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A retiring educational developer

An exchange with Alan Wright, a Canadian member of SEDA, and the Educational Developments Editorial Committee

This year, Alan Wright retired from his position as Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning, at the University of Windsor, Ontario, and at the same time stepped down from his membership of the Educational Developments Editorial Committee. Alan has been a great supporter of SEDA and has invited many SEDA colleagues to work for a semester or two at Windsor. To mark this transition we organised a question-based online interview.

What advice would you give to colleagues starting their educational development careers? What advice would you have liked?

First of all, colleagues starting out in educational development should realise the challenge involves a marathon, not a sprint. The work is all about policies, programmes, and practices, and attention to all three is important in an ongoing and sustained manner: 'quick fixes' have limited value.

Secondly, educational developers and those who work in the unit should do all they can to at once put themselves in the position of the 'go-to' resource for teaching and curriculum development. They should seek to narrow the gap between the unit and the academic departments so that the commitment to teaching effectiveness becomes a shared responsibility, a partnership. One rather sad example of the academic staff's perspective on the role of an educational development unit came when one university adopted a strong commitment to the development of well-articulated 'learning outcomes' for every module, and the ed dev unit had the remit to vet the submitted outcomes. Academic staff dubbed the ed dev unit 'the learning outcomes police'.

Thirdly, the educational developer can certainly support those lecturers who struggle in their work as teachers, but there is much to be gained by identifying the strongest of teachers, especially those with an established record of research, scholarship, or creative activity, and involving them directly in the business of educational development through workshops, presentations, projects and publications. This work can then be recognised as an important model of leadership in the academic community.

My fourth point relates to how we, as educational developers, think about our profession. When they were youngsters, my children tended to think their dad was 'a person who taught teachers how to teach'. That notion made me cringe, and my response was to the effect that I saw my role as promoting effective teaching and learning practices, to be sure, but my strategy was to bring out the best in university lecturers through the sharing and promotion of identifiable effective practices.

My ultimate point is that to be taken seriously, quality teaching must be on the institutional agenda and lead to extrinsic as well as intrinsic reward for educational development to be seen as central to the culture and mission of the university.

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What would you say was the most important attribute of an effective educational developer?

A key attribute of an effective educational developer revolves around awareness. Close to home it is about listening – *être à l'écoute* – hearing the voices of the community of academic staff around you and understanding institutional context and priorities. An educational developer at a leading Canadian university was at first dismayed when her university (we'll call Eastern) adopted a new marketing message 'Think research, think Eastern'. What about thinking teaching quality? She took the initiative to concentrate on improving the graduate teaching and learning experience, with an emphasis on the teaching and research nexus, as a way of working with the new slogan adopted by her institution.

More broadly, the notion of awareness relates to advances in educational research and movements, reforms in higher education through involvement with professional organisations, and literature in the field. It is very gratifying to work with other educational developers with mutual confidence, a confidence that comes from being on the same page in a maturing enterprise with increasingly solid foundations. I recall a moment in a teaching workshop I delivered on my home campus, together with the late Peter Knight, our Visiting Fellow from Lancaster. A participant asked me what the literature said about a specific issue on teaching and learning. Without hesitation I deferred to Peter, saying 'I'll let Professor Knight respond'. I knew I was absolutely not 'putting him on the spot', I knew that my co-presenter would be *au courant* and respond perfectly well. I felt good about our field as developers.

From your visits to the UK and from inviting developers to your home institution, what differences and similarities do you see between the UK and Canada in relation to academic development?

As Associate Dean of Undergrad Studies of a French-language university with a mandate to bring HE to a vast rural region in the Province of Québec in the 1980s, my favourite task was chairing a committee distributing funds *for 'l'innovation pédagogique'*. When Dalhousie University opened the first educational development centre in Atlantic Canada in 1988, I was thrilled to take on a new leadership position in the area of teaching innovation and effectiveness as the central mission of my work. I knew I had a lot to learn from others and took an active role in teaching and learning organisations, first with Canada's Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE), then the Professional and Organizational Development (POD) Network in the USA. I also broadened my perspective by looking at the work of the Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA) and, as one of the few Canadian developers working in both of Canada's official languages, the Association International de Pédagogie Universitaire (AIPU).

But I was particularly impressed by the work of SEDA in the UK. The publications I came across from the most active of SEDA members intrigued me, and I soon found the resources to invite leading developers such as Graham Gibbs of Oxford Brookes to conduct workshops at several universities in Atlantic Canada.

Through contact with SEDA and colleagues from the UK. we gained new perspectives on managing and engaging students in large classes, and we began to see a module in terms of learning tasks and learning hours for the students instead of limiting it to teaching tasks and the content of the face-to-face teaching hours for the lecturer. I also found the collective approach to the structuring and reform of curriculum in the UK to be of interest because the North American 'lone ranger' approach, perhaps associated with a particular notion of 'academic freedom', was lacking. In addition, adopting a more evolved, authentic concept of assessment of student learning was quite attractive. Although there were many similarities in terms of goals between developers from one jurisdiction to another, I found it beneficial to learn from the varying approaches to achieving those goals. I found the UK approach to educational change somewhat more grounded than it was in those jurisdictions where a certain superficiality and razzle-dazzle sometimes prevailed.

What development in higher education can you hand on heart say 'I told you that was going to happen'? And what development was the biggest surprise?

Let us look at what we now call 'online learning'. From the decades in the past when the term 'distance education' was widely used, I have always promoted well-organised, well-designed, meaningful courses delivered off-campus, often to what we call 'non-traditional' student populations with limited access to on-site education due to geographical and social distance. I knew that off-campus offerings could be poor educational experiences, but I was also convinced that they had their place and saw excellent examples of credit courses reaching people who would otherwise not be able to benefit from state-supported higher education.

I looked at the good work of the Télé-Université (TELUQ) in Canada and that of the Open University in the UK. Perfect models they were not, but the most severe critics of remote learning and champions of the lecture hall often forgot how poorly designed and delivered our on-campus modules could be. And so, in my capacity as Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning, I applied for internal funding to establish a permanent Office of Open Learning at the University of Windsor a decade ago. The mandate of the Office was, basically, to apply best educational practices to synchronous and asynchronous course delivery beyond the confines of campus.

The Office of Open Learning was thrust into a central, essential role, alongside the UWindsor Centre for Teaching and Learning, when the worldwide pandemic hit us in 2020. The developing expertise on campus helped us to bring sound solutions to a hugely challenging situation. I was pleased that our initiative had prepared us, to an extent, for what amounted to an international pedagogical crisis. Those ed developers who had studied the means of achieving success in online education prior to the crisis were best equipped to handle a situation which everyone termed 'unprecedented'.

Is there an Educational Developments article or category of article that stands out in your mind, changing your thinking/approach to your work?

In the 1990s, I was particularly impressed by the extensive work of Angelo and Cross on 'Classroom Assessment Techniques' (CATs) published in the USA. The authors suggested that when CATs became formalised, they lead to 'classroom research'. [*Editor's note – Assessment in the USA translates as Evaluation in the UK]*. Soon after, the concept of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) was adopted like the proverbial 'best thing since sliced bread' by the international ed dev community, although there was considerable energy poured into deciding just what qualified as *bona fide* SoTL. Turning to SEDA's *Educational Developments*, I applauded the publication for the emphasis on articles written by ed developers and academic staff recounting their in-house efforts to introduce innovation and reform to curriculum, to modules, to classroom practices, and to practices designed to improve the teaching qualifications of academic staff. I was struck by the very practical approach of providing an outlet for staff to describe an institutional initiative in a straightforward manner, from the stage of problem identification to goal, to implementation to tracking, to measurement and reflection. *Educational Developments* offered a very useful outlet for pedagogical experiences, especially those involving a team. The publication practised a serious yet efficient version of peer review, allowing timely emergence of descriptions of innovative projects without the sometimes overwhelming demands and delays of formal academic research journals.

My first position, at 22 years of age and after graduating with my BA from Mount Allison and my BEd from McGill, was teaching grade six in Montreal. The class motto, one I admittedly adopted from a major corporation, was 'Progress is our most important product'. *Educational Developments* and SEDA have provided an excellent platform for those seeking teaching and learning progress in HE.

What has been the best thing about being a member of SEDA?

For over 25 years, I have benefited from both individual and institutional membership of SEDA as an educational developer and academic administrator working in two languages and in three very different Canadian provinces. The individual membership has provided me with an expanded perspective on educational development, and the institutional membership an opportunity to introduce our country's first formal program of academic staff development certified by SEDA. But the enduring memories involve encounters with the people behind the ideas, the visits, the dialogue, the pleasure of moments spent together in the UK and in Canada. These moments include canoeing with Graham Gibbs in Nova Scotia, sightseeing in Vieux Québec with Stephen Bostock, kayaking in Ontario with Mark Schofield, running in a London park with Carole Davis, and enjoying tea, scones, and conversation at the British Museum with the affable James Wisdom.

They say that you can take the person out of educational development, but you cannot take educational development out of the person – what, if any, of your educational development knowledge, skills and values might you use in your well-earned retirement?

A few years ago, my unit hosted a young educational developer from China, and we attended a meeting of Canadian developers. The visitor noted, with surprise, that a high percentage of the participants were women and wondered why. Maybe because women are, traditionally, attracted to a 'helping profession' and educational development is a 'helping profession'? Dangerous ground for me to say that, perhaps. But educational development is most definitely for people who care…largely selfless people engaging fully for the welfare and job satisfaction of teachers, for the learning and success of students, for the quality of the institutional environment and for a vibrant and connected community. Caring for community remains after formally retiring from the world of higher education.

Communication is also a big part of educational development. Soon after I started my work in educational development some 30 years ago, I adopted the tonguein-cheek motto 'If it ain't in print, it don't exist', regarding, for instance, strategies for writing one's teaching portfolio or dossier. As electronic communications evolved and I recognised the new reality of the educational environment, my modified motto became 'If it ain't on the internet, it don't exist'. Today, somewhat grudgingly, my motto becomes 'If it ain't on social media, it don't exist'. So, I will continue to write in retirement. In fact, I launched a 400-page family memoir, 'Competition & Community', dealing with the influence of the sport and recreation experience in our environment, in July 2022. This appears in print, but the next logical step should take me beyond Twitter to the creation of websites, blogs, and podcasts as a means of expression. I have mentioned a few slogans to work with in my response here, but those who know my e-mail presence are familiar with the phrase in my signature, 'We are all works in progress'. It is meant as a message to academic staff and to educational developers alike, and it should apply equally to retirees. As an active retiree and avid ultra-marathoner once told me, 'I want to avoid, as far as possible, retiring to my rocking chair, rocking back and forth, rocking more and more slowly, until the rocking stops'.

Leisure, work and wellbeing: A new focus for educational developers

Petia Petrova and **Kat Branch**, University of the West of England, and **Sam Elkington**, Teesside University

This article is a call to the educational development community to embrace conversations that consider our leisure *and* our work lives as part of an integrated approach to how we support staff and the formation of their professional identities and practices.

Emotions, stressors and wellbeing

We have long recognised student wellbeing as an important part of a well-designed curriculum and 'student experience'. More recently, there has been increased attention on emotions in the learning environment, and on topics such as humanising online learning (see for example the work of Michelle Pacansky-Brock) and compassionate pedagogy (Hao, 2011), among others. Universities UK acknowledges that 'good mental health is foundational to all aspects of university life' (De Pury and Dicks, 2017, p. 4) and that a whole-institutional approach is needed to support both students and staff, but it is not yet clear how this might be manifested.

In wider society, we are now more willing to have open conversations about mental health, with a particular focus on burnout and the implications of the 'Great Resignation'. We have also long known that stress is an issue for many in the HE sector, and much attention has been paid to cultural and structural issues in HE that pose significant challenges for academics with regards to workload and work-life balance (Archer, 2008).

The 21st century has not been kind to those of us working in HE. Staff have been stretched in different directions: 'research productivity', 'teaching excellence', 'student experience', are phrases often used to describe the range of conflicting priorities that staff are juggling every day. The unpredictability of workload in academia has reached new heights. With the impact of global events such as the Covid pandemic, government changes to HE funding models, or localised institutional strategic drives (of which we have all experienced a-plenty), it is now almost impossible to predictably manage one's workload, let alone prioritise what interests us and/or will enhance our wellbeing.

Staff development and staff wellbeing

As educational developers, we offer courses, workshops and communities. We help staff develop a multitude of skills and expertise to face a myriad of demands. Wellbeing for staff is an area that has gained new prominence in generic staff training, yet it can be challenging to do impactful work in this domain. We, as educational developers, need to think carefully about our role in this. We cannot distinguish between developing staff teaching skills and developing the ability to manage and process stresses rooted in the role. These include supporting students in crisis, dealing with the emotional impact of harsh teaching evaluations, managing competing priorities and coping with a lack of agency to affect what, when and how we work.

What, then, can educational developers do to integrate such support? Given the nature of the SEDA community, we have no doubt that reading this piece you have thought of a number of ways to offer such support, or may indeed be working in this space already. We teamed up to produce a podcast (Figure 1).

Figure 1 Podcast

Why a podcast? Well, we felt we needed to start from first principles. I (Petia) am often drawn to Åkerlind and McAlpine's definition of practice:

> *'"Practice" represents more than a job, appointment or title that academics hold. We see practice as incorporating the totality of personal experiences: it brings into play the underlying, sometimes implicit, purpose(s) and values that motivate us to become academics and through which it is possible to integrate an array of multi-faceted duties, responsibilities, skills and knowledge into a coherent sense of academic identity, regardless of the nature of one's appointment.'* (Åkerlind and McAlpine, 2010, p. 157)

Our work, as well as our life outside of work, is rooted in the 'sometimes implicit, purpose(s) and values that motivate us'. Working to develop academic staff cannot be separated from supporting them to develop their own academic identities, and the academic identities cannot be considered as separate from the other multitude of identities we hold.

The way we experience work stress, what leisure pursuits we engage in, what we choose to prioritise and commit to, be it at work or at home, is all interwoven with our sense of self. That sense of self needs to be fully attended to when we support staff. We recognise that due attention is needed to reflect deeply on how we balance our leisure, our work and our wellbeing. A podcast, we felt, offers a much-needed space to have deep conversation on how leisure, work and wellbeing intersect, to (re)negotiate the importance of our leisure identities for our wellbeing. We are also determined, through the podcast, to tackle toxic narratives of overwork, perfectionism, and academic identities being all-consuming.

Serious conversations about leisure

We created a space to discuss, and pay serious attention to staff hobbies, passions and interests that fall outside of the workplace. How have these evolved? How are these identities integrated, or not, within their work identities? How do staff make meaning from their leisure experiences? What is the impact of these special activities on our wellbeing and our development as educators?

We do this in a podcast format to create an opportunity for long, deep and sometimes hilarious conversations about our interests. It is quite telling that almost without fail podcast guests will email us to thank us for the opportunity to talk about and reflect on their leisure. Guests note that they have not had conversations about their leisure journeys with anyone, be it at home or at work. They emphasise how indulgent it can feel to have conversations about leisure during the working day. This suggests a lack of legitimacy we may feel around our leisure stories in comparison with work, and also reminds us how easy it is to forget to reflect on what we do and who we are more holistically, rather than just focusing on our academic selves.

Our intention is that through the humour, honesty and humanity of the conversations, our podcast is more than an entertaining listen, but rather a friendly catalyst to nudge people to prioritise their leisure time, through inspiration and empathy in place of argument and rhetoric. Beyond the personal sphere, we hope to nudge conversations at an institutional level to gently challenge both values and work structures that create barriers to the balanced life we all desperately need.

The impact of the podcast

We have been intrigued and encouraged by the impact of the podcast on listeners so far. Some listeners have described embarking on their own deep reflections on what their leisure means to them and therefore how they prioritise it. Sometimes this has led to completely new endeavours, at other times to listeners finding the energy to overcome the time shortages and psychological fatigue that can characterise academic work in HE, to dedicate some time to a lifelong passion. Still others have expressed relief at the legitimisation of leisure activity through the personal stories that also illuminate key features of the literature, moving beyond popular notions of leisure as an add-on or a luxury, but rather a central strand of a balanced life and authentic identity.

As educational developers, we have also been able to use the podcast space to introduce our personal journeys to each other, our guests and our listeners, role-modelling an authentic and sometimes vulnerable way of being with colleagues, made possible by the humanising connection of sharing what we do and who we are outside the teaching space. Remarkably, rather than entrenching the separation of our work and leisure identities, this process has significantly increased the overlap between these areas, so that what we learn in the leisure space has organically enriched and innovated our educational development expertise in the experiences of both presenters and guests. A significant example of this is our host Dr Petia Petrova who started Improv Theatre as a way to get away from work and enjoy something just for herself. Months later and twenty episodes into our podcast, she has designed innovative educational development training, teaching improv techniques to academics to enhance teaching artistry, which has achieved exceptional engagement and appreciation from staff, whether new to the profession or eyeing retirement.

In an era where we are expected to bring more of ourselves to the classroom, we must recognise that we are (and should be) more than just our work selves. As educational developers, we can help make time and space to reflect on our leisure, our work, and our wellbeing, and on how our professional identities are shaped by all facets of our lives.

The podcast can be accessed through this QR Code:

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An introduction to the Co:Lab Curriculum Design Process at the University of Brighton

Lucy Chilvers, University of Brighton

Emerging curriculum design practices

New to Brighton in 2021/22 is the Co:Lab Curriculum Design process – a series of developmental workshops and resources from the Learning and Teaching Hub to facilitate course teams in preparation for periodic review, course validation and module re/design. Staff and students are facilitated to collaborate and co-create new approaches to the design and delivery of the whole course of study, including the learning and assessment activities at a module level. A series of discussion activities have been designed to guide teams in creative-thinking and innovation.

This type of educational development provision is common practice across many universities internationally, but interestingly, across the Higher Education (HE) sector in recent months there has been a renewed focus on curriculum design via the SEDA list, with colleagues interested in mapping practices (Hinton, 2022), sharing approaches to curriculum design through email discussion (Pate, 2022), a recent forum (Gramaglia *et al.*, 2022), and a sector-wide survey (MacNeil and Knight, 2022) focusing on how – post-pandemic – digital technologies and modes of delivery are being used to deliver curriculum design support. This article will share how throughout 2021/22 the University of Brighton has been piloting the use of new platforms and technologies to maximise curriculum design support to increasing numbers of course teams, in flexible modes of delivery.

The Co:Lab process, workshops and resources will be explained to give readers an insight into what is covered and how this is facilitated. Reflections will be shared on the Co:Lab process, from the lead of the project, and colleagues and students who have been involved in the process so far. Plans for developing Co:Lab and expanding provision further in 2022/23 will be shared.

Why Co:Lab?

A new Senior Management team conducted a recent restructure of the University, and with this came fresh vision and inspiration for curriculum enhancement. The Co:Lab process was introduced by the Learning and Teaching Hub (L&T Hub) building upon previous experience and expertise of existing colleagues who have delivered similar workshops over past decades, but addressing a current gap in institutional-wide provision. The L&T Hub facilitates the support, bringing expertise in pedagogic research and practice, digital technologies, institutional strategies and approaches to curriculum and learning design.

This new practice has been timely as many course teams are still lacking time to regroup as a team. The increased workload brought by Covid has left many colleagues still in a firefighting survival mode of working. The opportunities for reflecting on the holistic course-wide learning experiences of our students has been put under pressure, and often a module-level focus on teaching can therefore be more common practice. The implications of this can mean a lack of connections between levels of study, where incremental and connected learning and skill development can be under-developed, and the variety of assessment and feedback activities being unbalanced and disconnected.

The new Co:Lab workshops are providing time and facilitation for colleagues to reconnect and receive guidance through focused discussions that enable them to take a more strategic and holistic view of their course. During the pandemic our periodic reviews were delayed, and we now have a high number of courses to support in the next couple of years (e.g. 84 courses are going through 20 subject-level periodic review events in 2022/23). The Senior Leadership team are keen that all course teams are given the opportunity to engage with the Co:Lab resources and support. New workload allocation for periodic review is currently being confirmed and the Curriculum Enhancement Lead is using a train-the-trainer model to equip L&T Hub colleagues to increase capacity for providing this support.

The Co:Lab approach

Having completed a mapping exercise of similar practices at other institutions, we have tried to strike a balance in covering key aspects of curriculum design that are manageable to cover within the capacity of the L&T Hub team. The L&T Hub, led by Juliet Eve, includes seven academics each with their own L&T areas of leadership, School L&T Partner role and other responsibilities.

The Co:Lab Process for 22/23 is outlined in Table 1. The workshops aim to focus and catalyse discussions, and spark ideas which course teams continue beyond the workshops. For that reason, we recommend colleagues plan these workshops within the context of longer planning or awaydays if possible.

The activities are aligned to key content from the University's Periodic Review Reflective Analysis Template and Curriculum Design Framework (available to readers upon request). Biggs' (2011) theory of constructive alignment of learning outcomes, L&T activities and assessments has been an important model for the design of Co:Lab. Aspects of the workshops have also been informed by Salmon's (2011) *Carpe diem* approach to curriculum design and University College London's ABC Learning Design resources (Young and Perovic, 2015).

Co:Lab Process	Activities	Modes and Technologies	Participants
1. Planning Meeting **(1 hour)**	Identify key areas for curriculum development. Review Academic Health data and feedback from students and external examiners. Discuss School Plan and discipline-specific priorities. Discuss outcomes from Portfolio Review and/ or Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB) requirements.	MS Teams or on-campus	L&T Hub colleagues x 2 Subject lead Course leads School Quality lead
2. MS Teams, One Note and Padlet **(L&T Hub admin 30 mins.; Course team Padlet reflections 30 mins.)**	Create and allocate MS Teams Co:Lab group with course-specific MS OneNote resource. Use the Padlet board to reflect on L&T experiences aligned to principles from the Curriculum Design Framework (CDF). Workshop room booking.	Online MS Teams MS One Note Padlet	Course leaders Module leaders Students
3. Course Design workshop 1 **(3 hours)**	Course Rationale/Unique Selling Points/Aims. Internal and external factors driving change to the course. Current course Learning Outcomes (LOs) + University of Brighton Graduate attributes – reflecting on the student development journey from applicants to successful graduates.	On-campus recommended MS Teams if required	Essential: L&T Hub colleagues x 2 Course leaders Module leaders Recommended: Subject lead School L&T lead Students x 3 Alumni Employers

Co:Lab Process	Activities	Modes and Technologies	Participants
4. Re/design course structure and learning outcomes **(Minimum 2 week gap between workshops)**	Re/design course + module structure. Develop and refresh Course LOs.	On-campus and online	Course team and students
5. Course Design workshop 2 **(3 hours)**	Develop a Course-wide Assessment and Feedback strategy. Reflections on alignment with institutional strategies including the CDF, Assessment and Feedback policy and UN Sustainable Development Goals. Map and adjust the assessment and feedback diet.	On-campus recommended MS Teams if required	Essential: L&T Hub colleagues x 2 Course leaders Module leaders Recommended: Subject lead School L&T lead Students x 3 Alumni Employers
6. Module Design workshop **(2 hrs)**	Module Aims and LOs. Balance of modes of delivery, types of learning. Storyboard activities, modes, tools. Design formative and summative assessment and feedback activities.	On-campus recommended MS Teams if required	L&T Hub colleagues x 2 Module leaders Module tutors Students
7. Co:Lab toolkit	Co: Lab Toolkit. L&T Hub Partner support.	On-campus and online	Support from School L&T Hub Partner

Table 1 The University of Brighton's Co:Lab Process 22/23

Staff reflections

Piloting these workshops began in January 2022 and so far we have worked with course teams across eight subject areas, including Teaching English as a Second Language, Law, Physiotherapy, Photography and Moving Image, Supply Chain Management and Management courses. Most of these subjects have included course pathways at undergraduate and postgraduate level. We have so far delivered the Module design workshops twice using an interdisciplinary opt-in approach.

From the L&T Hub perspective, these workshops have gone well. The digital tools used include MS Teams, MS OneNote and Padlet, which have enabled effective online collaborative working. This has included the following modes of collaboration: 1) asynchronous working before and in-between workshops; 2) collaboration during workshops to record ideas; and 3) enabling staff and students to participate in a hybrid workshop delivery mode with some joining on-campus workshops via MS Teams video calls.

Comments from our evaluation form, which staff and students have permitted us to share, will be outlined below to illuminate the learning from our pilots.

The process has brought colleagues together, bringing renewed motivation and engagement in curriculum design:

> *'The Co:Lab workshops provided a particularly effective forum in which to discuss the course development. The workshops brought us together as a course team and motivated colleagues to get more engaged with decision-making and the periodic review process.'* (Course leader)

Staff are feeding back that the design

and sequence of curriculum design activities in the workshops is helpful and has brought clarity to their understanding and confidence in the distinctive value proposition of their courses:

> *'...the links between our reflective activities within these [Co:Lab] workshops and the development and evolution of our courses are clear: our courses meet the University of Brighton graduate attributes, and are "tested" by our assessments; we have revised our course rationales and aims, and then reflected these at module level through the learning outcomes; course mapping has brought clarity to the skills we are teaching and assessing at each level to ensure breadth and depth of development; reflecting on our USPs has allowed us to further understand the value that our option modules bring to students and their future legal or non-legal careers.'* (Course leader)

Other colleagues shared the aspects of curriculum design they have developed as a result of the Co:Lab workshops, including:

> *'Improvement on aims/LOs and improvement on assessment diet.'* (Module leader)

> *'Ensured a better spread of assessments across the course and better allowance for feedforward to benefit the students.'* (Course leader)

> *'More consideration for inclusive practice and what this may look like...Assisted in highlighting the Transitional pedagogies into the design and helped to highlight good practice examples.'* (Course leader)

A student staff partnership approach

Partnership-working and keeping students at the heart of all we do are key values and priorities in our institutional strategic plan (University of Brighton, 2019); therefore, involving students in curriculum design activities is an exciting opportunity for co-creation and outworking these values. There are existing paid roles for students as panel members for Periodic Review, but the Co:Lab workshops are providing new spaces for staff-student collaboration, dialogue and partnership working, whilst the early stages of creative thinking and decision-making is taking place.

Whilst student involvement in Co:Lab is not essential, and unfortunately unable to be paid at present, we do strongly recommend that colleagues invite a few of their course reps or others to be involved. The majority of our workshops so far have had students participating, either in person, asynchronously via the Padlet and Teams groups, or synchronously through live Teams calls into on-campus workshops. In all contexts, the students have brought energy, insight, expertise in their learning experiences and great suggestions for changes to teaching and assessment practices.

Colleagues' feedback on collaborating with their students has included:

> *'The students' perspectives were invaluable and greatly influenced our choice of module assessment in the revalidation…it was useful to have their thoughts and opinions – would be helpful to have their presence more.'* (Module leader)

> *'Co:Lab was a great experience. I got a lot of insight from just talking, casually and informally, with a student about the module I lead – so Co:Lab provides the time and a neutral space to do this. She had so many great ideas, and it was touching how mindful she was about not increasing staff workload! It was also useful to hear a student telling me what activities or sessions worked, or were helpful, and what didn't. Interestingly she saw "active" and "practical" learning in aspects of our delivery that I wasn't expecting, and that I had assumed to be quite boring for students. This experience can only be improved by having more time and space: longer, more regular sessions and more workload time to apply the ideas generated.'* (Course leader)

Student reflections on Co:Lab

A Masters student who participated in the Co:Lab workshops in 21/22 shared their reflections in response to the following questions in a recent presentation at our Education and Student Experience Conference:

'What was your experience as a student in being involved in curriculum design?'

> *'It was really interesting to see how the staff perceived the course and understanding how course is structured and the reasoning behind it...because as a student...you're just kind of whisked through it and you do it because it's there in front of you and really reflecting on why it's set up like this because we don't have that broader perspective that the staff have…It's also really good to chat with them in a more casual manner...you can give a lot more depth and detail than why you think something is good...compared to the surveys we get at the end of each module.'*

'What were you able to contribute to the conversations?'

> *'A fair bit...a lot of it was very open and we're all asking each other questions about certain aspects of the course and what we thought. And I guess my experience as an international student during COVID I was able to provide a different perspective than maybe a domestic student would. But as I'd also collected the experience of my peers as well, it's not just my experience that matters, it's everyone's...I was able to collate a lot of the struggles that some of the other students had on the course and the transition to the online and blended learning...and give feedback on what the students thought was very helpful.'*

'Has this involvement impacted your sense of belonging to your course community, your learning or development in anyway? If so, how?'

> *'I haven't really got to meet the faculty and the staff that much, so it was really good to just be in the same room as them, get to chat with them... being able to read all the body language...the social aspect of it was huge...It really improved the student-staff relationship from my end.'*

'How can we encourage other students to be involved in Co:Lab workshops/ curriculum design?'

> *'I think introducing it early on in the degree so they know that there's an option... it could be contacting the course reps or could be part of what they do as course representatives…the visibility of what you guys are doing so we know that it's an option to add more feedback. I know we get the surveys, but I don't think those are particularly well filled out and they are usually very short...or the feedback is from the students that have an issue so you get biased negative feedback... Co:Lab allows us to have a bit more reflection and have a more reasonable discussion.'*

Developments for Co:Lab in 2022/23

Building upon the involvement of students in Co:Lab so far, we shall continue to pilot the involvement of other stakeholders including course alumni, industry and employer contacts, and external examiners. These pilots will be with the purpose of enriching the curriculum design conversations and bringing expertise from industry to ensure our Courses are relevant, future-facing and innovative. The University's Graduate Attributes will be woven throughout the course learning outcomes, learning activities and authentic assessments.

Co:Lab resources are currently being fine-tuned in order to publish an online Co:Lab Toolkit for course teams to use independently, and to equip L&T Hub colleagues using a train-the-trainer approach before the start of the academic year 22/23. The academic year ahead will be another year of reflecting and evaluating as a team, and we plan to disseminate our reflections and evaluative research next summer 2023.

For the Co:Lab Curriculum Design process, see https://tinyurl.com/2p9but48.

For any supporting documents, please contact the author.

A special thanks to APVC David Walker, Head of L&T Hub, Juliet Eve, and all my colleagues from the L&T Hub, for their support in developing Co:Lab.

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Here be dragons: The challenges of balancing quality assurance demands and pedagogical needs

Laura West-Burnhan and **Gaby Tobin**, Cardiff Metropolitan University

Introduction

At a period of post(ish)-pandemic reflection at Cardiff Met, the Times Higher Education University of the Year 2022, we review the last few years following the bringing together of Quality Assurance and Pedagogy in process and operational terms. This bringing together, born of a merger of the Academic Standards and Quality Unit and the Learning and Teaching Development Unit, brought with it a literal breaking down of office walls, and a whole heap of metaphorical walls too, into a newly formed Quality Enhancement Directorate. The merging of people and ideas undoubtedly brought challenges and opportunity, but it wasn't until work started in earnest on a whole-scale review of Quality Assurance processes, that the blending became complete, and we moved into Quality Enhancement mode.

We were mindful of an old trope of academic colleagues viewing Quality Assurance process as something that demanded lip-service paying to it or, as Newton (2000) says, needing to 'feed the beast'. The oft-held, traditional view of a QA office as being staffed by 'dragons' to be negotiated with is something we wanted to move away from: whilst as a Welsh University we are happy to identify as dragons, we aspired to use the new merger of functions as a catalyst to build on and enhance collaborative relationships with academic and professional support colleagues. This had been particularly important during the pandemic when we needed to 'Lay the tracks as the train is running', in that the usual function of a Quality Enhancement department had to continue while we made change, requiring acknowledgement that overlaps of old and new processes can be confusing and problematic at times. Managing expectations was crucial and is true of the whole programme of work: people can tend to assume that reviewing process will result overall in less process, and it often, at least initially, doesn't.

Context

The terms 'Quality Assurance' (QA) and 'Quality Enhancement' (QE) are used interchangeably by many universities in the UK, and the perception or understanding of any distinction is mixed. Both terms, and other less-utilised related phrases, have a range of applications and definitions that are complex and varied both in application and understanding. At a simple level, both terms encompass a range of activities governing Higher Education practice around the teaching, assessment, and awarding of qualifications, but the commonality between them – the word 'quality' – is itself complex and nuanced.

The *Analytic Quality Glossary* (Harvey, 2021) offers the oft-considered seminal definition of Quality *Assurance* as 'the collections of policies, procedures, systems and practices internal or external to the organisation designed to achieve, maintain and enhance quality'. However, Harvey also notes that Quality Assurance has become the shorthand for all forms of external monitoring and is understood by many to mean predominantly external evaluation and review. A former CEO of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) itself, then the UK regulatory body for Higher Education, suggested that there is no accepted definition of Quality Assurance, and that it had become a 'catch-all phrase; it is asked to do too many different things and as a result it can do few of them to anyone's satisfaction' (Williams, 2011, p. 87).

Quality *Enhancement* is seen to a varying degree as being distinct from Assurance, with more of a focus on demonstrable improvement. Interestingly, in Welsh contexts, the process by which external monitoring or review takes place by the QAA is referred to within the scope of Enhancement, as a Quality Enhancement Review (QER). This is a distinctive approach in Wales to meet the requirements of the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) and one that the QAA describes as having 'both an assurance and enhancement function' (QAA Cymru, 2020), formalising the national position on the two functions. This sends a clear message on where the external and national bodies are increasingly seeing themselves in the process.

The *Analytic Quality Glossary* again offers a definition of QE as a process of augmentation, both of learners themselves and the improvement of the institution as a whole (Harvey, 2021). The inclusion of both the focus on improvement and of the learner outcomes is perhaps the distinction between assurance and enhancement but it is not undisputed. Whilst we are used, in Higher Education, to a focus on 'Continual' development across a wide spectrum of activities – extending knowledge, abilities, and understanding being at the core of what we as a sector do – it is suggested that when it comes to functions scrutinised by Quality processes, the notion of continuous improvement is problematic. Williams (2016) cites Collini's (2012) framing of continuous enhancement as conceptually incoherent, positing that there are limits to how far already supposedly excellent activities can be improved. A range of studies propose that Assurance/Accountability and Enhancement are fundamentally opposed, as the basis for enhancement, that of openness and reflection, is at odds with accountability and the demands of external stakeholders (Houston and Paewai, 2013; Groen, 2017; Newton, 2000)

The Cardiff Met context

Tasked with revisiting the entire process for Quality Assurance – from validation to annual monitoring – in 2020, we spent some time considering approach and ethos: we knew we wanted to bring consideration of pedagogy better into the process, have wider and more meaningful input, reduce bureaucracy and burden on staff, and 'close the loop' around data. This initial laying-out of ideas came from the unique nature of the recently merged Quality Enhancement Directorate, and its new structural make-up. Broadly speaking, the Directorate was formed of former Quality Assurance colleagues, Teaching and Learning colleagues and newly joined academics with significant Quality Assurance experience, who acted in a 'bridging' role.

We also recognised that QA and quality control processes are not guarantees of quality just by virtue of merely existing (Vettori *et al*., 2007), and that successful outcomes depended on a number of variables – what you asked/asked for, of whom, when, and why. Success in this area came from a series of increasingly honest conversations with colleagues, particularly those 'poacher turned gamekeeper' academics who, like Laura, now worked in hybrid Quality Enhancement/teaching roles. These discussions led to a recognition of some key themes:

- We weren't always asking for the right things at the right time, and sometimes we were asking more than once. This led to form fatigue, cut and paste or perfunctory answers, and a disengagement from the processes
- We could not assume that what we were told was always representative of the true picture, and much of that was due to how we were asking and the questions we posed
- Neither the academic colleagues, nor the Quality Assurance team, were always sure of what happened next when we did ask for information – so gaps were highlighted in follow-up, targeted support, and development opportunities.

Bringing some key ideas from good teaching and design practice into our evaluation of QA process led us to a place we could more genuinely consider Quality *Enhancement*: a space in which we could be confident we were adding into as much as we asked of the process.

Key to this were some simple changes

Timing

We reviewed several annual monitoring processes and concluded they fed from the same data and served similar purposes – so they were merged into one point of a rolling annual process. We also sought to plan activity in time to work from recent data, and in time to make changes. Bringing academics into the discussions highlighted that prompting review after the deadline for modifications has passed is frustrating and pointless – and likened to the practice of giving students feedback too late for them to build on it in their next assignment.

Support

We approached this from a teaching and learning stance and designed the roll-out and support as we would approach explaining a new student assessment: with clear guidance, exemplars, training videos to be viewed asynchronously, and workshop sessions. Additionally, increased support for the pedagogical change itself has helped perception of the review process and buy-in.

Co-creation and collaboration

Key to our design vision has always been the targeted input from a wider range of colleagues and stakeholders and at a point where they can make a difference – timing again! To this end, we have approached a range of Professional Services colleagues to build their input into process at design stage, not as a sign-off at the end and at a stage too late to make meaningful change. This includes the recruitment of student colleagues, in collaboration with our Student Union. In collaboration with our Student Voice and Engagement Team within the Directorate, we recruited a 20-strong Student 'Insights' team who are trained, supported, paid the Living Wage, and contributed to the process holistically, from acting as Student Reviewers in validation and reviews, to contributing to the design and resources around the new processes and provision.

Rethinking relationships

Considering who gets to contribute to programme design and review has led to some fundamental rethinking of the relationship all stakeholders have with the curriculum. Part of our approach has been in fully integrating these relationships and finding these areas of common ground and purpose. Essentially, we are viewing academics as 'front line workers' or at 'street level' – Lipsky (1980) – the real makers of policy by their influence on how it plays out on the ground. The move beyond a Quality Enhancement body and approach that is *central but separate* is key here – any policy or practice guidance is only as effective as its implementation at 'street' level. Academic and professional staff are not passive receivers of anything, let alone the imposition of central policy: collaboration and involvement we feel is the only way to gain traction.

It is generally acknowledged that, to varying degrees, academic staff can be wary of Quality Assurance processes. Newton suggests that this stems from the top-down directive of much of the activity: 'when led by management objectives, "quality" appears as "accountability" and "managerialism"' (Newton, 2000, p. 155). The function of activities under the Quality Assurance umbrella term may have led, in part, to a generally accepted understanding within academic staff of the need to pay lip service to bureaucratic processes. Many studies conclude that staff find the Quality Assurance process, both within their institution and externally, an additional administrative headache and approach it with what Williams (2016) calls 'ritualised compliance'. In addition to already heavy workloads, the expectation that academic staff absorb increasingly more administrative tasks leads to reluctant completion of Quality Assurance work, and heightens their perception of the process as an additional administrative hurdle to be tackled (Kis, 2005; Groen, 2017).

Part of the negotiation of relationship building therefore has been asking the hard questions of ourselves as a Quality Enhancement office: what is in it for them? Do we make it easier, or inevitable, for colleagues to 'feed the beast' and tick boxes, or to find workarounds despite us? Do we have adequate reward in place for engagement, in that there are intrinsic rewards in undertaking the enhancement exercises that lead to clear and measurable improvement?

We considered some key themes here:

- Re-examining principles across the University – what do we do? Teaching and learning is the common goal – do Quality Assurance processes always work towards this: 'education as an enterprise' (Elken and Stensaker, 2018), or do they sometimes get in the way?
- Allowing support to be focused *where* it is most useful – recognising and rewarding 'academic good standing'
- Allowing scrutiny to be focused *when* it is most useful – at carefully considered points in the year, and at a stage that can make a difference so that colleagues see the point and the outcome
- Acknowledging expertise, difference, and overall good intent. Talking openly about exceptions to the rules and acknowledging subject expertise
- Acknowledging resourcing and support needs – review of whether the level of input is practical and balances the benefits
- Changing the culture of discussion – letting people have a look behind the 'emerald curtain' – when they understand why they are asked for information and confident it is used productively, they are more inclined to give it honestly and willingly.

Conclusions to date

Our work is iterative and complex – we are expecting to have to continue to tweak and review in line with our own reflections and conclusions, and the needs and strategic drivers of the University.

However, talking openly about where we are, about common goals, and finding solutions has been the key to engagement and support. Every single person, and professional unit, that we have asked to be more involved has been delighted, despite the additional workload…and has said they have wanted to be involved for a long time. As one senior colleague has pointed out, their meaningful involvement and input at early stages results in their being able to plan effectively, influence positively, and saves having to 'retrofit' solutions after the fact.

After two iterations of our Programme Enhancement Planning Process and one iteration of our revised process for programme design, validation and review, we have gathered stakeholder feedback and initiated steering groups bringing together voices from module leaders, programme directors, professional service colleagues and University management, to further consider and refine the direction of travel. The feedback is broadly positive, and there is agreement that the direction of travel is right, but, as with every large change, there are a number of areas to further develop and improve. These range from management of data through to use of industry advisors, through to length of forms, through to timing of key milestones, through to more or different KPIs, and so on. Many of these are 'quick wins' which have been changed for the session ahead, and we'll see the outcome of these during the next stakeholder engagement rounds; others are more complex and require further thought and cross-institutional work. In summary, however, many of these go back to the main principle of engagement *vs* impact and the benefit of these process at 'street level'. How can we balance any burden of engagement in quality enhancement activities against the probable output in a way that enhances the experience at 'street level', but also provides the reassurance we need as a public institution? This isn't yet resolved, but we continue to reflect and seek to co-create as we move forward and ask the big questions about why we do what we do.

We dragons in this context continue to try to be powerful champions of positive, compassionate, and meaningful work in tough times and, with any luck, in less tough times too.

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Innovative methods for positive institutional change: The Listening Rooms Project and student and staff 'voice'

Helen J. Parkin and **Emma Heron**, Sheffield Hallam University

Introduction

Two innovative research methods, developed in a large UK university, have been used to challenge how 'voice' data is collected, analysed, and used. These two stand-alone methods are combined to enable Higher Education (and other) institutions to utilise good listening to embed responsive change built on authentic, genuine participant experiences. The article introduces the Listening Rooms Project, offering a step-by-step guide for practitioners, and, through Nancy Kline's key *Thinking Environment* values, shows how institutional change can be built on and through an appreciative approach. The article concludes that good listening benefits all: for participants, educators and institutions alike.

The Listening Rooms Project

The Listening Rooms Project comprises two individual methods: the Listening Rooms (LR) method, which collects data, and the Round Table Analysis (RTA) method, which analyses the data. Since 2017, the Listening Rooms Project has involved over 300 participants and 100 analysers of data across a wide range of projects (from course redesign through to corporate responses to such demands as the degree-awarding gap), and has become a 'business as usual' research method available to staff and students. Latterly, the approach has been adopted in other HEIs in the UK, charities and local organisations. In 2020, the approach won the Student Experience Guardian University Award.

Method one: Listening Rooms

The steps for the LR method, outlined in more detail in Heron (2020), are based on the need for friendship pairs, safe spaces, and key 'kit'.

1 Friendship

Participants in this method need to be friends/close acquaintances. Finding participants could be through access to an easily identifiable pool (e.g. a course leader will have access to students on their course), or they could be found through a call-out to specific participants (e.g. staff of colour asked across the university to participate). Both routes ask participants to 'find a friend' or 'choose someone you know well'. There is no influence from the researcher on how the pairs are created.

2 Safe spaces

Paired participants are briefed by the researcher on the process and purpose of the research, shown how to use the kit and asked to complete a consent form and demographic profiling (this takes 15 minutes). Participants are told that there are no wrong answers and that they should feel free to let the conversation flow in the way that feels comfortable.

Participants undertake their conversations in a private room where they will be uninterrupted. The researcher ensures the privacy and safety of this space by locating her/himself adjacent to the room in case of potential disturbances from outside or from questions or issues from inside.

At the end of the conversation, participants are asked to complete a short debrief on their views of the method (this lasts five minutes) and they are then free to leave.

3 Kit

LR equipment is straightforward and cheap:

A Digital Voice Recorder (DVR) – The researcher switches the DVR on at the start, then leaves the room, and once the conversation is finished, is responsible for switching off and uploading the audio recording for transcription, ensuring data protection at all times.

Six prompt cards – These are made up of simple words and questions (e.g. 'Belonging' and 'What do I feel I belong to?') and are based on a prior literature search of key issues, debates or themes pertinent to the project area. Participants can choose to talk to these cards in any order they wish.

A 10-minute egg timer – Participants are responsible for the egg timer, turning it over after each card until all six cards have been discussed. The conversation therefore lasts for 60 minutes.

Refreshments – Where the research budget allows, drinks and cake are provided either in the room for when the participants arrive or given afterwards.

Incentives – Where budget allows, research participation is enhanced by offering a financial incentive to each participant to undertake the conversation (applied to student, but not staff, involvement).

Method two: Round Table Analysis

Round Table Analysis (RTA) is a stand-alone approach to the analysis of large-scale qualitative datasets, facilitated by an independent staff member and a group of interested and invested stakeholders. It is important that the facilitator has access to, and familiarity with, all the collected data to provide oversight and challenge. Key to the success of the approach is identifying appropriate stakeholders with the influence to stimulate change. Importantly, this doesn't necessarily mean those in a position of authority. Stakeholders should have a vested interest in the area under investigation, and should have a shared interest in making positive change through whatever mechanisms are available to them. This may include changes to strategy and/or policy, through to simply having informed conversations with friends or colleagues with a view to challenging perceptions. Selecting stakeholders with different skills, experiences and roles is beneficial to the process as it will result in a wider range of views contributing to the data analysis.

Stakeholders should be identified as early as possible to secure their interest in the project and also, logistically, to ensure that all stakeholders can hold time in their diary for the analysis session, which is typically three hours in duration. The number of stakeholders included in an RTA should be proportionate to the amount of data collected, but ideally each stakeholder should have to read no more than, for example, four transcripts of sixty minutes.

1) Once stakeholders have been selected and data have been collected and transcribed, the facilitator should have a first read-through of all transcripts ensuring that data are appropriately anonymised for the analysis session. The facilitator should then allocate transcripts to stakeholders in advance of the session, with the expectation that stakeholders should arrive at the session having read the transcripts.

2) The facilitator should ensure that each transcript has been allocated to at least two stakeholders (not including the facilitator unless absolutely necessary) and that no stakeholder has more than four transcripts to read (less for interviews lasting in excess of ninety minutes or more for interviews lasting less than sixty minutes). This ensures that each transcript (and therefore each research participant) has a 'voice' in the analysis session, but that the preparation time for each stakeholder is minimised (Table 1).

	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9	T10
FACILITATOR	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Stakeholder 1	✓		✓			✓		✓		
Stakeholder 2		✓		✓			✓		✓	
...										

Table 1 Reading Matrix to allocate transcripts to stakeholders

3) The role of the facilitator in the session is to guide and capture the discussion and record evidence to support assertions made during the session. The facilitator should create a live document within which the discussion and the evidence can be captured. At the beginning of the session, the facilitator should invite stakeholders to share initial thoughts on the transcripts that they have read with the rest of the group. Each participant should be given the opportunity to reflect on the themes that emerged strongly from their data, and this should enable the other stakeholders to highlight similarities and differences with their own transcripts. Throughout this discussion, the facilitator should start to note key themes. Towards the end of this discussion, the group should collaboratively decide on the key priorities for the data analysis session and mutually agree upon three to four key themes that have emerged from the data to explore more thoroughly. These themes will form the structure for the remainder of the session with a 15-minute focused discussion session and a 15-minute evidence search session dedicated to each theme.

4) The facilitator will invite stakeholders to spend a few minutes reviewing their transcripts through the lens of the chosen theme and then to discuss the theme using the transcripts as the basis of the discussion. The facilitator will record the group analysis of the theme, capturing sub-themes and guiding the group to reach a consensus about the meaning of the data. During the evidence search session, the group should be invited to find evidence to support the assertions of the group discussion by finding key quotes in the transcripts which support, or sometimes oppose, the group analysis.

5) At the end of the session, the facilitator should summarise the discussion and ask the group to co-create findings and recommendations based on the evidence.

6) This format is repeated for each of the key themes. This action-focused approach ensures that stakeholders leave the table with tangible and agreed actions to stimulate change.

7) The facilitator should be mindful that the session cannot cover the entire analysis of the data and should keep in mind the priorities set by the group at the beginning of the session. Where interesting themes emerge, but do not contribute to the priorities decided by the group, the facilitator should acknowledge the theme and record it for further exploration, but guide the discussion back to the key themes. The live document will capture the findings and recommendations and will then be circulated to the group.

So, both methods have a set process, the key components of which can be seen in Table 2.

	Listening Rooms	***Round Table Analysis***
Participants	Friendship pairs Ideally 10 pairs per project	Anybody with the influence to effect change at any level Facilitator Ideally 6+ around the table (plus facilitator) per dataset
Activity	1-hour conversation based on six key themes	3-hour guided thematic discussion with pre-reading
Equipment	Six prompt cards, digital voice recorder, 10 minute egg timer, consent and debrief forms, refreshments, incentives	Transcripts of LR conversations, wireless mouse and keyboard
Time needed to undertake the method	80 minutes (15-minute briefing prior to the 60-minute conversation followed by 5-minute debriefing)	4+ hours: 3 hours for RTA discussions plus reading time (approximately 1 hour per script)

Table 2 Summary overview of the processes of both methods

Good listening, done well, generates good results

Both methods complement each other because they share important appreciative values. These values reflect the work of Kline (1999) who argues that 'thinking' organisations are those that value people and their experiences; in effect, they matter. In Higher Education, as in almost any sector, ethical as well as strategic and corporate reasons for ensuring people matter are important. In Table 3, we explore how the Listening Rooms project embraces Kline's caring values.

<table>
<tr><th>Values (Kline, 1999)</th><th>Listening Rooms</th><th>Round Table Analysis</th></tr>
<tr><td>Attention –

'The quality of your attention determines the quality of other people's thinking.' (p. 36)</td><td>By placing participants in a private room, they are encouraged to focus their attention solely on each other and to listen supportively to each other's views and experiences.</td><td>Through attentive facilitation stakeholders are encouraged to discuss their views and respect other viewpoints to explore the data.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Equality –

'Knowing that you will have your turn improves the quality of your listening.' (p. 58)</td><td>Removal of the researcher from the room creates an unbiased and balanced discussion between friends.</td><td>All transcripts are given equal weight and all RTA stakeholders are given equal voice in the analysis of data, regardless of position, creating democratic output.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Ease –

'Ease creates. Urgency destroys.' (p. 67)</td><td>LRs are a safe space for friends to have guided but relaxed discussions at their leisure.</td><td>Reading data is shared between participants to make participation in the RTA as easy as possible. Efforts are made to create a safe environment for discussion.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Appreciation –

'A five-to-one ratio of appreciation to criticism helps people think for themselves.' (p. 62)</td><td colspan="2">Both methods adopt an Appreciative Inquiry approach to take a strength-based approach to organisational change. Aligning to the work of Watkins et al. (2011), LRs choose the positive as the focus of inquiry and explore the experience of participants. RTA encourages stakeholders to locate the themes that emerge from those experiences and use them to create findings and recommendations for positive institutional change.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Feelings and Encouragement –

'Competition stifles encouragement and limits thinking.' (p. 71)</td><td>By creating a safe environment for friendship pairs, the intention is to enable uninhibited sharing of thoughts and feelings.</td><td>By creating an environment where all input is regarded equally, stakeholders are encouraged to bring their own thoughts, feelings and experiences to add value to the analysis.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Diversity –

'Diversity raises the intelligence of groups.' (p. 87)</td><td>The LRs welcome staff and students from all backgrounds. The friendship pairs are self-selecting so even where a protected characteristic is the focus of inquiry, no assumptions are made about the second participant in the room.</td><td>Efforts are made to ensure fair representation of our diverse university body, especially when a protected characteristic is the focus.

Diverse points of view are welcomed through RTA. Discussion with the aim of reaching a consensus.</td></tr>
</table>

Table 3 Kline's Components of a Thinking Environment alongside how the Listening Rooms Project embraces these components

Good listening benefits all: The impact of The Listening Rooms Project

Feedback evidences that through these two methodological approaches, students and staff have felt appreciated, cared for and valued. The following two quotes show how the methods themselves can affect participants in a positive way (irrespective of any change at institutional level). Listening Rooms Project participation, in and of itself, has benefits:

> *'The best thing was reflecting on how much we have all actually grown and improved since starting university in September.'* (LR participant) *'I really value Listening Rooms as a research tool as it supports the authentic views of participants to be heard and is positive and collaborative.'* (RTA participant)

In addition, the approach has clear impact at a strategic level. Stakeholders across a variety of Listening Rooms projects have articulated the benefits of the methods to their organisations in achieving positive educational change:

> *'Listening rooms provides an innovative way to gather rich qualitative data, in addition to providing a powerful change management tool [...] providing a*

further perspective on the students' lived experience […] which enhances the quality of our decision making with respect to academic practice.' (RTA participant)

'The methodology creates a holistic view of a student, their journey and deep experiences rather than a series of separate transactional interventions. This has transformed our thinking at the Students' Union. The deeper understanding generated by the approach is one of the reasons why our new strategy is to become a "Listening Organisation", where listening doesn't just happen – it's planned into our structures and culture.' (RTA participant)

Considerations of the two methods

Whilst the two methods have many advantages (each individually proving to be a powerful tool for positive participant involvement and, when combined, collectively allowing for meaningful and impactful institutional change), there are limitations to each.

Listening Rooms

Unlike more conventional qualitative methods, such as interviews and focus groups, there is no opportunity for the researcher to probe participants to 'explain further' or elaborate on answers. Indeed, the researcher only gets to listen to the conversation once it has been transcribed. To counter, the friendship between participants allows conversations to go much deeper and cross boundaries that perhaps a researcher was not able to do. It is important to note here that good ethical practices apply and participants fully consent to their data being used and are signposted to appropriate support in the debrief.

The method allows a participant to choose their own friend to participate and as such we do not assume that their friend necessarily falls into the same cohort bracket that we might be wanting to explore. For example, we do not assume that 'disadvantaged males' or LGBT+ participants have only 'disadvantaged male' or LGBT+ friends and it would, in our view, be false to assert that this is the case (although our experience shows that this does happen but, significantly, it is not for the researcher to make this assumption). It is the friendship bond that matters most here for the LR method. This is not the method to use, therefore, if this variability in friendship characteristics matters. It is worth noting here that where there is variability (for example, a straight friend talking to an LGBT+ friend), the researcher interested in LGBT+ experiences can learn an awful lot from this conversation.

Round Table Analysis

This method of data analysis could be regarded as one that does not exhaust all of the collected data because the RTA discussion will focus on agreed priorities and draw out specific points that are important to the collective group. It is a method, in essence, that draws on the collective agreement from the stakeholders and as such some data may not get used (and the group is fine with that). Some researchers may feel uneasy with this aspect.

The RTA method requires time for reading of transcripts and collective discussion even though transcripts are shared out amongst the stakeholders and the individual load on any one individual is reduced. This is not, therefore, a quick method that can be worked through in a short time period. It is not, also, a method for a researcher who wants to work alone on data analysis. Time spent together immersed in 'voice data' can, on the other hand, be regarded as an equivalent of a team meeting and as such need not necessarily be regarded as extra time. It also has the benefit of allowing a wider range of stakeholders to come together and talk about what is, by definition of them being present, of importance to them.

Bringing a range of stakeholders to the discussion will almost inevitably demand research skills of individuals who are not researchers (their expertise will be in the area under focus, for example, a head teacher's view on 'teaching' or a student rep's view on 'student experience'). This may feel risky to a researcher and does require clear instruction and confidence around explaining ethical processes such as confidentiality. Reading transcripts may feel a challenge for those who do not do this as part of their everyday activity and could run the risk of stakeholders declining the offer to participate (although they almost always get something positive back from the experience). This method, therefore, may be less attractive to those researchers who need a simple data analysis plan with as few potential obstacles as possible.

Conclusion

This article outlines two methods that have been brought together to bring about positive institutional change through friendship, collaboration and immersion in voice. Through listening well to holistic experiences guided by shared appreciative values, we argue that meaningful change can be implemented to enhance educational experiences for students, educators and institutions.

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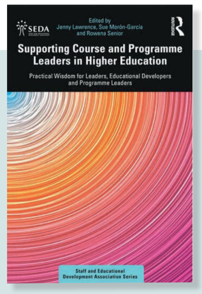
Book Review



Supporting Course and Programme Leaders in Higher Education: Practical Wisdom for Leaders, Educational Developers and Programme Leaders

Edited by Jenny Lawrence, Sue Morón-Garcia and Rowena Senior

Routledge, 2022 ISBN: 978-0-367-650 1 5-5

If you have ever wondered about the sheer complexity and diversity of the role of a programme leader, this book brings it to life. This edited volume of perspectives on the role positively buzzes with different voices from international, national, institutional and individual contexts. The ambitious and far-reaching range of these perspectives embodies the essential nature of this role – regardless of its official title. Collectively, these voices come together to show us why this role matters, how we can support colleagues in this role and – above all – how important a global conversation about this role is for our understanding of the sector. For this reason alone, I thank the editors and the contributors for capturing this conversation in one text. There is an irrepressible energy fizzing from the pages that left me, the reader, feeling part of this conversation.

This book is at once a practice-sharing guide, a collection of personal reflections, a scholarly enquiry and evaluation, a manifesto for change and a reflective tool. Split into three sections, the reader is taken on a breathtaking journey in which the definitions of terms and rationale for the starting point are helpfully defined for us at the beginning in the Introduction. What stands out is the desire of the editors to share and empower the Programme Leader (PL) through these multi-vocal explorations. This is a call to action for leadership that is collaborative, radical and hopeful. Inspired by the words of bell hooks, it is this notion of 'practical wisdom' that delights me, inviting me in. The editors also explain the germinating ideas for this book, which can be traced back to previous SEDA work and are also deeply embedded in the existing scholarship and practices that have been explored in the UK context.

In the first part of the book, we are treated to the institutional development of programme leadership and programme leaders and are offered perspectives of national and institutional examples. We start in Scotland where the culture of enhancement is deeply embedded with a helpful framework to enable conversations before we can consider what this might look like in a South African context.

From there we move between UK and international contexts. It is clear that there is a powerful role for both formal and informal

networks (see the chapter by Scott and Lawrence) and how we create those cultural contexts in which these networks can grow and be cultivated is helpful to consider.

Swiftly moving on to Part 2, we move into the lived experiences of Individual Programme Leaders, starting with Doug Parkin's discussion on how academic leadership aligns to the role. Indeed, this whole section would make helpful reading for those colleagues applying for Senior Fellowship against the Professional Standards Framework, but it also sets the tone for some useful explorations about the increasing diversity of our learners, and subsequent implications for the role of PL. Again, the responses of colleagues enable us to ponder the case studies through the eyes of other perspectives, deepening our reading and understanding.

What stands out most powerfully for me in this section is how much the role of a PL relies on relationships and collaboration and community, embodied in the reflective dialogue between Jessie Johnson and Frances Kalu. The different examples in this section helped me see how indeed PLs can be change agents in a broad and contextual sense of the word.

In the third and final part of the book, we come to the practice of leading programme teams with examples ranging from co-creation and collaboration with Evelyn Jamieson, to 'assessment therapy' as a response to NSS scores (Henri) and identifying how and where PLs can get support through a Canadian curriculum development framework, all of which are reflected through a response from another country's perspective.

For me, what I enjoyed most about this book was the opportunity to see such a range of initiatives in place globally to enhance, empower and support the role of the PL. The clear signposting and structure of the book helped me navigate the many, many examples and the conversational responses to each of the case studies is a lovely format that embodies the spirit of the book, set out in the Introduction. There is a risk that this multitude of voices could leave the reader feeling a little overwhelmed, like the aftermath of a lively conversation where you are not quite sure what to think but feel energised nonetheless! There is also – and this is not a criticism but a comment on where we are in our conversation in the UK – an inevitable focus on western, anglocentric examples, and although I welcomed the responses from diverse perspectives, it would be nice to think that the next version of this book will perhaps be multilingual too? We finish with the manifesto for sustainable programme leadership, which I will certainly be taking back into my institution, fired up and ready to talk!

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Identity through integrated practice: Finding a place in the third space

Diane Nutt, Independent HE Consultant, and **Emily McIntosh**, Middlesex University

Introduction

Over a number of years, we have talked together about our work in higher education and, drawing on concepts from Whitchurch (2012), have come to appreciate the value and power of our identities working in 'the third space'. By third space we mean the place between conventional situations and roles in higher education. So for example, the space between academic and professional roles and activities. The third space is often a project-based space, where staff work together on activities incorporating both professional and academic agenda. So, for example, a retention project, or widening-participation activities, often take place in this space. While Whitchurch brought the concept firmly into HE, to help make sense of the work done by a range of staff (for example educational developers), there has been increasing recognition in HE of the importance of the third space across a range of institutional priorities (e.g. see Grant, 2021).

How we work in this 'third space' context we see as 'integrated practice'. This term will be explored further below. As part of our interest in, and commitment to, exploring integrated practice as an effective way of working, we connected with colleagues across the sector to bring together a collection of accounts, which explore four elements of third-space working: strategies and leadership; identities and ways of working; the impact of integrated practitioners' work in the academy; and career trajectories and professional development for those in the third space (McIntosh and Nutt, 2022). In bringing together this collection we were particularly interested in providing an opportunity for those who work in the third space to tell their own stories. Authors in our collection bring their narrative accounts and case study examples of what it means to be effective in the third space.

In this article we want to explore, in brief, some of the insights we gained from bringing this collection together and from working in this way. We will begin by explaining what we mean by integrated practice, and then explore some of the identity tensions in working in-between the conventional demarcations of higher education. We will then discuss aspects of integrated practice. There are a number of issues we could consider here, but we have chosen to focus on three: partnership working; how to thrive in the third space; and whether it is possible to build a career in the third space. These three issues are important to both of us and to those we have talked to and worked with in our ongoing work exploring integrated practice.

What is integrated practice?

In 2009, Whitchurch developed a framework from the research that she undertook on blended professionals in the UK, the US and Australia. She developed the framework to identify and explore four key dimensions which describe third-space working – spaces, knowledges, legitimacies and relationships. We argue that, taken together, these four dimensions highlight what integrated practice actually is (see Figure 1). It is about creating and identifying spaces for cross-boundary working; it is about creating new knowledges by bringing in colleagues with different perspectives; it is about cultivating expertise and creating legitimacies; and, finally, it is about supporting, nurturing and building relationships between colleagues. We argue here that educational developers naturally adopt these four dimensions of working and that, consequently, integrated practice is a hallmark of thriving in the educational development space. The application of integrated practice to educational development is explored in more detail, below.

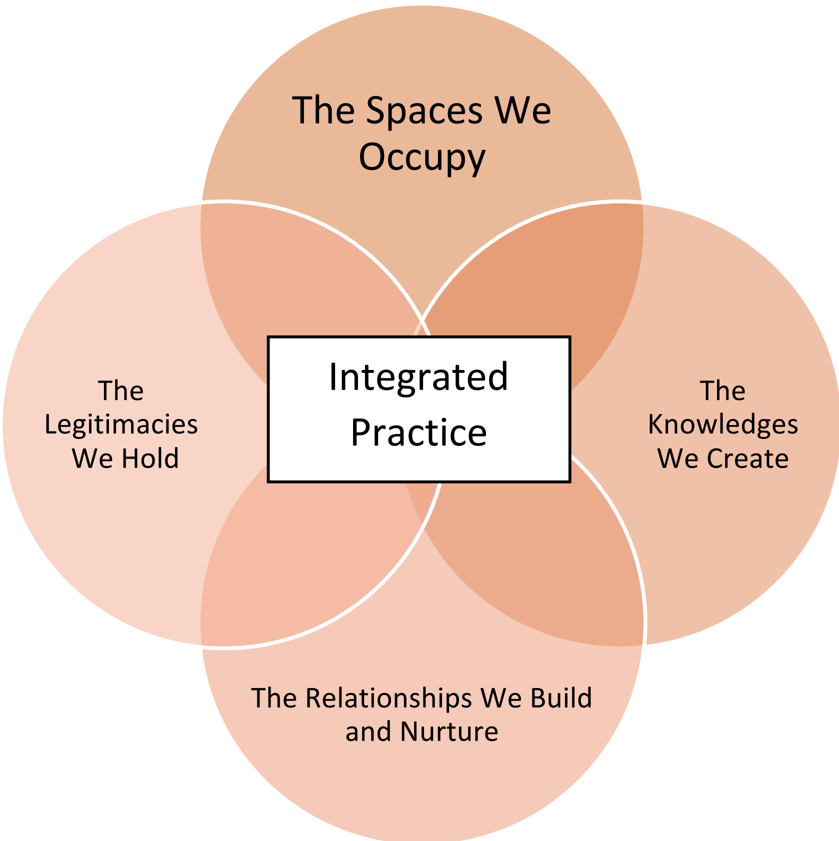

Figure 1 Integrated practice

Imposter syndrome and identity in-between

Educational developers, learning developers and staff developers (whatever our titles) are familiar with the sense of working in-between academic and professional settings. Those of us in these roles are familiar, too, with the debates about role definition, which is sometimes played out in job titles and types of contract (academic, professional, administrative, managerial). But whatever our title, or our contract type, the activities we undertake are frequently in an apparently liminal space between conventional settings. This inevitably leads many of us to experience identity conflicts and imposter syndrome.

Some people working in the third space talk about a feeling of invisibility (Akerman, 2020) and lack of recognition, of who we are, of our skills and of our practices, and this can have implications for the effectiveness of our work. While working in the shadows can sometimes be productive, as we can work around some of the apparently fixed structures, it is not the best way to move forward with positive change in a systematic way. Kift (2022, p. 59) suggests, 'To assure individualised student success for diverse cohorts in the post-pandemic university, our institutions and ways of working must transform and become more relational, permeable and agile'. Feeling personally invisible and having our work be invisible are also different issues. If we can see that the work we do with others in the academy – through staff development and student support, for example – makes a real difference and that difference is recognised, then our personal relative lack of recognition can be managed differently.

For some of us, the discovery of the concepts of third space and integrated practice are incredibly liberating. Here, in the third space, we can have a valued identity. And being recognised by other integrated practitioners and those who write about and work actively in the third space, can make a significant difference to our actions and effectiveness. Through this sense of identity we establish our legitimacies in line with one of the four dimensions of the framework (see Figure 1).

Partnership working

A big part of effective integrated practice is partnership working. We partner with academics, professional staff, researchers and students. The relationships we create in these partnerships are fundamental to making a difference in our activities. These are the relationships we build and nurture (see Figure 1).

We create bridges between people and translate ideas across disparate perspectives (Denney, 2022). This is both part of the relationship work, but also fuses with other dimensions in creating knowledge and establishing legitimacies. We create communities of practice and support others to engage in ways of working that are new to them, shaping the spaces we occupy. But what does this mean in practice? Quinsee, for example, writes about using a set of shared principles to work with staff across an institution to move forward substantial change during the pandemic (Quinsee, 2022). Carey (2022) highlights the importance of purposeful partnering with students to make change effective in student engagement and success work. From a third-space role, he established an initiative to build assessment literacy in both students and staff, using 3 student/staff teams (each with 3 students and 2 staff) from across the university, to develop resources. Some of the outputs from this partnership work included: a compendium of authentic assessment; a tool to support staff and students to clarify assessment expectations; and a template for students to work with feedback (Carey, 2022, p. 215). Millard and Lowe (2022) describe how working from a central department across academic and professional services, they brought together groups of staff and students to create an extra-curricula awards programme (Graduate+) and a digital assessment centre; they note that, 'For us, boundary spanning approaches have been successful in instilling confidence in collaborators that their voices will be heard, and that they can help lead that change' (Carey, 2022, p. 215).

A manifesto for thriving in the third space (Lawrence, 2022)

In bringing together accounts of third-space working, we discovered many practitioners thriving in the third space. This isn't to say that working 'between' is easy or without challenges, but our chapter authors, and in some cases their third-space research respondents, provided a rich set of stories showing that integrated practice could be fulfilling and could make a difference to student learning, staff teaching and organisational success (we used a narrative case study approach to draw out the connections; for details, see McIntosh and Nutt, 2022, pp. 9-11).

One of the chapter authors, Jenny Lawrence (2022), provided a way to make sense of these survival tactics; she defined what she called 'a manifesto for thriving in the third space' (p. 233). Elements of her manifesto to mention here are: the importance of being part of a community; and finding the value of the work we do, but as part of that, also working to our own values. Perhaps unsurprisingly for an educational developer, she also argues strongly for a continual approach to learning, and emphasises the importance of the scholarship of teaching and learning, and this is clearly one of the ways we create knowledge and establish our legitimacies (see Figure 1). In Lawrence's account of her own third-space journey, she highlights the importance of gaining recognition markers in our work – for example, FSEDA, SFHEA, NTFS. Others in different third-space roles also talk about how important gaining other markers of recognition has been in helping them thrive in the third space (e.g. CMALT, PhD, CeLP).

To thrive, Lawrence and others also emphasise the importance of ongoing reflection, which can be difficult to find time for in contemporary university life and when working on often complex integrated activity. However, our own experience of working in the third space and talking with others about integrated practice reinforces the need for time to have these conversations: to reflect both alone and together about our work in this context. Finding our communities of practice is key to thriving in the third space. Many of our authors highlighted the value of networks and supportive communities, which were often with colleagues from outside their main work-based institution.

Portfolio careers: Creating a frame for careers in the third space

A key anxiety, or challenge, for third-space practitioners is whether it is possible to have a career in the third space. Is this a good place to work in the long term, and how do you carve out a career in integrated practice? This is becoming an even more important question given the growing recognition of the importance of third-space work in the ongoing success of universities (Grant, 2021). Roles within third spaces are often not developed in a linear way, but rather can be developed in response to particular priorities; they can be in departments which change title and focus; and can move in and out of faculty and central settings. Some third-space roles are unique and/or the role can be the only person working on that kind of activity in a small institution. There are a wide range of potential qualifications and experiences that might, or might not, be required or valued in roles. It is hard to visualise a career ladder in this complex, moving environment. As the four dimensions (see Figure 1) reveal, we occupy a range of spaces, create diverse knowledge, develop different legitimacies, and connect with a variety of others inside and outside our institutions.

Two pieces of research provide some insight into how we might think about integrated practice careers. Firstly, Veles and Carter (2016, p. 524) created the concept of a career frame explaining that many practitioners in the third space take 'lateral trajectories' to gain experience and knowledge as part of their career development. Secondly, more recently, Whitchurch has been researching academic careers and findings from this new research suggest the idea of concertina careers (Whitchurch, 2022). Many integrated practitioners move in and out of roles within academic and professional settings. The changing face of HE leads to a range of sideways opportunities, which can be engaging and inspiring for those who enjoy the 'in-between' world of integrated practice. These two ways of conceptualising careers in contemporary academe suggest that those of us who do develop a career in the third space are more likely to have a portfolio career than follow a conventional career ladder. It is perhaps worth noting here that we, and many of our authors, have found mentors (Beckingham, 2022) and peer networks to be a vital part of thinking through our own integrated practice careers. Our mentors and networks have often been colleagues from outside our own institutions.

Managing a portfolio career can be challenging for integrated practitioners but is also an important consideration for HR departments and university managers. Grant (2021) has recently argued that both currently and into the future universities need to recognise the importance of the third space. He suggests that for universities to succeed in increasingly challenging times, they will need to make much more of this space and those who work between and across the 'lines'.

Hall (2022:31), herself a university leader, argues that 'university leaders should call on the boundary crossers to help navigate through the post-pandemic reimagining of the university and…third space professionals should seize the opportunity'. This is a challenge for institutions, but also, we believe, for us as boundary-crossing integrated practitioners.

Conclusion

In this article, we have introduced you to the concept of integrated practice and considered the four dimensions which make up this way of working. We have discussed some of the challenges of identity in the third space and explored aspects of working in this way. We have drawn on some of the voices in our edited collection on the impact of integrated practice to give you a flavour of why we see integrated practice as so valuable to higher education. We hope that you can take time to reflect on your own practice in the context of the four dimensions, and that you find this useful for thinking about the way you work and about your own career.

If you do want to reiterate your identity as an integrated practitioner and see yourself as having a career in the third space, we would both strongly recommend the value of finding a good mentor, considering coaching and making connections with others beyond your local environment. We are at different points of our own careers as integrated practitioners – Emily in the middle, Diane towards the end – but we both regularly appreciate our mentors and our networks and the support, guidance and challenge they provide. The book we are drawing on for this article would not exist without our personal networks and our support for each other. It is, we believe, through our relationships that all of the four dimensions of integrated practice come together.

Check out our blog: Third Space Perspectives – exploring integrated practice.

A version of this article was presented at a HEDG meeting in April 2022.

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Embedding, but foregrounding, academic skills development

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The foundations: Learning to learn and social inclusion

Within HE there are still those who expect students to start university as 'oven ready' independent learners. Often these educators also see the job of developing the skills required to work independently as one for others to handle. In this short article we propose that the development of academic skills should be shared by all those involved in the teaching and learning process and that, whilst they should be embedded within the programme (Wingate, 2006), they should also be foregrounded, so students are clear as to the skills they are developing, and their salience in their development as effective learners. We maintain this is important not only for providing a clear focus on 'learning to learn', but also for social inclusion, addressing the gaps in academic skills arising from students' differing prior educational experiences, experiences which have become increasingly diverse within the context of widening-participation initiatives. Here we describe our socially inclusive approach to supporting the development of academic skills in a cohort of Foundation Year Psychology students, through an intentional design strategy which foregrounds academic skills whilst also embedding them within the Psychology curriculum.

Why foreground?

The development of academic skills is central to the educational process. Students need to be able to connect academic learning explicitly with the process of learning, as well as with the acquisition of knowledge and skills. By highlighting the key skills that underpin academic success, gaps arising from students' differing educational experiences can be somewhat addressed. This is particularly relevant against the backdrop of widening-participation initiatives, which aim to address discrepancies in the educational achievement of under-represented student groups. However, it is not clear that students are aware of the key skills that underpin academic success, which in turn will hinder their development as successful independent learners (Goldingay *et al*., 2014). In addition, those from under-represented and/or disadvantaged groups have been identified as making limited use of academic support services (Benson *et al*., 2012), with barriers identified including these services being seen as additional hassle for students, as well as having a stigma attached (Goldingay *et al*., 2014). Goldingay *et al*. also identified the importance of structured and specific expectations in facilitating the development of academic skills. In line with these findings, we propose an approach that endorses embedding learning *how* to study within subject content (Wingate, 2006), but which deliberately draws attention to key skills and the contribution they make to students' development as learners.

5-step process

The 5-step process below outlines the approach we took to 'embed, but foreground' academic skills development on a Foundation Year programme in Psychology. Our aims for the programme were:

- To connect academic learning explicitly with the *process* of learning
- To make *explicit* key academic skills and practices that contribute to success
- To develop the students' insight into themselves as learners
- To foster an interest in/focus on 'learning to learn'.

In so doing, we hoped to begin to level the academic playing field for the students on our programme.

First, through discussion with teaching colleagues we identified the *key academic skills* students need to be successful. These included both general skills that would apply across all degree programmes, for example time-management, but also more discipline-specific skills. The skills identified may be seen in Figure 1.

Secondly, we considered *learning activities* that would support the development of these skills. Continuing with the example of time management, we developed a workshop in which students were introduced to different time-management techniques and set a post-workshop task of trying out and then reflecting on different approaches. Students completed a 'Reflection Log' which was discussed at a subsequent workshop. We also modelled techniques within the programme, for example, using the Pomodoro technique (Cirillo, 2018) to structure writing retreats organised ahead of assessment deadlines.

Thirdly, we considered *how and where the learning activities might be embedded* within the programme. We mapped the focus on skills within and across modules. Figure 1 shows this process when looked at chronologically across the year-long programme. We then embedded academic skills development sessions within curriculum content, linking with the type and timing of assessments. This allowed us to plan for progression, skill development and the revisiting of skills across the programme. In addition, we made the academic skills visible within the core module VLE, with each academic skill assigned its own folder of resources, making it both visible and accessible to students.

	Semester 1					Semester 2			
Academic skills	TP Formative essay	PRW Formative annotation (peer feedback)	PRW Annotated Bibliography (50%)	PRW Government Report (50%)	TP Formative reflection	ISR Formative research project plan	TP Summative essay (50%)	TP Summative reflection (50%)	Research Project Proposal (100%)
Academic integrity & referencing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Academic reading (engaging critically with the literature)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Assessment strategy (understanding assignment briefs and using feedback)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Academic writing (critical analysis & synthesis)									
- Evaluation & critique	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
- Developing an academic argument	✓			✓		✓	✓		✓
- Application of knowledge				✓		✓			✓
Literature searching		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
Note-making (in class, captured content and/or reading)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Time-management	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Writing reflectively					✓		✓	✓	

Figure 1 Mapping of skills to assessments chronologically

Next we considered how we and the students would *know they have developed the academic skills*. We identified ways this would be achieved, for example, through the delivery of specific learning and teaching activities during scheduled workshops, and looking at the type (formative/summative) and timing of assessments. This was to ensure that, in addition to being able to demonstrate the skills to which they had been introduced, the assessment pattern allowed for the ongoing development of skills.

Finally, when thinking about assessment we also considered which *assessment formats* were the most suitable, looking at traditional, authentic and more creative formats, whilst also ensuring constructive alignment between the assessment tasks and the intended learning outcomes (Biggs and Tang, 2011). Whilst all assessments provided the opportunity to use and demonstrate the development of academic skills, we also designed an End of Year reflection assignment requiring the students to reflect on their learning journey across the year.

Outcomes

As a new programme, we have had limited opportunity so far to formally analyse results, but anecdotally, we have had positive feedback from both cohorts of students who have completed the programme, and Level 4 module results from the first group of Psychology Foundation Year students look extremely positive. The end of year reflection assignment provided high-quality and insightful reflective writing which demonstrated year-long engagement with academic skills development. We believe foregrounding the development of academic skills has helped students not only to improve skills to support their ongoing development as learners, but also to understand the importance of these skills alongside academic content. In so doing, we believe this design provides a more socially inclusive approach to academic skills development whilst supporting students in learning to learn.

Next steps

We are continually reviewing the academic skills, specifically the what, how and where they are 'embedded, but foregrounded' into the curriculum. We are also in the process of amending assessments so that in addition to the dedicated reflective writing assignment, students will be required to write a short reflection within other assessments which focuses on a specific aspect of their academic writing, for example, how they engaged with feedback, or how they developed their academic argument.

Conclusion

Although this 5-step process was applied to a Foundation Year programme, it could be implemented in all courses, and is particularly important in the first year of study of a programme, irrespective of level. Students starting a Master's degree will similarly have differing prior educational experiences, notably the time elapsed since they were last in formal education. Whilst we acknowledge we had the advantage of being a new one-year course with fewer modules than many programmes, this method could still be extended to other programmes and highlights the importance of a programmatic approach to academic skills development. To conclude, we would like to pose the two questions that have underpinned our approach for others to consider. We believe that embedding, but foregrounding the development of academic skills and sharing this responsibility between all educators is one way to address these questions, and we would be interested in the responses of others:

- How are you helping to level the academic playing field for students joining your programmes?
- How are you developing your students as (independent) learners?

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Literacies, fluencies and academic practices

David Baume, University of London Centre for Online and Distance Education

New meanings of 'literacy'

The meaning of 'literacy' seems to have expanded, while I wasn't looking. It used to mean something like 'being able to read and write', maybe also 'listen and speak'. Now literacy (sometimes, literacies) carries a much broader meaning, something like 'being competent or capable' at – many things.

So we have many (often overlapping) literacies, including digital literacy, information literacy, library literacy, cultural literacy, academic literacies (including, for example, assessment literacy), research literacy, careers literacy, environmental literacy, even numerical literacy – numeracy, surely? And no doubt others to come. Let's explore.

Literacies considered as capabilities

Literacies, whatever else they are, are clearly capabilities. They are things that people can *do*. People who are, in these various senses, literate, can – read, write, listen, speak, be academic, manage information, work with numbers...

Knowledge and capabilities

I find it productive to consider learning as the gaining, the development, of capabilities. Of course, I also value the acquisition of knowledge. People – I – enjoy learning new things, and knowing things. But my inclination always is to value what people – again, I – can do with and to knowledge, rather than simply the possession and recall of knowledge.

To emphasise: I am not against knowledge, against knowing. The more knowledge we in some sense have or can readily access, or know the existence of, or can reasonably surmise the existence of, then the more connections, relationships we can suggest and make and test among these items of knowledge. The growth in these connections rises exponentially with the number of nodes, in this case the number of pieces of information. This is an individual version of the network effect.

But knowledge, knowing, becomes increasingly problematic, at least until we are clear about the status of what we know. We often are not readily able to say how confident or provisional we are in our knowing, and why. And even then, some knowledge still becomes wrong and/or irrelevant, more and more rapidly. And new knowledge is created at an increasing rate.

A useful hierarchy of goals for learning starts with:

- *Knowing* – knowing physics, social science, literature, any discipline. It progresses to
- *Doing* – again, knowing physics, social science, literature, any discipline. At the top of this hierarchy lies
- *Being* – being a physicist, a social scientist, a writer or critic or scholar of literature, any disciplinary of or professional identity. Not excluding our many other identities, personal, political, and as citizens of the world.

I do not offer this as a developmental sequence. But the hierarchy may usefully describe extents or qualities of engagement with a discipline. I value being over (just) doing and knowing. I value doing over (just) knowing. This whole article suggests a shift in our balance of attention away from just knowledge and towards action and identity. Not a rejection of knowledge, rather an increased caution about it; putting it in its place. So, I like literacies because they shift attention from just knowing and towards doing, and potentially towards being, towards particular identities.

Knowing and action

Building on all this, we can use the idea of literacies to reconceptualise – I would suggest, to recover – the idea of a discipline. Disciplines are often described, conceptualised, treated, as areas of knowledge. And somehow, in our course design and teaching, with no malign intent, knowledge is often gently reduced to propositional knowledge, to content. We can reinforce this view of knowledge when we write knowledge down, when we lecture it, above, when we use unseen closed-book written examinations which, whatever else we may intend them to assess, inevitably also assess knowledge.

There can be a snobbery at play here, that prefers knowing to doing. Knowing is sometimes felt to be rarefied, exalted, a thing of fine minds and clean hands. Doing, by contrast – 'horny-handed sons of toil' – exemplifies a view of those who do.

Here's a true story about relations between knowing and doing:

> *I went to see my GP. I described my symptoms. He paused, and then said, 'I am sorry, I'm just back from two weeks of holiday, and my brain seems to have emptied itself completely. Do you mind if I look this up?'*
>
> *'Hm. Would I rather you guessed, possibly guessed wrong, and failed to cure me, or even made things worse? Or would I prefer you to look it up?' (We had a good relationship, and he knew I worked in education. This was neither meant nor heard as rude.)*
>
> *He took my questions as encouragement to look the symptoms up. He used what he looked up – no doubt alongside his fast-returning memory – to prescribe a course of treatment. It worked.*

In this short encounter I discovered that I value expertise – the ability to do – of course critically, intelligently, responsively, and in a knowledge-informed way – over knowledge alone.

What follows from the story? Among other things, this advice: Encourage your students to look it up. Why? They may have mis-remembered it. And some 'its' will have changed, some will have become wrong, some will have become irrelevant. Anyway, looking it up gets easier by the month. This is how the real world works. Even for GPs.

Recovering disciplines as fields of practice

Recovering the idea of a discipline here means conceptualising and treating the discipline as a field of practice, and as an identity. Not rejecting the discipline's knowledge. Rather, again, putting that knowledge in its place, as a tool or object for critical and creative thought and action, rather than as the summit of aspiration. Nothing of value is lost when we move away from considering disciplines as bodies of knowledge, and instead consider them as fields of practice, as identities. And much is gained. Students both use and critique their advancing knowledge. Indeed, students learn knowledge, and much more besides, as they do the discipline, as they define and tackle questions and problems.

Knowledge achieves much of its significance in action. Learning to do and learning to be, as developmental and critical functions, are at once more challenging and more rewarding than just learning content.

The relationships between knowledge, capability and identity are complex. Just one example: The idea of a progression from, in terms from Bloom's taxonomy of educational outcomes in the cognitive domain, knowing, and then advancing, as the years of study pass, through understanding and application to analysis then synthesis and evaluation, bears very little relation to how students actually learn (Krathwohl *et al*., 2000). Bloom suggests, or is often taken to suggest, that students start by collecting and memorising a bunch of facts. Then, on a second pass through, they come to understand these facts. And then they revisit these understood facts and learn how to apply them…

This is, of course, nonsense. Most teachers don't wholly teach this way, fortunately. But I have seen this Bloomian idea of progression in teaching portfolios and HEAcademy fellowship claims. The idea clearly at least affects the thinking, possibly also the practice, of teachers. It is sometimes made explicit in course handbooks.

Perhaps, in relation to Bloom, the frequent disconnect between teachers' espoused and enacted pedagogic theories (Baume, 2017) is not such a bad thing.

A student is far more likely to learn when a problem, question, issue, idea or challenge seizes their attention, and when they work – at any and all six Bloom levels as appropriate – to solve the problem or answer the question.

The teacher has clear, important and

rewarding roles here, including offering questions or problems, helping students to analyse these, and then steering and informing and challenging. Also, in helping students to do these things. Not so much in telling students lots of content, or in answering questions that students have not yet asked, as lectures often do.

Bloom's Taxonomy can provide a valuable tool for analysing the level of learning outcomes (Baume, 2015a). But it is disastrous as a guide to course design (Baume, 2015b).

So, I also like literacies because they can help us to reconceptualise disciplines in productive ways, indeed they can help us to recover disciplines to something like what the discipline or profession means for the member, the practitioner, the advocate, the enthusiast, the lecturer. Perhaps something like a field of academic, disciplinary and/or professional practice?

Higher levels of literacy

I have a reservation about literacy. Literacy sounds, well, a bit low level for higher education.

I am delighted when children in the junior school of which I am a governor show how they can read, write, listen, talk, select and use information, make sense, and solve problems using reasoning and numbers. But surely higher education should mean, should require, more than such basics? Something – higher? What would make literacies higher level, more degree-worthy?

Perhaps the upper four levels of Bloom – application, analysis, evaluation and synthesis? (Krathwohl *et al*., 2000). The upper levels of Biggs' SOLO taxonomy, the abilities to bring together, synthesise, maybe compare and contrast, and then go beyond, given information and concepts? (Biggs, n.d.)

Or as QAA suggest, abilities 'to devise and sustain arguments, and/or to solve problems, using ideas and techniques, some of which are at the forefront of a discipline', to 'critically evaluate arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts and data (that may be incomplete), to make judgements, and to frame appropriate questions to achieve a solution – or identify a range of solutions – to a problem', 'an appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge', and the ability to 'communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences' (QAA Framework, Part A4.15).

There are lots of ideas here about where level in capabilities lies. The key may be that levels lie in complexity (of capabilities); in the ability to communicate accurately, clearly and effectively; and perhaps above all, in taking an active and a critical approach.

Beyond literacies

With level addressed, I like the idea of literacies, capabilities, as goals. But I don't think capabilities are enough. In two senses.

Values and principles

Alongside literacies/capabilities, surely values and principles are also essential parts of academic, disciplinary, professional, practice and identity. The 'know, be, do' hierarchy described earlier helps us here. Values and principles need not figure much in knowing, except as propositional knowledge, knowing what the values and principles are. Values and principles can be more prominent in what we do – they can inform what we do, and also how and why we do what we do. But values and principles are, surely, an inextricable part of our academic, professional, disciplinary, indeed our personal, identity.

Embedded capabilities

Let's stay with doing and being. It is rarely enough to be *able* to do things. If the things are important enough, we also need to just *do* them, as essential and continuing parts of our practice, indeed of our identity. Literacies, capabilities, learning outcomes, are things that we *can* do. But, when we shift from doing to being, then they become things that we *always* do; in a deliberate double negative, things that we *cannot not* do.

Capabilities have, on this account, now become things that we *must* do – again, critically, reflectively, embodying our values and principles, embedded in our practice.

Fluency

When we exercise these capabilities often enough, when they become part of our practice and of our identity, we become fluent in their practice, exhibiting a certain grace. Fluency feels a good quality, as long as we remain critical and reflective about what we do and how we do it. We need to get beyond unconscious competence, and get to what I have called reflective competence (Baume, 2004).

Locating and teaching literacies

Literacies currently occupy an ambiguous position. Particular literacies may be taught, and even assessed, in their own modules: alongside but separate from the discipline taught and assessed by, for example, librarians, learning technologists, mathematicians, learning support staff, who may specialise in, for example, mathematics or English.

The good news: the teachers and assessors are experts in their particular literacies.

The bad news: there is a danger of actual or perceived disconnect between these literacies and the discipline. This can lead to students taking these literacies less seriously than they take their main discipline of study. It can also mean less integration of these literacies into course design, teaching and assessment of their main discipline of study.

Alternatively, literacies can be integrated into the course, and taught and assessed by subject specialists.

The good news: above all, these literacies are planned, taught and assessed as part of the students' main discipline of study, rather than as an adjunct.

The bad news: those teaching these literacies may not be completely up to date with recent developments in these literacies, and in approaches to course design, teaching and assessment for these literacies.

A good synthesis – not a middle ground – might be for subject specialists and literacies experts to collaborate in the design of courses, and in teaching and assessing discipline-appropriate accounts of the literacies integrated within the disciplinary courses. The academic and disciplinary credibility of the literacies is enhanced, and all relevant expertise is applied.

In a little more detail, how may this integration happen? Literacies or fluencies may be included in the learning outcomes. The example below is an account currently in development of critical information fluency:

A. I am critically information fluent when I can:
   i. Identify what information I need
   ii. Identify why (and when) I need it
   iii. Find it efficiently
   iv. Evaluate it rigorously according to explicit and appropriate criteria
   v. Use/process it for my intended academic/professional purpose(s), and
   vi. Communicate it clearly, accurately, appropriately (to the intended audience(s)) and ethically, fully acknowledging sources
   vii. Also, explain/give sound reasons for my decisions and actions at each stage.

(Notes: ii. I think 'when' may be far less important than it was in 2004, when it probably referred to interlibrary loans and the like. Now and in the future, most information retrieval probably is/will be rapid/instant. iii. There may be scope for further work on this and subsequent adverbs.)

This is heavily adapted from CILIP (2004) (Armstrong *et al* (n.d.), which suggests that Information Literacy means 'knowing when and why you need information, where to find it, and how to evaluate, use and communicate it in an ethical manner'.

Alternatively, such a literacy may be considered to be an assessment criterion, standards to be applied to academic work.

Whether as learning outcomes or as assessment, some such detailed account of information literacy or critical information fluency could be adapted for other literacies, and applied to particular disciplines. If such accounts of literacies were collated, then common features of these various literacies could be identified, overlaps removed, and a coherent, discipline-appropriate account of all the various discipline-relevant literacies could be taught and assessed in an integrated way.

With or without such a grand integration, these various literacies make explicit some of the components, some of the qualities, of good academic work. I cannot easily see the boundaries between these various literacies and the study, the practice, the advancement of the discipline itself. We could resolve this uncertainty by calling each aspect of the practice of a discipline a literacy. This would require disciplines to be redefined as clusters of literacies. This might be a very tough sell. Or we could describe all these various literacies, capabilities, as essential parts of the discipline. This is surely accurate. It also feels more likely to be productive.

Why the recent interest in literacies?

The recent drive to identify and teach these various literacies, capabilities, competencies, suggests the view that they have not always been given sufficient attention within the disciplines. Why might this be the case? How did these capabilities become somewhat separated from current conceptions of the disciplines?

One possibility is that the unconsciously competent practitioners of a discipline have simply forgotten the effort that they applied to learning these various capabilities, that they have forgotten or down-valued these capabilities as automatic, usually unproblematic, parts of their own disciplinary practice. Another, overlapping, possibility is that these capabilities have changed since the practitioner joined the discipline, and the practitioner may not in every respect be fully up to date with every aspect of all of the contemporary literacies of their discipline. Yet another possibility is that, when practitioners do consider these capabilities, the capabilities are felt to lie a long way back from the front line of the discipline, far away from where the excitement is, from where the practitioners' hearts and heads lie, from where identity and the greatest likelihood for making a real contribution, for advancement, are to be found.

One of the curses of gaining great expertise can be the associated forgetting, in this case the forgetting of what it is like not to know, not to understand, not to be able to make sense, not to be able to practise, except in a stumbling and imperfect way. Teachers need to recover this knowledge of ignorance in order to be able to teach well.

Conclusion – bringing it all together – disciplines as academic practices, including literacies

Literacies are not adjuncts to disciplines. They are parts of the disciplines. For example, the abilities to find and use and acknowledge information, to select and use appropriate technologies, to communicate clearly to intended audiences, are disciplinary skills. They are surely best taught and learned and assessed in the contexts in which they will be practised – within the disciplines.

This will require close cooperation between discipline specialists and those currently teaching these various literacies. The conception of disciplines as fields of academic practice makes this coming together easier. It encourages the discipline academics to be positive about a view of the discipline as something that people do, as well as know. And it encourages the literacies specialists to give appropriate weight to the disciplinary contexts in which their literacies, fluencies, are learned and practised.

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Words for Carole Baume on behalf of SEDA

Helen King, SEDA Co-Chair

Carole was chair of the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA) from 1995 to 1998, and was later awarded a place on the SEDA Roll of Honour in recognition of her exceptional contribution. SEDA is a values-led organisation and these values (including an understanding of how people learn and a commitment to professionalism, community and inclusivity) shone through Carole in all her activities with SEDA and in her wider work locally, nationally and internationally. Carole was a kind, supportive and encouraging inspiration at the beginnings of my career in educational development and a role model for compassionate pedagogy and professional development for all of us who had the pleasure of working with her.

SEDA News

Launch of SEDA Focus on Educational Development Series

SEDA Papers Committee are pleased to announce a new collaboration with Routledge to bring you the Focus Series. This will build on SEDA's expertise and knowledge in publishing shortform texts on current topics relevant to the educational development community. Published initially as ebooks, they will replace SEDA Specials and will be distributed to institutional members as part of their membership benefit, and by direct purchase from Routledge. We hope that books on active learning, leadership and online teaching and assessment practice will be published soon. If you want to publish in this Focus Series, please contact the Papers Committee to discuss a proposal.

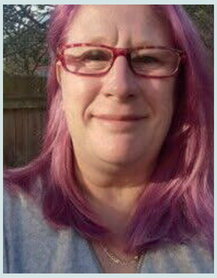
Review of the UK Professional Standards Framework

SEDA played a key role in the creation of the UKPSF (https://tinyurl.com/4m66b24t) and was invited to contribute to Advance HE's recent review (https://tinyurl.com/34nc96yk). We organised a private consultation meeting with Advance HE and a public discussion with SEDA members. Advance HE asked us to submit an organisational response to their consultation survey (available on the SEDA website: https://tinyurl.com/bdfu8796). We support moves to improve accessibility and inclusiveness, and argue the Framework should remain situated in the UK HE context and owned by the sector.

Coming soon…SEDA/Jisc Student Partnership Impact Award

SEDA's really excited to share the news of our forthcoming Student Partnership Impact Award (in association with Jisc) which will recognise students' contributions to inspiring, supporting and leading educational change. Individual students and teams of 2 to 12 students may apply, with criteria based on identifiable impact or influence within their course, department or institution. The Award is available to UG and PG (taught or research) students in the UK or internationally, and will be formally launched in October 2022, with the first submission window in early 2023.

New members of the Executive Committee



SEDA welcomes two members of the Executive Committee. **Rachel Challen PFHEA SFSEDA** is an Associate Professor in Educational Development and a Learning and Teaching Manager in the School of Arts and Humanities at Nottingham Trent University, and **Willie McGuire SFSEDA** is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Education at the University of Glasgow. More at https://tinyurl.com/2f2ye3cx.