students

who received a lower grade than anticipated. Lecturers also reported that most students who requested feedback tutorials did not want to discuss their feedback, but rather wanted to justify the case for a re-grade, often comparing their work

	C1 – Grade	C2 – Effort	C3 – Comparison
L1 (UG)	student struggled with feedback		
L2 (PG)	a few students have protested their grades after assessment	assumed work deserved higher	but were resolved once a demonstration of how assignments with higher grades met the LOs
L3 (UG)	student requested a re-mark from another tutor		
L4 (PG)	wanted a higher grade	thought the work she put in was worthy of a higher grade	compared her grade to MSc in Psychology
L5 (CPD Course)	didn't like the outcome	stated that it was lengthy piece of work that took considerable time to complete	compared to others who had achieved
L6 (PG)	got a pass – wanted higher	engaged in numerous tutorials and emails communication so expected higher	compared to previous modules and other courses to justify
L8 (UG)	student felt that they should pass		because others had

Table 2 Lecturers' statements

with other students' work (see Table 2 for a summary).

## Discussion

It is interesting to see that eighty-eight per cent of the lecturers have stated that student actual claims of unfair assessment took place post-grading, which aligns with the data found on thestudentrooms.co.uk. The student search did not identify any claims or discussions surrounding the fairness of the actual assessment type or the feedback given. This would suggest that either the assessment type itself is fair or that students are not reliable evaluators of FA. Even in the case where a student claimed a lecturer had been unfair throughout the final year, the only justification was that the student was given Cs during this period (S3, studentrooms.co.uk) and, even though the student thought this was unfair, only expressed concerns upon receiving the final classification. In fact, all claims found referred to a lower-than-was-anticipated grade, and justification was often based upon effort-level and comparisons. This does suggest that the grade received is the students' CDF for making FA judgements.

If this is the case, then it is not the assessment that students find unfair, but the grade received. Further suggesting

that students do not perceive marking and assessment as the same thing, which means that the responses to the NSS Q9 could be referring to either marking or assessment. It is possible that an assessment can be fair, but the grading of the assessment be unfair and *vice versa*. If students are using the grade received as the CDF, then the NSS Q9 statement should be redesigned as the current results are misleading; it is unknown whether respondents are referring to assessment or to marking or indeed grade received.

Much research surrounding FA has been taken from the student perspective even though they are not trained educators nor informed by research surrounding fair assessment. Lladó *et al.* (2014, p. 593) state that 'If the processes of evaluation and marking are already difficult for teachers, they will be no less so for students who have less knowledge and experience in this field'.

This view has been supported by others (Patton, 2012; Kaufman and Schunn, 2011; Segers and Dochy, 2001). For example, Patton's (2012, p. 724) peer-assessment study highlighted that students sometimes feel as though they lack the necessary skills to adequately assess others, and cites one student as saying, '(...) us are

just undergraduates and we'd rather be marked by someone who has been in the field and knows what they're talking about'. Yet, the comments from thestudentrooms.co.uk indicate that when students are dissatisfied with their grade, they do, indeed, peer-assess the work of others to justify a regrade.

If students do lack the knowledge and experience to assess themselves and their peers fairly, how can they fairly assess the fairness of an assessment that has been designed by a team of experienced and qualified educators? As McDowell and Sambell (1999) state, 'students do not have pedagogical expertise in methods of assessment (...) [and] are not experts in the subjects or professions for which they are studying'. Yet, Q9 of the NSS assumes that students can judge the fairness of both marking and assessment even though they 'may not be able to identify (...) appropriate standards of achievement at graduate level' (McDowell and Sambell, 1999).

That is not to say that the student voice is not important, of course; it is very important, but is it more important than the lecturer voice? Has higher education, as Flint and Johnson (2011, p. 7) state, 'consciously "privileged" students' perspectives over those



of [qualified and experienced] university teachers and administrators? Quite possibly, but what is certain is that further research into actual student claims of unfair assessment is required, especially if the CDF is grade-received rather than the assessment itself.

## Recommendations

This preliminary investigation not only highlights some of the contributory factors that influence student decisions surrounding the fairness of an assessment, but also identifies the likely CDF that leads to the decision. It is important to investigate actual claims made rather than perceptions of what may be considered unfair. By gaining a deeper understanding of the CDF and the influential contributors that lead students to decide an assessment is unfair, educators can identify strategies that might help students.

## Limitations

The participant samples for both lecturers and students in this preliminary investigation are very small which renders inferential statistical analysis difficult to apply and, thus further research using a much larger scale is required. A further limitation rests within the capturing of students' actual claims as these are not publicised. Thus, it would be necessary to collect this information on an as-and-when-it-happens basis.

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<https://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/showthread.php?t=5441458>  
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# Why educational development needs a narrative

**Graham Holden**, Higher Education Consultant and Researcher

*'Narrative is understanding your purpose, creating a vision and communicating this to others. It unlocks in your audience's mind the answer to the question, "why?"'*  
(Stefani, 2013)

The storm clouds over higher education described by Stefani (2013) have not cleared, if anything with recent events they have got stronger. As a result, universities find themselves in a torrent of unprecedented change which saw before the COVID-19 pandemic the imposition of economic restraints, increasing demands for accountability, and expressions of value for money (Donovan, 2019; McCowan, 2018). Driven by these demands, considerable time and effort has been devoted to attempts to define, measure and evidence teaching excellence. Yet despite the recognition by many commentators of the contested nature of teaching excellence (Gunn and Fisk, 2013), and of the challenges of measuring teaching excellence (Gibbs, 2010; Robertson *et al.*, 2019), there is an increasing focus on the use of metrics-based measures for teaching quality. In the UK this has resulted in the predominance of proxy measures for teaching quality such as student satisfaction, student retention and graduate outcomes. These measures have taken an increasing prominence with the advent of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) (Gunn, 2018), dominating the discourse around teaching and learning.

This culture of measurement has placed increasing pressure on Educational Development Units (EDUs) to evidence the impact of their activities on these metrics, and to justify the return on investment for the staff and resources provided by the institution. A discourse that developers must find a way to address if the future of educational development is not to be under threat (Krause, 2013; Stefani, 2013). As a developer with many years of experience of managing and leading educational development in the sector,

it is clear to me that many EDUs find themselves in a precarious place. A place where the activities they deliver are central to addressing the challenges institutions face and driving forward their vision for education, but which can be undervalued or poorly understood. The problematic issue of the narrative of educational development identified by Stefani (2013) has clearly not been resolved.

## What can we learn from the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)?

Putting aside arguments about whether the TEF and its metrics are a true measure of teaching excellence, what can we learn from its implementation? The popular misconception is that the TEF is all about the metrics on which judgements are based. But this is only part of the picture. At the core of the TEF is a compelling narrative (Eales-Reynolds and Westwood, 2013) that links institutional purpose and values, educational strategy and policy, with practice and impact on student learning. A narrative that tells a story about the institution, its values and context, and how it enacts these values through the educational experiences it provides and the transformative impact these have on the lives of its students.

As an institutional lead for teaching and as a consultant working across the sector, I have worked with many institutions and subject teams, supporting them to capture and articulate their TEF narratives. The transformational nature of these discussions has not focused on accountability for student outcomes, or indeed, in the new parlance of the day, addressing weak courses (O'Thomas, 2019). They have focused on the golden thread that weaves together institutional/subject purpose with the approach to teaching and learning and the resultant impact on student outcomes. Woven within these narratives are tangible examples of the value and impact of educational development activities and their

influence on a culture of teaching excellence.

## So what does this all mean for Educational Development?

Educational developers have access to a range of guidance, tools and approaches to evaluation to support them in evidencing the value of what they do, e.g. Bamber and Stefani (2016) Stefani and Baume (2016), Davis *et al.* (2019), Chalmers and Gardiner (2015), McCowan (2018). However, what is lacking from these approaches is a narrative that captures the richness of educational development work and its transformational impact. A narrative that is woven around the evidence which stitches together the values of educational development work with institutional strategy, policies and practices. A narrative that not only expresses the impact on student academic outcomes but also the influence on the educational culture of an institution and the 'intangible assets' that positively enhance the student learning experience (Robertson *et al.*, 2019). A narrative that unlocks answers to key questions about the work of educational development such as: *Why do we do what we do in the way we do it? What are the benefits of the work we do? What changes as a result?*

## Where to start – The importance of a compelling opening

Next time you are asked to provide a report on educational development activity think about the opening. The opening sets the tone, framing your overall report and making your case in a nutshell. The opening sentences should capture the essence of what is distinctive about the work of the EDU in your institutional context. Think in terms of not just of what you offer but why you do it and the benefits that result.

Framing your narrative in this way, using language that is not only accessible but is the genuine voice of those you work with, lends authenticity and places the

focus on what matters – the impact of the work you do and the value it adds.

## Narrative matters more than ever

Higher education finds itself in the midst of a storm with senior leaders across the sector recognising the importance of educational development in responding to the pivot to online. If we are to be able to continue to ‘dance in the rain’ as Stefani (2013) describes, then our purpose needs to be explicitly articulated and our vision for teaching and learning captured and communicated clearly to others. Without it, once the deluge has gone, we risk losing our footing and sliding down the list of institutional priorities.

It is incumbent therefore on all of us involved in educational development, especially bodies such as SEDA, to create a compelling narrative which portrays a coherent picture of the value of the work we do, our commitment to teaching, and the impact we have on student outcomes. The response of educational developers across the sector to the COVID-19 crisis provides the perfect opportunity for us to capture stories of our impact and why educational development matters now more than ever.

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# Expanding the conventional writing genres: A matter of equity and inclusion

**Mick Healey**, Healey HE Consultants, UK, **Alison Cook-Sather**, Bryn Mawr College, USA, and **Kelly E. Mathews**, University of Queensland, Australia

*‘Research is all about unanswered questions, but it also reveals our unquestioned answers.’*

(Shawn Wilson, 2008, p. 6)

As educational developers, our

professional commitment is to engage in and support research that answers – and communicates answers to – questions about effective educational practices in higher education. Yet, evoking a research paradigm shared

by Indigenous scholars in Canada and Australia, Shawn Wilson asserts that we also should consider what we are leaving unquestioned. In educational development, this includes the accepted and assumed ways of being, knowing,



researching, and – the main focus of our new book – writing about learning and teaching.

The forms and borders of writing are, in many arenas, conventional and unquestioned. It requires courage and encouragement to push beyond them. In the acknowledgements of his prize-winning first novel, which refuses a number of conventions, Ocean Vuong (2019) thanks Ben Lerner for the reminder that ‘genre borders are only as real as our imaginations are small’ (p. 245). Through naming, questioning, troubling, and exploring ways of writing about learning and teaching, educational developers, too, can support an expansion of writing genres to reflect and affirm the widest possible diversity of knowledges and voices – to expand who is writing about learning and teaching and how.

In this article we draw on material from *Writing About Learning and Teaching in Higher Education* (Healey et al., 2020) to argue not only for the legitimacy of such an expansion but also for its necessity to support the diversity of identities and ways of knowing that those who teach in higher education bring to their practice and to their analyses of their work. Such an expansion is an act of imagination, and it is also a matter of equity and inclusion in the context of the conversations we contribute to and create about learning and teaching through published writing.

## Naming and troubling teaching and learning writing genres to question the unquestioned

By ‘writing genre’ we mean *the kind or form of writing* an author selects. There are many forms in which to write about learning and teaching. For example, writing an empirical research article that draws on data gathered through a research design is commonly accepted in many academic disciplines, including in learning and teaching. But it is only one of several genres for communicating about this work.

Beliefs about accepted forms of writing vary according to disciplinary backgrounds, cultural contexts, and personal and political commitments, so what is conventional to one person might be alternative to another. Through naming genres explicitly and clarifying the distinctions and overlaps among them, we want to encourage writers, editors, and reviewers to embrace a diversity of submissions. Hence, we name and explore eleven genres in our book (Table 1). While far from an exhaustive list, these eleven include oral presentations and application writing to expand thinking about, and practices of writing about, learning and teaching.

In naming genres as distinct and differently valuable, we are arguing against the creation of a hierarchy that privileges one genre over another. The

genres we name overlap. Rather than see these blurred lines as problematic, we suggest that they reflect the ways in which imagination resists reductive forms of containment and requires instead an ongoing process of rethinking and revising our ways of engaging, analysing, and sharing understandings.

In making this case, we are by no means diminishing genres already legitimated in the educational development literature, such as empirical research articles or case studies of practices in Western contexts. These genres enrich knowledge of learning and teaching in their own ways. Instead, we are arguing for also legitimating often unrecognised and equally important ways of contributing knowledge to the growing scholarship of teaching and learning in higher education. We understand that this values-based stance might come into conflict with the pressure many universities put on writers to embrace particular genres and publish in outlets that ‘count more’ in metrics of rankings and ratings. And we recognise that expanding beyond what is traditionally expected and valued carries different risks for differently positioned staff. It will take a collective of brave writers and reviewers to challenge conventional (Western) wisdom and resist the exclusive practice of embracing only dominant genres. It will also involve each of us questioning our own assumptions about writing genres and what counts as publishable work to move this agenda forward.

Genre	What the genre typically does	What the genre typically looks like and where it is published
Empirical research articles	Gather and use observable data (e.g. from interviews, surveys, document analyses, reflections, and narratives) to offer evidence to support a particular aim or question.	Research articles in the natural and social sciences include an introduction, a literature review, sections on methods, findings, discussion, and implications, plus a conclusion. The humanities have a different format with many variations. This genre is typically published in journals, book chapters and books.
Theoretical and conceptual articles	Draw on literature and theories (without presenting new data) to provoke, deepen, or expand thinking about a particular concept or practice.	Theoretical and conceptual articles typically describe the method or approach guiding the writer’s process but otherwise do not follow a prescribed set of headings typical of data-driven research articles. They are typically published as journals, book chapters, or books.
Literature reviews	Synthesise what is known and reveal what else we can learn about a topic by reviewing existing research.	Free-standing literature reviews tend to be organised around a guiding question with an introduction and methods, findings, and discussion sections. They are commonly published as journal articles, book chapters, or research reports.
Case studies	Delve deeply into, and provide rich descriptions of, specific examples of successful learning and teaching practices, often within a single course, program, or institution. They also influence others to enhance their practices.	Case studies are usually organised around a ‘rich description’ of a learning and teaching practice or context and include an introduction, discussion of the case study, and implications for other scholars. Some journals publish case studies, but blogs are also a common platform for case studies, and case studies might also be included in award or fellowship applications.
Books and edited collections	Offer the opportunity to go into more depth and breadth about a topic or theme. Edited collections allow a bringing together of people working in the same field to explore the topic from different perspectives.	May involve a mixture of review, conceptual thinking, empirical data, and reflection. Learning and teaching books are published by a limited number of commercial and university presses. Several new publishers are entering the open-access market. Some edited collections are published as special issues of journals.

Genre	What the genre typically does	What the genre typically looks like and where it is published
Presentations	Communicate your research, practice findings, and stimulate conversations with colleagues in real time.	Presentation formats vary widely and include conference papers, workshops, panel discussions, and poster presentations. Posting slides online following a presentation is a common practice.
Reflective essays	Share lived experiences of the messy, unfinished, personal, and relational work of learning and teaching. They also offer analyses of the resulting insights.	Reflective essays are written in the first person and present insights rather than empirical findings or arguments while describing the learning and teaching practice. Reflective essays are typically published either in journals that explicitly name this genre or via blogs.
Opinion pieces	Assert a value judgement about learning and teaching that draws directly on the writer’s experience and informed perspective.	Opinion pieces tend to be short (usually less than 1000 words), written in the first person, and focused on a single point with no conventions for headings or sub-headings. Blogs are a common forum for opinion pieces or journals that explicitly publish this genre.
Stories	Share the everyday experiences of learning and teaching from the perspective of the writer to articulate what happened in practice along with the writer’s experience of the practice. The author and the story are intertwined in ways that privilege the subjectivity of the story.	Stories include information about the context: what happened, who was involved, where it happened, and what happened in a narrative flow. They are unlikely to have headings at all. Award and fellowship applications typically include a story, and book chapters and blogs are also common media for publishing stories.
Social media	Enables fast self-publication and raises awareness of your work. Social media can accommodate any writing genre, although stories, case studies, reflective essays, and opinion pieces tend to be more common than publishing a research article, for example.	Social media by definition means to publish online. Publishing on social media can look vastly different from written text because you can design the layout and use images creatively.
Teaching awards, fellowships, and promotions	Make the case and provide evidence that you meet the award, fellowship, or promotion criteria, based, at least in part, on the excellence of your teaching, support of learning, and leadership.	In contrast to the other genres, these applications are usually private. Some involve completing highly structured forms, while others emphasise critical reflection and discussion of the evidence of impact of a selection of activities and experiences structured under a few broad headings. These typically go to a committee or panel for assessment.

Table 1 The functions, appearances, and publishing locations for eleven writing genres (source: Healey et al., 2020)

### Creating new conversations through more writing genres that better reflect learning and teaching

The key features of the eleven writing genres we discuss – features that apply to academic writing generally and that authors will therefore want to consider when writing about learning and teaching – are summarised in Table 1. Remember, the distinctions between the eleven genres are not hard and fast and we endeavour to model as well as invite taking them up in imaginative ways. We offer these general descriptions to help authors decide which genre might be most conducive to any given learning and teaching experience, perspective, or finding they want to share and the identities they want to develop as learning and teaching scholars. In presenting these genres we do not wish to reify stereotypes or conventional norms. Instead, we are opening up space to question the unquestioned, as Shawn Wilson (2008) encourages scholars to do.

In our book we present flexible guidelines in the form of open questions to help authors frame their writing for each of the eleven genres we discuss. The guidelines are not intended to be perfect or prescriptive but rather to offer steps for getting started by presenting questions for consideration. Figure 1 offers a *potential* process for writing for publication – from selecting the genre to submitting the finished piece.

In summary, our argument is that educational developers should embrace a wide variety of writing genres that enable staff to join in, create, and support conversations about learning and teaching in higher education. In a world of increasing uncertainty, it is important that educational developers and others imagine and make space for ‘new possibilities for writing within and beyond “traditional” (mostly Western, mostly white) genres’ – possibilities that can ‘move us closer to creating more equitable and inclusive institutions of higher education and practices of teaching and learning’ (Cook-Sather et al., 2020).

PLAN	1)	Decide on a genre
	2)	Identify 1-3 potential journals
	3)	Select relevant guiding questions a. write brief answers b. arrange your answers into a logical narrative c. assign word count to each question
	4)	Draft a timeline for you and your co-authors
WRITE	5)	Draft an abstract that articulates your argument
	6)	Draft main text
	7)	Re-order sections, refine, revise, and copy edit
	8)	Select specific journal and format to their guidelines
GET FEEDBACK	9)	Invite feedback from critical friends
	10)	Revise again
SUBMIT		

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Figure 1 Using the guiding questions to write for publication (source: Healey et al. (2020) based on Healey et al. (2019, p. 35))

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# Interview with Professor Mick Healey and Dr Ruth Healey, 30 July 2020

**Peter Gossman**, University of Worcester

## Introduction

The article below is part of the occasional *Educational Developments* series of interviews with key figures in academic development. Prof. Mick Healey and his daughter Dr Ruth Healey are both National Teaching Fellows, Mick in 2000 and Ruth in 2017. Mick has published widely in the field and his latest book is discussed towards the end of our conversation. Ruth is Associate Professor of Pedagogy in Higher Education, within the Department of Geography and International Development at the University of Chester, and in 2019 was made an inaugural Fellow of the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSoTL). Both are inaugural co-editors of the *International Journal for Students as Partners (IJSaP)* and they also work and present together as part of Healey Consultants.

**Peter: Mick, what are the main features of your career from university to the present day?**

**Mick:** I'm an Economic Geographer who did his bachelor's and PhD at the University of Sheffield. I then got a job at what is now Coventry University, as a lecturer, and was there for 20 years. I moved to the University of Gloucestershire in 1994, when it was still Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education, as Head of the Department of Geography and Geology. Reorganisation in 1997 allowed me to step down from being a Head of Department and from then

until 2010 I think I had the best job in higher education as a Professor without major responsibility. For my last five years at Gloucestershire I was also, for a couple of days a week, a Co-Director of one of the centres of excellence in teaching and learning – the Centre for Excellence in Active Learning. My whole career has been in Geography. The Centre for Active Learning was proposed by the School of Environment, with me co-authoring the proposal, so it started in the environmental subjects and from there we disseminated across the university, nationally and internationally, and promoting active learning across many other subjects. Since 2010, I have worked as an independent HE consultant.

**Peter: Ruth, to what extent has your career so far mirrored that of your father and why do you think that has happened?**

**Ruth:** I suppose at first glance it may appear like that. For example, I went to the University of Sheffield for my BSc, but it wasn't because of Dad. For my sixth-form A-Level geography project I wrote about the 'Geography of Women's Fear' and the key author in the field was Gill Valentine who was at Sheffield. Then I stayed on for a master's and PhD because I obtained funding there.

Becoming interested in teaching and learning was perhaps more driven by my connections with my Dad. The very first International Network for Learning and Teaching in Geography in Higher Education (INLT) event

was a writing workshop in 2004 that occurred between me finishing my UG degree and starting my master's. The organiser, Steve Gaskin, had arranged everything but then was invited to go to a wedding in Canada and they were looking around for someone to step in. Dad said, 'I know someone who is free and organised and could run this'. Between the writing sessions I started sitting in on discussions and the participants seemed to like having a student contribute. I think that was my starting point for getting into the students as partners area. When I was coming towards the end of my PhD and I was applying for jobs and I applied to Chester and I absolutely loved preparing for the interview. The interview process required me to pitch a third-year module to second-year students. It worked out well and I still use some of the material I prepared in my current teaching. I was successful at the interview and I signed up to do the Master's in Teaching and Learning, although I was only required to do the PGCert.

I have taken the opportunities as they have come up. Within learning and teaching I have been conscious of the potential appearance for nepotism when you have a father who is as famous as mine in the learning and teaching world. So, we did not start working together until 2016. We would chat about things but we did not do any work together until I had been in post at Chester for about seven years. In that time I had undertaken my own scholarship of teaching and learning



(SoTL) research and felt more confident about it.

When I am working on some research in teaching and learning I'll ask Dad and I generally get an email with a whole load of reading. I have benefited from having somebody to talk to, a mentor, someone who builds your confidence. That has been the key, when I have not had a great deal of confidence for things he has said 'this is something for you to consider, you should "give it a go".'

**Peter:** *You both started as geographers and then have moved wholly or partially into educational development. How did this happen? Are your identities as geographers, educational developers, or both, and do you see a link between the two areas?*

**Mick:** I have never had a full-time position as an educational developer, the last post I had was Professor of Geography. Sometimes I feel a bit of a fraud running workshops in educational development. For 15 to 20 years I developed as a discipline-based educator building up a reputation as a specialist in geography in higher education. In 2013, I was awarded a SEDA@20 Legacy Award for Disciplinary Development. My approach would be to always look at the broader literature and use Geography as an example. So, I became aware of a great deal of the general HE literature. I did a lot of work in Geography as the Director of the Geography Discipline Network and we brought in hundreds of thousands of pounds' worth of funding. I quickly became more interested in my work in geography and higher education, than in economic geography. From there it was an easy step into Higher Education more generally.

Now I have left Gloucestershire, my professorial role and self-identity is as an educational developer and I no longer think of myself as being a Geographer.

**Ruth:** Although my current title is Associate Professor in Pedagogy in Higher Education, I am a Geography lecturer, and my post is entirely within a Geography Department. Importantly, my work in geography and HE is seen as 'REFable'. My department is highly supportive of pedagogic research. I think the discipline, particularly for

a social or human geographer, has similar methodology to that used more broadly in higher education, so it is a relatively easy transition between the two. The social geography work that I was interested in was often about social justice. The work I now do in teaching and learning ethics, teaching for social transformation, and students as partners, has a similar social justice theme to them.

**Mick:** I always argue that it is quite easy for Geographers to move into educational development. With Geography, we emphasise integration; we are very good at 'pinching' ideas from anywhere. As an Economic Geographer I would reference anything relevant to the topic I was investigating, whether it was in Planning, Business Studies, or Economics, as well as Geography, whilst in an article on the same topic written by an Economist you would rarely find references from outside their field. Hence I think Geographers can understand the construction of knowledge and hold conversations with colleagues from a broad range of disciplines.

**Peter:** *Students as partners (SaP) is an area you have both specialised in and you are inaugural co-editors of the International Journal for Students as Partners (IJSaP). How did this happen and why do you think it is an important area for educational developers?*

**Ruth:** We believe that SaP is one of the most important issues facing higher education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It gets to the heart of education and recognises who is making the decisions now and who might make them in the future. It considers how those decisions are reached and it breaks down traditional hierarchies (the 'sage on the stage' model). It offers an opportunity to think about building inclusive communities, and ways of working together through co-researching, co-learning, and co-designing activities. It is a way of changing how we think about teaching and learning and the relationship between students and staff.

**Mick:** We have only used the terminology SaP in the last ten years. When I think back throughout my career from the mid-70s, I was doing

SaP, but I did not label it as that. The language has changed. When I was at the ISSoTL conference in Milwaukee in 2011, a session was co-developed by faculty and students and I was impressed by the SoTL work students were doing and thought 'this is interesting'. The year after I was asked to give a keynote at the 2012 ISSoTL conference at McMaster University, Ontario, and perhaps foolishly I said 'I would like to talk about SaP', not knowing much about it. However, it forced me to read a lot and I then collected a wide range of examples from around the world of people doing SaP. That collection of numerous mini-case studies helped link me into the SaP community.

I was later made a visiting 'Distinguished Scholar' at McMaster University and I suggested that we run a summer school in SaP. We subsequently ran the first international SaP Institute in 2016 with 100 people attending from around the world, half staff and half students. It was the success of this conference that led to conversations with colleagues at McMaster and other locations and the decision to launch the journal (*IJSaP*). We wanted to build it on SaP principles so we decided to have a model where we would be international with student-staff co-editors in four different countries (Australia, Canada, UK and US). Three of the initial staff and two of the student co-editors were present at the Institute. We thought of inviting Ruth to be UK staff co-editor as she had experience both as a student and a member of staff of undertaking SoTL and SaP work since the INLT in 2004. We subsequently added teams from Hong Kong and Malaysia.

We are pretty unique amongst international journals because *IJSaP* is co-edited by staff and students working together. We do not insist that the articles be written by students and staff jointly, though we encourage it. We are also a developmental journal in that we give a lot of support to our authors. We encourage potential authors to send in a proposal before they start writing. We can then provide some initial feedback and say 'what about this idea?'. People often get confused between doing work with a partner and writing about the outcomes of a project, and discussing the experiences of working in partnership.



Our interests are primarily in the latter.

**Ruth:** The definition of SaP can be difficult for people because ‘partnership’ can mean different things to different people. Once someone came to talk to us after a presentation to say ‘I thought you would be talking about romantic partnerships!’

It has taken a while for my colleagues at Chester to buy into SaP, but now we have student module partners for every module and the staff are more comfortable with the terminology. I think the increased comfort stems from seeing that it works and seeing the enthusiasm of the students and staff involved.

**Peter: How has COVID-19 affected students and staff working in partnership?**

**Ruth:** I think where we are now is different to where we were two months ago and where we will be in three months. Experiences vary widely, but there is evidence that ‘pandemic partnerships’ have evolved in unexpected ways. At our *IJSaP* editorial meeting, Alison Cook-Sather was discussing the experiences of 25 students starting pedagogical partnership programs from nine colleges and universities in the US, who were saying that they didn’t know any different and were very enthusiastic, open and excited. Kelly Matthews at UQ in a community poll, reported that people were identifying how the situation had unexpectedly ‘equalled’ people. Everyone was at home in similar situations. Conversations were different and the relationships between staff and students were shifting. Students were literally coming into the member of staff’s home. I noticed this with my own tutees, meetings went on longer than previously because I was worried about the students and they were worried about me. The meetings were more open. The students were much more supportive of one another. Student relationships with staff have the potential to be deeper and are certainly different. I wonder if it will continue as the situation becomes more normalised. I genuinely think that the opportunities that are presented in this ‘new normal’ have the potential to create new working relationships.

Greater interaction with students is an opportunity to recognise the relational side of teaching.

**Peter: You are the only father and child to both be awarded National Teaching Fellowships (NTF). What difference has that award made to each of you?**

**Mick:** It is my NTF 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary and reflecting back I think it was a ‘sliding-doors’ moment for me. I am not sure if I would be doing what I am doing now if it had not been for contacts I made after the NTF was awarded. I was fortunate that at the time they awarded £50,000 with which I explored embedding SoTL both in disciplines and in institutions. This allowed me to go and meet people around the world who were pre-eminent in the field. For example, I would ask Mary Huber (US SoTL scholar) who I should meet when I attended a SoTL conference in the States and she would give me two or three names of Carnegie Fellows to go and meet. This development of networks was probably the most important thing I got out of the NTFs. My interest in SoTL grew and I became one of the founders of ISSoTL.

**Ruth:** I think confidence. My £5000 (not £50,000!) has been really useful; it enabled me to attend events, such as ISSoTL conferences, and it contributed to me being awarded one of the ISSoTL inaugural fellows in 2019. The NTF supported me to become a part of that community. Moreover, I do not think I would have obtained my Associate Professorship without it. The NTF network is very supportive. I think teaching and learning as a space to work in is a very welcoming community, people are interested in what you are doing.

**Peter: Mick, you have a book coming out on writing about learning and teaching in higher education, how do you think this will contribute to educational development?**

**Mick:** Kelly Matthews, Alison Cook-Sather and I have written a scholarly guide for people writing about learning and teaching. They could be people writing their first article, they could be experienced people, they could be discipline-based, they could be writing generally about higher education, they could be students, academics, or

professional staff, they could be from a Western or non-Western background. So we are taking a very inclusive definition of the potential audience. I think the link with educational development is that not only do many education developers write themselves, but they also frequently support other people who are writing.

In the book we talk about genres and we have deliberately gone beyond the traditional genres of writing. We wanted to move beyond research articles, literature reviews and case studies to include genres like reflective essays, stories, and blogs. We would like them to be accepted in their own right. Our conceptual framework is about seeing writing as a conversation between the writer and the potential reader. It helps the writer form their own identity. The act of writing helps them become scholar writers in their own way, and it is a way of learning. We tried to be open to different voices, we have 20 invited ‘reflections’ from people at different stages in their careers, in various parts of the world, who have different viewpoints. We try to provide suggestions that if you are going to write about learning and teaching, these ideas may help you, give you confidence and give you some guidance. It is not a ‘how to do book’ but more a ‘some ideas you might find useful’. We do this through posing questions. For example, if you are writing a research article, here are ten questions that you might address. Not all of them may apply to your work and there may be others, but if you draft answers to the relevant questions, they will give you the basis for starting to write your article.

## Conclusion

Many thanks to Mick and Ruth for their time and interesting insights, it is clear that networks are key to their work and were facilitated by their respective NTF awards. Issues of *IJSaP* can be found at <https://mulpress.mcmaster.ca/ijpsap>.

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# Book Review

## Delivering Educational Change in Higher Education: a transformative approach for leaders and practitioners

Edited by Jackie Potter and Cristina Devecchi

Routledge, 2020, pp. 226.

ISBN: 9780367147846



In this edited volume, Jackie Potter and Cristina Devecchi aimed to address a gap in existing literature, where despite an abundance of titles on higher education practice, very few – if any – titles focus on ‘how practitioners across disciplines and varied roles can bring about change and enact leadership to develop education and pedagogy’ (p. 1). The editors have therefore taken a holistic approach to educational change, and brought together fifteen chapters from a range of institutional, organisational, and geographical contexts, in an attempt to transcend practitioner silos, and inspire change as a shared endeavour which can be sustainable and impactful.

The book is divided into three parts. Part 1 acts as a theoretical anchor to the volume, with four chapters addressing crucial dimensions of change leadership and practice. Much of the theory utilised in this volume draws from Kotter, Lewin and Cohen’s ideas to introduce models of change leadership. In this part we have important contributions by Steve Outram and Doug Parkin (Chapter 1) who discuss the confluence of culture and context and their importance for influential leadership in HE. In Chapter 2, Maureen Snow Andrade works

backwards from the prospect of failure of change initiatives, and uses three key (and complementary) models of change (Lewin’s 1951, Kotter and Cohen’s 2002, Bolman and Deal’s 2017) to analyse a hypothetical case study. In Chapter 3, Mary Bishop, Paul Gentle, and Doug Parkin discuss principles of co-creation and collaboration in three case studies (where student-led work is included) as key in avoiding the prospect of ‘change without change’.

Part 2 focuses on the development and support of ‘people as educational leaders’ and their preparation for ‘educational change’ (p. 4). In this section we have a series of examples, both from specific contexts of HE practice – such as college higher education in Chapter 5, to global teacher development in Chapter 7. Other chapters discuss models of change leadership, such as Clare Taylor’s example of a distributed educational development team at Wrexham Glyndŵr University, or Alastair Robertson and Steve Olivier’s Abertay University case study of change management based on a principle of ‘6 Ps’. This section concludes with a chapter by Rachel Forsyth and Penny Sweasey on programme leadership, a dimension of practice which often falls

in the cracks between the ‘academic’ and ‘managerial’ spheres in higher education practice.

Finally, in Part 3 we have a rich and diverse series of cases studies which showcase examples of application of different approaches and models of educational change. Once again these chapters not only offer practical examples and lessons learnt from a diversity of contexts, but also crucially offer key principles and approaches that may be applicable beyond such contexts.

Does the volume achieve its aspiration to address the gap in scholarship mentioned in the introduction? Unequivocally, yes. With its holistic and multi-faceted approach and diverse case studies this volume serves as a reminder that effective and sustainable change has a better chance of happening when it is seen as a joint and collaborative endeavour within institutions. As a result, this volume would be of good use to a range of practitioners, from curriculum leaders, to educational developers and senior managers.

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Any opinions expressed are those of the authors.





<i>Classroom practice</i>	<i>Curriculum</i>	<i>Theories of learning and teaching</i>	<i>Research</i>	<i>Professional development</i>
Approaches (active)	Constructive alignment	Teaching methods	Issues in research – generally	Reflection
Lesson planning (importance)	Learning outcomes	Constructivist theory	Supervision	Programme leadership
Technology enhanced learning	Assessment – design and feedback	Pedagogy/Andragogy/Heutagogy		Scholarship
Flipping classrooms		Theories		Peer work/networking
(In session) Teaching advice				Observation
Inclusion				

Table 1 Categories and themes within them for responses to survey Q10

The categories represent broad areas of teaching practice into which separate themes were allocated. In the next section the categories and themes are presented, including typical response examples, to illustrate how they were derived – an adopted approach that follows Williams and Irurita (2004). The responses to the question were typically less than ten words and often simply listed the idea, for example, ‘flipped learning’. The simplicity of the responses allowed the construction of broad categories and distinct themes. The themes could have been disaggregated further but this would have been counterproductive.

Within the category ‘classroom practice’ six themes were identified. Starting with ‘approaches (active)’, the simple phrase ‘active learning’ was used in some form by 15 of the respondents within this theme. Example responses within this theme included:

*‘Learning is active – include lots of interaction even in big lectures.’*

*‘Use more activities during lecture sessions.’*

The next theme related to the importance of ‘lesson planning’. Examples included:

*‘Invest in planning then relax and be self.’*

*‘Particular approaches to lesson planning.’*

The third theme was created for responses identifying the use of ‘technology enhanced learning’. This theme is broad and covers respondents who identified TEL as important within their practice. Examples include:

*‘Use of technology to enhance learning.’*

*‘Some use of technology – if I feel it will help students to understand the intended topic.’*

The fourth theme, perhaps in fashion, was the ‘flipped classroom’. This theme was rather more direct, compared with TEL, as identifying a specific practice. Examples included:

*‘The ability to flip the classroom.’*

*‘Flipped learning to enhance learning.’*

The fifth theme, ‘teaching advice’, was created for those responses that identified a particular piece of advice. The theme is generic and includes a range of advice that respondents apply. The form of the responses took the form of a kind of note to self – in advice terms, for example:

*‘Incorporating stories – experience into the teaching.’*

*‘Break it up into 15/20 min. chunks.’*

*‘Using an image/music to focus/intrigue people before they enter.’*

*‘Use tasks at the end to check the learning.’*

The last theme in the category identified an awareness of ‘inclusion’. Examples included:

*‘Heightened awareness of inclusive approaches.’*

*‘Being more familiar with the variety of needs in the room.’*

Within this category the most obvious comment is that the responding participants recall a specific aspect of their course that they have taken and applied. The statements tend to be rather broad, as illustrated above, but occasionally have a degree of specific detail. One respondent suggested, coded to approaches, that they plan ‘activities in seminars that ensure getting everyone engaged’. It is clear, as already noted, that practical advice has currency whilst specific theories are under-recalled. For example, we might attribute the 15/20 minute break notion to Bligh’s 1998 book, *What’s the Use of Lectures*, but this is not recalled.

Three themes were allocated into the ‘curriculum’ category. Two are specific theories and the third is more generic. The first, ‘constructive alignment’, contains respondent references to this theory. Examples included:

*‘Constructive alignment from programme through to module down to individual sessions and assessment.’*

*‘Creation of more constructively aligned LOs.’*

The second, ‘learning outcomes’, again contains specific



references. Examples included:

*'Bloom's Taxonomy for setting LOs.'*

*'Focusing on learning outcomes.'*

*'Intended learning outcomes (and aligning these).'*

In this theme the last example illustrates one of the problems of coding, as the response could be contained within either or both of the two above.

The final theme in this category relates to generic responses around 'assessment'. Here respondent mentions of assessment, design and feedback were included:

*'The different methods of assessment available.'*

*'Ideas around how to make the best use of feedback and assessments.'*

Within the category 'theories of learning and teaching' four themes were identified. The first, 'teaching methods', contains respondent references to changing and varying teaching in broad terms. Examples included:

*'Vary teaching styles.'*

*'Introduction of a range of teaching methods to all sessions.'*

The second theme, 'constructivist theory', contains those references in responses to this approach/school of psychology. Examples included:

*'Scaffolding.'*

*'Constructivism is the model of learning that I most closely identify with.'*

The 'pedagogy/andragogy/heutagogy' third theme is where respondents simply identified a form of '-gogy' and listed it. For example:

*'Heutagogy.'*

The final broad theme, 'theories', collects up any mention of a theory, for example:

*'Threshold concepts.'*

*'Considering deep and surface learning.'*

*'Increased confidence in pedagogic theory.'*

However, the most common answer was a more general one, for example:

*'Some theories of education.'*

Here the actual theory was not specified. For this I think we as PGCLTHE teachers might register some disappointment. Theory is remembered as having been taught, but a specific one cannot be identified.

A separate 'research' category was created to recognise that some respondents identified research in general, but aspects of the relationship between teaching and research are included. For example:

*'Research informed teaching has supported my teaching of modules.'*

*'More closely linking learning and teaching to research per se.'*

A second theme of 'supervision' within this category was also created and this related to research supervision education (a specialist module at one of the institutions). An example was:

*'Approaches to research supervision.'*

For the final category, 'professional development', five themes were created. The first, 'reflection', frequently mentioned and constructed as a theme because it is a common method of assessment is PGCLTHE courses. Examples included:

*'Prompting and enabling reflection.'*

*'Gibbs Reflective cycle.'*

*'Reflect on teaching sessions.'*

Note here a mention of one specific theory by author.

The second theme identified 'programme leadership', again this at the time of the research was an area of attention for academic development. Examples included:

*'Institutional practices around programme leadership.'*

*'How to be an effective Programme Leader.'*

The third theme, 'scholarship', contained references to scholarly approaches to teaching and learning. Examples included:

*'Support my practice by consulting relevant literature.'*

*'Improved understanding of academic writing.'*

*'That teaching and research can (and indeed should) be symbiotic.'*

The fourth theme identified one of the commonly noted benefits of PGCert-type courses that they allow for 'peer work/networking'. Examples included:

*'Peer support for lecturers new to university.'*

*'Give opportunity to network across the university.'*

*'You cannot underestimate the benefits of peer learning in the classroom environment.'*

The final theme was 'observation', a common component of PGCert-type courses. Examples included:

*'Value of peer observation.'*

*'The value of observing other teaching deliveries by colleagues.'*

Given that the responses tended to be brief, it is also possible to report frequencies for the above themes. These are shown in Table 2. In the frequency count the distinction between ranking (first, second and third idea) has been ignored.

Category	Theme	Frequency
Classroom practice	Approaches (active)	33
	Lesson planning	29
	Technology enhanced learning	33
	Flipping classrooms	16
	Session teaching 'advice'	55
	Inclusion	19
Curriculum	Constructive alignment	26
	Learning outcomes	16
	Assessment – design and feedback	33
Theories of learning and teaching	Teaching methods	13
	Constructivist theory	3
	Pedagogy/Andragogy/Heutagogy	6
	Theories	13
Research	Issues in research – generally	11
	Supervision	2
Professional development	Reflection	15
	Programme Leadership	4
	Scholarship	4
	Peer work/networking	4
	Observation	2
Other (not coded to the above)		43
Totals	141 respondents – 380 responses	380

Table 2 Categories and themes frequency of responses to survey Q10

## Discussion

Arguably these two approaches, coding and frequency, are paradigmatically opposed, but both have been included here to allow the reader to make their own judgements about what respondents retain from their PGCerts. Of course, the frequency responses are 'tagged' to the codes we created; however, many of these categories and themes are clear enough to prompt discussion.

If we consider one of these – 'classroom practice/teaching session advice' – which has the highest frequency response, we might take some comfort from it. PGCert graduates are clearly taking away something that has useful application to their practice, whatever that thing might be. However, we might also register some disappointment as we might wish for our courses to be more transformative than that.

In addition, some of these brief statements disguise a conceptual shift for the PGCert graduate. Take for example 'let students direct learning', a simple statement but one that is arguably illustrative of a move, on the part of the respondent, from a teacher-centred approach to a student-centred one.

## The 'so what!'

There are some questions that clearly arise from this work, most notable, why are these ideas the ones that are recalled and stated? Related to this, the question of what this means about PGCert curriculum design, so should more concrete theories be the things that participants recall? Take for example, the zone of proximal development, a theory that we might argue has utility in every teaching session. It is about 'pitch' and inclusion and a whole range of other teaching/learning factors. Yet not mentioned here – although definitely taught.

Two further things are worth highlighting.

One is perhaps an extrapolation from the data – if these are the ideas that are retained and applied, do we need to ensure, if we consider the retained ideas to be desirable, that we are teaching in a way congruent and consistent with those ideas? There is a debate within this too. The ideas tend to be more practical than theoretical, and this in part stems from the question asked – but are we losing conceptions of teaching in the practicalities?

The second is rather more direct. Observation of teaching is a useful process. One respondent noted:

*'Peer observations are helpful ways of enhancing your teaching practice both through observing others' practice and receiving feedback on your own.'*

We invite you to consider what you think your own course graduates might retain, apply and report from their experience of your courses.

We'll close with one final contributor quote:

*'I don't need to know everything about everything.'*

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# Leading accelerated educational development

**Claire Taylor, Colin Heron, Sue Horder, Caroline Hughes, Alicia Owen, and Neil Pickles,**  
Wrexham Glyndŵr University

## Context

At Wrexham Glyndŵr University, our Strategy for Supporting Student Learning and Achievement (SSSLA) was reviewed during early 2019/2020, leading to a commitment to develop more active, accessible and flexible approaches to learning, teaching and assessment going forwards. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, we quickly made the decision to accelerate this work through the introduction of a new learning blend (digitally-enabled learning combined with best use of physical learning spaces) delivered through the Active Learning Framework across all taught programmes from September 2020. The Active Learning Framework (ALF) is based upon the research-informed principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), an innovative way of thinking about teaching and learning that helps give all students an equal opportunity to succeed. UDL offers flexibility in the ways students access material, engage with it and show what they know.

## The Active Learning Framework (ALF)

At the core of ALF is the appropriate use of digital technologies across all aspects of teaching, learning and assessment, both off-campus and on-campus, in order to support active, accessible, flexible and inclusive practice (Figure 1).

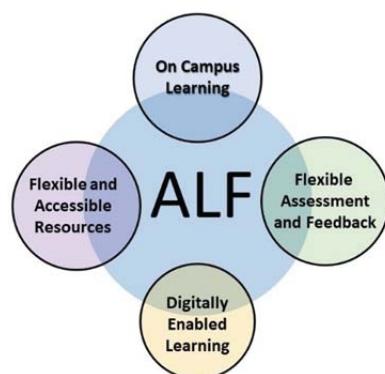


Figure 1 Active Learning Framework (ALF)

In essence, ALF embraces the following baseline principles and associated challenge questions, applied across all taught programmes in order to inform curriculum design and delivery:

- Flexible and accessible learning – Can learning activities be appropriately and inclusively accessed anytime, anywhere, by anyone who needs to, including those with specific learning needs?
- Student engagement – Do the learning activities support active and creative student engagement and a sense of belonging?
- Innovative, flexible and accessible assessment – Are there a range of ways for students to demonstrate learning and understanding?

ALF implementation was originally planned as a significant but incremental change project over several academic years, but the challenges of operating in a COVID-19 world provided a compelling opportunity for us to fully roll out ALF from September 2020 onwards, as an accelerated change programme across all taught provision over a matter of months rather than years. This article explains the factors that were in place to enable us to do this and at the core is our distributed

approach to academic development.

## Distributed academic development

At Wrexham Glyndŵr we do not have a central educational development unit, but a distributed network of academic development associates from across both professional services and academic faculties, who work ‘cross-systems’ on integrated development projects alongside their day jobs (Heron *et al.*, 2018; Taylor, 2018; Taylor, 2020). Distributed arrangements for academic development were established at the University from September 2016, following the closure of its central educational development centre in 2014. The new arrangements comprise a core Academic Development Team (four individuals each with substantive roles for learning and teaching in the Academic Faculties, plus the Digital Learning Manager and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor), supported by a network of volunteer Academic Development Team Associates (Figure 2).

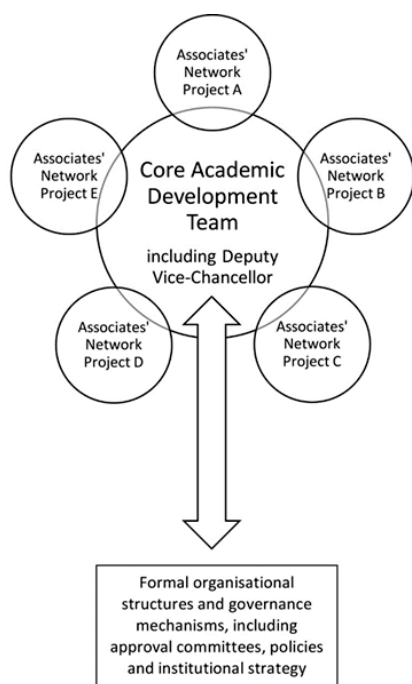


Figure 2 The Academic Development Team and Associates' Network

This initiative has been supporting major organisational change in learning and teaching through embedding an agile leadership network across the organisation, using the principles of Kotter's (2014) dual operating system approach. The network of Academic Development Team Associates gets on with innovative change projects, operating alongside the traditional

management structure that ensures that day-to-day ‘business as usual’ happens. Overall, developing a distributed approach has enabled the University to move learning and teaching development forwards in a more engaging, agile and impactful way, with change projects owned by staff working at grassroots level, across disciplinary and departmental boundaries through all levels of the organisation.

## Mapping the development and implementation of ALF against Kotter's eight accelerators

Alongside the agile network, eight accelerators also feature (Kotter, 2014). These mirror in some ways the eight steps that Kotter articulated in his well-known work ‘Leading Change’ (1996), but with key differences. Essentially, the original eight steps were designed to be applied in a linear, sequential way, executed by a core management group within a defined hierarchy. In contrast, the accelerators are concurrent and require the flexibility and agility of a network (Kotter, 2012).

In relation to the development and implementation of ALF, this accelerated change project can be mapped against Kotter's eight accelerators as follows.

### 1) Create a sense of urgency

Kotter is clear that any change project has to appeal to heads and hearts. For ALF, we had already established a strong emotional and intellectual rationale for developing a framework based upon UDL principles. In particular, such principles are aligned to the University's values of being accessible, supportive, innovative and ambitious. We wanted to develop approaches to teaching and learning that were truly flexible and accessible given the diversity of our student population and our focus on social inclusion (Wrexham Glyndŵr is the UK's most socially inclusive university as reported by the Times/Sunday Times Guide, 2020), and this was built into our review of the Strategy for Supporting Student Learning and Achievement. However, the global pandemic provided an additional sense of urgency, again both intellectually and emotionally, to accelerate the introduction of ALF for the benefit of our students.

### 2) Build a guiding coalition

The guiding coalition is a cross-disciplinary team formed from all levels of the organisation, and for Wrexham Glyndŵr this already existed in the form of the core Academic Development Team. All members of the team have equal status and influence; there is no hierarchy (a key approach according to Kotter).

### 3) Form a strategic vision and initiatives

The strategic vision and initiative is the Active Learning Framework. ALF is a simple idea, easily communicable and appealing to colleagues. Indeed, many staff members in the early review of the Strategy for Supporting Student Learning and Achievement recognised that they already followed many UDL principles but we needed to ground them in our particular context – hence ALF.

### 4) Enlist a volunteer army

Kotter is clear that the volunteer army should be recruited from across the organisation and that people should ‘want’ to take part rather than feel obligated to. To accelerate the implementation of ALF, we were keen to identify a group of ALF Champions – colleagues who would advocate for the new ways of teaching delivery, buddy-up with less confident colleagues and be positive, enthusiastic ambassadors for the project. Because we already operated a distributed volunteer approach to educational development through our network of Academic Development Team Associates (it is culturally embedded), the call for volunteer ALF Champions was well received with 22 champions enlisted. Some ALF champions had not been involved previously as ADT Associates, but others had:

*‘I have been an ADT Associate for Recorded Content and Employability for the past two years and I have found the experience invaluable. Having the opportunity to work with colleagues across the University, sharing good practice and learning from each other has improved learning and teaching experiences for all students. The recorded content group in particular has built my confidence in producing*



*asynchronous content and so having the opportunity to become an ALF champion seemed an obvious step. The University is offering clear support and guidance for implementing the Active Learning Framework and I am excited about the possibilities for our students and sharing with colleagues my experiences of taking a practical-based course online.'*  
(Cerys Alonso, Programme Leader and Senior Lecturer in Applied Arts)

Crucially, ALF Champions are a varied group; they have not come forwards because of job role or organisational position. Rather, they have self-identified as being champions of the idea that digitally-enabled learning can support and enhance more accessible and flexible ways of teaching and learning. ALF Champions are also varied in their representation of discipline area, with volunteers drawn from across both academic faculties covering health, sport, social sciences, visual and performing arts, science and engineering. In addition, we have attracted ALF Champions from our digital learning team, academic skills and library services.

### 5) Enable action by removing barriers

Removing barriers so that the volunteer army (in our case, ALF Champions) could make progress is critical, according to Kotter. Again, we have already adjusted (or removed) some processes at Wrexham Glyndŵr through our distributed approach to Academic Development and this has flowed through into how we expect ALF Champions to operate. It is essential that the network remains agile and flexible and is not held up by managerialism.

### 6) Generate short-term wins

For the implementation of ALF, our key short-term focus has been around facilitating opportunities for colleagues to engage in support and development activity. We have quickly designed online support resources including: diagnostic tools around digital capability; a series of moodle workbooks and self-access online courses; updated technical guides housed in a new searchable hub and

a series of summer webinars and recorded content. We have also been careful to involve the student body as much as possible as we look to introduce ALF. The Students' Union have created a Student Advisory Group (SAG), chaired by the SU President, which meets bi-weekly and is made up of a cross-section of students from across the University. The SAG has been consulted at all stages of the development of ALF in the spirit of co-production and working with students as partners:

*'The Students' Union are excited to be working with the University on this strategic initiative. As Chair of the Student Advisory Group, I have been able to gather student feedback around ALF and it is clear that flexible and accessible learning opportunities are now more important than ever.'*  
(Ebony Banks, SU President 2020/21)

### 7) Sustain acceleration

Implementing ALF is now at the stage where many of the component parts are in place and now we need to keep going! Kotter is explicit that it is important to keep learning from experience and to keep the sense of urgency high. Given that we need to develop a sustainable approach to digitally-enabled learning and teaching in light of the pandemic, there is certainly no let-up in the sense of urgency.

### 8) Institute change

Kotter is clear that no strategic initiative is complete until it has been incorporated into day-to-day activities. At Wrexham Glyndŵr, we have made a commitment to see ALF embedded for all taught programmes; in that respect, starting to deliver programmes through ALF from September is perhaps only the beginning, but we will certainly have a very good idea of just how well this accelerated change programme has been executed by the end of Semester 1, as we continue to gather staff and student feedback.

## Conclusion

All universities are working hard to re-imagine curriculum delivery in light of COVID-19, meaning that educational

and staff development work is hopefully being valued more than ever. But the challenges we face demand agile and flexible responses which should be reflected in our structures and ways of working. At Wrexham Glyndŵr, the establishment and embedding of a distributed approach to academic development over recent years has been invaluable as we now seek to accelerate significant change projects using Kotter's framework of a dual operating system and eight accelerators. By harnessing an already culturally-embedded approach to managing change within our university, we have been able to respond with agility and confidence as we support wholesale changes to curriculum design and delivery across all taught programmes.

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# Addressing inclusive teaching and learning environments using immersive academic workshops

Chris Little, Abigail Pearson and Karl Gimblett, Keele University

A SEDA-funded project is under way at Keele University aiming to address staff difficulties in integrating reasonable adjustments into their teaching practice through immersion and reflection. This project is delivered by a Lecturer in Law, a Learning Developer and an Educational Technologist. This piece will detail the project and a short narrative of each person's involvement.

## The call for action

Whilst staff are generally willing to assist students with access, they can find it difficult to translate the legislation and guidance into practice and to identify discrete barriers to access and would like enhanced accessibility training (Dempster *et al.*, 2012; Marquis *et al.*, 2016). A lack of contextualised examples can make it difficult to communicate the existence and effect of more abstract barriers, leaving some staff uncertain and the needs of some students under-considered (Cameron *et al.* 2019). An immersive approach to disability equality training aims to demonstrate this type of barrier to help staff to identify them, but also to understand the impact of leaving them unaddressed (Tinklin and Hall, 2006; Fuller *et al.*, 2004; Goode, 2007; Moríña *et al.*, 2016). Hopefully, the collaboration and honesty shared during this project will provide a template to others in the future.

## A disability law lecturer's perspective

I have seen first-hand, as a staff member and a student with a disability, how the plasticity of the law in this area can make it difficult for staff and institutions to respond to reasonable adjustments in the proactive manner now required by the changes in provision to the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA). I work as a lecturer, whose research is in disability law and access, particularly the concept of 'reasonable adjustments'. As a student, I required reasonable adjustments and have experienced how Universal Design approaches to resource design can still leave some students with access issues in classes where multiple students need adjustments.

## A learning developer's perspective

Working as a centrally-based learning developer, I rarely get any information on how many students in my upcoming classes have disabilities, let alone what adjustments may be needed. As such, my responses to reasonable adjustments have historically been very *ad hoc*, but limited. Work on this project has already been useful in helping myself and colleagues to respond to requests for reasonable adjustments. I considered my practice fairly aware of, and considerate towards, students with disabilities anyway, but this project has shown me I can do much more to proactively plan for classes.

## An educational technologist's perspective

As an educational technologist, it's important to me that all teaching resources and teaching spaces are designed with inclusivity in mind from the outset. If PowerPoint presentations or PDFs aren't prepared and designed well, for example, all students lose out, not just those with a particular disability. In teaching spaces, if projectors 'buzz', chairs are too heavy to move and issues with lighting are ignored, students are distracted somewhat whilst they're trying to learn, at best. At worst, however, we are presenting very real barriers to learning that can have a dramatic impact. Student conditions such as Autism, Sensory Processing Disorder and Cerebral Palsy can be exacerbated in teaching environments simply because of a lack of forethought and planning.

## The project

We have designed and built weighted chairs, enhanced slide decks, immersive audio recordings and lighting plans that form part of a three-session staff development resource that spans one day of training. Session 1 involves a reflective discussion session of experiences of working with students with disclosed disabilities. Session 2 involves an immersive experience of a range of exaggerated exclusions for those with disclosed disabilities. Session 3 involves reflective action planning on how to make existing teaching practices more inclusive and accessible. We hope to showcase a condensed version of all three sessions at a SEDA conference.

In December 2019, we invited students with disclosed disabilities to a showcase of these resources to ensure we were not over-, or under-, representing certain conditions and to see if we'd missed anything. We had! The students were incredibly open and candid, offering real insight and new directions for the project, as well as partners for future research (Table 1).

"If the flashing lecture capture pause is on, I'm missing my next class with a migraine" - <a href="#">Photo sensitive dyslexia and dyspraxia</a>
"The last two months, no slide decks were on the VLE, so I just sat blindly in the room listening" - <a href="#">Profound visual impairment</a>
"Pointing at things but not saying what they are" - <a href="#">Visual impairment</a>
"Deviating from session plan" - <a href="#">Dyslexia and Autism Spectrum Disorder</a>
"Chairs with tables attached are not helpful" - <a href="#">All students</a>

Table 1 Indicative feedback from consultation with students with disabilities

In March and April 2020, data collection with staff will commence with two cohorts of around 12-15 teaching staff

members. We will track staff perspectives and opinions throughout the workshops, through surveys, observation and in-session documentation. We will then, through discourse analysis, see if any change has occurred. Following this data analysis, we will look to share outcomes more widely in the near future.

## Next steps

The project is already gaining an exciting amount of attention at Keele. Our Buildings and Estates Teams are interested in the research and what it may mean for the development and redevelopment of teaching spaces on campus. Parts of the project have already found their way into the Masters in Higher Education Practice programme and we hope to offer this training to colleagues beyond Keele later in the year.

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# Is academic development dead?

## Sherre Roy, Central Queensland (CQ) University

As an Academic/Educational Developer in Australia, I have noticed a change in the higher education landscape in Australia in relation to the professional development of Academics/Faculty as Educator and I wondered whether this is just a regional phenomenon. This paper seeks to 'dwell on what is going on' (Regehr, 2010) and explore academic development from the perspective of quality assurance standard requirements and how that may be playing out in practice in Australia as compared with Canada and the United Kingdom.

I acknowledge the different terminology (Academic, Faculty) used across the three regions, and as this paper is focused particularly on learning and teaching I will use the term Educator.

Quality Assurance Standards are a fact of life for Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) and the Educators that work in them. This dwelling on what is happening will focus on only the sections of the standards as they relate to the professional development of Educators.

In Canada, the Ministerial Statement on Quality Assurance of Degree Education in Canada (2007) provides two areas where Educator development is mentioned. First is in Section 2, Procedures and Standards for New Degree Quality Assessment: Human Resources (7.6), where it is identified as one of the elements that needs to be evaluated when a degree program is being reviewed:

*'7.6 Human Resources – The institution has sufficient and appropriately qualified resources, academic and otherwise, to deliver degree-level education, and satisfactory policies pertaining to faculty that address issues such as the protection of academic freedom; academic/professional credentials; the regular review of faculty performance; the means of ensuring that faculty knowledge of the field is current; teaching, supervision*

*and student-counselling loads; and professional development of faculty. Staff resources must be sufficient to ensure the coverage required within the discipline for the proposed program.'* (Universities Canada, 2020, p. 8)

The key aspects being appropriately qualified educators, and that the organisation has satisfactory policies relating to educator currency in the discipline field of the degree and professional development for Educators.

The second is in Section 3, Procedures and Standards for Assessing New Degree-Granting Institutions: Faculty and Staff (5.4) are identified as one element that needs to be evaluated when an organisation wishes to become a Degree-Granting Institution:

*'5.4 Faculty and Staff – The institution has policies with respect to the number and qualifications of the academic faculty and instructional staff,*



*including provisions against fraudulent credentials; policies with respect to appointment, evaluation (including student evaluations), employment conditions, which include workload, promotion, termination, and professional development; and policies/practices with respect to research and/or scholarship. In addition, the institution has policies regarding appropriate human resource development and management.'*

(Universities Canada, 2020, p. 11)

Similarly, the focus is on having satisfactory policies relating to Educator professional development.

In the United Kingdom the Quality code has similar expectations to Canada:

*'The provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.'* (QAA, 2020)

Further information about what this looks like was gleaned from two guidance notes 'Explaining staff teaching qualification' and 'Learning and Teaching', both published by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). The expectation is that Educators will hold a Learning and Teaching qualification and/or be recognised by an external body such as AdvanceHE. The guidance note explaining staff teaching qualification includes a list of the most commonly held UK Professional Standards Framework-aligned qualifications/recognition. The guide mentions that HEIs need to demonstrate 'the value they place upon enhancing the skills of all staff who support learning' (p. 5)

The 'Learning and Teaching' guide highlights that apart from being suitably qualified in discipline and teaching, educators are expected to 'draw on scholarship, research and professional activity to facilitate student learning' (p. 7). Educators are expected to be self-reflective in their practice and identify their own learning and teaching development needs and participate in initial and continuing professional development. The key aspects being

that educators are suitably qualified in discipline and teaching and engaging in professional development, with the HEI needing to be able to demonstrate that the standards are being followed.

In Australia, the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015 is the guiding standard for HEIs and has two areas relating to Educators.

The first is in Part A Standards for Higher Education, Section 3.2 Staffing:

*'3.2.3 Staff with responsibilities for academic oversight and those with teaching and supervisory roles in courses or units of study are equipped for their roles, including having:*

- *knowledge of contemporary developments in the discipline or field, which is informed by continuing scholarship or research or advances in practice*
- *skills in contemporary teaching, learning and assessment principles relevant to the discipline, their role, modes of delivery and the needs of particular student cohorts, and*
- *a qualification in a relevant discipline at least one level higher than is awarded for the course of study, or equivalent relevant academic or professional or practice-based experience and expertise, except for staff supervising doctoral degrees having a doctoral degree or equivalent research experience.'* (DofE&T, 2020, p. 8)

The key aspects being discipline-qualified and skilled in teaching but no requirement for a learning and teaching qualification. Discipline knowledge must be informed by 'continuing scholarship or research or advances in practice' (p. 8).

The second is in Part B Criteria for Higher Education Providers. This part lists the standards that a HEI must meet to become accredited and maintain that accreditation:

*'B1.2 "Australian University" Category*

*The higher education provider demonstrates sustained scholarship that informs teaching and learning in all fields in which courses of study are offered.*

*The higher education provider identifies and implements good practices in student teaching and learning, including those that have the potential for wider dissemination nationally.'* (DofE&T, 2020, p. 18)

Similarly to the scholarship requirement for the Educator, the Institution is required to demonstrate that scholarship is happening.

As would be expected, each region has different requirements. Table 1 summarises the various standard requirement for each region. What stands out is the variation in requirements relating to educator development. In Canada, it is enough to have it in a policy while in the United Kingdom the organisation has to demonstrate the value placed on enhancing educator skill and that people are engaging with professional development; at the other end of the continuum, Australia has no requirement for educators to participate in professional development.

### Information for Contributors

The Editorial Committee of *Educational Developments* welcomes contributions on any aspect of staff and educational development likely to be of interest to readers.

Submission of an article to *Educational Developments* implies that it has not been published elsewhere and that it is not currently being considered by any other publisher or editor.

The Editorial Committee reserves the right to make minor alterations during the editing process in order to adapt articles to the house style and length. Such alterations will not affect the main content of the article. A proof copy will not be supplied to authors prior to printing.

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	Canada	UK	Australia
Measure how the relevant standard is met	Policy in place	Demonstrate	Demonstrate
Required qualifications	Discipline	Discipline and Teaching	Discipline
Professional development	Covered in policy	Participation/engagement is expected and recorded	Not mentioned
Scholarship	Not mentioned	Mentioned in the discipline context of drawing on in relation to facilitating learning	Participation/engagement is expected and recorded

Table 1 Quality standards discussion summarised

So, what is happening educator development-wise in Australia?

The current Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015 came into effect on 1 January 2017. The previous standards framework stated the need to provide professional development for its staff in a statement very similar to the Canadian standards:

*'5.3 The higher education provider manages its human resources to ensure effective:*

- *workload management; merit-based selection and promotion processes;*
- *induction;*
- *performance review;*
- *grievance procedures; and,*
- *professional development of its personnel.'* (DofIISR&TE, 2020, p. 5)

The current standards have nothing similar. Instead it moves the focus from the HEI providing professional development to the Educator, who now is responsible for maintaining their own development through scholarship. Hence in some way, shape or form, the Australian HEIs now need to record the scholarship activity of their staff, to be able to demonstrate to the quality body (Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA)) that the organisation is meeting or exceeding the thresholds standards.

TEQSA have created guidance notes to assist Higher Education Institutions understand the requirement relating to scholarship. TEQSA identifies an individual's engagement in scholarship activity as being 'part of an individual's personal professional development,

teaching, research or professional practice' (TESQA, 2020, p. 1). A recent environmental scan of Australian universities conducted by the Council of Australasian University Leaders in Learning and Teaching found that the majority of responding universities (38 out of 42) had policies in place relating to staff development: enterprise bargaining agreements mention learning and teaching professional development; probation requirements include learning and teaching professional development; and learning and teaching professional development programs are being provided for educators. This provision appears not to align more with the previous threshold standards than the requirements of the current threshold standards, however this is a service that is still valued by educators of all levels of experience. With the new threshold standards there appears to be a paradigm shift for educators and HEIs. The provision of professional development opportunities is still needed but now the push to provide becomes the pull to enhance.

Kennedy (2005) identifies nine models of continuing professional development, placing them into three purposes of model categories: Transmission, Transition, and Transformational. These categories can be placed on a spectrum of increasing capacity for professional autonomy, moving from transmission through transitional to transformational.

HEIs in Australia appear to be caught in the transmission/transitional end of the spectrum, pushing out professional development that prepares educators for a profession as an Educator when they come from discipline backgrounds in industry. These people often need information pushed to them through transmission that provides understanding and knowledge of the

organisation's learning and teaching culture and ways of doing things, including foundational learning and teaching knowledge. Similarly, for Educators previously employed by other institutions.

At the transformational end of the spectrum of Kennedy's (2005) framework are the action research and transformational models of continuing professional development. These models are seen as providing agency to the Educator, encouraging them to be an active participant in their professional development through critical reflection of practice, and awareness of issues and power that lead to the transformation of teaching practice. These transformational models of continuing professional development appear to align with the intent of the scholarship required in Australia's Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015. It is interesting that HEA professional recognition has become very popular in Australia in recent years, and may be the first steps on the path for HEIs in a move towards the transformational end of the spectrum.

Is Academic Development dead?

This will depend on how one defines Academic Development. Globally there are several interchangeable terms, educational development and learning design being two of them. The term Academic Development appears to have resisted definition although there is some consensus on its purpose to create conditions supportive of learning and teaching (Leibowitz, 2014; Sutherland, 2018) and/or the 'improvement of teaching with the hopeful aim of subsequently enhancing student learning' (Sutherland, 2018).

For the purposes of this paper, Aitchison *et al.* (2020) provide a definition of academic development as ‘supporting educators to improve their teaching through staff capacity building’, with educational development focusing on ‘curriculum development, evaluation, student literacy development and technology and online learning design’ (Aitchison *et al.*, 2019). Aitchison *et al.* go on to report that, in Australia, there is a focus on developing the product (curriculum resource development) rather than developing the person through building human capacity.

Going back to the question, is Academic Development dead? In Australia it is changing. There is a dedicated focus on the product and, as seen in Table 1, Australia’s Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015 focuses on scholarship not professional development. The TEQSA guidance note on scholarship views scholarship as a subset of professional development. There appears to be the implication that the educator will participate in a process of professional learning that is located within their professional practice context (Boud and Hager, 2012).

For those whose roles do focus on the development of the person rather than the product, the challenge now becomes helping educators to see themselves as professional Educators rather than as an Academic or Faculty. For Educators in an Australian HEI it

appears, according to the standard, they are viewed as a professional in Education and there is a requirement to maintain one’s standing as a professional Educator through something called ‘scholarship’ rather than something called ‘professional development’. Recognition as a professional Educator appears to be one strategy to change Educators’ perceptions of who they are, with each Australian HEI then needing to think about how the culture of being a professional who manages and advances their own professional development can be embedded.

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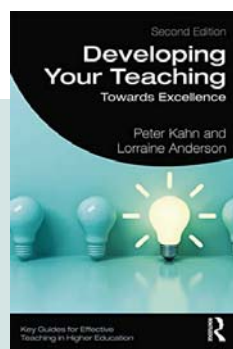
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## Book Review

### Developing Your Teaching: Towards Excellence

by Peter Kahn and Lorraine Anderson  
2nd edition

Routledge, Key Guides for Effective Teaching in Higher Education, 2019



As an old-hand academic developer who has read a range of these books, I sometimes ponder what can be added to the field. In this respect this book was a pleasant surprise and an informative read. I found myself flagging pages

for further personal consideration, as opposed to thinking about its use on the PGCLTHE I teach. However, I can also see scope for its productive incorporation into the course reading list – perhaps as a key text.

The title is exact: Developing Teaching.

I do have one tiny gripe: I found that the extensive use of case studies often broke up the flow of the text. Having said that, it is a direct and easy read – it will work as a personal refresher

for SEDA professionals as well as an introductory text for new HE teachers.

The book is structured around twelve relatively brief chapters whose titles suggest an active engagement with their content. For example: the second chapter is entitled 'Choosing effective teaching practices' and contains subsections about sources of information – experience (including checklist of possible reasons for adopting a practice), others, the written word, and research. The last section of the chapter includes a neat, four sentence encapsulation of constructivism as a learning theory.

The fourth chapter, 'A partnership with students in learning and teaching', poses some interesting questions in its introduction and explores the contested nature of engagement. The chapter, as with many other places in the book, poses questions that demand thought from the reader. This is one of the book's strengths. Here in terms of partnerships, consider, the authors suggest, why students might get involved and are the benefits (of involvement) obvious?

Similarly, chapter seven, about drivers

for change, seeks to challenge teachers: 'How can we learn to look more positively on drivers for change within our professional context?' (p.100). A great question that the chapter then seeks to address.

I found much of use throughout the book and highlights include:

- The table of student engagement through partnership
- The four prompts/tools to support reflection (especially the notion of assumption hunting)
- High impact practices (evidence-based student-centred impetus for change)
- Models of skills acquisition in the development of excellence.

Some of these items are reported research and some are original. Other readers will find different material within the pages that resonates for them. The point is that this book has assembled them in an accessible, logical, readable way.

The section on excellent teaching was particularly useful in this the age of

'excellence'. The author of one of the case studies summed it up superbly: '... my conviction that an excellent teacher is one who enables students to realise their potential ...' (p.163), but then added, wonderfully, '...and be happier as a result'. I would love to be the teacher that enables students to learn but also enables them to be happier.

The conclusion, too, contains an insightful piece about what genuinely good teaching might look like. The authors summarise, and I extract it here as it illustrates the tone of the book:

- Good teaching maintains a focus on student learning
- Excellent teaching takes account of the discipline concerned
- Excellent teaching is a collaborative endeavour
- Excellent teaching challenges preconceived ideas.

**Peter Gossman** is a Principal Lecturer and Course Leader for the Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education in the Institute of Education at the University of Worcester.

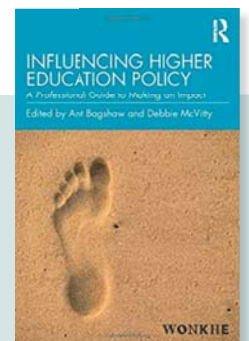
## Book Review

### Influencing Higher Education Policy: A professional guide to making an impact

Edited by Ant Bagshaw and Debbie McVitty

Routledge, 2019

ISBN-10: 1138347078



This edited collection of insightful chapters from our friends at Wonkhe may not be an obvious first choice for the Educational Developer's reading list, but perhaps I can persuade you otherwise.

Structured into three parts, this book considers:

- 1) Concepts and theories for policy influence
- 2) Regulation and the role of government
- 3) Institutions' engagement with policy.

With a wide range of contributors who draw upon experience from across higher education practice, research, government policy-making and advisory roles, the book is both scholarly and practical. The book comprises 14 chapters and as such covers a lot of ground. It's good to see contributions from the devolved nations of Scotland and Wales as well as a strong student voice perspective.

I deliberately approached the book quite critically from an Educational Developer's point of view and especially as a SEDA member, asking myself

whether this book was really relevant for our community. And I have to say the answer is an unequivocal 'yes' and I think different aspects of the book will appeal to different readers. For example, the theoretical and conceptual focus of part one will be enjoyed by those of us who like to understand, reflect upon, critique and maybe even problematise what is set before them. The chapters related to regulation and government provide useful practical insights and case studies into how policy-making influences change in higher education – and as Educational Developers often working at the heart



of change projects, I would contend that it is important for us to understand how policy-making happens structurally within the government corridors of power. The final part considers the position of universities in the higher education policy-making process. Practical tips around how to influence with impact sit alongside reflections on the concept of the 'civic university'.

However, the biggest direct challenge comes in the final chapter from Ant Bagshaw, who is adamant that

universities' historic approaches to influencing policy based on a 'benign amateurism' and 'hope and accident' are no longer acceptable. He contends that universities must accept that external policy influence is core business and should be equipped to engage proactively and effectively. In my view, this is where the SEDA community has such an important role to play. The challenge for us now both individually and collectively is not so much 'whether' we should be involved in shaping policy, but rather

'how' we are able to do that. With that in mind I commend this book to us all as a starting point for understanding the mechanics of how things happen sector-wide, but also as a book to return to periodically for tips, tricks and encouragements as SEDA seeks to be seen as an authoritative source of Educational Development expertise and policy influence UK-wide and beyond.

**Professor Claire Taylor** is Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Wrexham Glyndŵr University.

## SEDA News

### Transitions out of HE Online Workshop

Tuesday 1st December 2020 – 10am-12pm

*This interactive online workshop is designed to stimulate scholarship and research capability in the area of transitions.*

The final workshop explores transitions out of higher education. How do first-in-family graduates navigate the transition into the employment market, and how can we better support them, and how can technology help in preparing students for placements which may facilitate this transition out?

Register for this event at <https://tinyurl.com/y618mtrn>

### SEDA Research and Evaluation Small Grants 2021

These grants are intended to support research and evaluation in staff and educational development with the goal of continued improvement in the quality and understanding of educational development practices. For 2021, we will be offering five grants of £1000 each for research into educational development practices.

Further information, including application forms can be found on the SEDA website (<https://tinyurl.com/y4lhzz6k>).

For those interested in applying for one of the small grants, then you may find this webinar useful (<http://tinyurl.com/y3bq9c29>) - sign up via eventbrite (<https://tinyurl.com/y4bdpq3m>).

The closing date for applications is 12 noon on 29 January 2021.

### SEDA – Professional Development Framework

Congratulations are due to Comenius University, Bratislava, Queen's University, Belfast and Birmingham City University

which have all been recognised to provide SEDA-PDF accredited programmes.

The SEDA-PDF Committee would like to extend their thanks to **Ruth Pilkington** who has tirelessly provided her expertise and support, not only to those on the PDF Committee but also to the institutions she has supported over the years. The Committee are delighted that Ruth will continue her association with SEDA-PDF by remaining as a Recogniser, Mentor and Named Award Co-ordinator.

A warm welcome to the Committee to **Dr Rachel Curzon** from Birmingham City University. Rachel is well-versed in the world of SEDA-PDF in her role as Institutional Lead for SEDA-accredited courses.



### Partnerships for Enhanced and Blended Learning (PEBL)

SEDA (**Ruth Brown, David Baume and Yaz El-Hakim**) continues to deliver pedagogical and tutoring support in the third iteration of this exciting and extremely timely project which was designed to address the critical staff shortages facing universities in East Africa, while improving outcomes for students.

Further information about the project can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/y43bl5az>