

SEDA Spring Conference 2024



Session Title: Change fatigue? Experimenting with a different approach to change planning and implementation

Session Type: Workshop (60 mins)

Main presenter(s): Sarah Wilson-Medhurst, SWM Consulting

Co presenter(s): Clare Kell, Clare Kell Consulting

Session Summary: Frameworks, models and guidance to ‘help’ plan, monitor and report on educational change activities abound in the UK HE sector. While some colleagues relish these tools, others are left cold. This workshop will explore a fresh approach: using the typical human cell as a metaphor for change. Recognising that usually a cell doesn’t want to change, you will map change elements to cell organelles and processes making visible interdependencies, opportunities and sequencing for sustainable change.

Session Outline: Change fatigue? Experimenting with a different approach to change planning and implementation.

Change and innovation projects are proliferating as the sector seeks to improve learner and staff experiences, associated metrics and league table positions. The complexity of these ‘experiences’ frequently demands cross-discipline institution-wide activity involving academics (e.g programme leaders), learners and Third Space practitioners.

An educational change activity (e.g. curriculum development, awarding gap projects etc.) is typically deemed ‘successful’ when a practice and / or learner outcome has changed positively. Influencing others to change their practice(s) to secure outcome changes, evaluating the change and enabling sustainable, embedded working norms in meaningful ways requires an openness to, and deep understanding of, the complexity of the change environment (Kandiko and Kingsbury, 2021, Kell and Wilson-Medhurst, 2023).

At this workshop we introduce an approach that aims to get ‘under the bonnet’ of the change facilitation process and explore a tool that is designed to help change facilitators ‘unblock’ some of the barriers, and engage the enablers, of change. Drawing on the change management (e.g. Knoster, 1991) and systems thinking literature (Senge, 2006) our approach uses the human cell as a metaphor for change design and operationalisation. With the aid of a curriculum intervention worked example we will illustrate how the approach can be applied, and then invite you to test out the approach yourself and give us feedback on the metaphor’s value. Following the workshop you will be invited to join a community of interested practitioners working in this field.

In summary by the end of the workshop participants will:

- have considered a worked example of the change facilitation tool in action,
- explored its usefulness and transferability to their context,
- have the opportunity to continue the conversation by joining a community of interested practitioners.

References: Kandiko Howson, C and Kingsbury, M (2021). Curriculum change as transformational learning. *Teaching in Higher Education*. DOI: 10.1080/13562517.2021.1940923

Kell, C and Wilson-Medhurst, S (2023) Boundary spanning or crossing? The human cell as a metaphor to enable change planning and operationalisation. *Educational Developments*. 24(4):14-18.

Knoster, T. (1991). Factors in managing complex change. Material presentation at TASH conference, Washington D.C.

Senge, P.M. (2006) *The fifth discipline: the art and practice of the learning organisation*, Random House, London