

'Global perspectives on learning, teaching and assessment: avoiding unpleasant surprises and encouraging the love of learning'

In a global higher education environment, student and academic mobility continues to increase, which many (including me) regard as a highly positive development, enriching learning opportunities for all. However, many underestimate the significant differences in pedagogies, practices and patterns of learning that exist in universities across the world. Too often HEIs problematise such diversity, ignoring the potential cross-cultural benefits.

Being unprepared for difference can on occasions provide unwelcome shocks that can undermine positive learning experiences. For this reason, using examples serendipitously gleaned from colleagues in many countries, in this presentation I aim to explore some of the misunderstandings and context gaps that are apparent when students and those who teach them hail from different national contexts. I will suggest some helpful strategies for ourselves and our students who may not share common approaches and language, let alone core beliefs about what higher education is for. I will argue that by embracing diversity we can encourage positive orientations towards learning, and this is likely to be uplifting as well as being mutually educative.