THE INCLUSIVITY

G▽P

EDITED BY
KARISA KRČMÁŘ

THE INCLUSIVITY GAP

Reflecting the authors' commitment to gender
equality, gender specific terms, such as 'he' and 'she'
are used intermittently throughout this book.

From each copy of this book sold, a donation
is made to a charity working in inclusive education.

Dedicated to my parents, Boris and Anne, who have always encouraged me; but particularly this book is dedicated to the memory of my mother, Anne, whose loving patience and intelligence was always inspiring.

Karisa Krčmář,

Editor.

'This is an outstanding and timely collection of essays, neatly organised and structured to support all of those involved in the student journey, from recruitment through to graduation. Widening access matters, widening participation more so, but the learning journey and student success matters most of all, and the wealth of understanding, evidence of effective practice and case study material present here should place Karisa Krčmář's edited collection on the desks of academics, academic support and student support colleagues across the United Kingdom and beyond.'

Dr. John Cater,
Vice-Chancellor, Edge Hill University, UK.

'The Inclusivity Gap is an important contribution to the growing work on inclusivity in Higher Education. Its broad approach to inclusivity means a range of student experiences is explored. Its mix of chapters focusing on experience, theory and practice and the sheer range of topics covered – from lecture capture to learning spaces, from policy implementation to practice development, from student support to student voice – mean that there is something for everyone. Bringing together students, academics, professional staff and practitioners, this volume is truly diverse and, I am sure, will become a "must read" for all working to develop an inclusive approach to learning and teaching.'

Dr Pauline Hanesworth,
Senior Adviser, Advance HE.

'This is a timely and valuable book about a really important issue in Higher Education. The coverage is excellent of many groups and issues that up to now, have not received the support and attention merited. It's also lovely see the variety of contributions from both staff and students. I am sure this will be an excellent resource and guide to all of us who value student success and a good experience for all students.'

Professor Colin Bryson,
Newcastle University UK, Chair of RAISE.

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS:

Nick Allsopp has worked in three sectors of education. He started his teaching career in a comprehensive school in Derby before moving on to further education in Leicester. After teaching and managing in the post-compulsory sector he moved into higher education. At De Montfort University he was Head of Academic Professional Development and at Loughborough University he is Assistant Director in the Centre for Academic Practice. In both posts he has led a team of educational developers delivering the HEA accredited provision and supporting colleagues to develop their practice. His doctoral research was concerned with academic professional identity and the evolution of quality improvement in learning and teaching and his current interests include the politics of assessment, on which he has recently published, and the changing nature of academic professional identity.

Paul Armitage has an MBA from the University of Huddersfield and is a PhD candidate investigating the challenges of project management in Local Authority Social Enterprise Schemes. After a diverse career including serving in the armed forces, in manufacturing and as a senior fire service officer, a serendipitous meeting led to a change of direction into higher education (HE), where he is now a lecturer of strategic leadership and change management and a final year tutor on undergraduate programmes at the University of Huddersfield. Paul is a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, a member of the International Association of Arson Investigators (IAAI), enjoys walking and is an enthusiastic golfer.

Vikki Anderson is a Teaching Fellow on the University of Birmingham's MEd programme in Language, Literacies and Dyslexia. She is also a member of the University's Learning Support Team, where her work includes supporting a range of students with specific learning difficulties and other, overlapping conditions, and delivering Continuing Professional Development. Her research interests include inclusive learning and teaching, and listening and responding to the student voice.

Penny Andrews is an interdisciplinary social sciences researcher at the Universities of Sheffield and Leeds, with interests including social media, populism, quantification of work, scholarly communication and politics fandom.

Andy Birch is an academic consultant with a background in educational development and managing large projects including Virtual Learning Environment Reviews and adoption of Lecture Recording technologies. Andy has also managed large scale reviews such as the recent Valuing Teaching at Birmingham and the current Assessment Change Initiative. A retired police officer with a diverse background including many years as an operational traffic motorcyclist and then later specialising in people development and diversity training, Andy is interested in organisational culture and how knowledge is exchanged in large institutions.

Michelle Blackburn is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, has a first degree in Psychology and an MSc in Human Resource Management. She is also a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. Before becoming an academic Michelle spent 20 years in HR consultancy where she actively advised and actively supported organisations in both the public and private sectors. Michelle is a Principal Lecturer and leads on Student Experience in the Department of Management at Sheffield Business School. She has taught internationally and has written on both HR and pedagogical practice. She enjoys family history research, activities with her poodle (Lara) and crochet.

Georgina Brewis is Senior Lecturer in the History of Education at UCL Institute of Education. A historian of voluntary action, youth and education in modern Britain, she teaches history modules across UCL, using her 'curated teaching collection' of objects sourced on EBay to engage students with the material culture of charity, youth and youth movements. Her research is underpinned by a strong commitment to knowledge exchange and public engagement, as part of which she works closely with a range of voluntary organisations on archives and record keeping.

Jasmin Brook is a History with Politics undergraduate student at Newcastle University involved in many student engagement and voluntary activities, including working in partnership with combined honours staff.

Kate Carruthers-Thomas is a Research Fellow and Project Manager for the Athena SWAN programme at Birmingham City University. Athena SWAN is a gender equality charter mark addressing barriers to progression into and through academic and professional services careers within universities. Her doctoral research investigated narratives of belonging and retention in relation to part-time, mature undergraduates in English HE. She is currently researching the role of gender in HE career 'trajectories' and experiences of work.

Charlotte Clements is Lecturer in History and Course Director for the BA (Hons) in History at London South Bank University. Her approach to teaching emphasises offering a diverse and inclusive view of historical research which enables students to get hands-on with history, including object based learning. Charlotte's research focuses on youth, welfare, charity and social policy in contemporary Britain. She works with various charities and archives to support good governance and record keeping in the voluntary sector as part of her wider interest in history, policy and public engagement.

Ross Cooper is dyslexic and was an Inclusive Learning Manager in FE, and a Course Director of the MA in Adult Dyslexia, Diagnosis and Support at London South Bank University. He presented his Bagatelle Model of SpLDs at the 8th Annual Disability Lecture at Cambridge University and the Holist Manifesto at the 1st Disability Identity conference at LSE. Recently, he has been leading online SuperReading courses for dyslexic students in HE, designed to double reading effectiveness in 4 days. He is Chair of AchieveAbility, and co-author of the Parliamentary Commission Report about barriers to employment for neurodivergent people (January, 2018).

Rachel Curzon is a Senior Education Developer at Birmingham City University; drawing upon 17 years' experience of teaching and programme leadership in built environment, she now applies that knowledge to assisting and mentoring others in the improvement of teaching quality, and the creation and enrichment of staff community. She is a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (2016), and has significant experience of curriculum development, both as part of a faculty team responsible for design, and from the perspective of an Approval Panel member responsible for scrutiny.

Justine Devenney is Student Support and Guidance Tutor for the School of Architecture and Design, at the University of Brighton. She has worked for twenty years in both the education and the charity sector. She is a specialist in participatory research and in the design and delivery of initiatives aimed at improving the well being of children and young people. Prior to working at the University of Brighton she was Head of Policy at OnePlusOne an award winning research charity training front line practitioners in early intervention to support family relationships, where she led on all communications and publications. She is also the editor of the University of Brighton School of Architecture and Design blog. http://aia-brighton.org/

Dennis Duty came into Higher Education in 1994 after a successful career in senior operations management positions with blue chip companies such as Coca Cola and Courtaulds Textiles. He completed his PGCE(FE) in 1991, his MBA at Keele in 1992 and then obtained a teaching fellow position at Lancaster University. In 1998 he moved to the University of Huddersfield as a lecturer where he quickly developed an interest in undergraduate retention. Drawing on experience of organisational improvement through operations he engaged in and completed an EdD (2006-2011) that focussed on how retention could be improved through institutional change. He takes the view that the problem of student persistence is one firmly rooted in the problematic structure and culture of HE institutions, and that in the context of a changing environment it is HE institutions that need to change. Dennis is a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy.

Marc Fabri is a lecturer and researcher at Leeds Beckett University. His research interests include assistive and enabling technologies, participatory design and user experience design. He leads the Autism&Uni project which supports autistic student with navigating Higher Education (www.autism-uni.org).

Amanda French has worked in higher, further, adult education and the voluntary sector in the UK for over 30 years. Amanda is currently Head of Professional Development, Research and Enterprise at Birmingham City University's School of Education and is a Reader in Teaching and Learning. In addition to her interest in academic writing practices and development her other research interests include child-led research, social justice in education and creative critical pedagogy and methodologies.

Nick Gee is Associate Professor (Accessibility and Inclusivity) in the Faculty of Health, Education and Life Sciences at Birmingham City University, UK. He is also founder member and Chair of the International Disability in Professional Practice Special Interest Group (DiPPSIG) and a member of several Editorial Boards.

Nick has undertaken commissioned work on the subject of accessibility and inclusive practice for many organisations in the education, charitable and not for profit sectors as well as for several blue chip companies and has received commendations from several regulatory bodies for his work in inclusive curriculum design.

Presenting his work worldwide, and undertaking consultancy as 'The Inclusivity Man' Nick has unrivalled connections in the field of inclusivity. He is one of the inaugural members of the International Association of Accessibility Professionals and is Fellow of both the Higher Education Academy and the Royal Society of Public Health.

Sarah Graham is Deputy Director for the Centre for Combined Studies at Newcastle University. Prior to that she was Head of Academic Development at the University of Sunderland. Since 2006 she has been actively engaged in scholarship and research relating to how students in HE learn and in turn how they are best supported to learn. Through the evaluation of professional practice, sharing ideas and disseminating findings at conference and through publication, she has implemented assessment and feedback practices that support the development of self-determined learning, and teaching practices that support inclusive learning and student engagement.

Professor Jonathan Green is the Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) and the Director of the Teaching Academy, as well as being a member of the academic staff in the School of Biosciences, at the University of Birmingham. He was previously Director of Education in the College of Life & Environmental Sciences. As DPVC (Education) he oversees quality assurance, programme approval, collaborative provision and degree apprenticeships at the University. He set up the University's Inclusive Curriculum Working group with Prof Mike McLinden and Michael Grove. He has research interests in innovative methods of teaching, including interactive lectures, the inclusive curriculum and the transition of students to University. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Biology.

Michael Grove is a Reader in STEM Education within the School of Mathematics at the University of Birmingham where he teaches mathematics to undergraduate students and researches issues relating to learning and teaching in mathematics in higher education. He was previously Director of the National HE STEM Programme, a three-year £21million initiative that enhanced the way in which universities recruited students and delivered programmes of study within the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics disciplines, and Associate Director of the sigma Mathematics and Statistics Support Network. He is a National Teaching Fellow and a Fellow of the Institute of Mathematics and its Applications.

Catherine Hayes is Reader in Pedagogic Practice at the University of Sunderland. She is a National Teaching Fellow and Principal Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. Catherine teaches into the interdisciplinary Professional Doctorate programme at the University of Sunderland and supervises several PhD and Prof Doc students. She has published widely in the context of pedagogy and allied health and methodologies of practice for critical reflective practice via the integration of autoethnography. Catherine regularly attends conferences to disseminate her work across the UK.

Mariya Hussain was Vice President for Education at King's College London Students' Union where her work centred on the topic of BME student experience. She has also worked as the Underrepresented Groups and Liberation Coordinator at Goldsmiths Students' Union and has written on various platforms on the topic.

Susan Jones has a BSc in Food Science and Environmental Management an MSc in Food Safety and Quality Management and a Post Graduate Certificate in Education. Before joining the university Susan spent 11 years working in the food industry specialising in Food Safety Product Development and Account Management within both the retail and food manufacturing sector. In her current role as Principal Lecturer in Student Experience at Sheffield Business School, Susan enjoys working in partnership with industry on student led projects to build strong relationships and enhance the student experience. She enjoys entertaining and walking in the Peak district with her family.

Amarpreet Kaur is currently a Sociology PhD candidate at the University of Cambridge. Her research focuses on the potential reproductive future with genetic editing on human embryos in the United Kingdom, in relation to disease and disability. Amarpreet was a course representative at Manchester Metropolitan University for the duration of her Bachelor's degree, and during her Master's at the University of Cambridge. Amarpreet served as RAISE Network's Special Interest Groups' Coordinator for two years before taking on a Student Advisory role on the committee.

During her Bachelor's degree Amarpreet was also a Student Ambassador, Peer Mentor, and Student Panellist for the University's Programme Review Board, where she keenly represented student voice. Amarpreet has been part of, and spearheaded several student engagement initiatives, several of which are detailed on her website www.amarpreetkaur.co.uk.

Professor Lelia Kiš-Glavaš is a full professor tenure at the University of Zagreb, Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences, Department of Inclusive Education and Rehabilitation.

Her scientific interests are in the field of system of support for students with disabilities in higher education in Croatia (implementation and development, evaluation of the effectiveness and satisfaction of participants in the process), professional rehabilitation and employment of people with disabilities (motivation of persons with disabilities and employers' attitudes), human rights of people with disabilities, educational inclusion (in higher education, and education of teachers in primary and secondary education), undesirable behaviours, rehabilitation through movement and basic perceptive-motor stimulation.

Karisa Krčmář has an MBA from Glasgow, and MEd and PhD from Birmingham. After working in a variety of commercial sectors ranging from shipping to ballet, she changed direction, went into teaching, and is now a specialist about specific issues relating to learning and teaching. She is senior tutor/manager of a team of specialist tutors at Loughborough University and co-authored the book Mindfulness for Study published by Inspired by Learning https://www.inspiredbylearning.eu/book/9 . Karisa is a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy and has a black belt in Shotokan Karate.

Tom Lowe is the Centre for Student Engagement Manager at the University of Winchester where he oversees student engagement with extra-curricular activity and is the Programme Leader of the Post Graduate Certificate in Student Engagement in Higher Education. Tom is also the Secretary of the RAISE network for those interested in Researching, Advancing and Inspiring Student Engagement across Higher Education. Previously, Tom was the REACT Project Manager, where he facilitated collaborative development between 16 universities around Student Engagement in educational developments. Prior to joining the University, Tom was Vice President, Education at Winchester Student Union representing the students of the University of Winchester. During his time as Vice President, Tom gained a particular passion for student engagement participation through revamping the Student Academic Representative system and starting up the Winchester Student Fellows Scheme. Tom is also involved with other sector activities as a member of the QAA Committee for Degree Awarding Powers and the QAA Strategic Student Engagement Advisory.

Eleanor Machin is a Specialist Tutor and assessor with The University of Sheffield. She has over 15 years' experience working in the SEND area, specialising in dyslexia and dyscalculia for the past seven. Eleanor is fully qualified with a PGCE and Master's in Education alongside her specialist qualification in SpLDs. She also has memberships with professional bodies such as the British Dyslexia Association and holds Quality Assured Teacher status and Qualified Teacher in Learning and Skills. Eleanor has experience as an author and conference speaker and is currently undertaking a PhD.

Victoria Mann is the Academic Director of Studies for the SpLD service at the University of Sheffield. Her research interests are dyscalculia; dyslexia and EAP; maths anxiety; and the SpLD tutorial as a third space. She is a senior fellow of the HEA and recently won a University of Sheffield Senate Award for her collaborative research into maths anxiety. She currently is undertaking a PhD in spatiality in the SpLD tutorial. Other publications include, The SpLD tutorial as a third space (book chapter) and Addressing Maths Anxiety in the Curriculum (article).

Ellen Marshall is a Senior Lecturer and coordinator of the Statistic Support Service at Sheffield Hallam University. Ellen's primary role

is providing statistics support to students from all backgrounds and she regularly encounters students with maths or statistics anxiety. Her practice based research centres on strategies for overcoming maths and statistics anxiety so that students can progress successfully with their courses or quantitative research. She is a senior fellow of the HEA, recently jointly won a University of Sheffield Senate Award for her collaborative research into maths anxiety and also received the sigma award for 'Outstanding Contributor in the field of Mathematics and Statistics Support ' in 2015.

Robert McLaren is a Policy Manager for the think tank Policy Connect, where he works on assistive technology issues. As part of this role, he manages the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Assistive Technology. At the time of writing his contribution to this volume, Robert worked on a freelance basis with organisations in the higher education disability support sector. He also served as Assistive Technology Officer for the Association of Dyslexia Specialists in Higher Education. Robert holds a BA in Philosophy from King's College London and a PGC in Teaching Adults with Specific Learning Difficulties, from London Metropolitan University.

Professor Mike McLinden has over 25 years' experience of working in schools and Higher Education (HE), with extensive experience of inclusive curriculum design, delivery and evaluation. He has a broad research interest in professional learning and pedagogy in HE and has been involved in a range of funded pedagogical projects in partnership with colleagues in the sector. This includes Strand Lead (Part Time Learners) for the 'Flexible Pedagogies' project funded by the Higher Education Academy (HEA). Mike was conferred the status of Principal Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (PFHEA) in 2013.

Charlotte Morris has a PhD in Gender Studies from the University of Sussex. She has been involved in research and development in the area of inclusive practices in higher education for over a decade, focussing on undergraduate and postgraduate student mental health, wellbeing, disabilities and caring responsibilities. Alongside her pastoral care work she teaches in Education, Sociology and Gender Studies and is a Research Fellow for the Centre for Higher Education and Equity Research. Charlotte has three adult children and lives by the sea with her two cats.

Nick Morton is an experienced academic leader and educator, formerly Head of the Built Environment School at Birmingham City University, and both a National Teaching Fellow (2006) and Principal Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (2016). Currently Associate Dean with responsibility for academic quality and student outcomes across a large and diverse faculty at BCU, he led a recent curriculum transformation project in which inclusive design was a key principle. Nick is now wrestling with the implementation of this new curriculum, and working on a project to reduce attainment gaps as part of a continuing commitment to enhancing the student learning experience.

Karl Nightingale is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Birmingham, and has teaching and management roles on several undergraduate and Foundation (pre-degree) programmes in the biological sciences.

Tim O'Hare is an Educational and Organisational/Business Psychologist. He has worked in these fields for the last 33 years, following earlier careers in Sales & Marketing and as a secondary school teacher. For the last 15 years he has developed a specialisation in assessing students in HE and FE for Specific Learning Difficulties, across some 15 institutions. In doing this, he was surprised at the number of university students who were clearly struggling, but whose learning difficulties were more general, rather than specific – i.e. universities were recruiting some students whose cognitive abilities would give them a highly predictable difficulty in coping with the complexity of abstract and conceptual demands of a degree course. In collecting data from his own and other educational psychologists' work, he became concerned at how widening access was, amongst other things, giving universities a comprehensive, rather than selective form of intake, where either the fee paying student with lower cognitive ability has to cope with high academic demands – or degrees are academically devalued to meet wider student ability levels.

Caroline Pepper's role at Loughborough University has strategic responsibility for leading the design and development of learning spaces, associated technologies and services including Teaching Support and Timetabling. She is current Chair of SCHOMS, a higher education professional body which promotes excellence in learning and teaching environments and associated technologies and has recently been involved in a publication: The UK Higher

Education Learning Space Toolkit a SCHOMS, AUDE and UCISA collaboration. Caroline holds a Master's in Educational Research and within her role actively promotes the philosophy: 'the way in which a space is designed will ultimately shape the learning that takes place, pedagogy and inclusivity needs to be at the heart of every university building project'.

Neil Raven is an independent educational consultant. He began his career as a lecturer in modern economic and social history, before becoming project manager and then manager for Aimhigher in the East Midlands, where he was responsible for income generation and overseeing a range of widening participation initiatives. More recently, he held the post of manager for a university student outreach and recruitment team, leading on research, data analysis and monitoring and evaluation, and overseeing the scoping and development of a number of new projects. For the past two and a half years Neil has run his own consultancy, specialising in educational research and evaluation, and is also a visiting university tutor in postgraduate research methods. Neil has published extensively in the fields of access and widening participation.

David Roberts is Senior Lecturer in Peace and Conflict Studies at Loughborough University, and a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. He presently researches and publishes on the effect of multimedia learning (MML) on Higher Education students, and runs a consultancy aimed at helping other institutions match how their teachers teach, to how their students learn at a cognitive level.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

This is a book about inclusive learning and teaching. It's about the gap between the assumptions of background preparedness for learning that students possess and those they actually do – the gap between teaching in a traditional way and learning in a different way – the gap between how traditional assessments are perceived to objectively measure knowledge and attainment and the reality of how differently individuals are able to express and prove their knowledge. It is an inclusivity gap that has not been addressed before in this way. This edited collection of insights uniquely includes chapters and contributions from a range of people situated in different contexts, with differing experiences, perspectives and contributions. You will hear the student voice, the experience of professionals from support services and consultancies alongside the researched opinions of academics; including a contribution from Prof Lelia Kiš-Glavaš who provides a non-UK perspective.

As might be expected in such a book about inclusive curricula, it involves examples of rigorous research. In chapter 21, for example, Vikki Anderson and Karl Nightingale present evidence of how supplementary lecture capture supports an inclusive curriculum. In addition to this academic approach, however, are chapters that offer reflections upon deep and insightful personal experiences. Mariya Hussain writes passionately about her experience being a British, Muslim woman student (chapter 3) and in chapter 7 Jasmin Brooke bravely shares her personal difficulties of experiencing mental ill-health whilst studying in higher education.

The book covers three main areas of discussion around the question of the inclusivity gap. It starts with a section considering various student cohorts ranging from those with identified disabilities (for example, chapter 5 by Marc Fabri and Penny Andrews about autistic spectrum conditions) to those who come to university from what are considered to be non-traditional backgrounds (Neil Raven's chapter

outlines the challenge of progression to higher education for young men from white working-class backgrounds). The irony of a book about inclusivity starting off by dividing students into different, exclusive (but not exhaustive) cohorts does not escape me; but we have to start somewhere. The second section presents some different theoretical perspectives. Chapters include considerations of embedding inclusive policy and practice (chapter 10 by Prof Mike McLinden and colleagues) and student approaches to learning and retention (chapter 17 by Amarpreet Kaur speaks with a student voice and in chapter 15 Kate Carruthers-Thomas writes about the issues of retention for mature, part-time undergraduates). Uniquely, this book also includes a consideration of the impact of the physical learning environment as Caroline Pepper discusses the design paradox in chapter 16. Section three presents some examples of good practice currently available for students in higher education. These ideas range from examples of inclusive curriculum design (Nick Morton and Rachel Curzon in chapter 19) to the use of support professionals in different contexts when Justine Devenney presents her research on using student support and guidance tutors to encourage and enable inclusive practice (chapter 23). In chapter 20, Nick Gee offers suggestions for developing your own emotional intelligence to help you challenge traditional approaches.

Inclusive approaches to education start at the pre-school level and continue throughout primary and secondary school. The Pre-school Learning Alliance website (2017) defines equality as being "fair, respectful and recognising the individual needs and identities of all others" and inclusivity as "fairness in process and outcome". It has been talked about in higher education for a while, but generally in terms of accessibility for disabled students. For example, many universities offer some kind of cover sheet option for students with dyslexia, or other similar specific learning difference. This is a cover sheet that says something to the effect that lecturers should be aware of a disability and that coursework should be marked on content with allowances for spelling or grammar errors that do not affect meaning. This, I would argue, is an exclusive rather than inclusive approach. It exclusively gives adjustments to students with identified differences. This book will widen this definition to mirror the Early Years approach. The reader will uniquely be taken through a range of chapters outlining what inclusivity means to the learning of a whole cohort of different students. Some quick web-

browsing, shows that many universities now have explicit policies about inclusivity. I pick just one which, for me, sums up the contents within this book. It comes from Strathclyde University, Scotland. One of their fact sheets for academics talks about inclusivity as being related to values and approaches to teaching. Inclusive teaching, they argue, is teaching that recognises the diversity of students. It is teaching which focuses on enabling access to course content for all students. Inclusive learning enables all students to participate fully in all learning activities and enables them to demonstrate their learning and knowledge at assessment. Inclusivity values the rich diversity of the student population as a resource that enhances learning and also, I would argue, teaching. In the example given above, dyslexic students (who, as individuals, may have no or little problem with spelling or grammar) may be given an adjustment, however, true inclusivity would take account of difficulties encountered by, for example, international students; or home students who come from language-poor backgrounds or have experienced mixed or poor schooling.

The Higher Education Academy (2011) has identified the need for all learning experiences to respect student diversity, enable participation, remove barriers (existing and potential) and has outlined that higher education provision should encompass a variety of learning needs and preferences. These are key elements in the dimensions of their Professional Standards Framework.

This inclusivity is not always apparent. Whilst snorkeling on holiday, I marvelled at the sea anemones on the rocks; then the thought suddenly struck me that I was watching a scene not too dissimilar from what can often be seen in lecture rooms in universities and colleges today. The academic stands at the front, tentacles waving, eager to send out the knowledge and experience and enthusiasm for their subject. They want to include this room of novices so that by the time they graduate, they can join what Wenger (2006) termed 'the community of practice'. They believe that in front of them, is

a group of students who mirror their enthusiastic tentacle waving to experience and learn this knowledge.

In reality, whilst some in the room may be experiencing this, many are closed to this type of teaching. Their tentacles have not yet been opened. They may feel lost or excluded from this type of teaching. They run the risk of failing to thrive. There is a gap between those whom the lecturer believes are being included in this community and those who feel excluded. There is a gap between the student whom Biggs and Tang (2011) identify as arriving at university knowing the academic way, for whom academics can safely assume that she knows how to learn in the right way and will teach accordingly; and the student who might, a decade ago, never have considered higher education and who will have had little opportunity to develop a reserve of appropriate, needed knowledge. There is a gap in the traditional teaching style which excludes the latter type of student. A gap, I have termed the inclusivity gap and which is being tackled by most, if not all, higher education providers across the UK. This inclusivity gap, once recognised, spurred me on to see the need for a book which tackles the question of inclusivity through recognising this gap. It seemed like a good book title to me.

The Bologna Process (2010), the Equality Act of 2010, recent changes for funding to support disabled students' learning, and the newly introduced Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) have all contributed to the call for a new approach to inclusive learning and teaching, also referred to as a Universal Design for Learning (UDL). The withdrawal of some government funding for disabled students puts the onus onto the higher education provider to ensure the needs outlined in the 2010 Equality Act are met whilst the TEF considers key issue of differential outcomes for students from different backgrounds. Whilst these may seem like 'sticks' to some traditionalists in HE, the 'carrots' of closing the inclusivity gap, are that developing inclusive practice will benefit higher education providers by enhancing the

institution's reputation as a 'good' place to study for a degree; there will also be an element of cost saving as students who thrive are less costly and inclusive learning is a "demonstrably effective tool in enabling students to thrive" (Layer 2017:10).

There are notable examples of good practice already being affected and some of these programmes or experiments are presented in Part 3 of this book; however, Layer (2017) notes that few higher education providers (HEPs) have embedded inclusive practice in all their programmes.

Definite and proactive action is needed to close the inclusivity gap, as noted by Layer (:18), there is a need to:

- Ensure leadership from the top
- Focus on closing the inclusivity gap in face of competing priorities
- Understand that cultural change is at the root of inclusive programmes
- Engagement across the whole institution, including support staff, professional services, marketing & recruitment
- Initial resourcing and project planning
- Time to enact change and embed ways to assess success
- Understand that beyond the 'quick fix' there is a long, sustained process
- Provide substantial and ongoing support to engage all staff

Closing the inclusivity gap means more than offering equality of access or indeed, more than enabling identified individuals in an exclusive way. It means working to remove any barriers that exist or may be perceived to exist. Making individual adjustments will help to enable key individuals – those identified with a specific need; but to truly include and liberate all individuals, it is simpler and fairer to remove the barrier that is in the way.

I have garnered a wide range of expertise for contributions to this book. Colleagues working towards inclusivity in higher education encompass a diversity of roles: academics, specialist support tutors, specialist professionals and of course, the students themselves. It was important to me that the student voice was heard and I am pleased that three of the contributors are, or were at the time of writing, students within higher education. I have encouraged a range of styles for each chapter. You won't find a 'house style' or a unified voice. Some chapters are written with great passion, others with more academic distance. All, I believe, complement each other and contribute significantly to the theme of this book: closing the inclusivity gap.

The ambition for this book is that it will help reflection and dialogue for all people involved in providing higher education. It uniquely brings together views of professionals working with different student cohorts, along with arguments about inclusivity and experiences from the students themselves. There is an increasing awareness of inclusivity in higher education providers today. When I started thinking about this book, there was a limited number of places I could go to find examples of good practice. As the editing process draws to a close, I am increasingly aware of the myriad of pilot projects, workshops, news sheets and range of good practice out there in higher education. The examples shared here are, pleasingly, just a snapshot of what is happening. It is an edited snapshot, but it is an important beginning in sharing understanding and good practice.

The book is divided into 3 parts.

PART 1

Part 1 identifies a wide (but not exhaustive) range of student cohorts that do not neatly fit into the traditional view of a student in higher education. It should be remembered, as you read, that whilst issues are addressed separately in different chapters, in reality, a student may fit simultaneously into several cohorts. A student with dyslexia may well have grown up with feelings of deep anxiety and low self-esteem. Her dyslexia may have meant that she didn't do well at school, she avoided reading, couldn't concentrate on certain types of academic work. The working memory difficulties so indicative of dyslexia, would have inhibited her ability to prove her knowledge

under exam conditions, conditions that would exacerbate her anxiety causing her body's natural response of shutting down brain activity to concentrate on 'fight/flight' responses. This might mean, therefore, that she is a mature student entering higher education through a BTech route and so has not had the opportunity to develop the learning skills necessary for higher education study, even though she has the innate potential (and range of unacknowledged skills and abilities) to achieve a 1st class honours degree and progress to PhD level research. The only (exclusive) acknowledgement of her profile would relate to adjustments made for dyslexia. Add into this mix the factors of class and ethnicity where family, friends and teachers themselves have never thought about higher education being an option; so the preparedness that is 'natural' in a white middle class family where both parents are, themselves, graduates, is not only limited but often non-existent.

The fillip to this is the financial pressure on departments to bring in students and the sheer numbers of students involved means that we are seeing a small, but increasing, number of students at university who are slower learners – not for any specific reasons, but who just process information more slowly and find it difficult to reach a conceptual understanding of their course contents. "Bums on seats", as it is crudely known amongst colleagues, has meant that the recruitment process is more open and inclusive; but it seems all too often, inclusivity stops there.

The theme of the book is introduced in the first chapter, The Elephants in the Room, which calls for a move away from an exclusive approach to learning and teaching; and identifies how the thinking and practice of inclusivity has developed. It discusses, what it calls the elephants in the room – aspects of today's learning environment and today's higher education. It discusses how ideas of inclusivity developed from the desire to make specific adjustments to allow students with disabilities to access higher education on a level playing field; but argues that this approach is now outdated as it is based on a medical model of disability – one which places the emphasis on the individual. It is exclusive rather than inclusive in that it requires evidence of specific need and bypasses a range of other needs. Some of the needs are addressed specifically in the chapters that follow.

Chapter 2 "I don't think it's quite me": the higher education progression challenge for young men from white working class backgrounds by Neil Raven is based on his research in English schools. He explores the negative attitudes exhibited by white working class boys towards the notion of higher education and discusses remedial action both within schools but also considers their potential impact on the higher education experience.

Chapter 3 is written by Mariya Hussain, a student herself who writes with the passion of her own experience. Black, Asian and minority ethnic students in higher education discusses the effect of white European-centric teaching on British students who come from a black, Asian or minority ethnic background. Her chapter concludes by calling for a root and branch overhaul of the ethnic structure of higher education.

Ross Cooper discusses specific learning differences in chapter 4. With less funding coming from Disabled Student's Allowance, this cohort of students may once again experience the disadvantages of traditional attitudes to teaching. Higher education providers have relied on DSA to fund inclusive approaches and Cooper discusses the strengths and difficulties of students with Specific Learning Differences. Chapters 21 and 22 in Part 3 are of particular interest alongside this chapter.

As higher education sees increasing numbers of students diagnosed as being on the autistic spectrum, Marc Fabri and Penny Andrews explain more about the condition in chapter 5, Autistic spectrum condition. They also identify key actions that academics and Higher Education Providers can take to aid an inclusive learning experience for autistic students. Chapter 16 discusses the built environment in education and it is interesting to reflect on how a physical environment can influence learning.

There is on-going discussion about the mathematics ability of the British nation. Many students experience severe anxiety when faced with mathematical modules in their course. Many students enroll on STEM degrees with minimal mathematical background. Students with dyscalculia tend to try to avoid subjects or modules that involve mathematics but sometimes it is unavoidable. Victoria Mann, Eleanor Machin and Ellen Marshall discuss these difficulties

in Chapter 6, Maths difficulties in higher education: maths anxiety and dyscalculia. They discuss the nature of the anxiety and ways that tutors can work with students with a more inclusive approach and outcome.

Undergraduate student, Jasmin Brook, shares her experiences of her own mental health difficulties at university and the effect this health issue has had on her study and overall student experience. Chapter 7 will present familiar issues for those who have, themselves, experienced mental health difficulties, but for those who, so far, only known good health, it opens windows onto the lived experience of many students in higher education today.

Educational psychologist, Tim O'Hare, writes an interesting chapter 8, 'Slow learning' students at British universities – a hidden disadvantaged minority. Whilst assessing students for specific learning differences, he is meeting an increasing number of students whom he calls 'slower learners'. These students, he argues, can achieve a degree but may take longer to acquire understanding of the concepts studied and may need additional guidance from their departments. He takes the Equality Act of 2010 and questions the moral and legal duties of institutions who have accepted students onto courses but do not then offer additional support or inclusive approaches when the student struggles to meet demands.

The final chapter in Part 1, Chapter 9 The exclusive campus bubble: the best and worst features of campus universities written by Tom Lowe, takes a different approach to the similar question about what happens to the student who does not, for whatever reason, fit in with the traditional campus life and the effects this may have on their learning.

PART 2

Chapters in Part 2 consider a variety of ways in which this more inclusive approach to recruitment has resulted in a gap in the delivery of inclusive teaching approaches. Issues of embedding inclusive policies within an institution are approached in different ways: from an institutional-wide perspective down to considerations about essay writing.

In chapter 10, Developing and embedding inclusive policy and practice within higher education institutions, Mike McLinden and colleagues write about a framework through which a Higher Education Provider can monitor change as it seeks to develop and embed inclusive policy and practice within the institution. They explore the application of the McKinsey 7S in the process of curriculum change in order to improve the quality of students' learning experiences.

Nick Allsopp explores the concept of inclusive assessments in chapter 11. He outlines the purpose and importance of assessment for students, academics and institutions and surveys a range of Higher Education Providers that offer inclusive assessment forms and argues for a truly reflective approach to flexibility of assessments which will ultimately benefit academics as well as the institutions for which they work – not to mention allowing each student to fairly reflect their learning journey.

All students are required to produce academic writing. It is such an integral part of academic life that we devote two different chapters to this skill development. Writing an essay is an important learning tool for a student but in Chapter 12, Amanda French discusses the barriers that many students face before they even start. In her chapter, Teaching academic writing inclusively as a situated practice, she outlines ways to help students tackle essay writing which will help to demystify the process and calls for more collaborative and supportive writing communities within teaching.

In chapter 13 Catherine Hayes and Sarah Graham discuss bridging the inclusivity gap by co-creating curricula. Beyond tokenism: bridging the inclusivity gap via co-creating curricular discusses the real benefits of embracing students as partners. They argue that by enhancing student agency, deep learning processes are embedded across academic curricula. This, they argue, provides a transferable skill base helping students in their progression into the workplace and lifelong learning; and facilitating a democratic process that advocates diversity.

We return to the question of academic writing in chapter 14 Composition classes – writing in higher education when Rob McLaren discusses further issues faced by students when tasked with academic writing. Drawing on some examples from America, he outlines a range of

reforms possible and discusses the pros and cons of academic writing modules being compulsory parts of degree courses.

Kate Carruthers-Thomas considers the importance of retention and the non-resident student in chapter 15, Retention matters: rethinking retention and belonging for mature part-time undergraduates. She draws on case studies of mature students undertaking part-time study in four English universities. In a similar way to Hayes and Graham in the previous chapter, Carruthers-Thomas challenges the linear, boundaried space of learning for a more interactive, social process of student-institution negotiation; thus enabling students to take more control of their own progress and learning, resulting in shared ownership of learning and teaching.

Whilst an increasing number of students are learning at a distance from a university, using virtual learning environments, physically being in the space of the Higher Education Provider is still, by far, the norm for students and academics. The physical environment for learning has traditionally only been considered in terms of adaptations for disabilities but creating an inclusive physical environment by working with estates departments is discussed by Caroline Pepper in chapter 16, Learning environments: the design paradox. She argues that whilst Higher Education Providers are investing significant capital in learning environments, embedded within this brief to support learning and teaching is a need to remove barriers to enable physical learning spaces to be used by everyone. It is interesting to read this chapter alongside chapter 5 where Fabri and Andrews outline some of the physical distractions affecting students with autistic spectrum condition. Design, layout and technology can support the inclusivity agenda but, Pepper argues, has been significantly missing from previous discussions of pedagogy.

The final chapter in Part 2 (Chapter 17), Identifying and bridging gaps through the student voice, offers a further chapter when a student speaks directly about the student experience and sits alongside the chapters on direct student engagement and advocacy. Amarpreet Kaur argues for the importance of students and academics working together in decision making and delivery of content. She argues that the student voice is crucial at all levels within a Higher Education Provider as it can be used to identify issues of inclusivity and to actively help bridge the gaps.

PART 3

Part 3 starts with some insight into how a different country in Europe is responding to the issues of inclusivity. In chapter 18 Lelia Kiš-Glavaš writes about The improvement of the social dimension of higher education in the Republic of Croatia – a prerequisite for its inclusiveness. Much of the debate and many of the actions are very similar to the UK but it is interesting to read about the different cohorts of students in Croatia – particularly, inclusivity in higher education takes account of Croatian war veterans and Croatia appears to be more aware of needs of asylum seekers than is the UK.

Difficult and daunting as it may seem, we have colleagues in various universities who are already developing and using good inclusive practice. The 3rd section of this book shares and highlights some of these ideas. This good practice is increasing and at each seminar or conference I attend, I hear about more examples that I would have loved to have included in this book; examples coming from places like Plymouth, Strathclyde, Worcester and De Montfort universities but time marches on and I needed to draw a date line in order to complete and publish this text. If readers have examples of good practice within their own institutions that they want to discuss and share, then a further publication may be the way forward.

In chapter 19 Nick Morton and Rachel Curzon outline their work in Transforming the learning journey through inclusive curriculum design. During 2015-16, they began a project to transform the curriculum across all faculties and programmes within their institution and their chapter reflects upon the transformative journey higher education students take from entrant to graduate. In particular, it explores the design and co-creation of an integrated, inclusive curricula purposely intended to support students on this learning journey, and thereby help to close the inclusivity gap.

Chapter 20 presents a slightly different, and interesting, approach. In Emotional intelligence – the road to inclusivity, Nick Gee gives you weekly tasks to do and asks you to stop a moment, reflect and challenge yourself and your actions in your own journey towards understanding inclusivity. He shows how good practice requires careful reflection on thoughts and actions and asks us to remember that "you cannot do inclusivity, exclusively".

Karl Nightingale and Vikki Anderson stand up for lecture capture as a useful tool for learning and teaching. Just think how many individual tutorial questions you could deflect by directing your students to an available recording! Chapter 21, Establishing the evidence for inclusive curricula: is supplementary lecture capture an effective approach to support students? starts with some consideration of the barriers to learning and moves on to consider, via a series of case studies and quotes from students, the benefits and support offered by lecture capture. In their chapter, they discuss how inclusive practice can be monitored and improved and conclude that lecture capture is one of a variety of approaches that can create flexible learning environments within inclusive practice.

In chapter 22, Visual lectures, David Roberts explains and demonstrates how he presents complex and abstract ideas via developing a more visual approach, which is beneficial to many students' learning styles. When accompanied with access to notes, this endorses the discussion about students with specific learning differences, as outlined by Ross Cooper in chapter 4.

Chapter 23, Any issue that is getting in the way: the role of the student support and guidance tutor in promoting inclusive practice by Justine Devenney shows how the role of dedicated Student Support and Guidance Tutors can promote inclusivity by supporting both students and academic staff on any issue that has the potential to affect student engagement with their course.

In chapter 24, Dennis Duty and Paul Armitage discuss closing the inclusivity gap by examining the learning environment. Promoting inclusivity through the learning environment addresses some issues raised by Neil Raven in chapter 2, about how widening participation has encouraged students from non-traditional backgrounds to participate in higher education. They seek to promote good practice by changing the way teaching is delivered: delivering more tutorials rather than relying on the traditional lecture style delivery and they discuss the difference it makes to students to have fewer different members of staff teaching the same module and they demonstrate how this can be achieved through careful timetabling.

Michelle Blackburn and Susan Jones take the work placement context for their case study of good practice towards closing the

inclusivity gap. Chapter 25, An approach to inclusive placement within a business school context, shares the experiences and lessons learnt when delivering high-volume placement support. They outline areas of recommended good practice with pre-, during-, and post-placement support so that all students can benefit from the learning and employability skills that come with work placements.

In chapter 26, we are offered ways to encourage hands-on, tactile, kinesthetic learning. In their case study, Diversifying the curriculum and encouraging students through archives and object handling, Charlotte Clemens and Georgina Brewer explain how students of history can be engaged by encouraging them to handle and discuss real objects, thus bringing historical concepts alive for a range of students.

Last, but certainly not least, comes chapter 27, Developing inclusivity and meeting the needs of student carers in higher education by Charlotte Morris. Many students in Higher Education today are also carers. Many, not all of them, are parents (frequently mothers) caring for children. Morris discusses how the life experiences of student carers means that they bring valuable perspectives, strong motivation, a range of highly developed skills, confidence and maturity to Higher Education and the wider community. She argues that through individual, departmental, institutional policy and practice, higher education professionals should be empowered to make a difference to this cohort of students which has the potential to benefit all learners.

Good teaching allowing good learning for one cohort of students is generally good teaching and learning for all.

These case studies are offered for you to read and reflect on and, hopefully, you will be able to take some of these ideas and adapt them to your own unique teaching.

Missing from the debate in the UK – and not included in this book - but very much a part of higher education concerns in Croatia (as we saw in chapter 18), is the consideration of asylum seekers and/or children of asylum seekers. However, the Article 26 project in the UK has spearheaded a campaign to support the "access, participation and success in higher education for people who have

fled persecution and sought asylum in the UK" (article26:np). With notable exceptions, few UK universities have identified asylum seekers as an identifiable student cohort. The University of Sheffield has a team dedicated to helping refugees throughout their academic studies from application to graduation, supporting them with advice on finance and housing, facilitating details of student life and even aiding them in finding work opportunities after graduation (Vioreanu, 2016). This is an area of inclusivity which, I suggest, will need to be increasingly addressed in the coming years.

The Inclusivity Gap is a book that is uniquely valuing knowledge and insight derived from social science research and phenomenological experience. I see it as the beginning of a dialogue and hope that it will stimulate further scholarship, debate, developments to practice and collaborative projects and initiatives; and that it is just the first in a series of books where we can share good practice in inclusivity as approaches to student learning develop and multiply until we can say that the inclusivity gap has been well and truly closed.

K.M.Krčmář (Editor)

REFERENCES

Sea anemone pictures (nd) Shutterstock [online]

https://www.shutterstock.com/searchsearch_source=base_landing_page&language=en&-searchterm=sea+anemone&image_type=all (accessed 19/09/17)

Article26: a project of the Helena Kennedy Foundation (no year) [online] http://article26.hkf.org.uk/ (accessed 27/02/18)

Biggs, J. & Tang, C. (2011) Teaching for Quality Learning at University. Maidenhead: Open University Press

Bologna Process (2010) [online] https://www.ehea.info/pid34250-cid101620/united-king-dom.html (accessed 23/08/17)

Equality Act (2010) [online] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance (accessed 12/9/17)

Higher Education Academy (2011) The UK Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning in higher education. [online] https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sys-tem/files/downloads/uk_professional_standards_framework.pdf (accessed 24/8/17)

Layer, G. (2017) Inclusive Teaching and Learning in Higher Education as a route to Excel-lence. Department for Education on behalf of the Disabled Student Sector Leadership Group. [online] http://www.guildhe.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Inclusive_Teach-ing_and_Learning_in_Higher_Education_as_a_route_to_excellence.pdf (accessed 21/3/17)

Pre-school Learning Alliance (2017) Equality and Inclusive Practice. [online] https://www.pre-school.org.uk/equality-and-inclusive-practice (accessed 11/12/17)

Strathclyde University (2017) Equality and Diversity for Academics (fact sheet). [online] https://www.strath.ac.uk/media/ps/sees/equality/e-and-d-for-academics-factsheet-inclu-sive-practice.pdf (accessed 11/12/17)
Teaching Excellence Framework (2017) [online] http://www.hefce.ac.uk/lt/tef/ (accessed 12/9/17)

Vioreanu, D. (2016) Universities that provide increased support to refugee students. [online] http://www.mastersportal.eu/articles/1940/universities-that-provide-increased (accessed 9/5/17)
Wenger, E. (2006) Communities of Practice – a brief introduction. [online] http://wenger-trayner.com/theory/index.htm (accessed12/09/17)

PART 1

1

CHAPTER

THE ELEPHANTS IN THE ROOM

Karisa Krčmář

In this chapter I will highlight and discuss some of the issues that I believe underlie the need for a truly inclusive approach to learning and teaching in higher education. Some of these are being readily and openly discussed in teaching communities but I feel that some are unknown, are being ignored, they are the elephants in the room. How many elephants can we fit into a lecture hall without their compromising our students' learning?

The concern with a more inclusive approach to teaching is being driven by changes currently occurring in the higher education sector. The Bologna Process (2010) has been developing over the past decade and this aims to provide comparable qualifications between countries within Europe. At the same time the UK government set targets for the number of people attending higher education and graduating with at least first degree status. A huge number of institutions have stepped up to meet this demand so that higher education provision is available from a greater number of institutions which include not only previous polytechnics and further education colleges which now have university status, but also higher education departments existing within further education institutions. This means that there has been a huge increase in students from non-traditional educational backgrounds studying at tertiary level.

Many traditional universities have relied on Disabled Student's Allowances (DSA) to help fund a range of study support services with a small 'in-house' top-up which may have allowed for the inclusion of a limited number of students who did not qualify as 'disabled'. However, DSA is drying up as the government makes it increasingly difficult for students to access the grant that funded additional support needs. It has been made clear to higher education providers that they are increasingly responsible for the provision of services

that make higher education inclusive. The Teaching Excellence Framework has focused the attention of vice-chancellors and their senior management teams, and most universities have now established expert teaching teams to help develop academics move from a 'lecture' approach to learning and teaching, towards a more readily recognised 'teaching' approach. This, more centralised, approach should ultimately benefit the institution, but more importantly, should benefit the student, as a universal adoption of inclusive teaching and practice "recognises and values the diversity of the student body and works with them to enhance and optimise the learning experience for all" (Layer, 2017:3).

During a conference speech Professor David Green (2017), Vice-chancellor and Chief Executive of University of Worcester argued that "university should be an everyday engine of inclusion"; there follows a discussion as to why this may be proving more difficult in practice than in theory.

Many years ago now, I attended a workshop at an Association of Dyslexia Specialists in Higher Education (aDShe) conference where colleagues from different universities were sharing examples of what they called inclusive assessments that were available for students with dyslexia. In fact, they were merely adjustments made to allow students with a disability or with a specific learning difference to work on a level playing field, allowing them to work to their potential.

Whilst inclusivity meant asking the disability services to advise on adjustments for their students, academic departments did not take much further interest. This made for very exclusive assessments and such practice was based upon what has been referred to as the 'medical model' rather than 'social inclusive model' (Pollak, 2005). This was akin to saying to an individual student, "Oh, poor you. You have a problem. We'll be kind to you and make allowances." It put the 'problem' fairly and squarely at the feet of the student (Wray, 2000).

This exclusive model of teaching and learning in higher and further education requires a student to get evidence of a disability – quite often at considerable expense and taking considerable time. There is a long process to go through to finally obtain a Disabled Student's Allowance grant, administered by financial bodies such as Student

Finance England. With any form of evidence of need, there is a requirement for a cut-off line. To one side of this line – yes, you can have an exclusive label that says you have a disability and your institution is legally obliged to make various adjustments for you. On the other side of the line – no, get on, struggle alone, or give up. In its day, this exclusive model, was a huge step forward. That day, however, has come and gone. Today, inclusivity must be … inclusive. The Bologna Process (2010) created comparable and compatible higher education curricula across Europe. This has resulted in a wider range of people accessing higher education in a variety of educational institutions as the process includes issues based around equitable participation and lifelong learning. This has led to a more student-centred approach to higher education provision with learning rather than teaching becoming an explicit and critical part of curriculum design. This demands improved teaching for a broader range of students.

One elephant in the room, I argue, is that traditionally academic curricula have been based on the research interests of individual academics. We have taken our research interest and taught it. Our base has been: what do we want to teach? The Bologna Process, with a focus on research and innovation, and employability requires a different approach. Additionally, many higher education providers offer courses where curricula are, at least in some part, influenced by government funding and/or professional organisations. Traditionally, this has been reflected in curricula needed for medicine or teacher training; but there are an increasing number of degrees with an applied or vocational focus. We need to start with: what do we want our students to learn? We need to identify learning outcomes. An integral part of this process is assessing that our students have met these learning objectives (which also involves assessing the effectiveness of our teaching). We need to be aware of the wide range of students sitting in front of us and take account of how differently they will approach their own learning, which will necessarily influence our choice from the array of teaching strategies and techniques available to us. This critical reflection based on thinking how will I teach will help develop truly inclusive teaching and inclusive assessments.

Since widening participation has become a part of higher education, students from Welsh and English schools are arriving for their degree studies not necessarily having a traditional 'A' level background or

international baccalaureate. The core, six or so, 'A' levels (maths, English, history, geography, sciences, languages) have been replaced by a huge amount of choice and students frequently arrive without any 'A' levels at all but with a non-vocational qualification. UCAS points can accrue with perseverance and a variety of learning and post-compulsory education spread over 3 or 4 years. Yet academic departments rarely put in place modules to teach the learning skills that a student may not previously have been taught. Universities in Scotland generally offer a 4-year degree course for students with Highers rather than Advanced Higher qualification. A study currently under way in my own institution is examining the gap of actual mathematics knowledge of students from non-vocational backgrounds and assumed mathematics knowledge to enable effective learning within science and engineering faculties (unpublished). There has been an assumption that, somehow, a student knows what is required and how to go about delivering the mystery that is required of them – it can sometimes feel rather like they are expected to be a magician and pull a rabbit out of a hat. John Biggs and Catherine Tang (2011) have written extensively on teaching and learning in higher education and have discussed the inclusion of non-traditional students in higher education learning today.

Figure 1 demonstrates, in a simple model, the historical process of the move from traditional teaching in higher education, through the slow move of introducing inclusive assessment procedures for students with disabilities and culminates with what I have identified as the need for a new inclusive model of learning, assessment and teaching that is necessary today and for the future of higher education provision in order to help close the inclusivity gap.

The discussion of inclusivity has been widening and is becoming main stream within higher education provision. Widening participation has meant students with the potential – but not quite the right skill sets, yet – need an inclusive approach to the curriculum to have the opportunity to develop those skills. It is often the 'newer' universities that can be seen to be making strides in this area. Widening participation has also meant a few students admitted to universities (at undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research level) will continue to struggle with conceptual aspects of their course. The stress and anxiety experienced by students who are struggling, in effect, without any recourse for help just compound

their difficulties. Seemingly never officially discussed, this is a group of students who have been accepted, paid their money and who deans of schools or faculties expect their academic teams to get on and teach, assess and pass. Just get a group of academics and teaching support tutors together and you'll soon hear about it! It then gets brushed under the table … if, indeed, you can brush an elephant under the table. What is the academic world's responsibility for students?

TRADITIONAL (EXCLUSIVE) PHASE	DEVELOPING PHASE	
Traditional students with traditional A levels (or equivalent) and grades	Traditional students with traditional A levels (or equivalent) and grades	Students with specific learning differences (e.g. dyslexia)
Traditional curriculum, teaching, learning & assessment	Traditional curriculum, teaching, learning & assessment	Alternative assessments and adjustments

MODERN (INCLUSIVE) PHASE		
Traditional students with traditional A levels (or equivalent) and grades	Students with specific learning differences (e.g. dyslexia)	Students from non-traditional backgrounds

Inclusive curriculum, teaching, learning & assessment

Figure 1: a simple model of the development of the inclusive curriculum approach

The Further and Higher Education Act 1992, which abolished polytechnics, is another elephant in the room. It has meant that universities, traditionally providing 'academic' education, developed to offer more 'vocational degrees'. Recruitment based on UCAS points rather than traditional 'A' level grades has resulted in students, with wide-ranging academic backgrounds and hugely varying underpinning skills, arriving to study for degrees. This has been compounded with the government target of 50% of young people in higher education of some sort. I have noticed a subtle change in language over the years. At one time, people talked about 'reading' for a degree; in my day, we 'studied' for a degree; these days, young people talk of 'doing' a degree. This might just be a comment on semantics, but it's a telling comment. Many of today's students start their higher education with a reading deficit. Many students do not come from a background of having learned to study. In fact, some admit to never having read a book in their lives and their homes were literature-free. Several studies have linked reading with academic achievement (see for example, Owusu-Acheaw, 2014). Reading is an integral part of vocabulary building; but secondary school league tables have resulted in the wide use of A-level study guides with key information in neat, bite-sized chunks so that wider reading is not required. Thus, the opportunity for specialist vocabulary building and internalising is missed but Nagy & Scott (2000) have argued that to effectively grasp the meaning of text, a reader must know at least 90% of the words contained within in.

Effective reading necessitates bringing prior knowledge with you. We can no longer assume that students arrive with that prior knowledge. It may need to be expressly taught. If I'm reading Dante or Chaucer or Shakespeare, I know I don't have the background knowledge to understand and enjoy all their references – knowledge readers of their time would have had. I may start this study from a lower base line of background knowledge, but it doesn't mean I don't have the same level of ability. We have students on our courses who start at a lower-than-average baseline but we are required to facilitate their learning to a good enough academic and thinking level that meets a rigorous and quality degree. It is not about enabling special adjustments for individual students; it is about going back to the drawing board and thinking about curriculum design taking account of the students who are being recruited to higher education courses. This will take time and effort. But just think about the time and effort

currently spent administering separate exam arrangements; alternative arrangements and adjustments and impaired performance claims.

The way we assess our students' learning is another elephant in the room. A truly reflective approach enables us to stop and really think about why we assess students; and importantly, really explicitly, consider the skills and knowledge that are we testing, making sure that implicit assumptions are not being made about other areas of skill or knowledge. In exams, for example, are we testing deep learning as we ask students to apply their learning to a variety of questions or are we just testing memory and regurgitation, which can be produced merely with surface learning – if you have that sort of memory? Owusu-Acheaw (2014) argues that a focus on exam-style assessments mitigates against students engaging in further reading for their course. He suggests that students rely more on lecture and handout notes to answer questions rather than wider reading to develop knowledge and understanding of a subject in depth. Interestingly, way back in 2008, Philip Long researched into the impact of student learning when students were offered a choice in the form of assessment. He argued that opportunity to choose from a range of assessment methods, reinforced students' approaches to their work and helped to promote deep learning amongst the cohort.

Figure 2 is a diagrammatic representation of the model developed by Light and Cox (2004:51) which shows the development of deep, transforming learning.

Developing as a person

Interpretive proces aimed at understanding

abstraction of meaning

acquisition of facts, methods, etc.

memorising

a quantitive increase in **knowedge**

Transforming (deep) learning

Reproducing (surface) learning
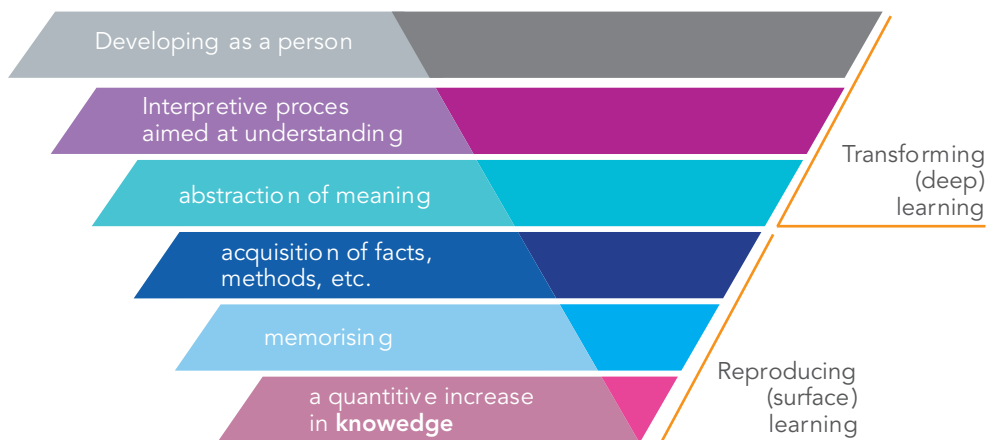
Figure 2: developing deep learning
(conceptions of learning adapted from Light and Cox, 2004)

Most colleagues would argue that they want their students to develop understanding and meaning around their subject. They want their students to develop critical approaches to their study so that they can gather, synthesise, analyse and interpret information. They want their students to develop transforming, deep learning. Yet, as shown in this figure, reproducing information, as is often required in the traditional exam model of assessment, is aligned to a surface approach to learning; but a transformative approach for deeper learning is developed as students are asked to interpret information. In order to allow that transforming, deep learning do they really need to learn a whole load of formulae or facts, which in real life, in the world of work, will be available to them at the touch of a button? If you believe that this is necessary, it should be clear in learning outcomes and students should have the opportunity to learn the techniques for memory. Sometimes, colleagues argue that it is a professional accrediting organisation that requires traditional exams. At a RAISE (Researching, Advancing and Inspiring Student Engagement) seminar (2017) Dr Abigail Moriarty (Director for Learning and Teaching at De Montfort University) cited that the most common reason given for maintaining examinations was the need to

meet professional membership accreditation criteria and yet when she surveyed the professional bodies, the only one that explicitly required accreditation through examinations was the Nursing and Midwifery Council.

Professional bodies, when asked, generally respond that they leave assessment up to the higher education provider; they are only interested that quality is met, not how it is met. This can leave a student (who for perhaps mental health reasons, experiences extreme anxiety), in a kind of unexplained and unsatisfactory limbo.

A further elephant in the room is modern use of technology. It is, undoubtedly, a wonderful tool which is a bonus for our teaching and learning. IT enables access to higher education for a huge number of people who use e-learning courses. Academics in Higher Education Providers (HEPs) sometimes tend to forget that the students sitting in front of us are from a generation that has grown up with constant access to, and use of, social media. Fransen (2013), at the KTH Royal Institute of Technology at Stockholm University, has shown how a typical session of social media browsing can overload the brain with information. This will include using the internet for information searching. Our brains can only hold and process three or four items of information at any one time, which means that being exposed to overwhelming amounts of information results in less information getting processed and filed away in memory. As we try to load our working memory capacity, not only do we reach its limit more rapidly, but the load we give it also reduces our capacity for information processing.

Carr (2011:6) discusses the effect of time spent online, searching and surfing databases has had on his own reading. He admits that "the deep reading that used to come naturally has become a struggle".

Attention is key to efficient processing and forming strong memories and when students have grown up with the usual behaviour of regularly checking their social media; using 'google' to check and find facts; and researching via sequential links from one website to another, their ability to process, organise and consolidate will be very different from the average academic, even if we are only a few years older (Chen et al., 2012). Our students will have grown up using assistive software, social media, internet-research as a way of life.

Many academics have had to go to workshops to learn about blogs and Twitter and Facebook (not to mention Myspace and facetime and all the other forms of social media that the pre-teen generation is using). This may mean that we are making exclusive assumptions based on our own experiences when it comes to students' ability to read, research, process and memorise. Are we giving our students the chance to keep some processing capacity clear to enable them to think and process what they are studying?

Some, at least, of the elephants in the room have been counted in. The belief that higher education provision is an everyday engine of inclusion brings with it adjustments and changes from the traditional view of university as being for the elite. Research-focused curricula have to adapt when they are underpinned by more vocational criteria, which by their nature encourage students from non-traditional backgrounds to engage in higher education. Students can arrive without the anticipated background knowledge or experience of study. This can immediately put them at a disadvantage compared with their peers arriving with high A level grades, good level international baccalaureates or Advanced Highers. This, in turn, affects the starting point and delivery of academic content and, since it is part of the learning and teaching curriculum, affects the nature of assessment. Inclusive learning and teaching recognises the diversity of students experiencing higher education today and the diversity of provision. Whilst I have argued that the idea of inclusivity began with laying out a more level playing field for students with disabilities, today's cohort of students attend higher education with a wider range of needs, differences and abilities. A truly inclusive approach for the 21st century will celebrate these differences and be open to work with students to develop a quality experience of learning and teaching for all.

There are many groups and organisations available for idea and resource sharing and discussion. These include:

- Association of Dyslexia Specialists in Higher Education:
  https://www.adshe.org.uk

- Higher Education Academy:
  https://www.heacademy.ac.uk

- National Association of Disability Practitioners:
  http://nadp-uk.org/

- RAISE (Researching, Advancing and Inspiring Student Engagement) is an independent, not for profit organisation, which aims to act as a hub and network for all those in Higher Education with an interest in Student Engagement.
  By supporting and facilitating the concepts, culture and practice of students and staff working in partnership, RAISE is an active network, meeting regularly in Special Interest Groups, an annual conference and several other events.
  More information available here:
  http://raise-network.ning.com/

- University Mental Health Advisors Network:
  http://www.umhan.com/

REFERENCES

Association of Dyslexia Specialists in Higher Education. [online]
http://www.ADSHE.org.uk (accessed 15/12/16)

Biggs, J. & Tang, C. (2011) Teaching for Quality Learning at University. Maidenhead:
Open University Press

Bologna Process (2010) [online]
https://www.ehea.info/pid34250-cid101620/united-kingdom.html (accessed 23/08/17)

Carr, N. (2011) The Shallows. London: W.W. Norton & Company

Chen, N.; Sugihara, H.; Sharma, H.; Perea, G.; Petravicz, J.; Le, C. & Sur, M. (2012)
Nucleus basaslis-enabled stimulus-specific plasticity in the visual cortex is mediated by
astrocytes. Proceedings of the National Academy of Science. 41:E2832-41

Disabled Student's Allowance. [online]
https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas/further-information (accessed 31/5/16)

Fransen, E. (2013) Information overload negatively impacts short-term memory.
Crosstalks TV. Published on 30 Sep 2013. [online]
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V-anQwJ2pRY (accessed 03/06/16)

Green, D. (2017) Welcome address to delegates at 2020 Enivionsing: Planning for and
realising inclusive excellence – a RAISE inclusive practice special interest group seminar.
Monday 26th June, University of Worcester

Layer, G. (2017) Inclusive Teaching and Learning in Higher Education as a route to
Excellence. Department for Education on behalf of the Disabled Student Sector
Leadership Group. [online]
http://www.guildhe.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Inclusive_Teaching_and_Learn-
ing_in_Higher_Education_as_a_route_to_excellence.pdf (accessed 21/3/17)

Light, G. & Cox, R. (2004) Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: The Reflective
Professional. London: Paul Chapman

Long, P. (2008) Does having a choice in the form of assessment help to promote deep
learning amongst students? [online]
https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resource/does-having-choice-form-assessment-help-pro-
mote-deep-learning-amongst-students (accessed 31/05/16)

Nagy, W.E. & Scott, J.A. (2000) Vocabulary Processes. Handbook of Reading Research.
In M.L. Kamil; P.H. Mosenthal; P.D. Pearson & R. Barr (eds) Vol. 3. New Zealand:
Lawrence Erlbaum Associates

National Association of Disability Practitioners [online] http://www.NADP-uk.org
(accessed 15/12/16)

Owusu-Acheaw, M. (2014) Reading Habits Among Students and its Effect on Academic
Performance: A Study of Students of Koforidua Polytechnic. Library Philosophy and
Practice (e-journal). 1130. [online] http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.
cgi?article=2908&context=libphilprac (accessed 23/08/17)

Pollak, D. (2005) Dyslexia, the self and higher education. Stoke on Trent: Trentham Books

REFERENCES

Researching, Advancing and Inspiring Student Engagement (2017) 2020 Envisioning: Planning for and realising inclusive excellence – a RAISE inclusive practice special interest group seminar – Monday 26th June. University of Worcester

The Further and Higher Education Act 1992 (1992) [online] http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1992/13/contents (accessed 31/5/16)

Wray, M. (2000-2002) Modification of examination and assessment arrangements for disabled students; additional support or added advantage. DEMOS Project Manchester University HEFCE Funded Disability Initiative 2000-2002 Project 44. [online] http://demos.ac.uk/course/assessment/welcome.html (accessed 31/5/16)

2

CHAPTER

'I DON'T THINK IT'S QUITE ME':
the HE progression challenge for young men from white working class backgrounds[1]

Neil Raven

INTRODUCTION

It has been recognised for some time that comparatively few males from lower socio-economic backgrounds, especially young white English males, progress to Higher Education (HE). Indeed, a decade ago the Select Committee on Education and Skills (2006-07 point 27:n.p.) expressed concerns "about male participation". These anxieties were echoed in a briefing released by the Higher Education Council for England (HEFCE) during the same year, where reference was made to the "significant challenge" the gender gap in participation represented for the sector (HEFCE, 2007:np; Raven, 2008a, 2008b, 2011). Despite these warnings, and accompanying calls to action, raising the progression rates of young males from less privileged backgrounds in England has proved to be a particularly intractable widening participation (WP) challenge (Raven, forthcoming).

Indeed, the gender-gap has continued to widen over the last 10 or more years, and this is especially pronounced where males from deprived backgrounds are concerned. Even compared to their female counterparts they are less likely to go onto HE-level study. In 2011-12, 23 per cent of young women from the most educationally disadvantaged areas progressed to university. The corresponding figure for males from the same background was 17 percent (OFFA & HEFCE, 2014: 21). This, it is claimed, equates to 3,000 more young women than men entering HE from these areas (OFFA & HEFCE, 2014:21). For the Office for Fair Access and HEFCE (2014:22) this represents a "troubling" trend. The need to better understand

the character of this access challenge appears clear. A greater appreciation of the circumstances encountered by these young men offers the prospect of being able to develop widening participation strategies capable of addressing this particular gender gap.

This chapter considers the findings from a local study within schools in England that sought to contribute to this understanding (Raven, 2016). This was commissioned by REACH - the Leicester and Leicestershire National Outreach Network (HEFCE, 2016). Whilst it affords a synthesis of the findings from this work, the chapter also draws on additional material to enrich the picture and to emphasise the role that schools and colleges can play in influencing the post-18 learner journeys of young men from WP backgrounds.

THE CASE STUDY

In seeking to gather rich, qualitative data a case study approach was adopted (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2001:3; Stake, 1978; Gerring, 2004). This was based on three English schools and colleges in the English East Midlands. To provide a spectrum of institutional-types in England, one of these was an 11-16 academy, the second an 11-18 academy and the third a post-16 college. It should be noted that the organisation of school education varies between different parts of Britain (Times Education Supplement, 2017; BBC News, 2017). In each case, the views of a range of teaching professionals, including heads of year, managers, vice principals and careers advisors, were gathered by semi-structured interviews (UK Data Services, 2016; DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). In total, nine professionals were interviewed.

To gather the learner perspective, focus groups were held with young men who met various WP criteria (including residing in areas of educational disadvantage). Following initial discussions with key contacts in each school, and recognising recent policy developments (OFFA, 2016: 2-3), it was decided to concentrate analysis on white British males from WP backgrounds. Learners at two key transition points in their educational careers were recruited for the focus groups: those in year 9, who were soon to embark upon their key stage four (GCSEs) studies, and those in years 12 and 13, who were taking level three qualifications (including A levels) and deciding on whether to progress to HE or not.

In order to discern any differences in outlook and attitudes, the teaching professionals overseeing selection were asked to identify two groups who would form separate focus groups. For those in year 9 the distinction was between learners judged to have become disengaged from education, or at risk of doing so, and those who remained engaged. The characteristic that determined which focus group the sixth formers were placed into was whether they intended to progress to HE, or not. In total, five focus groups were run, comprising two year 9 groups and three from year 12/13 (for practical reasons, one of the year 12/13 groups was a mixed - heterogeneous - one, which included learners intending to progress as well as those who were not). Twenty young men took part in these discussions (nine year 9 learners and 11 from years 12 and 13). The focus groups followed child-safeguarding guidelines, with consent gained from the schools as well as parents and guardians.

FINDINGS

1. School performance

1.1. Engagement and attainment

Discussions with teaching professionals from all three institutions confirmed that the school-level attainment of young white men from lower socio-economic backgrounds was of concern. Indeed, an improvement in their performance was recognised as a strategic objective. Whilst the focus of the research conducted for this study was on HE progression, school performance and not gaining the necessary grades at GCSE (and equivalent) is likely to have a strong effect on the prospects of university   progression. A negative school experience may also impact on the desire to pursue higher-level study. In this respect, one of the interviewees at the 11-16 academy noted that white working class boys have "definitely been prioritised as a group that we need to be looking at and targeting", adding that "on all the Ofsted requirements it is [asking] what is happening with your white boys and how are they doing?" Ofsted, the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills "inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people" across England" (Gov. UK, 2018:np). Similarly, an interviewee in the 11-18 academy observed that, whilst we "look at all" learners, the

underachievement of this particular group is a "focus", with another interviewee from the same academy acknowledging institutional concerns around males from "deprived areas". In the post-16 college "white learners, male and female, but male specifically", were also reported to have "not done so well as their colleagues in the same classes." Consequently, it was added, "they are a concern", especially since "we are measured by the groups of learners doing as well as each other."

These findings are consistent with wider trends. A House of Commons Education Committee report (2014:3) described "white working class underachievement in education" as a "real and persistent" issue. Whilst this applied to both sexes, a number of witnesses whose evidence was collected for this parliamentary report talked of the "educational performance" of males as being particularly worrying (House of Commons, 2014:5). Similarly, in their study Baars et al. (2016:34) recognise that "inequalities in educational attainment explain much of the variation in entry to higher education by social class, ethnicity and gender." However, they also acknowledge that "white working class boys with good school grades are still less likely to progress to HE than their high attaining peers from other ethnic groups and social classes." The "problem", it is argued, "runs deeper than low educational attainment", with "a range of additional factors" preventing "white working class boys from progressing to HE." The evidence collected in this study supports such an assessment and identifies a similar set of forces.

1.2. Associated behaviours

The teaching professionals interviewed suggested that educational underachievement was often the outcome of particular types of behaviour. Whilst in its more extreme form this could be linked to non-attendance, it was more likely to be associated with disengagement, or a lack of interest in school and college work. In this regard one of interviewees in the 11-16 academy discussed the need to address not merely attainment but "attendance" and "behaviour". Such behaviour could also worsen with age. A teaching professional in the 11-18 college observed a tendency for those "in year 10 and 11 [to] become more disengaged", adding that by the time they arrive in the sixth form "they [have] very low aspirations

and [a correspondingly low] work ethic." Interviewees in the post-16 college made comparable points. "We tend to find it is to do with retention [and of] truanting and not being here. Keeping learners to the end is more of an issue with our vulnerable learners, and white British boys' drop out is big." In recognising this pattern of behaviour, another interviewee from the same institution talked of members from this cohort becoming "resigned to not doing very well." Here reference was made to a "self-fulfilling prophesy". They judge they are "not doing very well" and so decide "I won't turn up". These interpretations align with findings discussed in the House of Commons' (2014:27) investigation into the underachievement of white working class children. Here reference is made to "pupils from deprived backgrounds" being "less likely to hold high aspirations for their futures." It also resonates with evidence provided to the same committee by a member of Leicester City Council, who suggested that "in parts of Leicester the white working class culture is characterised by low aspirations and negative attitudes towards education" (House of Commons, 2014:28).

2. Reasons for Disengagement and Underachievement

2.1. A lack of focus and planning

Underlying underachievement and disengagement, teaching professionals in all three institutions talked about a lack of focus amongst white working class boys. One interviewee in the 11-18 college referred to an absence of ideas about "what they want to do", which was evident by years 9 and 10. An interviewee in the post-16 college made a similar assessment. In observing a tendency for "more white [males from] lower socio-economic [groups to] drop out", it was noted that, "when asked what they want to do, they don't have a focus." In exploring this theme further, what emerged was a lack of planning by these learners around their next steps. When "ask[ed] what [are you] going to do for rest of lives, their decisions", it was observed, "were not based on" next steps, nor a consideration of a way of reaching what they want to achieve.

However, it was also recognised that these learners often harbour ambitions. Illustrating this, the example was offered of young man who wanted to "own his own gym." Yet, this ambition was not reflected

in "his immediate decision-making", which centred on wanting to "move out of [the family] home and earn enough." In discussing the more immediate concerns associated with this group of learners, this interviewee talked about their "economic background" being "really significant in terms of expectations." Whilst they showed "an awareness of the real world" and "the need to earn", this, it was observed, is "not necessarily long-term planning." A focus on short-term objectives was also highlighted in discussions with other teaching professionals from the same institution. Such learners just "want to finish [and] move on to [the] next bit." Consequently, it was added, "they don't know what their options are until it is too late." Interviewees also offered a contrast in mindset with those who were intending to progress to HE. Here one interviewee from the post-16 college observed that males from these backgrounds who go on to university are "very clear about what they want to do." What distinguished these individuals from their peers, it was added, was that they had discovered "their vocation" and "found things they clearly enjoy." The significance of identifying a subject or vocational interest was supported by feedback from a focus group participant at the same college. When asked where the decision to go to university had come from, this young man replied that it arose from an interest in the subject he was studying, and that university offered a chance to pursue this interest further.

Practitioners also offered explanations why others from the same group did not demonstrate the same levels of focus and planning. These individuals "don't think they need to go to university to do the things they want to do." "Anecdotally", it was added, "they have more of a desire for independence from their families than other groups, especially girls." In analysing data on the intended destinations of white males from this group who were in the second year of their A-levels, the same post-16 college interviewee observed that "more [intend to opt for] employment and apprenticeships here than [with] other groups." These findings accord with evidence discussed by Woodfield (2011:12), which suggests that "boys might be more attracted to entering the world of work after the end of compulsory education." Similarly, Baars et al. (2016:34) discuss a tendency amongst young white working class males to "prioritise swift entry into paid work" even if they have the potential to progress onto "further study."

2.2. Local and parental influence

For a number of the practitioners, the explanation for a lack of focus and planning lay with the neighbourhoods these young men came from, along with their family backgrounds and familial expectations. Here, one of the post-16 college interviewees talked of "a lack of examples", adding that "very often they come from groups where everyone would have gone onto factory work." Another practitioner from the college provided further detail. "The old traditional roles that white working class boys took on required no planning or motivation. They could just leave school and wonder into a building or factory job. In my experience the girls have vague ideas of what they want to do before they come here." Similarly, an interviewee in the 11-18 college argued that boys "don't see themselves working at Land Rover or places like that. They have not got parents that motivate them or speak to them about what is outside the area." Indeed, in some instances these learners "might not have a male role model at home because there is [only] one parent." Linked to this, a colleague from the same institution talked about wider local influences, suggesting that parents from these neighbourhoods will tend to "socialise [with each other] and have the same outlook." The idea that "where they live" can play a role in determining the educational trajectories of young people was addressed in evidence provided to the House of Common Select Committee (2014:38). Similarly, Reed et al. (2007:14) discuss how "local environments" can inform views, and reference dominant "local narratives" relating to "pathways into adulthood that do not depend on educational success."

The particular influence of parents was explored by one of the interviewees in the 11-16 academy whose role involved engaging with the families of some of these young men. Their parents, it was observed, may have struggled in school and may not "see the value of education." This can manifest itself in these children having "no place to do their homework." Whilst many of these parents have aspirations for their offspring, it was noted, "somehow they want it to happen without them realising they [need to have an] input. I don't think they quite know what to do." A similar point was made by an interviewee from the post-16 college who, in noting that parents and immediate family members are unlikely to have "been to university" themselves, added that these learners may not be

given a "quiet time to work" at home, and may lack the "equipment" and materials required to complete such work.

The same 11-16 academy interviewee also discussed the challenge some working class families with sons who express an interest in HE may experience. "It must be quite frightening for their child to say, right I am going to do engineering at university, and they would think what does that mean? He will walk away from here and not recognise us anymore because that is a different world! It must be an enormous step for some of these children and their families to take." An interviewee from the post-16 college also discussed the cultural differences between the local and familial surroundings such learners would be used to and what they might encounter at university. Here it was suggested that universities may lack "that sense of community" these young men are likely to identify with. Indeed, such sentiments were echoed by a focus group member from the 11-18 college group. Asked why he was not considering HE, this young man replied that "I didn't think [it is] quite me. I guess it's because I am not too well with new people and [a] new environment." Similarly, Baars et al. (2016:34) discuss how "white working class boys have less access to forms of cultural capital that facilitate access to HE", whilst there is also likely to be "a lack of experience and knowledge of higher education within family and peer networks" (see also Davies et al., 2014).

2.3. Costs

Interviewees also referred to instances where parental pressure was exerted on these young men not to participate. Where "parents and the immediate family have not been to university", questions, it was suggested, may be raised about "why [are] you going to college", and emphasis placed on getting "a job and bringing money into the house." Indeed, the issue of cost was recognised as a key challenge. One interviewee from the 11-18 college observed that, "whilst we try to do a lot of work [on] HE and finances, it is educating their families because when they see £9,000 [of annual fees] we have had parents say you are not going to university to the young people." Some parents, it was added, can be "very vocal about debt. We try to say your child will not pay anything back unless they earn over £21,000 [but] it is very difficult for that to sink in." This assessment is consistent with Connor et al.'s (2001:1) suggestion that the "main

reason" those from lower socio-economic backgrounds decide against continued study is the desire to start "employment, earn money, and be independent", whilst concerns about the costs of study are likely to push them in the same decision.

3. Current Strategies

Practitioners discussed various strategies in response to concerns over the performance of young men from working class backgrounds. Whilst a number of these focused on measures that were being implemented in their own institution, there was an awareness that improved levels of engagement and achievement during the years of compulsory education could lead to a larger pool of young men with qualifications and interests that would equip and inspire them to pursue higher level study. In this respect, teaching professionals in the 11-18 academy and post-16 college talked about establishing "systems" for monitoring the performance and progress of vulnerable learners, including white working class boys; a practice also referenced by the House of Commons Education Committee report (2014, 47). A related tactic was to emphasise the importance of attending classes and of the institution being prepared to intervene when participation levels dropped. In addition, a teaching professional from the 11-18 college talked about modifying the way the curriculum is delivered, in order to "ensure the work in challenging" and engaging. This included introducing "small alterations, like setting competitions in class." Whilst this was a response to concerns over male engagement, it was added that it "can also benefit girls who can learn from competition" as well. Similarly, the benefits of more interactive learning were discussed by members of the 11-18 college sixth form focus group. These young men discussed occasions when their teachers would "talk about the work and enable [us to] ask questions, rather than just reading off the board." Indeed, one participant observed that "if you want to see us make progress, chat to us and enable us to ask questions."

In addition, interviewees at the post-16 college discussed the practice of embedding "employability into the curriculum", which, it was noted, had received "positive learner feedback." This involved "teachers [incorporating] into lessons elements of what students need to be thinking about for their next steps", and encouraging learners to explore the "skills" that will be required "if they want to progress."

A further tactic mentioned by teaching professionals in the post-16 college and 11-18 academy concerned bringing in employers and "motivational speakers" to raise aspirations and help learners see "the purpose of being here." Indeed, when asked what advice they would offer their younger self, a post-16 college focus group participant talked about the career opportunities that can arise from pursuing a higher education. Similarly, Connor et al. (2001:1) found that "the main motivating factor [amongst] students from lower social class backgrounds to enter HE is a belief that a higher qualification will bring improved job and career prospects." Moore et al. (2013:iv) also talk about the importance of linking the question of "why HE" to the career opportunities this can offer. Likewise, Baars et al. (2016:35) argue that "white working class boys are more likely to be concerned about the relevance of a university degree to their future earnings and job prospects." Consequently, "the relevance and value of university degree subjects should be emphasised."

4. Potential Tactics

From discussions with practitioners a number of potential tactics for enhancing school performance and engagement - and by doing so improving the HE progression prospects of white working class males - were identified. The first, which was already starting to be implemented by the 11-16 academy, concerned recognising and capturing learner interests. By "knowing something about the young person", it was observed, you know the "right person" to approach when a suitable university outreach "opportunity comes along." The value of gathering and acting on such information was confirmed by some of the focus groups' participants at the post-16 college. Asked what had been the initial trigger for thinking about university, one participant discussed how they had discovered a subject that matched their interests. These findings are also consistent with those of Morrison (2010:76). In profiling the experiences of two working class students, the "love of learning" was identified " as a powerful pull factor." It can also be argued that universities have a role to play in this regard. By working in partnership with teaching professionals, outreach interventions could be developed that align with learner interests and that indicate the HE study opportunities associated with these interests (Raven, forthcoming).

The second potential tactic concerned the value of promoting

the social side of university life. Amongst sixth form focus group participants in the 11-18 college an opportunity to find out about the clubs and societies available at university was considered an effective way of overcoming fears that they may not 'fit in'. It was also a way of demonstrating that university could provide a friendly environment with 'people there that have the same ideas as you'. Membership of clubs and societies, it was noted, provided an 'easy way to make new friends'. The need to recognise and address the anxieties that students from non-traditional backgrounds may experience when they "shift into borders or territories that are unfamiliar" is considered by Webber (2014:99).

Finally, practitioners discussed ways of tackling the challenge posed by parents who do not engage with schools and colleges. Here one of the interviewees at the 11-18 college talked of inviting parents to attend a range of school events, including progression evenings, and of having some success at securing this engagement. However, the scale of this challenge was also recognised, especially in relation to parents who are less likely to attend such events. One new development discussed by practitioners in the 11-16 academy that had started to have a positive impact was the appointment of a member of staff with responsibility for family liaison. The role, it was observed, involved visiting parents at home with the aim of encouraging them to come into school and helping "them understand the value of education and how they can be part of that process." Whilst this approach may not have a direct bearing on the HE progression of males from lower socio-economic groups, it was noted that this represents the "start of the process" of getting these young men engaged in education. If through parental support their attendance improves and their attainment "picks up", the hope is that they will be set on a track that could lead to higher education. Indeed, the practitioner who had taken on this liaison role talked about their desire to see these parents visit a local university. This would provide them with an opportunity to see that the young people studying there "are no different from their children, and that there is absolutely no reason why their children couldn't come here" as well.

The HE progression of white males from deprived backgrounds represents a particular widening access challenge. The sector can claim progress in a range of widening participation areas over recent years, however the WP gender gap commented upon by HEFCE a

decade ago has persisted and, indeed, has widened. There is clearly a need to better understand the challenges faced by this group of learners with the objective of developing strategies capable of closing this progression gap.

This study has set out to make a modest contribution to this understanding. It has done so through adopting a qualitative approach that draws on evidence gathered from a case study of three schools and colleges in Leicester and Leicestershire, England, UK. Whilst representing quite distinct institutions - including in terms of their locations and catchment areas - in all three, practitioners recognised that HE progression was a particular concern for many in this group. Moreover, the widening participation challenge amongst these learners has definite antecedents. It is not only an issue associated with HE aspirations and ambitions but of pre-18 and very often pre-16 educational engagement. More particularly, the evidence from this study suggests it is an issue of underachievement, fuelled by a lack of certainty about future ambitions and possibilities, and the role that education, including higher education, can play. In turn, these attitudes appear to be heavily informed by the localities these young people come from and the local interactions they experience, and, most notably, by their parents and their educational experiences and outlooks.

Whilst this assessment goes some way to explaining the longevity of the challenge, evidence gathered during the course of this study suggests a range of strategies that may have a positive impact in terms of school engagement, as well as higher education aspirations and ambitions. A number have already enjoyed some success in the case study schools and colleges. These include modifying the delivery of the curriculum as well as embedding employability into it, and of encouraging learners to look ahead to post-18 options and opportunities, including HE. Some show early promise but require further work, notably local initiatives to engage parents, including those that introduce them to the university environment. Others represent new ideas that have considerable potential, including recognising learner interests and encouraging them to explore where these interests could take them (Raven, forthcoming). Whilst these tactics may focus on what happens in school, there is much value in schools and colleges collaborating with their local universities in the development and delivery of such initiatives, as well as in evaluating their longer-term impact on raising HE participation rates amongst young white working class males.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

REFERENCES

Baars, S.; Mulcahy, E. & Bernardes, E. (2016) The underrepresentation of white working class boys in higher education. The role of widening participation. King's College London. [online] https://www.lkmco.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/The-underrepresentation-of-white-working-class-boys-in-higher-education-baars-et-al-2016.pdf (accessed 9/12/16)

BBC News (2017) The schools system in Northern Ireland.
[online] http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7050434.stm (accessed 20/5/17)

Connor, H.; Dewson, S.; Tyers, C.; Eccles, J.; Regan, J. & Aston, J. (2001) Social class and higher education: Issues affecting decisions on participation by lower social class groups. Research Briefing No 267. Department for Education and Employment.
[online] http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130401151715/http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/RB267.pdf (accessed 9/12/16)

Davies, P.; Qiu, T. & Davies, N.M. (2014) Cultural and human capital, information and higher education choices. Journal of Education Policy. 29(6):804-825

DiCicco-Bloom, B. & Crabtree, B.F. (2006) The qualitative research interview.
Medical Education. 40:314-3210 [online]
http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1365-2929.2006.02418.x/full (accessed 9/12/16)

Gerring, J. (2004) What is a case study and what is it good for? American Political Science Review. 98(2):341-354

Gov.UK (2018) Ofsted. About Us. [online]
https://www.gov.uk/government/organsiations/ofsted/about (accessed 10/1/18)

Higher Education Funding Council For England (2007) Targeting Outreach.
Council Briefing. Issue 70 [online]
http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100202100434/http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/cbrief/2007/70/cb70.pdf (accessed 9/12/16)

Higher Education Funding Council for England (2016) National Networks of Collaborative Outreach. Policy Guide. [online] http://www.hefce.ac.uk/sas/nnco/ (accessed 9/12/16)

Hodkinson, P. & Hodkinson, H. (2001) The strengths and limitations of case study research. Paper presented at the Learning and Skills Development Agency Conference, Cambridge, UK, 5-7 December. [online]
http://education.exeter.ac.uk/tlc/docs/publications/LE_PH_PUB_05.12.01.rtf. (accessed 9/12/16)

House of Commons Education Committee (2014) Underachievement in Education by White Working Class Children. First Report of Session 2014-15. [online]
http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmeduc/142/142.pdf. (accessed 9/12/16)

Moore, J.; Sanders, J. & Higham, L. (2013) Literature review of research into widening participation to higher education. HEFCE: Bristol. [online]
https://www.offa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Literature-review-of-research-into-WP-to-HE.pdf (accessed 9/12/16)

Morrison, A. (2010) 'I want an education': two case studies of working-class ambition and ambivalence in further and higher education'. Research in Post-Compulsory Education. 15(1):67-80

Office for Fair Access (2016) Strategic guidance: developing your 2017-18 access agreement. [online]
https://www.offa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/strategic-access-agreement-guid-ance.pdf (accessed 9/12/16)

Office for Fair Access and the Higher Education Funding Council for England (2014) National Strategy for Access and Student Success in Higher Education. London: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. [online]
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/299689/bis-14-516-national-strategy-for-access-and-student-success.pdf (accessed 9/12/16)

Raven, N. (2008a) Understanding and overcoming barriers to HE progression faced by working class boys: provisional focus group findings from the East Midlands. e-bulletin. Action on Access. 51:2-3

Raven, N. (2008b) Raising the HE aspirations of working-class boys: lessons from the innovative projects of the East Midlands. e-bulletin. Action on Access. 51:3-4

Raven, N. (2011) Strategies for addressing barriers to HE progression. Male Access and Success in Higher Education: A Discussion Paper. York: Higher Education Academy, 15-19. [online]
https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/MaleAccess.pdf (accessed 9/12/16)

Raven, N. (2016) HE progression of males from under-represented backgrounds.
A report for REACH, the collaborative outreach network for Leicester and Leicestershire
Raven, N. (forthcoming) HE progression amongst economically disadvantaged white males: overcoming the challenges

Reed, R.L.; Gates, P. & Last, K. (2007) Young participation in higher education in the parliamentary constituencies of Birmingham Hodge Hill, Bristol South, Nottingham North and Sheffield Brightside. Technical Report. HEFCE, Bristol. [online]
http://eprints.uwe.ac.uk/10461/1/Four%20Cities%20report.pdf (accessed 9/12/16)

Select Committee on Education and Skills (2006-07) Written Evidence. Department of Education and Skills. [online]
http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmselect/cmeduski/285/285we02.htm (accessed 9/12/16)

Stake, R.E. (1978) The case study method in social enquiry. Educational Researcher. 23(6):5-8

Times Education Supplement (2017) The differences between teaching in England and Scotland. [Online]
https://www.tes.com/articles/differences-between-teaching-england-and-scotland (accessed 20/5/17)

UK Data Services (2016) Semi-structured interviews. [online]
https://www.ukdataservice.ac.uk/teaching-resources/interview/semi-structured (accessed 1/6/17)

Webber, L. (2014) Accessing HE for non-traditional students: 'outside of my position'. Research in Post-Compulsory Education. 19(1):91-106

Woodfield. R. (2011) Reasons for the gender gap in higher education. In J. Berry & R. Woodfield (eds) Male Access and Success in Higher Education: A Discussion Paper. York: Higher Education Academy. 9-14. [online] https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/MaleAccess.pdf   (accessed 20/5/17)

3

CHAPTER

BLACK, ASIAN AND MINORITY ETHNIC STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Mariya Hussain

I was the first in my family to attend university. Moving to London and beginning my degree in English Language and Literature at the age of eighteen I expected to learn a lot, and I did. I found myself in an environment in which I learnt from my peers to question what I was being taught, how I was being taught and to understand my place in society and at an institution like a university. I graduated disappointed and disillusioned with higher education and angry. I began my term as the Vice President for Education at the Students' Union with that anger driving my consistency of message: this university wasn't built for people like me, it has to change.

Being a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) student at university revealed to me the inadequacies present in the academic environment. Studying English means that I was often the only BAME student in seminar rooms, leading to my being singled out and asked for a "community opinion". Throughout my time at university I was taught by only two BAME academics, revealing the stark lack of diversity amongst the higher echelons of academia, leading me as a BAME student consciously and subconsciously feeling as though my thoughts do not belong in these spaces; the curriculum I was taught was, as the common phrase goes male, pale and stale. All of the compulsory modules were centred on white writers and in my first year (a year when all but one module were compulsory), I spent only six hours studying a BAME writer. In my final year, a module titled very broadly 'Poetry in America 1950 – Present' featured only one black poet in its eleven-week run, the rest were white.

My experience led me to question my own intelligence and ability, made me feel like a guest in educational establishments, and negatively impacted my experience at university. My experience is not, however, unusual. The academic year 2015/16 at my university saw multiple protests propelled by the student Ethnic Minority Association; protests that led to an open meeting with senior

university staff and the principal himself, where BAME students spoke out about their experiences. Students spoke of being told by academics that they don't need to wear a headscarf; being made to feel uncomfortable to speak out as a result of the government's making statutory the Prevent agenda which targets BAME and particularly Muslim students, and having their histories and experiences erased by whitewashed curricula. The meeting itself was highly charged and emotional with people breaking into tears, something that reveals the harsh and immediate reality of these experiences that were met with clumsy language and shock from senior staff who were before this largely unaware.

This chapter will speak honestly and authentically about the BAME student experience at university, such as that written above. It will incorporate studies and research with lived experience to explain and investigate the depth and effect of the problem. This topic is a multilayered one including big issues around attainment and curricula, but all centres around the institutional racism existent in our educational institutions that must be accepted and addressed. It will demonstrate that we must move past what is considered acceptable at present; inclusivity isn't just about having the faces there, but also about making sure that the space is truly for all. Through this chapter I aim to shed light on the experience of BAME students in higher education. Much is shared from my own experience, and although there are similarities in experience for many students, it is important to also understand I cannot speak for the experiences of all BAME students past and present.

THE EXPERIENCE:

It was at an open meeting called for by Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students at my university that I saw the scale of the impact that the structures our educational institutions have on us as BAME students. The open meeting was held in the Great Hall, a room that before this day had never seen or heard what was being expressed inside of it that afternoon. With the Principal and other staff and academics present and hundreds of students filling the room, one by one people took the mic and the stage and spoke of their experiences of existing in an academic environment in which

they faced racism and erasure. I took to the mic, strengthened and saddened by the outpouring of experience and emotion, and spoke publicly for the first time about my experiences of being called on as a spokesperson for the Muslim community in seminars, of questioning my own intellect and ability as a result of not enjoying the whitewashed and non-diverse curricula, and about feeling like a guest in the room rather than a valued member of the university community. The open meeting demonstrated that the impacts of the non-inclusive structures are systematic, far reaching and institutional.

The negative aspects of the BAME student experience are found at all levels of education. There are problems with curricula: using a world map in geography classes which instills a false perception of the world into the mind of a young person, by enlarging Europe in comparison to the continent of Africa for example; being taught about British Colonialism from the perspective of the coloniser and never hearing from those colonised, or being unable to find more than one black writer on a broad module about American poetry from the 1950s to the present day. Even the term 'middle east' is suggested by Ansary (2009) to be western-centric. Historically, he argues, the inhabitants of this area defined their land as central in terms of trading sea routes of the Mediterranean to the west; what is now Russia to the north; and land trading routes eastwards to the Chinese world. In their view, they were the middle world not the middle of the east of the white world. The things we are being taught ultimately shape how we see the world and our place in it, and BAME students rarely see themselves properly represented. If they do, it is often fleeting or stereotyped.

Some have said to me, "This is Britain, of course we will be taught things from a British perspective". To that, I, a British, visibly Muslim, second generation immigrant Pakistani woman, born and bred in West Yorkshire, always reply, "Am I not British?" When thinking about British history, many fail to think about the place of Black, Asian, and minority ethnic people and instead view British history as white. This is an example of the erasure experienced and often internalised by BAME students. It is dangerous and ultimately, it is a mistruth.

There is also a lack of representation amongst those doing the educating. Specifically at university level, out of the thousands of

academics currently teaching, only 17 are black women. Furthermore, overall, 92.4% of academics are white, while just 0.49% are black (Garner, 2015).

It is important to note the intersectionality[1] of the experiences of BAME students. Stereotyping, or viewing a person of a specific background as the same as everyone else from that background, is a feature of racist thought and interaction. Intersectionality is present in all students and for BAME students it is no different. A black woman will have differences in her experience from a black man or a south Asian woman. Double or triple bonds of oppression are found when considering intersectionality; the disabled, South Asian woman will face discrimination and obstacles due to her disability, race and sex. These parts of her identity are not mutually exclusive; they are very specific to her own situation. Throughout the discussion and the work around addressing issues with the BAME student experience, intersectionality must be kept in mind and understood.

THE EFFECT OF THE EXPERIENCE:

There is currently a national attainment gap of 15.2%, meaning that BAME students are less likely to attain firsts or 2:1s at university compared to their white counterparts, with the gap being widest for black students (McDuff & Barefoot, 2016). At Russell Group institutions the odds of being awarded a first or 2:1 are 43% lower for BAME students compared to their white counterparts (Hall, 2016). The attainment gap is a problem spoken about with great concern by many in the sector, yet too often there is little understanding about what actually needs to happen in order to affect change; in order to truly bridge the gap it must be understood that the attainment gap is a symptom of a deeper issue, it is the outcome of a non-inclusive education and educational environments we exist in. It is these natures and environments that must be rethought and challenged.

It is important to understand that the effect current academic environments and problems have on BAME students cannot simply be quantified or understood as the BAME attainment gap. Anecdotally

students have spoken about the effect these issues have on their perception of themselves, their mental health and wellbeing and their ambition and success later on in life.

The effect also impacts students who are not yet through the doors of these institutions also through a lack of change simply continuing the cycle of dissatisfaction, a lack of black and minority ethnic academics, a white curriculum and so on and so forth. The effects reverberate through our society and we must work to do our bit in these institutions to work against and change the status quo; a status quo that runs through all of society. If universities wish to be the pinnacle of new and current thought and ideas, then they must be places that understand and dismantle the structures that keep them very much in the past and complicit in an unfair system.

THE CHANGE:

Throughout my time as a student and in my current role as a sabbatical officer, I have often found that discussions around inclusivity are fraught with subjective and individualised interpretations of what it actually means. For some it means getting students through the door, for others it just means having a diverse reading list. Inclusivity is a word that has been sanitised through tick boxes and equality and diversity schemes, and the lack of a unified understanding of what it actually means leads to fragmented and ultimately ineffective work.

To be truly inclusive we must look at the very foundations of our institutions and of our education system. Many universities were not built by, or for, the diverse student population that is now seen in lecture theatres and student unions. Historically, higher education has largely been a place for privileged, white men. These structures have not changed; the structures built by, and for, a specific group of people are not open and are not fair. Inclusivity is not about inviting people into structures that weren't built for them. It's about having the courage to take an opportunity to dismantle the old structures and way of doing things and working with today's staff and students to build something else; something that doesn't treat inclusivity as something separate, but instead embeds it into the fabric of everything that is done as argued by May and Bridger (2010).

A unified and clear understanding of what it means to be truly inclusive is missing, and without it no change can be effective and long lasting. However, it is not for those sitting in committee meetings to decide what it means, but instead it is a collective conversation with those affected that will provide clarity. Importantly, there must be an honest confrontation with lived experience and historical contexts; it is important to understand that even when all other factors are taken into account, an attainment gap still exists, demonstrating that there is a fundamental issue with race and our institutions; a truth that I have found is skirted around, not even spoken about in hushed voices. But it is a truth and one that must be confronted in order to get to the root of the problem, as said earlier.

The issues around the BAME student experience are not solved by putting plasters on the surface to attempt to hold things together; this only brings a cycle of dissatisfaction. Instead, to dig up the roots and plant some new seeds we must consider the entire lifecycle of a student and all aspects of a university. From widening participation initiatives and support for postgraduate study, to curricula creation and the hiring of black and minority ethnic academics; new procedures and best practice should be embedded into the culture and workings of an institution, something seen at Cornell University in the United States where there is a vision to institutionalise diversity and inclusion within all the work of the university (Diversity.Cornell.edu, n.d.).

Students have been demonstrating their dissatisfaction through multiple campaigns and actions at various institutions, with two of the most prominent being Why Is My Curriculum White? Founded at University College London (UCL, 2014), and the I, too, am campaign that began at Oxford (I too am Oxford, n.d.) and spread to other institutions. The National Union of Students has a campaign also to aid students in pushing for a liberated degree, all in an attempt to decolonise education.

To decolonise one must dismantle the structures that were built through centuries of oppression to favour one group of people over another. This can happen on large institutional scales through the renewing of the curricula, to not placing those who have been historically and presently complicit in such oppression on a pedestal. Each institution, each faculty, each department must look at itself and see where the structures are, how they were created and consider

if they really do serve all students or if remnants of their colonial purpose remain.

Terms such as decolonising education and liberating the curriculum are ones that are being used by students leading the charge for change. They are terms that are often met with confusion and denial due to the force of them. They are words that unsettle and force a person to take a moment to think about what the phrase means. However, often the thought is met with denial, ignorance and a brick wall. If we do not start to listen to those words, to understand them and see exactly what they mean through the eyes of BAME students, a disservice will be done; a disservice to intelligent, creative students, to what we call the pinnacle of human research and thought, and ultimately to the society in which we exist.

Diversity has become somewhat of a buzzword in higher education. However, unless the roots of the problem are tackled, and current and historical systems and their effect are not understood, the work done around diversity will achieve little in the long run, and that is exactly what this is: a long run. Inclusivity means accepting the past and how that has influenced the current structure of things, and actively moving to change things. It needs true champions who understand that without true inclusivity universities will continue to perpetuate the inequalities they say they are trying to quash. It should not just be up to the one black or brown face in a room to understand and push these ideas, for them only to be forgotten once they leave. Universities profess to be places for the expansion of minds and the lauding of new ideas, but too often when it comes to actually changing the way things work, those two traits are lost. We cannot challenge academia, we cannot change history it is said; but if we do not, what is the use?

REFERENCES

Ansary, T. (2009) Destiny Disrupted: a history of the world through Islamic eyes.
New York: Public Affair

Diversity.Cornell (n.d.) [online] http://diversity.cornell.edu/sites/default/files/Open%20
Doors%20Open%20Hearts%20Open%20Minds%20Logo.pdf (accessed 22/11/16)

Garner, R. (2015) UK study finds just 17 black female professors. The Independent.
3 February, 2016.
[online] http://www.independent.co.uk/student/news/uk-study-finds-just-17-black-femail-
professors-10019201.html (accessed 20/10/16)
Hall, C. (2016) BME students need more than a place at Oxford. WonkHE. 5 February, 2016.
[online] http://wonkhe.com/blogs/bme-admissions-oxford/ (accessed 20/10/16)

I too am Oxford (n.d.) [online] http://itooamoxford.tumblr.com/ (accessed 8/11/16)

May, H. & Bridger, K. (2010) Developing and embedding inclusive policy and practice in
higher education. The Higher Education Academy.
[online] https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/developingembeddinginclusivepp_re-
port.pdf (accessed 4/11/16)

McDuff, N. & Barefoot, H. (2016) It's time for real action on the BME attainment gap.
WonkHE. 9 June, 2016.
[online] http://wonkhe.com/blogs/analysis-time-for-real-action-on-bme-attainment/ (ac-
cessed 20/10/16)

University College London (2014) Why is my curriculum white?
[online] http://www.dtmh.ucl.ac.uk/videos/curriculum-white/ (accessed 8/11/16)

[1] A term coined by American Rights activist, Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, in 1989. It is the
study of how different markers of identity and social categories intersect and affect each
other especially in terms of oppression and discrimination.

4

SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

Ross Cooper

INTRODUCTION

The concept of specific learning difficulties (SpLDs) (Rutter & Yule,1975) emerged within a post-industrial social and educational context, driven by an attempt to understand the experience of unexpected learning difficulties in relation, primarily, to literacy acquisition (Rice & Brooks, 2004). This approach has led to a proliferation of specific learning difficulties, each of which is identified through (often) overlapping criteria. The list now includes: dyslexia, dyscalculia, AD(H)D, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, auditory processing difficulties, motor integration difficulties, development coordination disorder, visual stress, pragmatic and semantic language difficulties, and increasingly autistic spectrum conditions (including Asperger's) and more.

The experience of specific learning difficulties is undeniable, but the causes and definitions of the specific difficulties remain contentious. The medical model, increasingly known as the pathological model (Walker, 2013) assumes that there must be something specific wrong with us that causes us to experience such difficulties. Within this paradigm, the emphasis is on individualised remediation and the need for a wide range of strategies to compensate for a wide range of difficulties.

In contrast to this, the social model of specific learning difficulties argues that we are disabled by the way we are being taught; that there is nothing wrong with us despite any evident neurological or behavioural differences. We might also argue, like Prof. John Stein (2001:1), that "... the genes that underlie (dyslexia) would not be so common unless there were compensating advantages…". This view supports the argument that human neurodiversity is a product of evolutionary advantage for group survival, that specific learning difficulties emerging in the late 19th century are but one side of an advantageous coin (Eide & Eide, 2011; West, 1997). The advantages characterised include expertise in holistic and visual thinking, seeing

the big picture, seeing anomalies in large amounts of data, and making meaningful connections across silos of information. Within this paradigm, the difficulties we now experience arise through arbitrarily privileging particular ways of learning, teaching and assessment (Bernstein, 1975; Bourdieu & Passerson 1977; Bowles & Gintis, 1976) while ignoring the nature of our neurodiversity and neurodivergence. Some of us are then disabled by, what are to us, inappropriate teaching strategies, social expectations and assessment methods. To put this bluntly, we experience unnecessary difficulties that are imposed on us arbitrarily, and often unknowingly, by educational systems, teachers and assessments.

I have argued elsewhere (Cooper, 2012a), that these expectations and methods are not chance happenings, but serve specific social functions designed to reproduce social capital and structures (Bourdieu & Passerson, 1977; Young & Whitty, 1977). Here, I am more concerned with the way in which unnecessary barriers to learning and achievement are organised, how this impacts on individual students, and what teachers can do to eliminate the disabling nature of HE processes, teaching, and assessment. I shall also be arguing that this is a simple undertaking in concept, even though there can be enormous vested interest resisting any change to fairer and more effective educational practices, usually couched in terms of maintaining standards even when this can be shown to be spurious (ADSHE, 2004; Ashworth et al., 2010).

This framework for understanding specific learning difficulties points us towards asking three basic questions:

1. What is the nature (or natures) of our neurological differences that underpin the process of disablement?

2. What is the process of disablement?

3. How can educationalists eliminate the unnecessary barriers to learning and the processes that cause disablement?

In considering the first question, some key aspects of what we can do, rather than what we can't do, are outlined and some key similarities between a range of specific learning difficulties are discussed, which

leads to positing the concept of a 5-stage disablement process. This feeds into an analysis of the experience of disablement and how this is imposed on us. The response to the final question makes concrete suggestions for improving interviews, lectures, reading effectiveness, the writing task, and exams or assessments.

1. What is the nature (or natures) of our neurological differences that underpin the process of disablement?

It is important to recognise that Judy Singer, who coined the term neurodiversity, was not a neurologist, but an autistic sociologist (Singer, 1999). The term crystallised a paradigm shift away from deficit pathological models, towards a better understanding of the social model of disability. It represented a conceptual framework for political action to counter the eugenics programme being developed by some researchers into autism. A failure to find a cure had led to the reported chilling desire to prevent autistic people from being born.

The concept of neurodiversity parallels that of biodiversity; in the same way that the planet depends on biodiversity for the survival of the biosphere, it was argued that the survival of the human race depends on neurodiversity.

The term caught the imagination of many of us who experience specific learning difficulties. But this was a consequence of recognising that the new paradigm captured our experience of the world and our understanding of ourselves. Crucially, it shifted the focus of attention away from specific difficulties towards strengths and how we do succeed, rather than how we don't. It was not therefore a consequence of new neurological research and knowledge, as fascinating as this was proving to be, but on a new way of understanding and conceptualising existing knowledge and experience.

In the decades since the concept of neurodiversity was first articulated, there has been an explosion of neurological research informed by brain imaging. While this still represents early stages of the scientific discipline, and much remains open to interpretation, there is a great deal of new evidence available to us (Galaburda, 2011; Blass et al. (eds), 2016). Much of this confirms the strengths

that were usually ignored by researchers and educationalists in the past. For example, researchers at Yale have discovered that dyslexic people are better at finding anomalies in large fields of information, and at making connections rather than subdividing information (Schneps, 2014). Shaywitz & Shaywitz (2005) discovered that successful dyslexic readers consistently use different parts of their brains when reading, usually associated with visualisation, compared with non-dyslexic readers. I would argue that this points to different ways of teaching and learning to read, and supports the view that despite appearances, the problem isn't reading ability, but teaching effectiveness (Cooper, 2012b), which I explore below.

While the pathological model divided people into an increasing number of specific learning difficulties, there has been a growing realisation that these are arbitrary categories (Pennington, 1991; Kaplan et al., 2001). In fact, an individual is more likely to receive two or more labels than one. We have begun to realise that all the specific learning difficulties overlap and run in the same families alongside autism with the same genetic markers (Poelmans, 2011).

However, the statistics on incidence remain problematic, because they vary according to definitions and methodology (and the specific expertise of the professional doing the assessment). Nevertheless, it is clear that only a minority are currently identified (Shaywitz, 2008:161-163).

Identifying specific learning difficulties focuses attention on those things we have difficulty learning; or, more usually, the processes we have difficulty with in a learning context.   If we focus our attention on the nature of our neurodivergence which historically has not been recognised or taken into account by education systems and teachers, a very different picture emerges.   This is not only important for understanding our experiences and developing our identities, but also because it dramatically simplifies what education systems and teachers need to change to become inclusive.

The specific learning difficulties we experience can cover a bewildering range of experiences, from spelling to time-keeping, from taking notes to organisation, from the need to move, to self-esteem. This can give the impression of the need for an extraordinarily complex response to individual needs. However, our neurodivergence is

much simpler, formed around a holistic rather than sequential need to understand our perceptions and experiences (Cooper, 2012c); the meaning arises out of the patterns. This holistic approach has many strengths in problem solving, reframing theory, making connections, invention and creativity, and often thinking visually rather than verbally (which lends itself to holistic processes in comparison to words). The downside is a small, relative weakness in working memory (which is not needed to nearly the same degree when processing holistically or visually). When education requires a good working memory (Gathercole et al., 2005), we start to fail at those processes and learning. This can affect any sequential process involved in the learning of literacy, maths, time-keeping, organisation, attention, movement, etc., if these are attempted sequentially rather than holistically. The trauma of failing further reduces working memory locking the difficulty in. I would suggest that this is a 5-stage process:

1. Our neurodivergence

2. Unrealistic expectations of working memory

3. Failure leading to trauma and specific learning difficulties

4. Resulting in low self-esteem and confidence leading to risk aversion or nihilism

5. Misperception of the impact of disablement as individual inability or lack of motivation.

The solution to this systematic disablement is to change educational systems and expectations so that learners are empowered to learn holistically and critically, by reducing the working memory load to sustainable levels for all learners. This is not only important for neurodivergent learners, but for all learners particularly older ones, since everyone experiences a drop in working memory capacity of between 5-10% every decade after the age of 25 (Smith, 2011).

2. What is the process of disablement?

We are disabled by the expectation that we can hold on to more strings of information than is possible for us, before the information becomes meaningful. When you learn holistically, the process is one of capturing patterns of information and how they inter-relate, rather than attempting to hold on to each step in a sequence. Requiring that we learn sequentially means that we lose information, fail to see connections and become overwhelmed by details without context. For holistic learners, understanding comes before detail, and detail only makes sense after the holistic understanding. The emotional impact of this experience can feel devastating. In short, it makes us feel 'stupid', since none of the individual bits of information present any difficulty; but the relentless experience of being overwhelmed by detail often leads to trauma, humiliation, failure and low self-esteem (Edwards, 1994). It is this emotional impact which locks in the difficulties and makes us want to look away from the source of the anxiety.

This can happen in any learning context, but specifically the field where it happens (such as reading, spelling, organisation, mathematics, listening, etc.) determines the apparent nature of the specific learning difficulty. In other words, the specific learning difficulty is not actually about the field, but about the process. But what is identified as the difficulty is closely associated with the field or subject, not the reason for the difficulty with the field or subject. We are vulnerable to being disabled wherever the teaching assumes sequential processing. This is why so many of the SpLDs overlap and run in the same families (Pennington, 1991; Poelmans, 2011). I argue that they are simply different expressions of the same underlying neurodivergence, generally ignored by educators, and indeed employers (Cooper, 2010, 2012a & c).

Consequently, closing the inclusivity gap does not require myriads of solutions, but an awareness by educators that up to one in five learners is overwhelmed by sequences of information without a meaningful context. It is therefore the responsibility of educators and institutions to understand when they do this, that it is disabling, unnecessary and there are better educational solutions for all learners than loading up working memory to breaking point.

3. How can educationalists eliminate the unnecessary barriers to learning and the processes that cause disablement?

The solution to the inclusivity gap is simple in concept - reduce working memory load and focus on meaningful, active learning. However, because most people are unaware of the nature of working memory, unaware that they are disabling people through teaching and testing choices, and unaware of the impact of these choices, this simple solution requires further explanation and some worked examples.

Interviews

On the surface it may seem that the opportunity to present ourselves verbally could overcome residual literacy difficulties. However, in practice this is often far from the case. When challenged with questions in a state of anxiety, responding to them generates a heavy working memory burden. First, we often have to translate the questions into visualisations of their meaning. Second, we may often then need to read between the lines of the questions to guess what they really mean by them. This may then trigger unlimited possibilities which we need to reduce to a single focus. We then need to visualise a response and translate that into a sequence of words. Meanwhile we are receiving all sorts of often conflicting visual cues from the interview panel. This can be compounded by multi-layered questions which we are likely to forget (lose completely from working memory) increasing anxiety which reduces working memory further (Morey et al., 2009) spiralling into a negative feedback loop.

There are a number of strategies and policies which can make this easier. Showing that you want to know what someone knows and can do, rather than looking for reasons to eliminate can be very helpful. Having a policy of only allowing a single question at a time can be crucial, or encouraging the student to feel safe to write down the questions so that they don't have to be recalled later. You might also consider giving people advance notice of questions. You might also encourage presentations rather than questioning; watching someone do, rather than merely questioning them. However, the fact remains, that for many of us, the process of being interviewed is usually far more challenging than the intended studying, and therefore of limited value for assessing learning potential.

A key principle for closing the inclusivity gap is that the processes required of us ought not to be more difficult than the learning, otherwise we will be excluded, mismeasured and disabled. Very often, the things that neurotypical people find easy and simple (such as literacy, grammar, spelling, and time sequences), we find challenging and complicated (because they are arbitrary), whereas those things that neurotypicals appear to find difficult such as analysis of complex data, visualising solutions to interesting problems, original ideas and new ways of seeing problems, we usually find simple (West, 1997).

Lectures

When we listen to lectures, we usually need to translate sequences of words into a visual holistic understanding. The process of making sense of often long and complex sentences is working memory demanding, particularly when there is background noise which we need to filter out without degrading the sound of speech. It can feel like a hearing impairment, but is actually an auditory processing difficulty caused by working memory overload. This is an exhausting experience usually resulting in poor comprehension or simply falling asleep. Students may very rarely fall asleep because the lecture is boring, but very frequently do because of the exhausting processing involved. In addition, a holistic approach to understanding often manifests itself by paying attention to all your senses which can result in sensory overload (we are actually expected to ignore all other sensory information while listening). Consequently, lectures can be an extremely inefficient way of communicating information, made even more challenging by the expectation to make notes while listening, which very few people can do well (Palkovitz & Lore,1980).

There are a number of things that lecturers can do to make lectures more effective. The most often attempted is to make the delivery more entertaining, but this is not an option for all lecturers. Having lecture notes available prior to the lecture can be useful because the familiarity with the material reduces working memory load, making it easier to process, understand, and make connections with what is being said. Having interesting visual presentations (and certainly not just dense black text on a white background – the infamous death by Powerpoint) is helpful, or break up presentations (such as including video clips, discussions and activities). If notes are deemed important, then lecturers could allow 5 minutes every 15 minutes

or so to take notes in quiet, and discourage note taking while you are speaking. Videoing lectures that enables students to view them at their own pace can also be extremely helpful, but offers little in interactivity.

The worst form of lecturing is simply reading a paper. In this case, many dyslexic readers will prefer to be given the paper to read for themselves. At least this allows us to focus on the important aspects of the argument before fatigue sets in. Recording lecture audio creates an additional burden for neurodivergent students. Since it means that the student then has to try to process speech which has been recorded in a restricted bandwidth without benefit of visual cues or presentations, doubling the time needed to pay attention to the lecture. Audio Notetaker software is better, since it records a visual map of the lecture, allows random access to every phrase as well as the ability to edit it down to a set of visual auditory notes. But it is still much more time consuming than making the lectures accessible in the first place.

Reading

The data from SuperReading courses, where we have asked hundreds of students about their reading load, suggests that reading loads for both students and teachers/lecturers have increased rapidly over the last two decades - approximately doubling (Cole 2009). Difficulty with reading (particularly phonetic decoding, tracking, visual recognition, and comprehension) is characteristic of many neurodivergent readers. What underpins such difficulties is working memory overload. In the case of phonetics, it is challenging to bear in mind all the rules and irregularities of spelling to blend phonemes into a recognisable word and make sense of a sequence of words, which can lead to very poor comprehension. In the case of tracking and visual recognition it is a difficulty of organising a sequence of eye-muscle commands fluently and maintaining stable memory for letter strings when the reader may be misperceiving their order. Consequently, reading can be an ineffective medium for acquiring new information and students may opt to acquire the information by discussing it with others (as I did as an undergraduate). Traditional technical solutions to this problem, such as the use of screen readers, may not help as much as they appear. They certainly reduce the working memory load of decoding, tracking, or recognising words,

but they are intrinsically slow (increasing the time needed to read) and do not eliminate the working memory load, since listening to a robotic voice droning through a book requires significant working memory anyway. SuperReading provides a different approach that builds on visual and holistic strengths (Cooper, 2012b) dramatically improving speed of reading and comprehension (Effect Size: 1.76, p<0.0000001). Holistic approaches to any activity require less working memory than sequential approaches, and this shift towards holistic and visual understanding is a panacea simply because it deals with the root of the problem. In the case of reading, this should include metacognitive strategies such as previewing, which increases speed of reading and comprehension, and reviewing which increases recall by around 50%.

We know from standardised tests of reading that the top quarter of university students are reading around twice as fast as the slowest quarter, with better comprehension. Consequently, it would be logical to imagine that helping students to improve their reading effectiveness would pay considerable dividends. For dyslexic and dyspraxic students, it can be life-changing (Cooper, 2012b).

Normally, the recommendations for accessible reading materials include the call for sans serif scripts and non-white paper. These can be important, but it should be recognised that these reflect working memory difficulties since serif scripts provide additional visual information that needs to be processed away (ignored) generating an increased working memory load. While the experience of seeing print move can be largely explained as a consequence of finding the rapid sequence of visual snapshots of groups of characters difficult to process into the illusion (for the visual system at least) of an ordered and level line of text, which also generates an additional working memory load. These specific solutions can therefore be seen as part and parcel of the importance of reducing working memory loads.

Writing

Having to write, particularly by hand under pressure of time, significantly disadvantages most neurodivergent students. Writing requires holding onto a stream of language while the brain is also involved in commanding a series of motor movements, while

remembering how to spell, while planning what to say next (or at least what words to use). We are also likely to be translating from a visual holistic understanding into a sequence of words. We know from standardised scores of writing speed (Wallen et al., 2017), that the top quarter of writers can write almost three times faster than the slowest quarter. The slower the writing, the more demanding the task is for working memory, since streams of commands and information have to be held onto for longer. Trying to speed up writing leads to illegibility and unintended errors, which increase the demands of proof reading and editing. As with reading, we know that the top quarter of students in exams write almost twice as much as the slowest quarter (Bledsoe, 2011) and therefore also have increased thinking time. Having access to computers can speed this process considerably, and it remains unclear why universities wouldn't expect access to computers for all students if academics insist on timed exams.

Part of the problem for neurodivergent writers is that we have often been led to perceive writing as a linear language based process. However, writing can be reframed as a holistic process, starting with the overall map of what is understood. Once the map is clear, then a linear journey through this meaningful space to communicate the whole map is where a writer can become creative with both the journey and the language used. This turns the writing from a start at the beginning and end at the end experience, to a more meaningful holistic one. In one sense, the whole idea is made manifest (by implication) from the first sentence, since it implies a choice that reflects the whole. This may also begin to explain why so many of our best creative writers are dyslexic (for example, writers like John Irving, Lynda La Plante and poet Benjamin Zephaniah). Since the best writing is almost holographic in nature.

Mind maps can help to reframe writing in this way. They also, by allowing ideas to be generated randomly before they are ordered by a decision about the organising principle of the paper, reduce the working memory load of holding ideas in your head while writing.

Exams and Assessment

Robert Fritz (Fritz, 1984) famously argued that the underlying structure of anything determines its behaviour. We can see this writ large in

our secondary schools where teaching to the test has become an Ofsted survival strategy (Bassey, 2008). Universities have the rare privilege of designing their own assessments. Yet it is unusual to see anything other than timed written tests. I would argue that these are intended for the convenience of teachers/lecturers, rather than as valid assessment. Any timed exam is disabling to neurodivergent learners who experience stress, misreading questions, insufficient time to write by hand, memory and working memory overload and the damaging weight of experience that keeps reminding us of previous exam failures.

A valid assessment will be able to assess the skills, knowledge and understanding developed on a course. Old fashioned timed exams fail to do so, making assessment a lottery that is heavily biased away from the neurodivergent learner. If the skills, knowledge and understanding developed on a course are usually time constrained, a timed exam may be justified. But in most cases, this is far from the case. For example, an assessment based on the observation of problem solving and the opportunity for the candidate to reflect on and evaluate their performance may be far more valid, accurate and, very possibly, easier to administrate than rooms full of people writing answers to written questions. Lecturers know the demands of their subject, but this is rarely reflected in the design of their assessments.

Conclusions

Seen from the point of view of the social model of specific learning difficulties, neurodiversity is a strength of the human species; yet we live in a world that continues to humiliate and fail those of us who think slightly differently. This experience was explored by asking what the nature of our neurodivergence is. As was discussed, this was recognised by how we make meaning, not how we do, or don't, read or spell. However, our neurodivergence is a precondition for the emergence of specific learning difficulties in a world intolerant of our specific neurodivergence.

How everyday assumptions and practices become tools of a disablement process was explored by asking what the process of disablement is. However, this analysis also leads to surprisingly simple solutions; changes that institutions and educationalists can easily make.

Understanding neurodivergence has become an opportunity for educators to re-evaluate teaching and assessment. A brief equality impact assessment of current policies would, I suggest, clearly demonstrate that current practices and policies are disabling and could fall foul of existing legislation if challenged. Asking all lecturers, tutors, and validation bodies to scrutinise current practice and ask whether these create unnecessary working memory loads for learners would be a good place to start. Seen in this light, more holistic, meaning-based, visual and interactive teaching and learning practices are not simply compensatory teaching strategies which enable neurodivergent learners to approximate neurotypical behaviour, but alternative practices that are at the heart of the neurodivergent experience and lead to excellence in learning. In the meantime, individual staff as well as institutions are responsible under disability law to ensure that they don't disable neurodivergent learners. So, asking yourself the question of whether a specific task, expectation or assessment makes unnecessary demands on working memory is an important place to start making a significant, positive difference to the inclusivity gap.

REFERENCES

ADSHE (2004) Reasonable Adjustments in Academic Departments. [online] http://adshe.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/reasonableadjustments11.pdf (accessed 26/10/16)

Ashworth, M.; Bloxham, S. & Pearce, L. (2010) Examining the tension between academic standards and inclusion for disabled students: the impact on marking of individual academics' frameworks for assessment. [online] http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03075070903062864?scroll=top&needAccess=true (accessed 27/11/16)

Bassey, M. (2008) Politics and Primary Schools: What parents should know before the next election. [online] http://www.naht.org.uk/EasysiteWeb/getresource.axd?AssetID=10884 (accessed 26/10/16)

Bernstein, B. (1975) Class, Codes and Control, Vol III London: Routledge and Kegan Paul

Blass, E.; Chan, A.; Chou, V.; Furze, M.; Gearing, M.; Hubaud, A.; Jakob, S.; Jikomes, N.; Riesselman, A.; Sagers, J.; Shan, Y.; Shukla, A.; Sitek, K.; Theodore, L.; Tyssowski, K. & Wu, K. (eds) (2016) Special Edition: Neurotechnology, Harvard University. [online] http://sitn.hms.harvard.edu/special-edition-neurotechnology/ (accessed 26/10/16)

Bledsoe, D. (2011) Handwriting Speed in an Adult Population. Occupational Therapy. 27(22):10 [online] http://occupational-therapy.advanceweb.com/Archives/Article-Archives/Handwriting-Speed-in-an-Adult-Population.aspx (accessed 26/10/16)

Bourdieu, P. & Passeron, J-C. (1977) Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture, London: Sage Publications, translated by Richard Nice

Bowles, S. & Gintis, H. (1976). Schooling in Capitalist America: Education Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life. New York: Basic Books Inc.

Cole, R. (2009) How to be a SuperReader. London: Piatkus

Cooper, R. (2010) Neurodiversity and Dyslexia. 8th Annual Disability Lecture at Cambridge University March, 2010

Cooper, R. (2012a) Neurodiversity and Dyslexia: challenging the social construction of specific learning difficulties. [online] outsidersoftware.co.uk/.../Neurodiversity-and-Dyslexia-Challenging-the-social-construction-of-specific-learning-difficulties (accessed 15/12/16)

Cooper, R. (2012b) Updating the evidence of the impact of SuperReading on dyslexic students. The Journal of Inclusive Practice in Further and Higher Education. Issue 4(1) October 2012.

Cooper, R. (2012c) The Bagatelle Model of Specific Learning Differences. Patoss Bulletin. 25(2):27-31 Winter

Edwards, J. (1994) The scars of dyslexia. London: Cassell

Eide, B. & Eide, F. (2011) The Dyslexic Advantage: unlocking the hidden potential of the dyslexic brain. Toronto: Hudson Street Press

Fritz, R. (1984) The path of least resistance: Principles for creating what you want to create. DMA

Galaburda, M. (2011) Neuroscience, Education, and Learning Disabilities, Human Neuroplasticity and Education. Pontifical Academy of Sciences, Scripta Varia 117, Vatican City 2011 [online]
www.pas.va/content/dam/accademia/pdf/sv117/sv117-galaburda.pdf (accessed 20/10/16)

Gathercole, S.E.; Lamont, E. & Alloway, T.P. (2005) Working memory in the classroom. In S. Pickering (ed) Working memory and education. Atlanta: Elsevier Press

Kaplan, B. J.; Dewey, D.M.; Crawford, S.G. & Wilson, B.N. (2001). The term comorbidity is of questionable value in reference to developmental disorders: Data and theory. Journal of Learning Disabilities. 34:555-565

Morey, R.; Dolcos, F.; Petty, C.; Cooper, D.; Hayes, J.; LaBar, K. & McCarthy, G. (2009) The role of trauma-related distractors on neural systems for working memory and emotion processing in posttraumatic stress disorder. Journal of Psychiatric Research. 43(8):809-817

Palkovitz, R. J. & Lore, R. K. (1980). Notetaking and note review: Why students fail questions based on lecture material. Teaching of Psychology. 7(3):159-161

Pennington, B. F. (1991) Diagnosing Learning Disorders. New York: Guilford Press

Poelmans, G. (2011) Genes and Protein Networks for Neurodevelopmental Disorders, PhD dissertation. Radboud University, Nijmegen

Rice, M. & Brooks, G. (2004) Developmental dyslexia in adults: a research review, NRDC

Rutter, M. & Yule, W.J. (1975) The concept of specific reading retardation. Child Psychol Psychiatry. 16(3):181-97

Schneps, M. (2014) The Advantages of Dyslexia: With reading difficulties can come other cognitive strengths, Scientific American. [online]
https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-advantages-of-dyslexia (accessed 20/10/16)

Singer, J. (1999) Why Can't You Be Normal for Once in Your Life? In M. Corker & S. French (eds) Disability Discourse. Buckingham, England: Open University Press

Shaywitz, S. & Shaywitz, B. (2005) Dyslexia (Specific Reading Disability) Biol Psychiatry. 57:1301–1309

Shaywitz, S. (2008) Overcoming Dyslexia: A New and Complete Science-Based Program for Reading Problems at Any Level. Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 24 Dec 2008

Smith, M. (2011) Introduction to working memory training. [online]
http://markashtonsmith.info/working-memory-training-review/ (accessed 15/12/16)

Stein, J. (2001) The magnocellular theory of developmental dyslexia. Dyslexia 7:12-36. [online] http://www.physiol.ox.ac.uk/~jfs/pdf/mileslec.pdf (accessed 25/10/16)

Walker, N. (2013) Throw Away the Master's Tools: Liberate Ourselves from the Pathology Paradigm. [online]
http://neurocosmopolitanism.com/throw-away-the-masters-tools-liberating-ourselves-from-the-pathology-paradigm/ (accessed 26/10/16)

Wallen, M.; Francis, A. & Bundy, A. (2017) Comparison of the Properties of the Handwriting Speed Test (HST) and Detailed Assessment of Speed of Handwriting (DASH): An Exploratory Study. Journal of Physical and Occupational Therapy in Pediatrics. 37(2):155-169

West, T. (1997) In the Mind's Eye: Visual Thinkers - Gifted People with Dyslexia and Other Learning Difficulties. London: Prometheus Books

Wright, M. (2013) Can Dyslexics Become Great Writers? Totally. [online] www.mjwrightnz.wordpress.com (accessed 21/7/17)

Young, M. & Whitty, G. (1977) Society State and Schooling. London: The Falmer Press

5

AUTISM SPECTRUM CONDITION

Marc Fabri & Penny C.S. Andrews

INTRODUCTION

Autism is a lifelong developmental condition that affects how a person communicates with and relates to other people, and to the world around them. It is also a spectrum condition, which means that it affects different people in different ways. It is estimated that around 1 in 100 people are autistic (Brugha et al., 2012).

A substantial proportion of autistic people is of average or advanced intellectual abilities and academically competent (often referred to as higher-functioning autism or Asperger Syndrome), although some have an additional learning disability (Fombonne et al., 2011). Whilst autism in itself is not an indicator of academic ability, many young people find it difficult to enter and succeed in Higher Education.

Having said that, the number of university students diagnosed with an autism spectrum condition is consistently rising. In 2014/15 the number in the UK had doubled compared to 2010/11 (HESA, 2015), and around 7% of Disabled Student's Allowance (DSA) applications received in 2016 were from autistic students, compared with less than 2% in 2012 (SLC, 2016). This is encouraging and there are many pockets of good practice around the UK. However, despite the growth in numbers, support for these students can be inconsistent and awareness of what autism is, and how it can affect one's university experience, varies significantly.

In this chapter, we explore the typical challenges autistic students face and the strengths they bring to their study and peers. Most importantly, we provide pointers to how academics and support staff can make a difference to these students' university experience and their academic success, using an inclusive approach. Our recommendations are informed by the multi-national Autism&Uni research project which aimed to widen access to higher education for

students on the autism spectrum. During the project, we consulted 280 autistic students, their parents, teachers, lecturers and disability support staff at universities in several European countries (see www. autism-uni.org).

At the heart of our approach is the concept of universal design for learning (UDL). We believe in engaging and supporting all students, regardless of their background, status, preparedness for learning, personal preferences or disability. There is a common misconception that UDL promotes a one-size-fits-all approach – but that is not the case. What it really means is the availability of options: providing students with multiple and varied opportunities to participate in learning, and to demonstrate their understanding (Bublitz et al., 2015).

We favour educational strategies that are proactively designed to support multiple paths through learning, rather than focusing on retroactively altering existing material to fit the needs of a specific group. An example of proactive design is giving all students options for how they can present assignment work, in line with their communication abilities and preferences. An example of retroactive design is the common practice of making reasonable adjustments to existing learning materials and examination arrangements.

This chapter focuses on autistic students, on providing options that take account of their potential strengths and weaknesses. But it is important to recognise that more inclusivity will reduce hurdles not just for autistic students but also for other groups, and ultimately it will make the need for reasonable adjustments redundant.

A note about language

We use the terms "autistic students" and "students on the autism spectrum". This is based on recent research (Kenny et al., 2016) showing that most autistic adults prefer this identity first language to the person first terminology often used by autism professionals (for example, "students with autism").

Typical challenges

With a preference for routines and structure, the transition to

university can be challenging for autistic students as much of what has become routine during the school years gets disrupted. Whilst recognising that each student on the autism spectrum is different, many share common worries (first published in Fabri et al., 2016):

The social and physical environment

- difficulty picking up unwritten social rules when interacting with tutors and fellow students

- difficulty tolerating background noise, lighting, crowding or other sensory aspects of the university environment

- handling the social isolation that often comes with living in a new environment

Lack of appropriate support

- lack of access to appropriate support right from the start

- a focus on the 'deficits' of autism, rather than the strengths students can bring

- lack of consistency in reasonable adjustments, autism-specific services and personal support

Unrealistic expectations by the student

- what university study is really like

- content of study subject or course

- performing at the same high standard as in secondary education

- fellow students' interests and dedication

Challenges concerning assessment
(even when mastering the subject matter)

- difficulty interpreting ambiguous and open assignment briefs correctly

- lack of understanding why something needs to be done

- difficulty planning studies and revision

- uncertainty about how much time to spend on a given task

- transitioning to adult life requiring more effort than it would for the average student.

Transitioning to adult life requiring more effort
than it would for the average student

- moving away from home for the first time

- time management and establishing routines

- an unfamiliarity with advocating effectively for oneself.

Of course, many students encounter these challenges, especially at the start of their studies. However, the difference with autistic students is that they have limited capacity to deal with these and their levels of anxiety are generally much higher. Without support, this can rapidly lead to isolation, disengagement and eventually drop-out from the course of study. This is clearly an immense loss to society and the economy as many autistic students have particular strengths to offer.

A STRENGTH-BASED VIEW OF AUTISM

Often too much emphasis is put on non-academic skills for autistic young people, confirming their deficits, rather than focusing on the academic abilities and high potential of autistic learners (Wehman et al., 2014; Gobbo & Shmulsky, 2014). This is perpetuated by the way students' study needs are assessed and Disability Student Allowance (DSA) is granted. The assessment typically focuses on a student's problems and deficits because that's what determines eligibility for support. There is an opportunity to also focus on the student's strengths and how they can be encouraged and enhanced – not just during the initial assessment but throughout someone's university journey.

Many autistic students have specific academic strengths such as an ability to maintain focus, think logically and rationally, to adopt unconventional angles in problem-solving, or to spot errors that others may easily overlook (Plaisted-Grant & Davis, 2009). Combined with a drive to seek knowledge and the willingness to adhere to rules, this student group is potentially very well equipped for academic success. Strength-based support strategies include focusing on the student's academic abilities rather than their social weaknesses, engendering realistic expectations, developing critical thinking skills and self-advocacy. With the right support, autistic students can thrive at university and be an inspiration to their fellow students.

Looking beyond university study, the strengths of autistic people as professionals with a high work ethic are increasingly recognised by businesses e.g. in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) areas and also in the humanities and the arts (AHEAD, 2012; Alsop, 2016).

WHAT ACADEMICS CAN DO

Autistic students and the individuals and organisations supporting them told us how academics made a real difference to them. With good awareness of autistic strengths and weaknesses, academics can make small changes to their practice and help these students fulfil their potential:

• **Be transparent** - Make boundaries, expectations and learning outcomes clear and explicit, either by providing the information during a session or by making it available online. Many autistic students are interested in details and will read what you put together for them.

• **Focus on strengths** - Too often in autism support the focus is on deficits and difficulties. When talking to an autistic student, identify their strengths and find out how these can contribute to study situations. For example, attention to detail combined with a high work ethic are great assets when managing time and resources in a group project.

• **Be aware of the sensory environment** - Autistic students can easily get stressed or distracted by sensory aspects. When scheduling classes or meetings, try to ensure that the room is free of visual and auditory distractions that may prevent an autistic student from focusing. Ask students in advance what distracts or bothers them.

• **Avoid exclusivity** - If you are asked to make decisions about reasonable adjustments or special arrangements, consider instead what range of options can then be given to ALL students. This way each student can choose the best way of acquiring and proving their knowledge and skills. It bridges the inclusivity gap without singling autistic students out.

• **Encourage consistent relationships** - Autistic students particularly benefit from consistency when dealing with lecturers, personal tutors or peers they work with in a team. It helps having the same contact person or study group throughout their time at university.

• **Avoid ambiguity** - Check that information given to students is clear, concise and unambiguous, especially in assignments and exams. Autistic students are prone to spotting phrases that allow for multiple interpretations and unexpected choices can stop them in their tracks completely. This does not mean to avoid ambiguity completely – sometimes there's a good pedagogical reason to be vague – but accidental ambiguity should be avoided.

• **Share in advance** - Autistic students like to know what is happening so give out lecture slides and handouts in advance. Consider recording lectures on audio or video. Both practices reduce anxiety and help

all students with organising work. Also, give students as much notice as possible if rooms change so that they have an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the new location and how to get there.

• **Manage group work** - Pro-actively provide support around students working in groups: intervene when communication appears to fail, when the division of work is unfair, or any member of the group is excluded by others. Encourage the group to set ground rules right from the start. Fellow students can take advantage of an autistic peer, especially if they are unaware of the condition. Speak to the autistic student about whether they are comfortable to tell others about their autism. Generally, this is a good idea but fellow students need to have enough knowledge about autism, and not just based on misleading media representations.

• **Be accommodating** - Show a positive attitude towards arrangements and devices that allow the student to manage their anxiety in learning situations, such as always sitting in the same seat, wearing a hat, hoodie or tinted glasses indoors, or handling stress toys. Make it clear that this applies to any student, also that any student can leave a teaching session if they feel anxious or overwhelmed – and that they will not be criticised or penalised for doing so.

• **Experiment** - Be open to exploring new, perhaps unorthodox, ways of working; encourage students to study in their own way, with flexible approaches to deadlines, coursework and modes of study if that helps them focus on the teaching material better.

• **Be flexible with presentations** - Consider the different ways in which work can be presented – formally in front of a panel or peers or tutors, informally during a meeting, or even over a coffee in the cafeteria. Where oral presentations are absolutely essential, provide support around relevant skills and be prepared to discount difficulties such as lack of body language, eye contact, speaking very fast, loud or slow.

• **Collaborate** - When you are uncertain about how to provide support, arrange meetings with the student and their support worker, study advisor, student counsellor, disability advisor or other professionals who may be able to advise you. Communicate with student services, disability workers or other relevant professionals

if you are concerned about signs of depression, anxiety or declining study performance.

• **Widen your horizon** - Learn about the autism spectrum in general and about your student's specific challenges and requirements. Request and undergo training in supporting autistic students and discuss training needs with other staff members who work with your students. The National Autistic Society (www.autism.org.uk) provides useful training for university staff. Consider asking for this as part of your continuing professional development. If you have already had training, share your knowledge with colleagues.

• **Develop your teaching practice** - Get in touch with disability or autism support staff at your institution and discuss what changes you could make to your teaching practice. Sometimes these changes are individual to you and not easily transferable, so it is worth exploring them in depth. If you have the opportunity, talk to an autistic student in the later stage of their studies and explore what support was useful and what you could have done differently.

WHAT UNIVERSITY DISABILITY AND WELFARE TEAMS CAN DO

Disability, specialist teaching, and welfare support staff play a crucial role in creating an inclusive learning environment. They are often the only people with an in-depth knowledge of autism (and other conditions), and the experience of what worked or didn't work for students in the past. Where traditionally there was little crossover between disability support and academic practice, we see more and more integration and collaboration that produces effective support and successful students.

• **Engage** - Involve the student in all discussions and decisions about their study requirements. Communicating with the student is not only good practice, it is mandatory. Likewise, actively engage with academic staff about how learning to work better with autistic students would also provide opportunities to improve the experiences of students generally.

• **See needs assessments as opportunities** - Encourage autistic students to apply for support and arrange an assessment of needs as early as possible. Advocate for the adoption of accessible and uniform assessment practices at your institution, in order to ensure equal treatment for all students. Ensure that the assessment covers both the challenges and the positive aspects of autism. Help the student understand the positive aspects of their autism (that are specific to them) for their academic life and beyond, their coping strategies and their personal strengths.

• **Be inclusive** – Pro-actively communicate with ALL students about the support on offer, whether they have a diagnosis for a condition or not. Move away from the idea of disability and instead consider supporting students with individual differences in communication styles, HE expectations, how they interpret instructions, social and cultural background, levels of anxiety, etc.

• **Provide consistency** - Ensure that support arrangements involving mentors, buddies, coaches, non-medical helpers etc. are consistent, i.e. the same person at the same time in the same place; this will reduce anxiety for autistic students in particular, and generally for any student.

• **Keep adapting** - Develop general practices for regularly reviewing support arrangements. Provide an opportunity to re-assess the situation in case the suggested interventions are unavailable or turn out not to function as expected. Include input from students, academics, support staff and also parents as stress at university may not be expressed at university but picked up at home. Review your procedures and practice regularly with input from students and recent graduates, including those who no longer receive services.

• **Improve general accessibility** - Use your experience of autistic students' requirements and preferences to improve accessibility at your institution. Advocate for detailed information being made available for all university buildings, e.g. pictures, room details and directions. Negotiate with the estates department to locate and label quiet spaces. Suggest these types of action to be included in your institution's official accessibility strategy.

• **Recruit autism champions** - Build up a staff network to support autistic students outside disability/accessibility teams and student services, covering as many teams and departments as possible, to provide joined-up support that is anticipatory, rather than reactive. Recruit autism champions in senior management to increase awareness at that crucial level.

• **Mind your language** - Be aware that autistic students may find some commonly used terminology inaccurate, marginalising or discouraging, and that preferences may vary. Consider the tone you set by using "challenge" instead of "difficulty", "limitation" or "difference" instead of "disability", "autistic characteristics" or "autistic condition" instead of 'autistic disorder'. This applies to many conditions, not just autism.

• **Widen your horizon** - Request and undergo training in supporting autistic students in the HE environment. Discuss training requirements with other staff members, e.g. tutors and lecturers, who work with autistic students. If you have already had training, share your knowledge with colleagues.

CONCLUSIONS

Autistic students have the potential to be strong successful graduates. They can, however, be made to feel marginalised and excluded if their strengths and difficulties are ignored, belittled or misunderstood. As with any of the 'non-traditional' student groups discussed in this book (and those omitted from this text) closing the inclusivity gap involves, not 'adjustments' or 'interventions' but a real development of an inclusive approach from the very start of curriculum design to the day-to-day interactions with individual students.

Many of the recommendations listed in this chapter require only small adjustments to one's professional practice, but with potentially significant positive effects on autistic students and the university environment they find themselves in – in other words they are "quick wins". Others may require support from senior management which may take longer, and some convincing, to implement. Either way, we believe that making the study experience less challenging for autistic students automatically leads to creating a more inclusive and more supportive environment for all students.

REFERENCES

Brugha, T.; Cooper, S.A.; McManus, S.; Purdon, S.; Smith, J.; Scott, F.J.; Spiers, N. & Tyrer, F. (2012) Estimating the Prevalence of Autism Spectrum Conditions in Adults: Extending the 2007 Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey, Leeds

Bublitz, D.; Wong, V.; Donachie, A.; Brooks, P.J. & Gillespie-Lynch, K. (2015) Applying Universal Design to build supports for college students with autism spectrum disorder. In Roberta V. Nata (ed) Progress in Education. 36:1-24. Nova Publishing

Fabri, M. & Andrews, P.C.S. (2016) Hurdles and drivers affecting autistic students' higher education experience: Lessons learnt from the multinational Autism & Uni research study. Proceedings of International Technology, Education and Development Conference (INTED), 7-9 March 2016, Valencia, Spain. DOI 10.21125/inted.2016.1373

Fabri, M.; Andrews, P.C.S. & Pukki, H.K. (2016) A guide to best practice in supporting higher education students on the autism spectrum. Autism & Uni project publication.1-3 [online] http://www.autism-uni.org/bestpractice (accessed 15/12/16)

Fombonne, E.; Quirke, S. & Hagen, A. (2011) Epidemiology of Pervasive Development Disorders. Autism Spectrum Disorders. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Gobbo, K. & Shmulsky, S. (2014) Faculty Experience With College Students With Autism Spectrum Disorders: A Qualitative Study of Challenges and Solutions. Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities. 29(1):13-22

HESA (2015) First year 2014/15 students by level, mode, domicile & sex. [online] https://www.hesa.ac.uk/stats (accessed 15/12/16)

Kenny, L.; Hattersley, C.; Molins, B.; Buckley, C.; Povery, C.; Pellicano, E. (2016) Which terms should be used to describe autism? Perspectives from the UK. Autism. 20(4):442-462 [online] http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1362361315588200?journalCode=auta (accessed 21/9/17)

Plaisted-Grant, K. & Davis, G. (2009) Perception and apperception in autism: rejecting the inverse assumption. Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London. Series B, Biological Sciences. 364(1522):1393-1398

SLC (2016) Student Finance England DSA Operational Update, unpublished report for Disabled Students Stakeholder Group meeting, May 2016, Student Loans Company

Wehman, P.; Schall, C.; Carr, S.; Targett, P.; West, M. & Cifu, G. (2014) Transition From School to Adulthood for Youth With Autism Spectrum Disorder: What We Know and What We Need to Know. Journal of Disability Policy Studies 25:30–40

6

CHAPTER

MATHS DIFFICULTIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION: MATHS ANXIETY AND DYSCALCULIA

Victoria Mann, Eleanor Machin, Ellen Marshall

INTRODUCTION

The impact of maths difficulties on students in higher education can begin before the student is expected to do any maths, or has even seen a maths formula. Indeed, anxiety about the maths element of a course can result in a student avoiding a course with a maths element, or avoiding modules that contain maths. Equally, this narrowing of choice may not be self-selected, but rather will be a result of a maths difficulty such as dyscalculia or maths anxiety resulting in students not meeting the pre-requisites for a course. Ashcraft and Moore (2009) found that if students had a high level of maths anxiety, they were likely to avoid further maths courses. When students are required to engage with mathematics, the anxiety and tension can interfere with number manipulation and the using of mathematical equations (Ashcraft & Krause, 2007). However, avoiding maths or statistics is becoming increasingly impractical, given that most degrees now require students to study at least some element of maths or statistics, for example, the use of stylometry (statistical analysis) in humanities degrees (Holmes, 1998). Students with moderate-to-high levels of maths anxiety may avoid studying for their maths or statistics courses until the last minute, inevitably leading to poor performance which reinforces their belief that they are useless at maths. Poor performance affects confidence, progression and retention so tackling anxiety early is vital to ensure students reach their full potential (O'Sullivan, et al., 2014).

Another issue for students with maths difficulties in higher education is the need to go beyond using formulae and principles to apply and adapt mathematics knowledge. Hewson (2011) identifies two interrelated issues. Firstly, students don't have the required underpinning mathematical foundations, and secondly, they find it difficult to apply their knowledge in different contexts. Hewson found the reasons for being unable to apply knowledge included

over-procedural thinking, which is described as an inability to translate mathematical thinking to real world thinking and vice versa; a lack of multi-step problem solving skills; and a lack of confidence. This issue is further discussed by Mann et al. (2013:3), who argue that students will often follow rote learning without ever achieving the underpinning understanding necessary to be able transfer knowledge from one situation to another. This chapter will consider two forms of maths difficulties: maths anxiety and dyscalculia and how these difficulties affect students and how tutors and lecturers can support students to overcome these difficulties.

MATHS ANXIETY, CAUSES AND IMPACT

Maths anxiety has been described as "feelings … that interfere with … the solving of mathematics problems" (Richardson & Suinn, 1972:551). Linked to maths anxiety is statistics anxiety. Maths and statistics anxiety are both situation-specific anxiety disorders, but they are often incorrectly considered to be the same construct. It is important to make the distinction because students can be anxious around maths, yet comfortable around statistics, and vice versa. Equally, there is evidence that the cognitive processes involved with statistics anxiety may be different from mathematics anxiety because statistics is more closely related to verbal reasoning than mathematical reasoning (Baloğlu, 2004).

There is a strong case that maths anxiety is rooted in negative learning experiences, with negative or stressful maths experiences such as teaching behaviour and approaches being cited as the main causes of maths anxiety in a number of research articles (Finlayson, 2014; Bekdemir, 2010; Jackson & Leffingwell, 1999; Harper & Daane, 1998). By the time students get to undergraduate level, 93% of students have had a stressful experience with maths (Jackson & Leffingwell, 1999:583), 85% have some maths anxiety (Perry, 2004:321), which has a serious impact on their ability to study maths or statistics effectively. Finlayson (2014) reported that maths anxiety is usually linked with the kind of teaching styles experienced in the classroom, in particular the use of memorisation and rote recitation. Cornell (1999) listed a number of pedagogical practices that can contribute to maths anxiety, as follows:

- The view that mathematical processes and procedures were inherently simple and self-explanatory

- Use of mathematics terms without an explanation of terminology being used

- Overuse of 'skill and drill' exercises which do not lead to understanding

- The sequential nature of mathematics instruction leading to students becoming confused if they cannot grasp the basic procedures or concepts being taught

- Mathematics tended to be taught in isolation, as opposed to using real life examples.

Negative experiences adversely condition the student away from maths and the brain learns to view maths as a threat and something to be avoided. This is demonstrable in brain scans (fMRI) in that, regions of the brain associated with pain processing are activated when thinking about maths (Lyons & Beilock, 2012). Importantly, this only occurs when thinking about maths, but does not occur when actually doing maths, thus maths anxiety is a purely anticipative fear that is learned through negative experiences in primary or secondary maths education. Furthermore, maths anxiety negatively impacts on working memory, wasting working memory resources thinking about failing or doubting oneself that could otherwise be used for solving mathematical problems (Young et al., 2012). This means that whilst the student is in a state of anxiety, they will struggle to understand the maths being taught and avoid asking questions or attempting problems because they are preoccupied with anxious thoughts. Finally, the brain has an idling network when it is not actively engaged in a task, e.g. daydreaming or quiet wakefulness. When there is a cognitive task to perform, this idling network disengages and other networks become activated to process the task at hand. In students with maths anxiety, this idling network does not disengage, which could explain why students report that they are unclear how to begin with maths (Pletzer et al., 2015).

Given maths can trigger negative thoughts and memories, the key behavioural consequence of maths anxiety is maths avoidance

(Woodard, 2004; Hembree, 1990), which often means avoiding subjects or modules thought to contain maths (including statistics). These processes are encapsulated in the maths avoidance cycle in Figure 1. Poor performance affects confidence, progression and retention so tackling anxiety early is vital to ensure students reach their full potential (O'Sullivan et al., 2014).
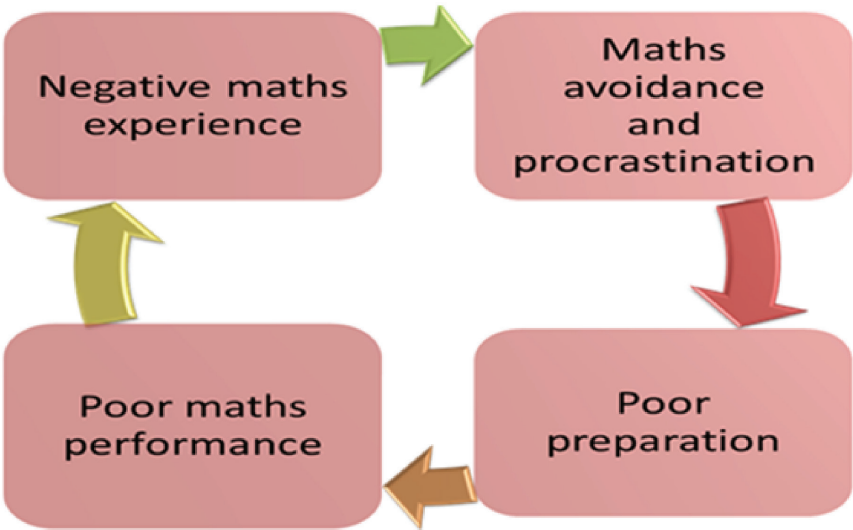
DYSCALCULIA DEFINITIONS

Dyscalculia is a specific learning disability that affects a person's ability to acquire mathematical skills. It impedes both daily living and academic achievement and has a prevalence of around 5-7% (Butterworth, 2003:np). This is a similar prevalence to dyslexia; however, no definitive link between dyslexia and dyscalculia has been identified. Whilst dyslexia is widely recognised and supported in educational institutions, dyscalculia is less well researched and there is frequently limited provision for dyscalculia support in higher education providers. In 2007, Gersten and colleagues reported that

studies in dyslexia outnumbered those in dyslexia by 14:1 (cited in Price & Ansar, 2013:2).

Similar to other SpLDs, there is no single accepted definition of dyscalculia. Definitions range from physiological models that describe structural disorders in the brain (Kosc, 1974) to those that describe areas of mathematical ability that are impaired (DfES, 2001). The latter are arguably more useful to the practitioner as difficulties can be matched to mathematical components; namely carrying out mathematical functions, understanding arithmetical facts, understanding and using arithmetical principles, and applying mathematical knowledge (Dowker, 2004). This, therefore, provides an insight into the specific difficulties arising from a dyscalculic profile, and creates a differentiation between dyscalculia and other mathematical difficulties.

DIFFICULTIES ASSOCIATED WITH DYSCALCULIA

In terms of cognitive development, some dyscalculia experts cite issues in more general areas of cognitive function; for example, Murphy et al. (2007) discuss differences in working memory function, visual-spatial skills and reading abilities. Some, however, investigate more mathematics specific areas of ability, such as Geary et al., (2007), who consider five areas of numerical cognition: number sets, estimation, counting, working memory and processing speed, and arithmetic, which is more useful in determining students' abilities and needs.

NUMBER SETS: More commonly known as number bonds, learners with dyscalculia do not develop their internal number line as others do, meaning this knowledge doesn't develop as one would expect in a neurotypical individual.

ESTIMATION: An underdeveloped internal number line has an adverse effect on a learner's ability to carry out approximate calculations.

COUNTING: Learners with dyscalculia may exhibit odd counting strategies; they may continue to use their fingers for seeming simple sums, or count from one when adding together two small quantities, rather than counting-on.

PROCESSING SPEED: There appears to be issues around processing and retrieving information about mathematical processes. This is exacerbated by weaknesses in working memory and the ability to mentally manipulate visual-spatial information.

ARITHMETIC: The completion of written and mental calculations is much slower and results in many more inaccuracies in dyscalculia. All of the aforementioned difficulties have negative effects on the processes required.

STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORTING STUDENTS EXPERIENCING DIFFICULTY ACQUIRING MATHS SKILLS

Cognitive Approaches

When supporting students with mathematical difficulties, there are two key areas to address: the cognitive anxiety symptoms and the process of learning maths content. Most students with maths anxiety do not realise that it is a recognised issue, believing that it is common to feel anxious about maths or that it is the anxiety that stops them from being successful rather than innate ability. Recognising one's own maths anxiety (Uusimaki & Kidman, 2004) and the effect it can have on the brain is the first step in overcoming it and succeeding with maths. Making students aware of how maths anxiety affects memory and cognitive processes, along with coping strategies for overcoming maths anxiety can help students recognise that they are able to develop their maths and statistics skills. Initially, it can also be useful for students to identify negative experiences in their past which could have contributed to their anxiety, how they felt at the time and how they feel now, especially if they are able to share these experiences with others.

Most importantly, students must be discouraged from maths avoidance and accept that effort is needed to pass (Perry, 2004). Students having difficulties with maths often believe they will never succeed and therefore there is no point in trying. Self-efficacy is the belief that one is capable of successfully performing a task and several studies have shown that high scores of self-efficacy are related to good exam performance. Tyler-Smith (2006) found that learners with higher levels of self-efficacy and self-concept were more likely to

be persistent when faced with educational roadblocks, and more likely to enrol in future courses. Peer learning has been found to be beneficial and regular study groups will discourage maths avoidance. Research suggests that collaborative learning in which groups work together to construct their own methods for approaching problems and receiving feedback from their peers increases confidence, develops skills, and reduces anxiety (O'Donnell & King, 2014).

For pre-exam anxiety, Ramirez and Beilock (2011) found that 10-15 minutes expressive writing about pre-exam anxiety before a test allows the brain to concentrate on writing rather than thinking about the exam. This technique is thought to work because expressive writing increases the availability of working-memory resources, which would otherwise be consumed by anxious thoughts (Yogo & Fujihara, 2008).

Specific Teaching Strategies

University classes often cover a lot of material in a short space of time and therefore do not provide time for the asking of questions (Finlayson, 2014). Students benefit from time for discussion and practise rather than memorisation and rote recitation. Some lecturers are using a flipped classroom, in which students study the material online and then teaching time concentrates on group activities to cement learning (Charles-Ogan & Williams, 2015). Online or distance learning is also thought to be beneficial as students don't have the fear of being called upon in class to answer questions or worry about looking stupid in front of peers (Taylor & Mohr, 2001).

The most effective method for tackling maths difficulties is receiving one-to-one support which allows students to work at their own pace and avoids students feeling embarrassed in front of their peers. Providing students with non-threatening maths experiences in a supportive environment, and teaching at a slower pace, allows enough time for inquiry and conceptual development (Woodard, 2004) and providing a quiet, relaxed, and supportive study area can help reduce maths anxiety (Patel & Little, 2006). Encouragement and feedback from lecturers and one-to-one tutors also increases their self-belief (Wisker et al., 2013).

Scaffolding learning is a process in which students are given support until they can apply new skills and strategies independently (Rosenshine & Meister, 1992). This can provide a useful framework to support students to build on existing knowledge. Whilst students may believe that they cannot do maths, everyone can do some maths or statistics, and this foundational knowledge can be built upon. In sessions, therefore, the tutor can start with what the student knows and work from there to develop knowledge. By progressing very slowly through increasingly difficult problems and encouraging students to practise these techniques at home, students can begin to develop conceptual skills (Sheffield & Hunt, 2006). Similarly, for statistics, spending more time on producing and interpreting graphs, which is something most people can already do, before moving slowly onto harder techniques should help increase students' confidence. Providing formative feedback and encouraging students to explain simple sections and commenting on the parts they got right can also develop confidence and reduces the time needed for students to reach a desired level of understanding (Anderson et al., 1989). This particularly reassures the maths-anxious student as faster progress than expected demonstrates to the student that their abilities in maths are greater than they expected.

Maths anxiety has generally shown to be negatively related to maths achievement (Hembree, 1990; Woodard 2004), due to the lack of preparation on the part of the student. However, in an evaluative study of a formative assessment system, exam grade scores were correlated with "perceived usefulness of feedback", rather than maths anxiety scores so providing the correct form of feedback is a crucial factor in addressing maths anxiety (Núñez-Peña et al., 2015:81). Encouraging students to construct their own systems of understanding is also a useful strategy to improve maths skills. There is usually more than one way to approach a problem and if students construct their own methods and notes, they will find it easier to revise. This can be achieved through "mathematizing the real world through analysis, organization, synthesizing, and construction of situations based on their level of understanding" (van den Heuvel-Panhuizen, 1996:np).

Unfortunately, whilst most Higher Education Providers now offer specialist maths support, it is estimated that 33% of students who have maths anxiety do not use available one-to-one support

(O'Sullivan et al., 2014:np) due to maths avoidance. The use of such a service at regular intervals during the course should therefore be encouraged.

In terms of specific approaches, multi-sensory learning is often useful in supporting students with maths difficulties. This can encompass the use of colour, mind mapping, diagrams and even plasticine to support the student in engaging with the course materials as demonstrated in Figure 2. This allows the student to engage with the material in different ways and thus explore the material, as opposed to believing that there is one right way to approach maths.
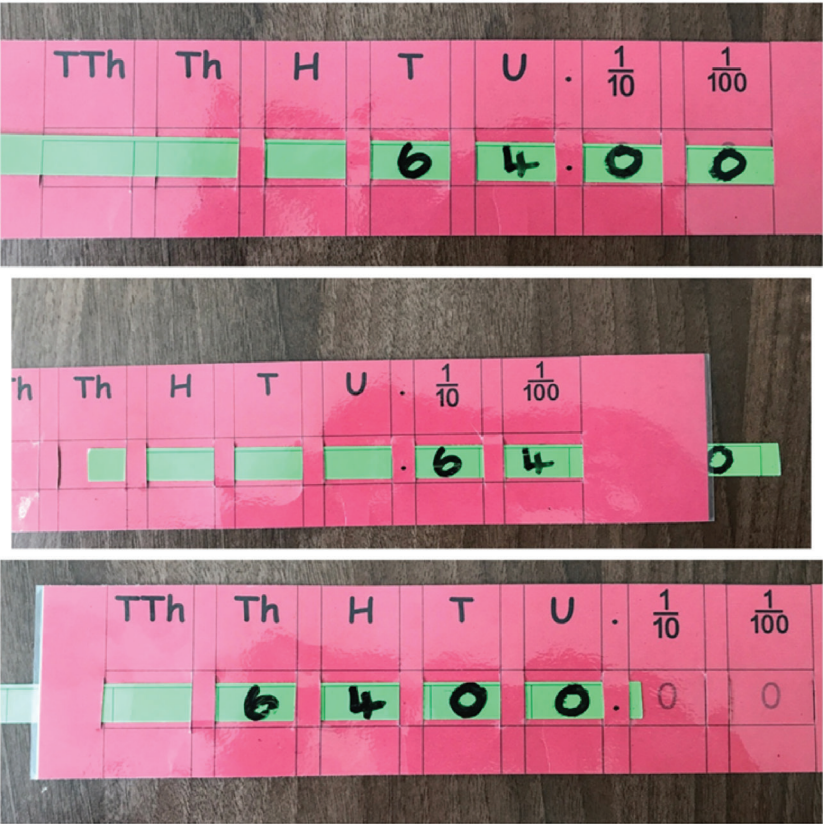
Figure 2 - Multi-Sensory Learning: Using a place value slider to multiply and divide numbers by tens, hundreds, thousands, etc. to include an understanding of the base 10 system with decimal places (Machin, E.)

This example of a multi-sensory method of multiplying and dividing by multiples of ten enables the student to physically manipulate numbers in order to obtain an answer. Multiplying and dividing by ten is an area where students with maths difficulties can display faulty knowledge: the common misconception of adding a zero in order to multiply by ten suddenly doesn't work when decimals are involved. The place value slider shows why this is the case and how the calculation is carried out in a mathematically correct manner.

Another technique is to begin with concrete examples, such as realia to build understanding and then move to semi-concrete examples before developing understanding of more abstract concepts. The concrete understanding is developed through the use of tangible resources, for example a nursing student learning about medication dosage may use actual medication to practice. To aid the transition to an abstract representation, the medication could be represented as a drawing, which is semi concrete, with the next step being the abstract conceptualisation using maths' symbols. This can be achieved through manipulatives, which are objects designed so that a learner can perceive a mathematical concept in order to move from concrete to abstract concepts, whilst building confidence along the way (Bartolini & Martignone, 2014; Degarcia, 2008). The manipulatives are on a continuum from the concrete to the abstract, providing the semi concrete stage between concrete understanding and abstract conceptual understanding. Vinson (2001) reported that using hands-on manipulatives as part of a mathematics methods course resulted in a significant reduction in maths and statistics anxiety. Figure 3 demonstrates the use of manipulatives to move from concrete to abstract representations.
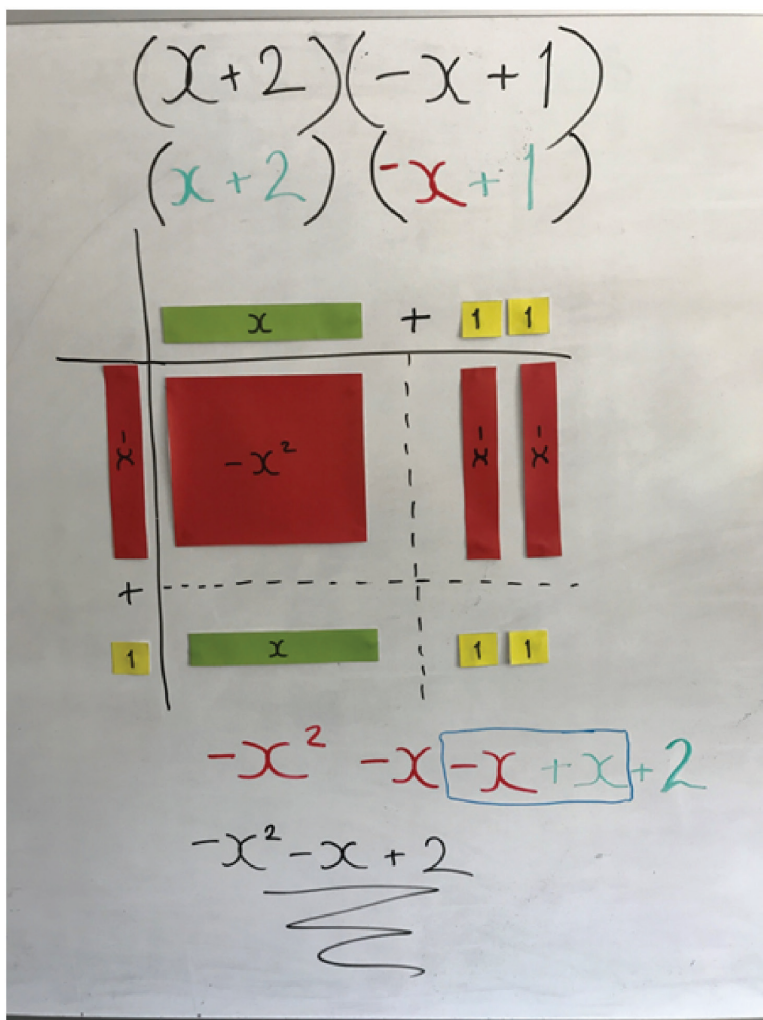
Figure 3 - Moving From Concrete To Abstract Representations: Using algebra tiles to expand an equation (Machin, E.)

In this example using algebra tiles, students are encouraged to visualise the process of expanding an equation. This visual representation helps explain why the process works as well as simply how it should be done. Colour coding is used to represent positive and negative numbers and the grid is representative of the familiar multiplication grid seen in many school classrooms. The concrete algebra tiles are arranged into a representational format, which can then be converted into the final, abstract answer.

For manipulatives to be effective, Laski et al. (2015) have identified 4 key principles:

1 Use a manipulative consistently, over a long period of time

2. Begin with highly transparent concrete representations and move to more abstract representations over time

3. Avoid manipulatives that resemble everyday objects or have distracting irrelevant features

4. Explicitly explain the relation between the manipulatives and the maths concept.

An example of how this could work in a one-one tutorial setting is the teaching of liquid volume. A student could begin by using a measuring cup to get the sense of volume, for example comparing 500mls to 2.5 litres; this could be followed up by the student creating a poster (Figure 4) visually representing the difference in volume between litres and millilitres, and finally the student could move onto the symbolic representation of volume having gained an understanding of what the symbols represent.
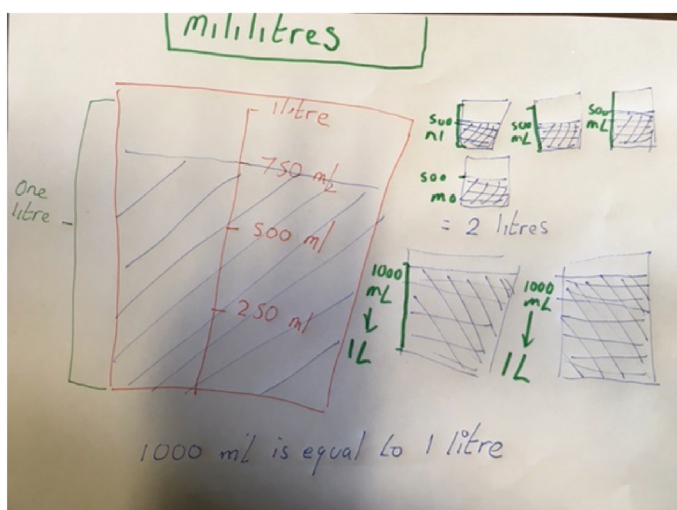
Figure 4 - Poster Demonstrating Litres and Millilitres
(Mann, V.)

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, large numbers of students in higher education are affected by maths difficulties, including maths anxiety and dyscalculia. These issues are often exacerbated by negative learning experiences at an early age which interfere with their ability to solve mathematical problems. These students tend to practise maths avoidance as a result which increases anxiety further and influences A-level, degree, module, and ultimately, career choice. Given that studying maths or statistics is almost impossible to avoid in higher education nowadays, addressing maths difficulties earlier in education can enable students to study maths effectively and progress on their courses. It is important to note that it is often difficult to separate out maths difficulties: a student with maths anxiety may have or think they have dyscalculia, for example.

There are a number of strategies and interventions that tutors can use to support students to overcome these difficulties. For example, a first step can be to discuss the concept of maths anxiety and its impact on learning. Through this, students and tutors can work through the underlying issues that are affecting the ability to improve maths skills. Equally, teaching interventions such as multi-sensory learning, scaffolding and manipulates are useful tools that can be utilised to support students in getting to grips with the maths elements of their courses. Through understanding the causes of maths difficulties and working with students to overcome these, tutors can instil a sense of self-efficacy in students and reduce maths avoidance.

FIGURES

Figures are from specialist tutors' teaching resources, used with permission. Unpublished.

Figure 1: Maths Avoidance Cycle, Dan Wilson's teaching resources

Figure 2: Multi-Sensory Revision, Emma Tudhope's teaching resources

Figure 3: Use of Manipulatives To Move From Concrete to Abstract Representations, Eleanor Machin's teaching resources

Figure 4: Litres and millilitres, taken from Victoria Mann's teaching resources

REFERENCES

Anderson, J.R.; Conrad, F.G. & Corbett, A.T. (1989) Skill acquisition and the LISP tutor. Cognitive Science. 13(4):467-505

Ashcraft , M.H. & Krause, J.A. (2007) Working memory, math performance, and math anxiety. Psychonomic Bulletin & Review. 14(2):243-248

Ashcraft, M.H. & Moore, A.M. (2009) Mathematics Anxiety and Affective Drop in Performance. Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment. 27:197–205

Baloğlu, M. (2004) Individual differences in statistics anxiety among college students. Personality and Individual Differences. 34(5):855-865

Bartolini, M.G. & Martignone, F. (2014) Manipulatives in Mathematics Education. Encyclopedia of Mathematics Education (pp. 365-372). Springer Netherlands.

Bekdemir, M. (2010) The pre-service teachers' mathematics anxiety related to depth of negative experiences in mathematics classroom while they were students. Educational Studies in Mathematics. 75(3):311-328

Butterworth, B. (2003) Dyscalculia Screener. London:NferNelson

Charles-Ogan, G. & Williams, C. (2015) Flipped Classroom versus a Conventional Classroom in the Learning of Mathematics. British Journal of Educational Technology: Journal of the Council for Educational Technology. 3(6):71-77

Cornell, C. (1999) I hate math! I couldn't learn it, and I can't teach it!. Childhood education. 75(4):225

Cruise, R.J.; Cash, R.W. & Bolton, D.L. (1985) Development and validation of an instrument to measure statistical anxiety. Proceedings of the American Statistical Association, Section on Statistical Education, Las Vegas, NV

Degarcia (2008) Concrete-Representational-Abstract Instructional Approach. Strategies for Teaching Elementary Mathematics. [online] https://mathteachingstrategies.wordpress.com/2008/11/24/concrete-and-abstract-representations-using-mathematical-tools/ (accessed 15/12/16)

DfES (2001) The National Numeracy Strategy. Guidance to support pupils with dyslexia and dyscalculia. DfES0512/2001 [online] http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20030731060050/http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk:80/numeracy/publications (accessed 12/1/17)

Dowker, A. (2004) Dyscalculia in children: its characteristics and possible interventions, Paper presented at OECD Literacy and Numeracy Network Meeting, El Escorial, Spain, March 2004 Dehaene, S. & Cohen, L. (1995) Towards an anatomical and functional model of number processing. Mathematical cognition. 1(1):83-120

Finlayson, M. (2014) Addressing math anxiety in the classroom. Improving Schools. 17(1):99-115

Geary, D.C.; Hoard, M.K.; Byrd-Craven, J.; Nugent, L. & Numtee, C. (2007) Cognitive Mechanisms Underlying Achievement Deficits in Children with Mathematical Learning Disability. Child Development. 78(4):1343-1359

Harper, N.W. & Daane, C.J. (1998) Causes and reduction of math anxiety in preservice elementary teachers. Action in Teacher Education. 19(4):29-38

Hembree, R. (1990) The nature, effects, and relief of mathematics anxiety. Journal for research in mathematics education. 3(21):3-46

Hewson, S. (2011) The Mathematical Problems faced by Advanced STEM Students University of Cambridge. [online]   http://nrich.maths.org/6458 (accessed 14/4/15)

Holmes, D. I. (1998) The evolution of stylometry in humanities scholarship. Literary and linguistic computing. 13(3):111-117

Jackson, C.D., & Leffingwell, R.J. (1999) The role of instructors in creating math anxiety in students from kindergarten through college. The Mathematics Teacher. 92(7):583-586

Kosc, L. (1974) Developmental dyscalculia. Journal of learning disabilities. 7(3):164-177

Kreoger, L.A.; Brown, R.D. & O'Brien, B.A. (2012) Connecting Neuroscience, Cognitive, and Educational Theories and Research to Practice: A Review of Mathematics Intervention Programs. Early Education and Development. 23(1):37-58

Laski, E V.; Jor'dan, J.R.; Daoust, C. & Murray, A.K. (2015) What makes mathematics manipulatives effective? Lessons from cognitive science and Montessori education. SAGE Open. 5(2):2158244015589588

Lyons, I.M. & Beilock, S.L. (2012) When Math Hurts: Math Anxiety Predicts Pain Network Activation in Anticipation of Doing Math. PLoS ONE 7(10): e48076.doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0048076. [online] http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0048076&version=meter+at+null&module=meter-Links&pgtype=article&contentId=&mediaId=&referrer=&priority=true&action=click&contentCollection=meter-links-click (accessed 20/7/17)

Mann, V.; Ashton, J. & Rowlands, J. (2013) Student's Experiences of Maths elements of STEM subjects. Inclusive Practice. 81

Murphy, M.M.; Mazzocco, M.M.M.; Hanich, L.B. & Early, M.C. (2007) Cognitive Characteristics of Children with Mathematics Learning Disability (MLD) Vary as a Function of the Cut-off Criterion Used to Define MLD. Journal of learning disabilities. 40(5):458-478

National Numeracy (2015) National Numeracy: for everyone, for life. [online] http://www.nationalnumeracy.org.uk/why-numeracy-important (accessed 14/4/15)

Núñez-Peña, M.I.; Bono, R. & Suárez-Pellicioni, M. (2015) Feedback on students' performance: A possible way of reducing the negative effect of math anxiety in higher education. International Journal of Educational Research. 70:80-87

O'Donnell, A.M. & King, A. (Eds.) (2014) Cognitive perspectives on peer learning. New York: Routledge

O'Sullivan, C.; Mac an Bhaird, C.; Fitzmaurice, O. & Ní Fhloinn, E. (2014) Student Evaluation of Mathematics Learning Support: Insights from a large scale multi-institutional survey. [online] http://eprints.maynoothuniversity.ie/6890/ (accessed 20/6/17)

Patel, C. & Little, J. (2006) Measuring maths study support. Teaching Maths and its Applications. 25(3):131-138

Perry, A.B. (2004) Decreasing math anxiety in college students. College Student Journal. 38(2):321-324

Pletzer, B.; Kronbichler, M.; Nuerk, H.C. & Kerschbaum, H.H. (2015) Mathematics anxiety reduces default mode network deactivation in response to numerical tasks. Frontiers in human neuroscience. 9.

Price, G.R. & Ansari, D. (2013) Dyscalculia: characteristics, causes and treatments. Numeracy. 6(1):2

Ramirez, G. & Beilock, S.L. (2011) Writing about testing worries boosts exam performance in the classroom. Science 331:211-213

Richardson, F.C. & Suinn, R.M. (1972) The mathematics anxiety rating scale: psychometric data. Journal of Counseling Psychology. 19(6):551-554

Rosenshine, B. & Meister, C. (1992) The use of scaffolds for teaching higher-level cognitive strategies. Educational leadership. 49(7):26-33

Sheffield, D. & Hunt, T. (2006) How does anxiety influence maths performance and what can we do about it? MSOR CONNECTIONS. 6(4):19

Szucs, D.; Devine, A. ; Soltesz, F. ; Nobes, A. & Gabriel, F. (2013) Developmental dyscalculia is related to visuo-spatial memory and inhibition impairment. Cortex: A Journal Devoted To The Study Of The Nervous System & Behavior. 49(10):2674-2688

Taylor, J.A. & Mohr, J. (2001) Mathematics for Math Anxious Students Studying at a Distance. Journal of Developmental Education. Boone, N.C., United States: Center for Developmental Education, Appalachian State University. [online] http://search.proquest.com/docview/1437904100 (accessed 15/12/16)

Tyler-Smith, K. (2006) Early attrition among first time eLearners: A review of factors that contribute to drop-out, withdrawal and non-completion rates of adult learners undertaking eLearning programmes. Journal of Online Learning and Teaching / MERLOT. 2(2):73-85
Uusimaki, L.S. & Kidman, G.C. (2004) Reducing maths-anxiety: Results from an online anxiety survey. [online] http://eprints.qut.edu.au/974/1/kid04997.pdf (accessed 15/12/16)

van den Heuvel-Panhuizen, M.H.A.M. (1996) Assessment and realistic mathematics education (Vol. 19). Utrecht University. [online] https://dspace.library.uu.nl/handle/1874/1705 (accessed 20/7/17]

Vinson, B. M. (2001) A comparison of preservice teachers' mathematics anxiety before and after a methods class emphasizing manipulatives. Early Childhood Education Journal. 29(2):89-94

Wisker, G.; Exley, K.; Antoniou, M. & Ridley, P. (2013) Working one-to-one with students: supervising, coaching, mentoring, and personal tutoring. New York: Routledge

Woodard, T. (2004) The Effects of Math Anxiety on Post-Secondary Developmental Students as Related to Achievement, Gender, and Age. Inquiry. 9(1):1

Yogo, M. & Fujihara, S. (2008) Working memory capacity can be improved by expressive writing: a randomized experiment in a Japanese sample. British Journal of Health Psychology. 13(1):77-78

Young, C.B.; Wu, S.S. & Menon, V. (2012). The neurodevelopmental basis of math anxiety. Psychological Science. 23(5):492-501.

7

CHAPTER

MENTAL HEALTH AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT: A BRIEF PERSONAL REFLECTION ON RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

Jasmin Brook

Student mental health and well-being is being increasingly discussed amongst higher education providers (HEPs) world-wide. Issues inside and outside the academic sphere, including increasing financial difficulties have the possibility to affect a student's mental health and academic work (Grant & Liss, 2016). Laidlaw et al. (2016:2157) found that 29% of students reported clinical levels of mental health issues. In addition, at Newcastle University there has been an increase from just over 1,000 in 2012/13 to 2,803 in 2015/16 in people applying to the wellbeing services for support (Brinkworth, 2016:np). This does not mean, however, that the stigma attached to mental health is decreasing, or that people are getting the support they need. Financial cuts in the UK, including a cut of £150 million in 2015 to HEPs (Morgan, 2015:np), has led to mental health support decreasing both inside and outside HEPs. Therefore, we must now find more creative ways to improve student well-being and focus more on prevention rather than treatment.

When discussing mental health, I can only reflect on my own experience, how that now shapes my life and how I feel research and practice needs to change. I never claim that my experience is representative of all students in higher education, but I do believe that many individuals experience similar issues to me, and it is the way we deal with these issues and how we are supported by our social networks and institutions, which really define our experience at university. I will briefly reflect on my own experiences, first published in the Student Engagement in Higher Education Journal 2017, and use this experience to reflect on practice and research I have come across (Brook, 2017).

I came to university with some existing issues. I had experienced some difficult relationship breakdowns while studying for my

GCSEs and A-levels. During this period, I became concerned with my mental health and sought the support of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and adult mental health services where I received Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT); something that some of my friends aren't even aware of today. I had a lot of different focuses in my life: my education, hobbies and personal development. It was a busy and difficult time, but with great social and professional support, I got to where I wanted to be.

I began my degree by studying three subjects, History, Politics and Psychology, which I loved, as I could pursue exactly what interested me. But this made social integration with my peers difficult. Combined honours students can study from 21 subjects in over 400 ways, taking into account the different modules we can take. We are not surrounded by the same group of peers all day, every day unlike single honours students. The friends that are often made in Combined Honours centre on those with whom you have one module, but you may not see them again for the next three years. Meaningful, deep friendships are hard to come by. After around two weeks, I felt everyone had developed their own, tight, friendship groups. Although I made a friend in one of my subjects, I became increasingly nervous to approach people and go to subject and course society socials. This started to make me feel isolated. This loneliness began to manifest itself, gradually, into a fear of social situations.

Many would believe that because I had professional support in the past, I should have the right coping strategies in place for coming to university. That is how I felt at times during my first and second years. I would get upset with myself when I didn't have the energy or motivation to implement the strategies I had been taught. Also, the support I had been given related to generalised anxiety and depression, not specifically to social anxiety. In addition, I hadn't disclosed the issues I had been having in the application process, because I worried that admitting these issues would jeopardise my ability to get into university. Therefore, I had no additional support when I arrived.

I threw myself into my studies as a distraction from the way I was feeling. I spent many hours in the library, even at weekends, to try to make myself feel productive and fulfilled. However, this did

not help my grades. My brain began to feel quickly saturated with information just a few weeks into term and I couldn't take anything in properly. I began to struggle with my academic work, particularly psychology. Because I only had one thing occupying my life, the rest of my time was spent over-thinking and worrying about the tiniest things in my life. I focused on everything that I felt was going wrong; rather than on what was going well. There were even occasions in my first year where I would listen out for the kitchen door to open and shut to avoid my flatmates.

Clark's (2001) a cognitive perspective on social phobia, for me describes, almost perfectly, how social anxiety affected my life. He has argued that there are three assumptions that individuals make about the world that can lead to a social phobia. Firstly, high standard for social interaction, for example, showing no sign of weakness or making no mistakes when interacting with others. Secondly, beliefs about the consequences of behaving in a certain way; for instance, if I am quiet people will think I am boring/odd, if I go out without make-up on people will think I'm ugly. Finally negative beliefs about oneself, such as I'm stupid for being anxious all the time, other people have it worse, I am incapable of doing well at university. This he argues, leads to individuals perceiving social situations as dangerous. Russell and Topham (2012), look at the work of Clark and Wells (2000) and note that social anxiety is maintained through a negative feedback loop of poor self-expectations – anticipatory anxiety – cognitive impairment. This can have a negative effect on learning outcomes as well as the creation of social support networks.

Personally, I would describe social anxiety as a vicious cycle. The fear of making mistakes and a lack of self-confidence leads to you spending more time alone. This isolation can lead you to over think and gives you a warped view of how others see you. This can then lead to anticipatory anxiety and rituals in which you need to complete to feel comfortable to leave the house in the morning. All this worrying leads to cognitive impairment and an avoidance of certain situations you find stressful; which then leads you to return to the beginning of the circle. As with all mental health conditions, with social anxiety it takes many attempts to break this cycle. You may break the cycle once, but then you might do something small and silly which leads you back to stage one. Sometimes simple things become difficult to do. At times I skipped lectures because

I didn't want to be the girl sitting on her own in the lecture theatre. Other times I would get worried or anxious in the middle of lectures and feel everyone's eyes on me, when, in fact, nobody really cared. Sometimes I felt the same way when I walked through town. If someone laughed, they were laughing at me and there was something wrong about me. At the time, it was all very real and this struggle to make course friends had developed into a much bigger problem.

I have painted a very lonely picture of my first year at Newcastle University. But it wasn't completely like that. I had made some friends in freshers' week who, when things became difficult for me, kept trying to encourage me to do things. I did go out with them, but I always took a lot of persuading. At one time, I remember one of my friends talking to me for an hour, to get me to just go to the comedy club! Although this did help me have slightly more faith in myself, I still struggled on a daily basis.

I got fed up of always feeling worried and anxious that I would make a fool of myself whenever I went out to see friends or go to lectures. I decided to seek help from the student well-being service. When I did, my social anxiety kicked in again. I missed the deadline to accept my therapy and had to be put back on the waiting list. This was the second time I had experienced this. The first was when I referred myself for therapy on the NHS. We assume that those with mental health issues also have the capacity to suddenly snap themselves out of it. Most universities require students to self-refer to access well-being services. But when you struggle to admit to yourself that there is a problem, how can you suddenly start talking to someone else about it? The systems in place rely on an individual feeling able to pick up the phone, write an email, make a referral or go and speak to a member of staff. But this isn't always possible. It took me a few months to build up to actually filling out the application. I felt like a failure as this was the third time I had had counselling in about four years. Self-referral is difficult for anyone who has a mental health issue. But then we are put on a long waiting list, depending on our needs, then given a limited window in which to accept this offer of help. I did begin counselling with the university well-being service through emails, as I was too worried to go and have face-to-face counselling. I also did this because I find it a lot easier to put my feelings down on paper, rather than into words. I think I needed the build-up of advice, contrasting perspectives and reminding that the

way I was thinking wasn't right. I had to start reasoning with myself whenever I got anxious or worried. I had to force myself to see that the way I was thinking wasn't reflecting the world around me.

I took an active decision towards the end of my first year that I wouldn't let opportunities pass me by anymore. I would do things that scared me because it was good for me to challenge myself. I had to work hard, every day to change the way I thought and saw the world and the people in it. When an opportunity came for me to be a Peer Assisted Study Support (PASS) advisor I knew I had to take it. This is really where my recovery began. I was so nervous before the interview; but one thing that struck me was that I was being interviewed by students, not staff members. They understood how I felt and it did put me at ease slightly. They were so friendly and it wasn't what I expected the interview to be like. When I got a few things wrong, I was not made to feel stupid. I was made to feel like I had skills that needed to be developed. My confidence began to grow after I found out I would be on the PASS team. My next challenge was a meal, organised by the PASS advisors to help us get to know one another. Now this was something that I knew I couldn't wriggle out of. I couldn't make up a silly excuse not to go, although on the day I felt anxious and if it was anything else I would have avoided it. I was determined to meet everyone, no matter how I felt mentally about it. I did it and it went really well. I didn't have a single embarrassing moment, which I would have overly focused on in the past. The assumptions I had were slowly being challenged and I saw them to be unrealistic.

I spent my summer in Newcastle trying to get myself feeling better. I started voluntary work at Newcastle Castle and with The Children's Society in August 2016. This was daunting at first as the challenges of the past year were still with me. But everyone I met was really nice and supportive. When I had days off I gave myself a target to achieve, to do some reading, go for a run or do some shopping, to give me a sense of achievement. I also attended the Researching Advancing and Inspiring Student Engagement (RAISE) conference in September 2016. I was thrown into a completely new environment with fellow students whom I didn't know. Going to that event helped me to start having faith in myself again.

Since my difficult first year of university, I have been determined to

get involved with as much as possible. In my second year I, again, volunteered at Newcastle Castle and with The Children's Society; I was a PASS advisor; I had a work placement; I helped staff to develop the new Student Staff Partnership Forum and was the lead on a student project for RAISE17. However, I had gone from one extreme to another. My academic work did improve, but not massively and I actually failed an assignment due to my preoccupation with extra-curricular activities. I had times of severe stress and anxiety, but this was due to the volume of work I had. This also meant that I had little time to spend with friends, as time I didn't spend on assignments went on extra-curricular activities. During this time, I was living with my friends from first year, and unfortunately, this didn't go as well as we had expected. This meant that whilst my anxiety associated with professional situations reduced, my anxiety associated with socialising with peers stayed the same.

But the effect of extra-curricular activities on my development has been incredible. It has led me to do things I never would have done in my first year. I have taken the initiative in some of the professional activities I am involved in, creating new materials for clients and getting a job with The Children's Society, as well as becoming PASS coordinator. I spent two weeks of my Easter holiday in the south of Spain staying with someone I didn't know, and I had my 20th birthday in Granada. I have moved into a house with people I didn't know in my first or second year. These things wouldn't have been possible without the great development I experienced in the first and second years of my degree. I am no longer afraid of putting forward new ideas for scrutiny and my ambitions are bigger than they ever have been.

I do see my mental health partly as a result of the times we live in. We are constantly being told, from the time we are in primary school, that we have to compete with others. We must get good grades, we must set ourselves apart from others, we must not show any sign of weakness. It is difficult to maintain positive mental health in an environment like this. I believe the solution to this is a culture change to normalise conversations about mental health. For many years I was ashamed about my mental health. I come from a relatively privileged background. I am white. Although I am a woman, I have never felt that this has held me back from doing anything. I have relatively good connections, and I had a good education. I felt that

I didn't have the right to feel depressed or anxious because there are so many people who have things worse than me. I do believe that this has also subconsciously contributed to the way that friends have discussed their times of crisis with me as well. When they have had problems, worse than any that I have experienced, their reaction has been that I couldn't possibly understand because I haven't had those issues. But the truth is, I do understand what feeling depressed or anxious feels like. I understand how it can take over an individual's life and make it difficult to focus on the things that you need to. Just because my trigger was different, doesn't mean that how we feel as a result can't be similar.

Focus also needs to be given to external factors that can impact on a student's mental health while at university. Family relationships and relationships with housemates are important, but issues such as the effects of exercise, food, contraceptives, alcohol, drugs, caffeine etc. need to be discussed more too. For example, I now accept that too much caffeine makes me anxious and when I feel like this I can accept that I may not be able to do as much as I normally can. Conversations surrounding mental health should happen as early as possible in order to have positive effects. This can be conducted in really simple ways like facilitating students getting together more, facilitating difficult conversations to giving students the space and permission to carry on with coping strategies they have used at home.

It is important to understand the impact that mental health and social support networks play in an individual's ability or willingness to be an engaged student. An engaged student doesn't have to be one that takes on all opportunities presented to them, just one that is aware of them and can make an informed decision about them. But making opportunities accessible to everyone is important. I have spent time researching these issues at Newcastle University and based my dissertation on social integration. Due to this, I have spent a lot of time reading around the issue of well-being in university students and the effect that it can have on different aspects of university life. I think that one of the huge issues with the research of higher education in general, is that there is a lack of useful, practical and desirable solutions. I find that although research helps us to understand the causes of students' issues and how we might help them, there is a lack of real practice sharing. Some solutions offered in research, for example training staff to recognise the signs

of social anxiety as suggested by Russell and Topham (2012), lack the necessary information concerning resources, practicalities and usefulness that is needed for us to actually make a real difference. Also, many solutions seem to be implemented from the top, and students are only consulted during evaluation rather than in the creation of these solutions.

I feel that sometimes the way we approach these issues is not always the most helpful. For example, I believe looking at certain groups within university, e.g. working class students, international students, commuter students, can actually have the effect of isolating these groups further. Yes, it is important for students to have relationships with those whom they find it easy to relate to. But focusing on certain groups can lead them to integrate well with those from that particular group, but not with their peers. I do not believe that this is the intention of projects that focus on certain groups of students, but it is a side-effect that we need to be aware of. In terms of mental health, I believe the same applies. We need to look at this thematically, rather than in terms of certain groups. We all face similar issues, and the easier it is for us to relate to one another, the better.

Contrary to expectations, my final year of university has, so far, been the best in terms of my mental health. I made a conscious decision to try to be more honest about my mental health. I have accepted that my mental health does not define who I am, but it is part of who I am. When I have my bad days, I have learned to accept that I just have to do what I can that day. I now have become more comfortable having discussions relating to well-being and social integration with my peers. I now realise that the same issues facing combined honours students can face joint, or single, honours students. If, in the first few weeks, you struggle to find people on your course with whom you get on well, it can become even more difficult as the year goes on. Therefore, if we can get it right for combined honours students, then we can hopefully transfer what we learn to other courses so everyone can have a fulfilling time at university.

RESOURCES AND SUPPORT AVAILABLE:

Universities UK has a new website available.
Their #stepchange mental health in higher education is available from:
http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/stepchange

They are working on the premise that good mental health in students begins when higher education leaders adopt mental health as a strategic importance, implementing a whole university approach with students and staff involved at all stages of the student journey.

AMOSSHE Student Services Organisation has developed a toolkit for developing resilience amongst students in higher education.
Available from: https://resiliencetoolkit.org.uk
the toolkit is a resource bank of research, case studies and practical tools to promote student resilience to stress, anxiety and similar barriers to achievement and success.

REFERENCES

Brinkworth, R. (2016) Newcastle is the second worst uni in the UK at dealing with mental health. The Tab.
[online] https://thetab.com/uk/newcastle/2016/09/24/newcastle-second-worst-uni-uk-dealing-mental-health-20829 (accessed18/7/17)

Brook, J. (2017) Mental Health and Student Engagement – A Personal Account. Student Engagement in Higher Education Journal. 1(2):12-15

Clark, D.M. (2001) A cognitive perspective on social phobia. In W. R. Crozier & L. Alden (eds) International handbook of social Anxiety: concepts, research and interventions relating to the self and shyness. Chichester: Wiley

Grant, A. & Liss, R. (2016) Mental Wellbeing in Higher Education: a Select Bibliography. Universities UK.
[online] http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/about/Documents/mental-wellbeing-in-higher-education-bibliography.pdf p 4 (accessed 3/1/18)

Laidlaw, A.; McLellan, J. & Ozakinci, G. (2016) Understanding undergraduate student perceptions of mental health, mental well-being and help-seeking behaviour. Studies in Higher Education. 41(12):2157

Morgan, J. (2015) HEFCE reveals £150m cut. Times Higher Edcuation.
[online] https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/hefce-reveals-ps150m-cut (accessed 3/1/18)

Russell, G. & Topham, P. (2012) The impact of social anxiety on student learning and well-being in higher education. Journal of mental health. 21(4):383

8

CHAPTER

"SLOW LEARNING" STUDENTS AT BRITISH UNIVERSITIES – A HIDDEN, DISADVANTAGED MINORITY

Tim O'Hare

There is a significant minority of students in British universities who are struggling with their courses because they are slow learners. They do not have specific learning differences (so cannot gain Disabled Student's Allowance support) but to whom the Equality Act (2010) support appears to be due. They have been recruited onto courses by universities in spite of this. However, they are generally unacknowledged or unsupported and continue to struggle to complete (or just give up) the degree courses on which universities have recruited them and for which they have incurred significant personal debt.

The Context – how has this issue arisen? I am a Chartered Educational Psychologist, principally now working in universities providing detailed individual assessments to ascertain if students have a specific learning difference (SpLD) like dyslexia or dyspraxia and can thus apply for the Disabled Student's Allowance (DSA). Students are typically referred by Student Support, to whom they have often come because they are struggling on their course. I work closely with a group of other psychologists carrying out the same kind of work, between us covering about 20 universities, ranging from new to Russell Group. One surprising result of these assessments over the last 10 years has been that a significant number of students who are struggling and come for an assessment, are not dyslexic, but are essentially slow learners.

How do you classify someone as a probable slower learner? Essentially, this is about measuring their cognitive ability to carry out a series of analytical tasks across a wide range of verbal conceptual and non-verbal cognitive abilities. In technical terms, a likely slower learner would score (measured on the top professional individual assessment instrument, the WAIS 4) below the 15th percentile for

the UK population of their age at a combined verbal and non-verbal abilities (equivalent to an IQ of 84 or below). University students in my experience may sometimes even score below the 1st percentile (equivalent to an IQ of below 70) - to give this some context, in previous times, students below the 1st percentile would probably have been educated in a Special School. However, many slower learners can undoubtedly succeed on degree courses, but typically have to work harder and take longer than other students to complete academic tasks and will often struggle without substantial support. In some respects, these struggling students show similar academic difficulties to dyslexic students – e.g. difficulty in reading and understanding academic texts, difficulty in understanding lectures, difficulty in producing good quality written work, difficulty in exams. Generally speaking, universities do not offer particular curriculum learning support or exam access arrangements to these students, perhaps because traditionally, universities did not anticipate recruiting students who were slow learners. However, this issue, as it has unfolded over the last 10 years, has caused me a real professional concern. These students can comprise over 20% of students assessed in some universities, especially the less traditional ones offering various vocational courses – and this probably only touches on a proportion of those present in the student body. However, most universities are neither collecting and acting on this information nor making any support provision for these fee-paying students, if they do not qualify for the DSA.

Looking at it from the student perspective, students are being accepted onto courses and taking out substantial loans to cover 3 years or more of fees. They also incur many other costs, including loss of work income for many mature students or students on postgraduate taught or research courses. They incur these costs based on the assumption that acceptance on the course means that the university believes that they have the capacity to complete it successfully - when realistically their chances of satisfactorily completing their degree course without substantial support is relatively limited, given their cognitive limitations. This raises strong questions about the ethical recruitment of students, touched on later.

ARE "SLOW LEARNERS" DISABLED LEARNERS ACCORDING TO THE EQUALITY ACT 2010? THE ANSWER APPEARS TO BE YES!

In summary, the Act says that a person "has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a long term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities" (Equality Act, 2010:np). For a university student those day to day activities are those of studying for their degree.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission publication: Equality Act 2010 Technical Guidance on Further and Higher Education (2012:np) clarifies what this means in HE. It states that:

> "... impairment covers physical or mental impairments. This includes sensory impairments, such as those affecting sight or hearing. The term 'mental impairment' is intended to cover a wide range of impairments relating to mental functioning, including dyslexia and other impairments often referred to generically as learning disabilities".

It therefore seems reasonable to say that a student with a long term cognitive difficulty has an impairment of mental functioning and thus a disability under the Equality Act.

THE JOINT COUNCIL OF QUALIFICATIONS (JCQ) INTERPRETATIONS OF THE EQUALITY ACT 2010 AND POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR UNIVERSITIES

Universities do not have a common national position on this. However, the JCQ examining boards in FE have for years interpreted this in a clear way and this interpretation now seems to be the generally accepted position in education. They indicate that a student with a substantial difficulty falls below 1 standard deviation (percentile 15) or very substantial difficulty below 2 standard deviations (percentile 3) on a range of tests standardised on the general population. These should therefore be regarded as having a learning disability within the definition of the Equality Act as their difficulty has an adverse effect on their ability to carry out the day-to-day study and learning activities of being a university student. Universities do not have to follow the direction of FE, (though the Equality Act 2010 Technical

Guidance on Further and Higher Education clearly groups them together) but no university I am aware of has put forward a different view of how to interpret substantial difficulty – in many respects it is difficult to see the possibility of a coherent alternative.

The JCQ examining board regulations for FE currently accept that a below 15th percentile performance on speed related skills or cognitive tasks that affect speed of information processing would give extra time in exams, whatever the overall level of cognitive ability. This choice of processing speed measures is, however, rather narrow – i.e. those students with cognitive ability difficulties measured at below the 15th percentile e.g. by the General Ability Index (GAI), the Verbal Comprehension Index (VCI) or the Perceptual Reasoning Index (PSI) on the WAIS 4 should also therefore be seen as falling within the definition of disability given by the Equality Act. Essentially, their cognitive abilities make it difficult to study at degree level without additional support.

ARE THESE STUDENTS ELIGIBLE FOR THE DISABLED STUDENT'S ALLOWANCE (DSA)? THE ANSWER IS NO!

My small CPD group of Educational Psychologists working in university assessment, now (following protracted correspondence) have some clarification provided by the Department for Business Innovation & Skills (BIS). A letter sent to us, dated 7 October 2015, stated:

> "The information set out in the guidance and confirmed by Student Finance England is correct. A student with a diagnosed Specific Learning Difficulty could be eligible for Disabled Students Allowance (DSA), but a student with general learning difficulties would not.
>
> This is because DSA is specifically to help remove disability related barriers to enable students to reach their academic potential.
>
> This does not mean that students with general learning issues should not be supported, but rather this is a matter for the institution, not for DSA.

Students with a general learning difficulty or low academic ability who require additional support should be signposted to the institution's student support services in order to access any available support."

Therefore, the BIS position is very clear – the responsibility for supporting these students is with **the university that recruited them.**

WHAT ARE UNIVERSITIES' DUTIES (ANTICIPATORY AND CURRENT) TO DISABLED STUDENTS UNDER THE EQUALITY ACT 2010?

In chapter 5, section 36 (page 79) of the Equality Act 2010 Technical Guidance on Further and Higher Education it states that "further and higher education institutions have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants".

This would include making reasonable adjustments to the course requirements unless they are a competence standard. The same chapter of this guidance (section 40, page 81) states "the Act makes it unlawful for a further or higher education institution to fail to comply with a duty to make reasonable adjustments" and that "this duty is anticipatory". This means that further and higher education institutions are required to consider, and take action in relation to, barriers that impede disabled people generally prior to an individual disabled person seeking to become a student."

The BIS and Equality Act advice seems to have clear implications for the university and how academic departments should anticipate, plan and support the slower learning students that they recruit. This may or may not be via Student Support, but typically providing access to the academic curriculum requires changes to teaching content and methodology to make the more complex conceptual parts of the curriculum accessible (Inclusive Learning). Student Support normally provides specialist teaching related to the study skills / technology that enables students to perform better in, for example, reading, proof reading, note making or written tasks – but does not include support with academic conceptual content. This would normally be the responsibility of the department which recruited the student. Following an assessment, an educational psychologist's report will

give details of abilities and relevant skills, some of which may be below percentile 16, indicating a potential substantial adverse impact in Equality Act terms. Thus, a case should be made for academic departments to both provide appropriate support to slow learners and to make exam access arrangements for them.

In summary, it seems clear that universities have a duty to anticipate disabled student needs, including slower learners, and to make reasonable adjustments for them to access the curriculum. This support should be based in the academic departments who recruit these students and who deal with the conceptual content of courses, rather than in Study Support. However, I have to say that in my observations, I have seen no anticipation of these needs and little provision when they have been established.

RECRUITING WITH INTEGRITY – SHOULD UNIVERSITIES BE RECRUITING THESE STUDENTS WITHOUT ASSESSING NEED OR LIKELY SUPPORT NEEDED TO SUCCEED?

University documentation on ethical recruitment varies by institution. However, the current JCQ Regulations in FE (section 2.6:np), as a national body, may be taken as guidance. It emphasises the duty of the educational institution to only recruit students to whom a course is suited:

> "It is vital that centres recruit with integrity with regard to vocational qualifications. Centres must ensure that learners have the correct information and advice on their selected qualification(s) and that the qualification(s) will meet their needs. The recruitment process must include the centre assessing each potential learner and making justifiable and professional judgements about the learner's potential to successfully complete the assessment and achieve the qualification. Such an assessment must identify, where appropriate, the support that will be made available to the learner to facilitate access to the qualification(s). Where the recruitment process identifies that the learner may not be able to demonstrate attainment and thus gain achievement in all of the assessments for the selected qualification, this must be communicated clearly to the learner. A learner

may still decide to proceed with a particular qualification and not be entered for all or some of the assessments. Centres must ensure that learners are aware of:

- the range of options available, including any reasonable adjustments that may be necessary, to enable the demonstration of attainment across all of the required assessments

- any restrictions on progression routes to the learner as a result of not achieving certain outcomes."

The British Council also emphasises this ethical approach in recruiting international students.

If a similar policy of recruiting with integrity is generally being followed for local students in UK universities, then an assessment of slow learners' anticipated needs should have presumably taken place prior to recruitment onto a course, and the anticipatory support measures to enable access to the curriculum outlined to the student. In my experience, this ethical assessment of slow learning student needs is not done, even though subsequently dropping out of a course in which they are struggling may have severe financial implications for the student. Moreover, collation of information on slow learners, classified by academic department in order to help those departments recruit more ethically and support more effectively, is not done by Study Support departments that typically receive individual assessment information.

This is increasingly being seen at masters and even PhD level on occasions where students have gained a largely vocational degree at one university and moved onto a different university where the academic demands at postgraduate level increase dramatically.

A POTENTIAL CAUSE FOR STUDENT COMPLAINTS?

In cases where recruitment falls below the ethical standards above, where the student is struggling with a course that seems to stretch their cognitive capacity and where support is not anticipated or provided, they might have a case for complaint. Universities usually

have a probationary point of three months from the start of the course after which a student is deemed to have accepted the course and is then obligated to pay the full year's fees. If the student was possibly not recruited ethically (as above) and having attended the course for one semester (indicating the university accepts them as competent), then return of fees and other costs might be claimed in the event of the student dropping out of the course, where they had not been warned of the possibilities of failure and access/support provision had not been anticipated and provided. It seems highly likely that there will be embarrassing court cases in the future when the Student Union takes up the case of these students.

CONCLUSIONS

There is a significant minority of students in UK universities who may be classified as slower learners in terms of their cognitive capacity to manage the complex and conceptual content of their studies. They are not eligible for the DSA, though they appear to fall within the scope of the Equality Act 2010 as being disabled. These students may succeed in their studies, but typically need more time and more support than the average student to do so. Typically, universities do not make support provision for these students or anticipate their needs. This situation has come about through widening access, but has not been anticipated or generally acted upon. The following recommendations might be made to universities for future action:

1. Acknowledge slower learners.

There are a significant number of UK university students who are slow learners with scores on cognitive ability, information processing, plus relevant literacy skills like reading speed that fall below the 15th percentile limits – and therefore could be designated as "disabled" within the meaning of the Equality Act (2010). This gives the university a duty to anticipate their needs and to respond.

2. Review exam access arrangements.

Exam access arrangements may be appropriate for these students and should be offered along with considerations of alternative assessment methods.

3. **Ensure Ethical Recruitment.**

Academic departments need to ensure they recruit students ethically and that the students are cognitively equipped to succeed on the course, perhaps with appropriate access and support arrangements. This needs much more rigorous assessment than seems to be the case currently. Study Support, by feeding back the numbers of slow learning students revealed through learning assessments collated by department, could help inform departments who may be in danger of being seen as not recruiting ethically. This would enable the department to review their recruitment practices and avoid embarrassing claims by students.

4. **Provide Curriculum Access Support.**

Student Finance England says that the DSA does not apply to these students and that required provision is the responsibility of the university. Therefore, the university itself should proactively consider how to make reasonable adjustments for them. These could include:

a. academic departments could consider the adjustments they need to make to give reasonable access in understanding the academic / conceptual content of the curriculum in written and spoken form

b. Study Support could consider how to support academic departments in relation to identified slow learners. These could include 1 to 1 support or small workshops for slow learners addressing common study skills difficulties, such as academic writing, assignment planning, improving proof reading etc., or providing access to useful software, e.g. software that will read text to students enabling them to concentrate on meaning rather than simultaneously struggling with decoding words

c. Study Support could work with academic tutors in helping them modify curriculum content or delivery methods to make them more accessible to slow learning students. This might also include, for example, small scale supplementary workshops provided by academic tutors on conceptually complex topics to help slow learners understand. Universities must resource Study Support and academic departments appropriately.

REFERENCES

British Council (2012) Ethical approach in recruiting international students in.
[online] http://www.britishcouncil.org/organisation/press/landmark-international-code-ethics-education-agents (accessed 26/4/16)

Department for Business Innovation & Skills (2015) Personal letter from BIS Ministerial Correspondence Unit, 7th October 2015

Disabled Student's Allowance (DSA) (n.d.)
[online] https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas/overview (accessed 15/12/16)

Equality Act (2010) [online] http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents (accessed 15/12/16)

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (2012) Equality Act 2010 Technical Guidance on Further and Higher Education of November 2012.
[online] https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/equality-act-2010-technical-guidance-further-and-higher-education (accessed 15/12/16)

The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) (n.d.) Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties.
[online] http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance/access-arrangements-and-reasonable-adjustments-2016-2017 (accessed 15/12/16)

Wais IV - Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-Fourth Edition (WAIS-IV) David Wechsler (2008)
[online] http://www.pearsonclinical.com/psychology/products/100000392/wechsler-adult-intelligence-scalefourth-edition-wais-iv.html (accessed 15/12/16)

CHAPTER

9

THE EXCLUSIVE CAMPUS BUBBLE: THE BEST AND WORST FEATURE OF CAMPUS UNIVERSITIES

Tom Lowe

University campuses and the services they run can often operate in an exclusive campus bubble to cater for the traditional student excluding non-traditional students from accessing the full higher education experience. This chapter will offer a consideration for the reader when planning, delivering and strategizing any services or activities students may engage in to complement their studies. The chapter will comment on how decision making in higher education is sometimes historically detached in the past and that mistakes can often be made by focusing on the students within the campus bubble who are studying full time in a closed geographical location. Therefore, this chapter reminds readers to consider those students sometimes excluded from campus activities and services and who may subsequently, live the less traditional student experience.

Traditionally study in UK higher education (HE) consisted of students moving or living close to the town or campus of study, where they would study full time and largely begin their studies during late teens and early twenties. With regard to creating inclusive planning, opportunities and strategies for students at an institution, the above assumptions can make the decision and planning process simple, with many students' journeys following a similar pattern. However, in recent decades, this trend in the student demographic has dramatically changed with the expansive growth in types of higher education providers (HEPs), pathways of study, growth of student numbers and the associated cost of being a student (Thomas, 2012). This has made HEPs very diverse and as a practitioner working in Student Engagement across multiple universities in the United Kingdom, I have witnessed that many decisions and plans are still made in a traditional mind-set towards HE study, as discussed above. For the purposes of this paper, I will refer to this traditional mind-set of operating within campus-based HE as the campus bubble, which can

be viewed as the best and worst feature of campus universities. This chapter will discuss several considerations for faculty/professional services to take into account when supporting learning or offering enrichment in HE.

THE "CAMPUS BUBBLE"

The term campus bubble is often referred to in relation to closed social networks or ways of thinking, such as academic tribalism at further or higher education, where the social networks or perspectives facilitated on campus can be siloed off from outside society (Schoolman et al., 2016; Trowler, 2001). This term began to be apparent to me in the context of wider HE when an undergraduate student stated that the "campus bubble was the best and worst thing about his university" explaining that if you as a student were part of it, university was a positive experience with lots of support and opportunities. If, however, anything put you as the student outside the bubble, the campus experience which came with support, opportunities and facilities was not so accessible. Obviously, this is a wide statement which does not apply to all of UK HE, though I have witnessed many HEPs acting within an aspect of the campus bubble mindset. When working on the HEFCE funded REACT Project looking at widening access to student engagement opportunities to involve so-called hard-to-reach students, we found those students who sat outside the traditional students who were 18-25 years old and from backgrounds which prepared them for HE, were those who experienced barriers to study (REACT, 2016). This was a widely known factor, with hard-to-reach students being different for each individual within a HEP depending on their perspective. However, most institutional planning of services, curriculum and communications would still be focused on the full-time, campus or nearby, late teens-early twenties, campus bubble student.

University campus facilities are now considered to be a key factor which attracts students to study at an HEP on par with league tables, location and opportunities (Havergal, 2014). Many HEPs are now investing millions in their campus estates featuring attractive buildings, sports facilities, modern teaching rooms and cutting-edge technology suites, as well as trading on community atmospheres and innovative learning spaces (Havergal, 2014). The campus has

become one of many unique selling points to studying at an HEP. These developments are happening at the same time as further courses are offered online by distance, through flexible study programmes. Fast decisions are being made to make campuses more attractive to study at, but also to be more inclusive for a more diverse student body to achieve greater retention and foster a positive student experience. These pressures have increased beyond student satisfaction alone in UK HE (NSS, 2016) with the newly implemented Teaching Excellence Framework (BIS, 2015) looking at further assessing HEPs with regard to their retention. This all adds further pressure on institutions and their campuses to be inclusive in all of their activities for their diverse student bodies, as any areas of issue on a programme or service not performing could affect the whole HEP's reputation, student experience and cause potential drop out.

Communicating, providing and planning for a diverse student body is not a simple exercise. Diversity, includes ethnicity, but also learning ability, expectations, level of additional time commitments, confidence, culture, technical ability, and distance lived from campus. All these factors can act as barriers or advantages for students in HE (NUS, 2013). By reviewing activity for accessibility for those with hidden disabilities or practical barriers, practitioners at HE can expand practice to have alternatives to stand-alone student support sessions on campus or advertising an opportunity by printed leaflets on-site only. By moving communications and services online, repeating and varying times of services/drop in sessions on campus and reviewing the flexibility of the HE experience, the campus bubble can be expanded to an extent to become more inclusive to benefit the student experience.

Campus professional services are at the forefront of the current pressures facing the modernising HEP in a neo-liberal setting. Student counselling, disability advisors, academic skills practitioners and other support mechanisms can come under pressure with university statistics around retention becoming increasingly considered for league tables. Often these departments are focused on campus and can have trouble reaching out through Virtual Learning Environments or even reaching out beyond the area of campus the service occupies. For students who are active within the campus bubble, the chance to become aware of these services is higher than those students

who commute to campus just for their classes, having less dwelling time on site. By moving activities, services and resources online, the campus bubble can be expanded to an extent, but personal interaction can be lost in this process. Challenging perspectives by reviewing the positive aspects of personal interaction within the campus bubble and transferring these to flexible services or moving aspects online, can act in one way to widen inclusivity.

For students with the flexibility to make the most of the student experience, opportunities are vast to become involved in extra-curricular and enrichment activities to enhance their student experience (Astin, 1984). For students to take part in optional enrichment activities, competitive/recreational sport, student societies and volunteering, there is often an associated cost or time sacrifice. A traditional student who sits comfortably within the campus bubble is able to engage with these activities. However, as discussed above, those students experiencing barriers to engagement or who sit outside the campus bubble, therefore finding it difficult to engage with these opportunities, often become excluded. This can be made even more difficult when physical distance is a barrier, for distance students unable to attend campus or time-poor, often commuting students, unable to commit to time on campus beyond their studies.

When approaching decision making for activities, strategies and planning at higher education, I ask readers to consider the campus bubble and consider the endless complexities of unique scenarios in which modern students study. Many universities now ensure students are represented or engaged in these processes through committees and partnership agreements; however, reflecting on how representative these activities are for those students who are unable to attend is important. As stated above, we can presume that it is far more likely that the students who are able to sit on university or programme level committees are those students with the time and easy access to that opportunity, and therefore likely to be in the bubble. Does your HEP ensure diverse representation? Do you consult just with the students who are already using your service or engaging in your activity? It is always worth questioning and reflecting on your current practice of engaging with students and asking how appropriate and accessible your service is for those students outside the campus bubble.

Unfortunately, it is not as simple as planning for students within the bubble and those outside, as institutions have to ensure their practice does not become exclusive for those students who sit in-between, such as commuters, differing ability and time-poor students. Simply moving resources and services online is not always enough. The dichotomy of where students fall, from completely campus-based to a distance learner in Australia, is a continuum which can be tackled at several levels. The alienation experienced by students, even on campus (Mann, 2001), should be remembered so an inclusive, accessible strategy must be adopted. The campus bubble perspective is certainly present in aspects of HE and beginning a conversation to pop it certainly is not simple, as it releases a complexity of debates around reaching and including students which will be an endless polishing process to our planning which HE should continue to develop.

I hope that this chapter will help begin, and continue, the conversation to close this particular inclusivity gap.

REFERENCES

Astin, A.W. (1984) Student Involvement: A Developmental Theory for Higher Education, Journal of College Student Development. 5:518-529.

Department of Business, Innovation and Skills [BIS] (2015) Fulfilling our Potential: Teaching Excellence. Social Mobility and Student Choice.
[online] https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/higher-education-teaching-excellence-social-mobility-and-student-choice (accessed 4/11/16)

Havergal, C. (2014) Estates spending up as student expectations increase.
Times Higher Education.
[online] https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/estates-spending-up-as-student-expectations-increase/2015970.article (accessed 4/11/16)

Mann, S.J. (2001) Alternative perspectives on the student experience: alienation and engagement. Studies in Higher Education. 26(1):7-19

National Union of Students [NUS] (2013) Mapping Participation: the Journey of Students' Union. Participation in Higher Education. London: NUS

National Student Survey [NSS] (2016)
[online] http://www.thestudentsurvey.com/about.php (accessed 18/11/16)

REACT (2016) Realising Engagement through Active Culture Transformation.
[online] http://www.studentengagement.ac.uk (accessed 4/11/16)

Schoolman, E.D.; Shriberg, M.; Schwimmer, S. & Tysman, M. (2016) Scratching the green surface: do higher education sustainability initiatives matter beyond the campus bubble. Journal of Environmental Studies Science. 178

Thomas, L. (2012) Building student engagement and belonging in Higher Education at a time of change: a summary of findings and recommendations from the What Works? Student Retention and Success programme. London: Paul Hamlyn Foundation.
[online] https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/what-works-student-retention/What_works_final_report (accessed 25/5/17)

Trowler, P.R. (2001) Academic tribes and territories. London: McGraw-Hill Education

PART 2

CHAPTER

10

DEVELOPING AND EMBEDDING INCLUSIVE POLICY AND PRACTICE WITHIN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Michael McLinden, Michael Grove, Jon Green & Andy Birch

ABSTRACT

This chapter contributes to the literature base on promoting equality of opportunity for students in Higher Education (HE). It seeks to broaden our understanding of how progress in relation to embedding inclusivity in the institution can be evidenced in order to improve the quality of students' learning opportunities. Despite an increased emphasis on promoting inclusive policy and practice in recent years within HE, there is limited work that examines to what extent such efforts have resulted in positive curriculum change, nor the nature of evidence that can be drawn upon to determine this. With reference to work undertaken at a Higher Education Provider (HEP) in the UK that is drawn upon as a case study (McLinden et al., 2014), we examine how such progress can be evidenced in line with strategic aspirations through an action oriented research design. Within this design we explore the application of the McKinsey 7S as a broad organisational change framework (Pascale & Athos, 1981) that was used to establish an evidence baseline and monitor potential change in line with agreed success criteria. We discuss the relevance of the organisational change framework to future curriculum change initiatives and propose that a revised framework should include a focus on students as stakeholders to ensure it has particular relevance to support future curriculum change within HE. The chapter has significance for HEPs seeking a potentially suitable research design and organisational change framework through which to monitor curriculum change more broadly when seeking to improve the quality of students' learning opportunities.

1. Introduction

An increased focus on equality and diversity within HE in recent years, underpinned to some extent by an increasingly heterogeneous

student population, has given rise to a focus on the development and promotion of more inclusive learning and teaching approaches (e.g. Hockings, 2010; QAA, 2015; HEA, 2016). Such approaches are described by Hockings (2010:1) as:

> "the ways in which pedagogy, curricula and assessment are designed and delivered to engage students in learning that is meaningful, relevant and accessible to all."

Underpinning the concept of inclusive learning and teaching are the values of equity and fairness which require HEPs to take account of and value students' differences within mainstream curriculum, pedagogy and assessment (e.g. Hockings, 2010; QAA, 2015). We begin the chapter by examining issues to do with embedding inclusive learning and teaching approaches within an HEP. We argue that an action oriented approach offers a suitable research design within which to undertake an institutional project designed to bring about changes in policy and practice. Within this design we then explore the application of the McKinsey 7S (M7S) as a broad organisational change framework that was drawn upon to establish an evidence baseline and monitor potential change in line with success criteria. We discuss the relevance of the M7S to future curriculum change initiatives and propose a revised framework that includes a focus on students to ensure it has relevance to support future curriculum change within HE. We conclude by reiterating that future inclusive curriculum initiatives should be designed within a suitable action-oriented framework. This should be supported by an appropriate means of collecting data and evidence, so that HEPs can confidently claim to have undertaken positive curriculum change that has improved the quality of student learning opportunities.

2. Embedding inclusive learning and teaching approaches within an HEP

Within the UK, HEPs have legal obligations which they must meet in relation to equality of opportunity and eliminating unlawful discrimination, including for example an "anticipatory" duty to provide reasonable adjustments for disabled students (QAA, 2015:2). As reported in the description on equality, diversity and equality of opportunity within guidance developed on academic quality within HE by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) in the UK, the notion of

anticipatory approaches is considered to be central to the concept of an inclusive learning environment:

> "An inclusive environment for learning anticipates the varied requirements of learners, for example because of a declared disability, specific cultural background, location, or age, and aims to ensure that all students have equal access to educational opportunities." (QAA, 2015:5)

2.1. Development of an Inclusive Curriculum Working Group

The ways in which HEPs have responded to such changes in order to develop and promote equality in learning and teaching through such anticipatory approaches at institutional and local levels will differ according to a range of factors, including their size, remit and focus. For the purpose of this discussion, we make reference to the activities of an Inclusive Curriculum Working Group (ICWG) at a case study HEP that was formed in a large, research-intensive university within the UK (McLinden et al., 2014). The main role of the ICWG was to explore how inclusivity, in its widest possible sense, might be more effectively embedded within the curriculum with a view to better supporting staff and students. The ICWG consisted of key stakeholders that represented academics, professional services staff and students with expertise in, and representing, aspects of disability, diversity, international and part-time students, socio-economic status, gender, religion, and LGBT. The particular focus was upon: disability, diversity, international and part-time students, socio-economic status, gender, religion, and LGBT with a view to bringing together a range of current activities and initiatives being undertaken and with the remit of identifying issues, challenges and barriers to greater inclusive practice, providing practical solutions to issues, sharing effective approaches, and embedding changes to teaching, learning, assessment and support practices.

Drawing on guidance provided by the QAA (QAA, 2012; QAA, 2013) a series of guiding principles were developed by the ICWG (Box 1).

1. Commitment to promoting equality and diversity with recognition that diversity in staff and students brings with it different ideas, knowledge and experiences that contribute to an enriched learning environment.

2. Commitment to promoting equality through treating everyone with equal dignity and worth, irrespective of the group or groups to which they belong, while also raising aspirations and supporting achievement for people with diverse requirements, entitlements and backgrounds.

3. Commitment to developing an inclusive environment for learning that anticipates the varied requirements of learners, for example because of a declared disability, specific cultural background, location, or age, and aims to ensure that all students have equal access to educational opportunities.

4. Explicit acknowledgement that staff and students all have a role in and responsibility for promoting equality.

5. Explicit acknowledgement that equality of opportunity involves enabling access for people who have differing individual requirements as well as eliminating arbitrary and unnecessary barriers to learning.

6. The nature of students' particular learning experiences may vary according to location of study, mode of study, or academic subject, as well as whether they have any protected characteristics, but every student experiences parity in the quality of learning opportunities.

7. Disabled students and non-disabled students are offered learning opportunities that are equally accessible to them, by means of inclusive design wherever possible and by means of reasonable individual adjustments wherever necessary.

8. Offering an equal opportunity to learn is distinguished from offering an equal chance of success.

Box 1: Guiding principles of the Inclusive Curriculum Working Group in the HEP case study (adapted from QAA, 2012; QAA, 2013 and McLinden at al., 2014).

As noted by McLinden et al. (2014), the formation of the ICWG illustrates a strategic approach to enhancement that seeks to bring about desired change in policy and practice through working with a wide range of individuals from across the HEP, including academics, professional services staff and students.

When seeking to embed a curriculum that is genuinely inclusive across a large research-intensive university there are the different levels of the curriculum in disciplines to consider including for example: content (which may have particular impacts in relation to gender, LGBT, ethnicity); accessibility of resources and facilities (which may impact students with disability and part-time learners). In addition, other aspects including tutorial support and welfare; teaching delivery; forms of assessment and feedback; and, professional development, can impact many of the groups. An inclusive approach to the curriculum at an institutional level therefore provides a mechanism for ensuring activities are coordinated and coherent at a practitioner level, that students can be engaged directly in the design, development and delivery of the activities undertaken, and the work of the group can influence institutional policy and strategy via the stakeholders involved in the group. In seeking to bring about change of any kind within an HEP, questions regarding how this change may be measured and benchmarked must be considered in order that the extent of genuine progress can be determined. While the more robust evaluation of educational activities is becoming increasingly widespread across the sector, this is often in relation to discrete or focused interventions (e.g. McLinden et al., 2014). Seeking to explore the progress of interventions and approaches that take place across a large organisation such as an HEP is more complex and, in addition, further complicated by not only the need to measure changes in policy and practice, but also cultural and attitudinal shifts.

Measuring the progress of enhancements and innovation within an HEP is not only complex, but adapting the ideas of Barnett (2000) may be described as supercomplex. The current HE landscape within England is undergoing a period of rapid change, and as such, an evidence-based perspective of progress towards enhancement is vital. Within this transformed system an increased emphasis is placed upon students' recruitment, retention, achievement and employability as well as their satisfaction with the quality of teaching, feedback on work and resources (BIS, 2016). For example, with the

changes to HE funding that were initiated following the Independent Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance (BIS, 2010), universities in England are required to produce a publicly available document (an Access Agreement) that details their specific approaches and activities for widening participation in higher education from traditionally underrepresented groups of learners. Such a document is reviewed by the Office for Fair Access (OFFA), the independent public body that regulates fair access to higher education in England, and if accepted a university is able to charge fees up to the current maximum threshold. Even this development however is not static.

The recent Government white paper (BIS, 2016) commits to replacing the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and the Office For Fair Access (OFFA) with a single sector regulator and student champion called the Office for Students, and implementing a Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). Whilst the exact details of the TEF continue to develop at the time of writing, one of its elements that has been determined is that those providers who submit to it will be assessed against three main aspects: Teaching Quality; Learning Environment; and Student Outcomes and Learning Gain. The TEF, at least in its earliest iterations, will be metric based, but universities will have the opportunity to submit a contextual statement in support of their overall submission. Undoubtedly, this will need to become increasingly evidence informed and, as such, HEPs within England are facing increased pressures from many different sources to not only articulate what they do, but also evidence the impact that their interventions and activities are having upon key stakeholders.

3. Action Oriented Research Design

Given the emphasis upon implementing institutional change at a number of levels and involving a wide range of stakeholders, McLinden et al. (2014) report that an appropriate research design when seeking to introduce and promote a more inclusive curriculum is considered to be action research, and in particular action research for organisational change (e.g. Zuber-Skerrit, 1996). Action research itself is a broad term covering various approaches that are characterised by a focus on action-oriented research involving interventions to

bring about positive change. The emphasis on organisational change in relation to HEPs ensures the focus is on bringing about such change at an institutional level. Whilst change at a course level or perhaps programme level can be easier to evidence and articulate, doing so at a faculty or even institutional level is considered to be significantly more challenging.

An example of one approach that has particular relevance to the focus of this discussion is action research which incorporates four key stages:

1. Strategic planning (Plan)

2. Implementing the plan (Action)

3. Observation, evaluation and self-evaluation (Observe/Monitor)

4. Critical and self-critical reflection on the results and making decisions for the next cycle of research (Reflect).

An example of the cyclical nature of these stages within an action research process is presented in Figure 1.
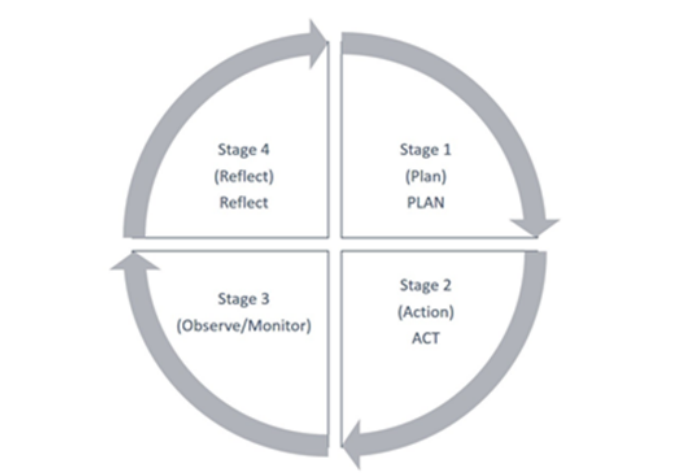
Figure 1: Example of the cyclical stages of an Action Research Cycle

The planning stage provides an opportunity to focus on what is the intended change and how 'success' will be determined. Questions that can guide such a focus include:

1. Where do we want to be, and by when?

2. What will constitute success? How will we know what success actually looks like?

3. Where are we now?

4. How will we get to where we want to be?

We examine these questions next drawing where appropriate upon our own experiences from the activities of the ICWG.

4. Planning curriculum change

Where do we want to be and by when?
In examining the aspirations of an HEP in relation to an inclusive curriculum it is helpful to begin with the question of "Where do we want to be, and by when?" Starting by analysing the current institutional position (i.e. "where are we now?") can serve to constrain blue skies thinking and ambition. Equally it is important to consider that change in itself is a process, and as such a timescale for achieving this change is important. It is helpful to bring together different groups of stakeholders to map out a future institutional vision. By envisioning what success looks like makes it easier to evidence, and indeed an Appreciative Enquiry approach (e.g. HEA, 2016) can be beneficial since it actively involves key stakeholders in a process of self-determined change. A report produced for the Higher Education Academy (HEA, 2016) as part of a project on inclusive curriculum and flexible learning provides an overview of how this can be incorporated into a planning session.

What constitutes success?

Before an approach to measuring or determining success can be developed, it is helpful to first consider what this might look like and how it may manifest itself across the institution. By having an

appreciation of what successful outcomes are, that is what change looks like, makes it possible to identify approaches, including beginning to identify a series of indicators that allow the progress towards these outcomes to be measured. Through the application of an appreciative enquiry based approach examples of such indicators of success derived for the ICWG are illustrated in Box 2. Whilst they may only demonstrate broad aspirations, significantly the members of the ICWG are very much bought in to this vision and therefore have a vested interest in ensuring and articulating success.

- A visible web presence related to inclusivity, including staff and student internal and external webpages.
- Availability of a range of resources from within the university that is accessed and utilised by both staff and students.
- Positive changes to International Student Barometer Data.
- Positive changes to Local/National Student Survey Data.
- Student performance, and in particular a narrowing of the attainment gap amongst learners.
- Qualitative feedback obtained from staff and students on perspectives towards inclusivity.
- A reduction in the number of appeals and complaints due to issues associated with inclusivity.
- Inclusivity explicitly embedded within the university learning and teaching strategy.
- References to inclusivity with respect to university appointments and staff selection and promotion.
- Inclusivity is firmly and visibly embedded within the values of the university.

Box 2. Examples of indicators of success derived from an appreciate enquiry based approach

Where are we now?

A particular challenge when restructuring multi-level institutional procedures is how to ensure alignment across the institution in relation to proposed changes. As is the case when evidencing any form of change, it is essential to have a baseline position. Particular methods are required to enable the impact of change within the institution to be measured and monitored over a given timeframe in relation to the agreed goals/success criteria. We consider next use of the M7S as a broad organisational change framework that was drawn upon by the ICWG.

5. Measuring The Impact Of Change Within An HEP Through The M7S Framework

The M7S framework has been outlined as being particularly applicable to help organisations seek harmony in their activities in order to create more inclusive practice within HE (May & Bridger, 2010). The framework is based on seven interdependent elements that contribute to organisational effectiveness (Figure 2). The seven elements are further broken down into hard (strategy, structure and systems) and soft elements (shared values, skills, style and staff). The authors of the model argue that for an organisation to perform effectively there needs to be alignment and coherence between each of these seven elements (Pascale & Athos, 1981). The model also offers the opportunity to gauge the effectiveness of any change made within a particular S in relation to the other elements by considering the various inter-relationships and the impacts it may have upon those.

In seeking to bring about changed institutional practices in relation to an inclusive curriculum, this framework can be drawn upon to explore different elements of the organisation at various points in a change process. As such, it can be used to help demonstrate the inter-relationships between the factors that together support institutional effectiveness and show how changes in one area can have knock-on effects for other areas. The framework highlights the fact that, in creating whole organisational change, attention must be paid to different elements of the organisation and is based on the premise that, for an organisation to perform well, each of the seven elements need to be aligned and mutually reinforcing. As such the

model can be used to help identify what needs to be realigned to improve performance during change. By exploring change within each of the seven elements separately it is possible to then form a valid judgement about progress towards change within the system as a whole. The framework can be drawn upon as an initial audit tool within the planning stage of the action oriented cycle and as a means of identifying and reviewing progress towards agreed priorities.
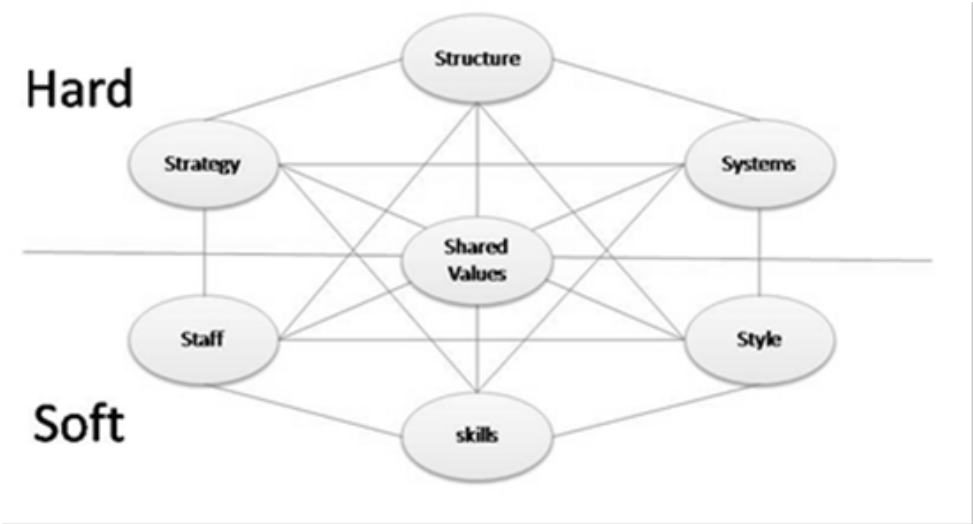
Figure 2: The McKinsey 7S Framework (adapted from McLinden et al., 2014)

The challenge of seeking to evidence progress within each of the elements is made more manageable since an appreciative enquiry approach can be used, once the global vision has been defined and articulated, to explore what success looks like in relation to each aspect (e.g. staff, skills, strategy, etc.). In essence, another iteration of the action research cycle can be employed which again involves the key stakeholders.

While the original version of M7S framework makes reference to staff, given its origins in a business environment (e.g. Pascale & Athos, 1981), it does not explicitly refer to students. In a higher educational context, however, we propose that an essential modification is to broaden this element to either include all stakeholders, within which students are then considered along with staff, or to add an additional element focused specifically upon students (essentially turning the framework into an 8S).

There is also a much broader issue to be considered in relation to the role of including stakeholders within the 7S process. Measuring and evidencing change in a large, complex organisation is intrinsically difficult. Such a system is not static with new activities and initiatives taking place at a range of levels and on a variety of scales. While their initial impacts may be subtle, they may be significant as a stepping stone towards the longer-term vision. An important question to consider therefore, is just how should this evidence be captured and by whom? Again, the role of the stakeholder is key. Stakeholders should be involved not only in the envisioning process, but also in the evaluation of each element. This is not only about the process of evaluation, and does not require them to be evaluative experts, but about involving stakeholders in all aspects of the action research cycle as conduits for evidence. A further consequence of such involvement is that it helps enable the buy-in of stakeholders to the complete vision of change and can help ensure the progress of developments given individuals have a vested interest in success.

6. Discussion

In reviewing the activities of the ICWG within the case study HEP, we briefly discuss four challenges that were addressed in order to affect change – namely the need to build in an appropriate monitoring and evaluation tool, the remit of the inclusive curriculum working group, staff commitment to inclusivity, and measurement of student performance.

In analysing the findings of a national survey of HEPs, Blackmore and Kandiko (2012:176) note that despite importance placed on evaluating a curriculum change it was frequently reported by HEPs that:

"making the change was in itself so difficult that implementing it was often seen as success enough. At several institutions the change had been so arduous that there was little energy to spare for evaluation."

Further, it was noted that a great deal of capital is invested in strategic curriculum change by its proponents that staff:

"tended to make judgements about success based on whether the change that was proposed had actually taken place, rather than on the basis of any improvement of students' learning and experience." (p177).

Blakemore and Kandiko (2012:177) argue therefore that:

"careful attention be paid to evaluation, from the beginning of the initiative, and that flexible and practical evaluation approaches should be built in throughout, at all levels, to maximise the possibilities that learning will take place speedily within the organisation as a result of experience".

We concur with such a call and in particular the need to ensure that flexible and practical evaluation approaches are built in from the beginning of any change initiative. As an example, no literature was found reporting on how the M7S framework could be applied in the context of HE, this institutionally-funded project focused on developing the model for use within the HEP. The framework was then drawn upon to analyse the organisational structure of the HEP at a particular point in time with the exercise planned to be repeated at various points in future years. An initial series of pilot measures were developed in relation to different sources of evidence and were drawn upon as a means of monitoring change over the selected timeframe. These were further refined through a project supported by the HEA (HEA, 2016).

An issue of effecting change in the HEP case study included how to set up an inclusive curriculum working group that was representative of a wide range of stakeholders. There are particular challenges in taking the holistic approach adopted by the ICWG rather than dealing with each category of student separately (e.g. addressing the needs of students with disabilities as a separate category). A significant

advantage however is that a consistent institutional approach can be constructed and there are efficiencies with respect to time and communication. In addition this means that factors from all the key stakeholders can be considered simultaneously, ensuring there is a common institutional purpose and objective. Through the initial audit activities it was realised that there can be relatively quick wins in seeking to embed inclusivity that can potentially benefit all students (e.g. changes to improve the accessibility of the VLE), but that other changes to the content of the curriculum or the attitude and approach of staff to teaching, are more challenging and require different types of resource to affect change (e.g. ongoing and targeted professional development activities). An example that emerged as a particular challenge in this regard was the design of inclusive assessments that can be used to effectively test the learning outcomes of a given course without affecting the integrity of the original assessments.

A clear challenge that emerged through the initial activities of the ICWG was that of convincing staff that inclusivity applies to all staff in their approach to teaching, learning and assessment, and this needs to be in combination with work on the curriculum more generally undertaken by the programme and course teams. Ensuring that inclusivity is clearly signposted in all new programme and course approval and review processes was found to be an effective means of ensuring this is a key aspect when designing and reviewing the content and delivery.

Finally, measuring improvement in student satisfaction and performance is clearly of significance but presents particular challenges. Improvement in student satisfaction is generally monitored in module evaluation questionnaire and surveys. This does not, however, provide a breakdown of the responses in relation to the different category of student that relates to inclusivity. As such it is necessary to conduct more discerning surveys and use focus groups to collect the necessary information on the effectiveness of any changes. Such activities can be related to different categories of student (e.g. part-time students; students with disabilities, etc.) but can be particularly challenging with categories where data may not be readily available. Whilst measurement of learning gain is not widespread in UK HEPs, it will become more so in line with current TEF requirements and as such will be of increasing relevance in measuring the success of any inclusivity strategy.

7. Conclusion

The design and remit of the ICWG align with findings by the Higher Education Academy about the need for inclusive learning initiatives to take a multi-pronged approach, be systematic and holistic, take an embedded approach, and target multiple institutional functions (Thomas & May, 2010). By framing the activities of the group within a process of action-oriented research, opportunities are presented to develop and test innovative data collection methods such as the McKinsey 7S that traditionally may not have been used within higher education settings in order to monitor change. The activities of the ICWG described in this chapter concur with Blackmore and Kandiko (2012:206) that achieving change in a university is difficult, owing to "organisational complexity, strongly held and diverse values and the power of vested interests." However, we argue that HEPs are in a unique position to draw on their respective capabilities to bring about effective curriculum change and that through adopting an appropriate organisational change framework supported with institutional commitment, it is possible to examine systematically the extent to which desired improvements have taken place to improve the learning opportunities for all students.

REFERENCES

Barnett, R. (2000) Realising the University in an Age of Supercomplexity. Buckingham: Open University Press

Blackmore, P. & Kandiko, C. (2012) Strategic curriculum change in universities: global trends. London: Routledge / SRHE

BIS (2016) Fulfilling Our Potential: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice. London, UK: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

BIS (2010) Securing a sustainable future for higher education: an independent review of higher education funding and student finance. London: Department of Business, Innovation & Skills

HEA (2016) Promoting equality of opportunity through flexible learning: University of Birmingham inclusive learning environment profile. [online]
https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/hea_-_birmingham.pdf
(accessed 26/09/17)

Hockings, C. (2010) Inclusive learning and teaching in higher education: a synthesis of research. [online]
https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/inclusive_teaching_and_learning_in_he_synthesis_200410_0.pdf (accessed 26/07/16)

May, H. & Bridger, K. (2010) Developing and embedding inclusive policy and practice in higher education. [online]
https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/developingembeddinginclusivepp_report.pdf
(accessed 21/11/16)

McLinden, M.; Grove, M.; Green, J. & Birch, A. (2014) Developing and Embedding Inclusive Policy and Practice within the University of Birmingham. Education in Practice. 1(1):18-21 [online]
https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/teaching-academy/documents/public/eip-nov14/McLinden.pdf
(accessed 21/11/16)

Morgan, H. & Houghton, A. (2011) Inclusive Curriculum Design in Higher Education: Considerations for effective practice across and within subject areas. [online]
http://www.academia.edu/1479995/Morgan_H_and_Houghton_A_2011_Inclusive_Curriculum_Design_in_Higher_Education_Considerations_for_effective_practice_across_and_within_subject_areas_York_The_Higher_Education_Academy
(accessed 21/11/16)

Pascale, R.T. & Athos, A.G. (1981) The Art of Japanese Management. London: Allen Lane

QAA (2012) UK Quality Code for Higher Education Part B: Assuring and enhancing academic quality Chapter B3: Learning and teaching. [online]
http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/quality-code-part-b
(accessed 21/11/16)

QAA (2013) UK Quality Code for Higher Education Part B: Assuring and enhancing academic quality Chapter B6: Assessment of students and the recognition of prior learning. [online]
http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/quality-code-B6.pdf
(accessed 21/11/16)

QAA (2015) UK Quality Code for Higher Education Part B: Assuring and enhancing academic quality Chapter B1: Programme design, development and approval. [online]
http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/AboutUs/Documents/quality-code-B1-Programme-Design-Development-And-Approval-17-February-2015.pdf
(accessed 21/11/16)

Thomas, L. & May, M. (2010) Inclusive learning and teaching in higher education. [online]
https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/inclusivelearningandteaching_finalreport.pdf
(accessed 21/11/16)

Zuber-Skerrit, O. (1996) 'Emancipatory research for organizational change and management development' in Zuber-Skerrit, O. (1996) (ed) New Directions in Action Research. London: Falmer

1

CHAPTER

INCLUSIVE ASSESSMENT

Nick Allsopp

It may be a truism to state that assessment matters but it is worth reflecting on this right at the outset. It is the case that all curricula-offers that carry academic credit in the UK higher education system, have to have some form of assessment attached to them in order for that credit to be awarded, so as either a student or a lecturer, there is no escaping it. The QAA Quality Code (2017) argues that assessment offers an important way for academic staff to assess and judge the attainment of learning outcomes. Their judgements then form the basis for grade allocation and the appropriate award of credit or qualification.

It is also true that assessment motivates students and helps to focus their energies and attention. This is shown through the year-on-year responses in the National Student Survey to issues around assessment and feedback and to the primacy given to assessing students in the UK Professional Standards Framework, for example. It is also true that assessment can dominate academics' energy and takes up a significant proportion of their time. In a blog entry for the Guardian Higher Education Network in 2012, one lecturer argued convincingly that "core faculty spend more than twice as long grading as teaching" (Leunig, 2012:np).

However, it is the outcomes of assessment that are really the important aspect to consider. The outcomes of assessment are usually marks or grades that eventually help decide the degree classification a student receives. This in turn can have a significant impact on the individual student's self-belief and identity. As long ago as 1991 Multon et al. (1991:30) showed through a meta-analysis of the literature available at that time that "results revealed positive and statistically significant relationships between self-efficacy beliefs and academic performance."

It is also a long-standing notion that the outcomes of assessment in higher education, in the form of degree classifications, also help many employers decide whom they will interview for vacant positions: in 2003 (:107) Brown and colleagues pointed to evidence from the, then, Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) and the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) that "…efficiency and justice depend on people acquiring the knowledge, skills and capabilities that employers need in an increasingly knowledge-driven economy." This is supported by a 2015 LSE study which stated that "78% of employers filtered out applicants who had not achieved at least an upper second class degree" (Naylor et al., 2015:1); and it may also affect the starting salary the successful graduate receives – the same 2015 discussion paper from the Centre for Economic Performance at the LSE argues that there is a 7-8% "wage premium for a good degree relative to a lower degree at age 30." (ibid:17).

It is therefore no surprise that David Boud (1995:35) should argue that:

> "…students can, with difficulty, escape from the effects of poor teaching, they cannot (by definition, if they want to pass or graduate etc.) escape the effects of poor assessment."

Understanding what elements make an assessment poor or good is no easy task. It is clear from the outcomes of the National Student Survey every year since its inception in the UK in 2005 that questions on assessment and feedback continue to be scored lower by students than most other groups of questions. Perhaps the starting point is for those designing assessment tasks to have a clear understanding of what they are trying to do with the opportunity that assessment offers.

If we accept the point made at the beginning of this chapter, that there is no escaping the need to assess students, then one aim of assessment tasks is to feed the machinery of higher education administration (bureaucracy?) with data that it can easily and quickly digest. Such an approach may lead to the creation of assessment tasks predominantly designed so that they can produce results in the form of numbers that can be added to other numbers in order to produce a final degree classification. This may be efficient but is a blunt tool because it takes no account of individual students'

context or circumstances at the time of the assessment and, as such, there is a distinct danger that such an approach may not in any way provide appropriate opportunities for students to demonstrate the skills and knowledge they have acquired. It may also be considered to be a cynical approach devoid of any real meaning and a waste of valuable time for all parties concerned.

Such an approach does however highlight a key concern about the real value of the numbers we ascribe to pieces of student work. Without the construction of detailed descriptions of what an individual mark or a range of marks might mean in relation to other marks there is little objective meaning behind any marks given to any piece of work, even then it is still problematic! However, putting this to one side, it is possible to identify a series of aims that all assessment activities should work towards.

So, what is the point of assessing students' work? Much has been written on this (see for example: Brown & Glasner, 1999; Biggs & Tang, 2011; or Gardner, 2012) but I will highlight three specific possibilities.

Firstly, we might use assessment to objectively demonstrate how good a group of students are when measured against a specific set of criteria. In this model students who score highly are better than those who don't. By extension they have also probably been well taught and so assessment could be seen as demonstrating how effective the academic teaching has been. One might even go so far as to argue that high achieving students also demonstrate how successful the institution is, since they have chosen the students and employed the staff! One might want to consider whether there are any flaws in this world view.

Secondly, and picking up from the first point, academics might use the results of assessment to help them to reflect upon their own effectiveness. Professional integrity amongst academics means that singularly or in groups, they work collegially, are reflective and driven to find ways of maintaining standards within their discipline and nationally, whilst trying to support and help their students to learn from the experience and to improve. They are thus likely to be looking for ways to improve all of the time and the results of an assessment provide such an opportunity to reflect on practice and work with colleagues.

Thirdly, and again connected, we might use the outcomes of assessment to help demonstrate that we are safeguarding the standards expected or required by our discipline, our department, our professional body, our institution or all of the above. If this is the case then it is likely to affect our behaviour as agents in the assessment process: it might, for example mean that we try to avoid awarding too many high marks, so as to avoid a charge of "dumbing down". However one behaves in this situation will have an effect upon the reputation of the institution and thus the currency of the qualification the student leaves with, and this in turn encourages caution.

Perhaps the main aim is not to sort or order students into a hierarchy but instead to improve student learning or, as Black and Wiliam (1998:2) point out, to "provide information to be used as feedback to modify teaching and learning activities…". Thus we evaluate students' outputs in order to help make both the student and the lecturer become more reflective and active in improving the learning process. This seems to place assessment at the active heart of the learning process rather than at the end when any data gathered is of less use. It makes assessment an integrated part of the whole rather than privilege it above all other activities. It also starts to make links across and between individual pieces of assessed work and thus across and between modules that make up a programme or a year. In this approach, assessment starts to be joined up and to make a bigger picture for the benefit of both the student and the lecturer. Individual pieces of assessment can also be designed to cater for the range of students' strengths and their needs and their outcomes can be used to change the practice of both the student and the lecturer.

It is argued that if assessments are just part of the learning process they should reflect clearly explicit learning outcomes. We must pause at the beginning phase of module planning and outline clearly what we want our students to have learned by the end of our teaching time. We must be clear about the knowledge and skills that we expect all students will bring with them to our module and if students who do not have the prior learning knowledge are recruited, we must make the implications of this clear to students and colleagues - what support and added learning opportunities will be offered? Once we are clear about what the intended learning

outcomes are (and these may be influenced to a greater or lesser extent by outside professional standards) and the background of our students, we can then begin to plan our inclusive teaching. Integrated into this process should be the kinds of assessments that will fairly and rigorously measure the learning (and teaching) that has taken place, whilst not measuring implicit but erroneous skills. For example, is it important to measure memory of formulae which in the world of work are easily accessible or is it important to measure the ability to apply the correct formula in the correct scenario? In their 2012 publication, Understanding Assessment, the QAA quoted Angelo (1995:7), writing for an American context, but which holds true for the UK as well and which encapsulates the argument put forward so far in this chapter:

> "Assessment is an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning. It involves making our expectations explicit and public; setting appropriate criteria and high standards for learning quality; systematically gathering, analysing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches those expectations and standards; and using the resulting information to document, explain, and improve performance. When it is embedded effectively within larger institutional systems, assessment can help us focus our collective attention, examine our assumptions, and create a shared academic culture dedicated to assuring and improving the quality of higher education."

INCLUSIVE ASSESSMENT

Having established the importance of assessment generally we turn our attention to inclusive assessment more specifically. It is possible to argue that inclusive assessment is just good assessment. Waterfield and West (2006:219) argued that inclusive assessment should "benefit most learners without losing the requirement that assessment should aid learning and should demonstrate the acquisition of the module or course learning outcomes." However, it might be thought that inclusive assessment is different in that it forces the individual creating the assessment to think more widely

about the students taking the assessment and puts them first, rather than thinking about efficient and effective ways of testing content first and thinking about the student experience second.

Inclusive assessment is also an approach which helps to address the changing nature of the student cohort. It has always been the case that students arrive at university with a variety of previous experiences of assessment and differing levels of success; however recent changes in England and Wales of the structure and assessment regimes of Level 3 qualifications such as A levels (from 2015) and B/TEC national qualifications (from 2016) means that assessment design is more complex.

Once at university an inclusive approach to assessment design also allows academics to flexibly respond to the changing nature of students' learning (see Ertl et al., 2008) and even to innovate whilst still meeting the standards of the institution and the wider higher education sector.

RECENT APPROACHES

Across the HE sector considerable work has been done to document the types of approaches taken by individuals, departments and institutions to incorporate a more inclusive approach to assessment. The guiding principle behind them all is to afford individual students the best opportunities available to both achieve the learning outcomes of the module concerned and to fairly demonstrate their skills and abilities – without providing them with an unfair advantage over other students.

Waterfield and West published a short guide to approaches to inclusive assessment in 2010 which emerged from their work as National Teaching Fellows. They provided a policy context for a new approach to assessment which included responding to the (then) legislation on disability, but which was wholly applicable to all students and all assessments. They foregrounded the need to be both rigorous and flexible, arguing that this was both a practical solution to a potential increase in claims for reasonable adjustments under the legislation and was also good practice.

The University College Dublin took on this call for flexibility and published a Practitioner's Guide (O'Neill, 2010) which aimed to encourage colleagues to provide choice in the ways that students achieve the learning outcomes of their module. The editor argued that providing choice empowered the students to take responsibility for their learning whilst at the same time allowing a number of different ways in which the same learning outcomes could be met. There was thus no diminution in the quality of the responses to assessment but there was sufficient flexibility to make the assessments more inclusive. The case studies in the guide covered a range of discipline areas and levels of study, thus demonstrating that this approach could be applied widely. The choices were not always particularly stark – offering either a problem-solving task or a seen exam for example or offering a choice between a traditional written essay or an audio/visual response – but the importance of the case studies is that they were seen to be robust and to work in a real situation. They may have had a pedagogical underpinning but they were practical solutions to a real need.

In 2014 the University of Plymouth published both a good practice guide and a short pamphlet which provided very practical steps for academics to follow in order to embed the arguments about assessment choice presented previously. In 7 Steps To Inclusive Assessment they also argued for a variety of assessment methods. Instead of only offering choice – which the team did support – they also suggested strongly that within a module and certainly within a programme it is important to offer a variety of different ways of assessing students. In that way all students would have ways of demonstrating their abilities, knowledge and skills and as such seek to ensure that no students are disadvantaged. The authors of the pamphlet also tackled the more contentious issue of examinations, stating that if exams were a requirement for the module – perhaps because of perceived professional body requirements – then it is important to find ways of making this form of assessment more inclusive. Suggestions included varying the scheduling/timing of exams, changing the length of exams and altering the structure of the exams, perhaps to include a range of tasks testing different skills and attributes.

The important final step the team suggested was to monitor, review and share practice on the basis that, as with all forms of teaching,

there will always be ways of improving and of making our practice even more inclusive. This is also about learning from others. Assessment is not just something that is done to students – imposed in a way that has no effect on the academics. The assessment practice used frequently by one individual may be the answer that a colleague is struggling to find. It is only by talking and sharing, and by being willing to take on ideas not one's own, perhaps not even originating from one's own discipline, that ideas and practices can develop and more students can benefit. This surely is the most relevant message to take away, that inclusive practice in assessment benefits all students but also, through the creation of formal and informal communities of practice, all members of staff involved.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has emphasised the centrality of assessment in the education of students in higher education. Given that centrality, an approach to assessment design that envisages innovative and flexible ways of acknowledging the variety of previous experience of assessment with which students arrive and which tries to allow all of them to achieve their potential in a measurable and moderated way is to be encouraged. The examples of inclusive assessment provided in this chapter do achieve this aim and are presented as a stimulus for discussion and food for thought.

REFERENCES

Biggs, J. & Tang, C. (2011) Teaching for Quality Learning at University. Maidenhead: Open University Press

Black, P. & Wiliam, D. (1998) Inside the black box. London: nferNelson

Boud, D. (1995) Assessment and Learning: Contradictory or Complementary? In P.Knight (ed) Assessment for Learning in Higher Education. London: Kogan Page

Brown, P.; Hesketh, A. & Williams, S. (2003) Employability in a knowledge-driven economy. Journal of Education and Work. 16(2):107-126 [online] http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/1363908032000070648 (accessed 1/12/16)

Brown, S. & Glasner, A. (1999) Assessment matters in Higher Education, SRHE

Ertl., H.; Hayward, G.; Wright, S.; Edwards, A.; Lunt, I.; Mills, D. & Yu, K (2008) The student learning experience in higher education. Higher Education Academy. [online] https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Geoff_Hayward/publication/242307698_The_student_ learning_experience_in_higher_education_Literature_review_report_for_the_Higher_ Education_Academy/links/0deec529c6bc07dd81000000.pdf (accessed 15/11/17)

Gardner, J. (2012) Assessment and Learning. London: Sage
HEFCE website. [online]
http://www.hefce.ac.uk/lt/nss/results/
(accessed 1/12/16)

Leunig, T. (2012) Academics need to spend more time teaching and less time marking. The Guardian Higher Education Network Blog, 3rd July. [online] https://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/blog/2012/jul/03/tim-leunig-on-teaching-and-marking (accessed 1/12/16)

Multon, K.D.; Brown, S.D. & Lent, R.W. (1991) Relation of self-efficacy beliefs to academic outcomes: A meta-analytic investigation. Journal of Counseling Psychology. US. 38(1):30-38 Jan. 1991 [online] http://web.b.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=93428f2c-6606-458d-b341-66f5 4e70b701%40sessionmgr107&vid=3&hid=101 (accessed 1/8/16)

Naylor, R.; Smith. J. & Telhaj, S. (2015) Graduate returns, degree class premia and higher education expansion. Centre for Economic Performance Discussion Paper No 1392. [online] http://cep.lse.ac.uk/pubs/download/dp1392.pdf (accessed 1/12/16)

NSS website (no date) [online]
http://www.thestudentsurvey.com/about.php (accessed 1/12/16)

O'Neill, G. (ed) (2010) A Practitioner's Guide to Choice of Assessment Methods within a Module. UCD Teaching and Learning: Dublin. [online] http://www.ucd.ie/t4cms/Practitioners%20Guide.pdf (accessed 9/10/16)

QAA (2012) Understanding Assessment: its role in safeguarding academic standards and quality in higher education. [online] http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/understanding-assessment.pdf (accessed 8/9/16)

QAA (2017) UK Quality Code for Higher Education. Part B6: Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning. [online]
http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/quality-code-part-b (accessed 10/10/16)

University of Plymouth (2014) Inclusive assessment: good practice guide. [online]
https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/your-university/teaching-and-learning/inclusivity/inclusive-assessment (accessed 10/10/16)

University of Plymouth (2014) 7 steps to: Inclusive Assessment. [online]
https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/your-university/teaching-and-learning/inclusivity/inclusive-assessment (accessed 10/10/16)

Waterfield, J. & West, B. (2006) Inclusive Assessment in Higher Education: a resource for change, The Student Staff Partnership for Assessment Change and Evaluation (SPACE project). Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)

Waterfield, J. & West, B. (2010) Inclusive Assessment: Diversity and Inclusion – the Assessment Challenge. Programme Assessment Strategies (PASS) University of Bradford. [online] http://www.pass.brad.ac.uk/wp5inclusion.pdf (accessed 9/10/16)

CHAPTER

1
2

TEACHING ACADEMIC WRITING INCLUSIVELY AS A SITUATED PRACTICE

Amanda French

ANXIETY AND ACADEMIC WRITING
WHY ARE STUDENTS SO ANXIOUS ABOUT WRITING?

Academic writing is a necessary, ever present thing, in students' lives, which they often, not surprisingly, feel positively and negatively emotional about. This is because academic writing practices and conventions are one of the principle means by which the academy produces, defines and polices itself as a distinct and privileged social institution. For this reason, Higher Education (HE) is a domain saturated in very particular, high-stakes academic writing practices for students (and of course for staff, although they are not the focus of this chapter). Indeed, writing constitutes the primary means by which students, across all disciplines, present their learning and understanding in higher education and how they are most often assessed on that learning and understanding by the subject-specialist lecturers who mark their work. The personal stakes around academic writing in HE are, therefore, high for students who have a lot invested in doing well at university. They are very aware that a failure to produce appropriate academic writing will be detrimental to their academic achievement. For this reason, it is not surprising that producing academic writing involves and evokes strong emotions in students.

The approach to academic writing development explored in this chapter focuses on the affective domain. It suggests that lecturers should explore, through a series of structured activities, how students feel about writing and it moves the discussion about academic writing away from the view that it is just about getting a technical skill set right. Rather, it concentrates on the importance of academic writing as a medium for the development of thinking and ideas within a community of disciplinary-based learning in higher education. For subject-specific lecturers it helps reposition students as active and agentic around their development as academic writers and thinkers.

It argues that students should be encouraged to think of their writing as an integral part of their academic identity, which draws on their whole-life experiences of writing for academic purposes. To this end it argues that they need to understand that being an academic writer is part of being an engaged thinker, drawing on their own lived experiences writing in and for a disciplinary based community of writing practice whilst at university (Ingold, 2011).

Students' subjective experiences and feelings about academic writing practices, including those they have experienced before they got to university, should, therefore, be taken very seriously, and, this chapter argues, all experiences of writing in education, form part of a distinctively emotional, social understanding of an individual's academic writing identity. This emphasis on the emotional aspects of academic writing is an extension of New Literacy Studies (NLS). In NLS, theorists like Barton and Hamilton (1998); Gee (1996); and Street (1984, 1995), contend that it is unhelpful and potentially damaging to treat literacy as the product of a unitary, autonomous skill set that can be taught or learned independently of its context of use. Rather, Street's (1984) emerging literacy, ideological model of literacy:

> "[…] offers a more culturally sensitive view of literacy practices as they vary from one context to another. This [ideological] model starts from different premises than the autonomous model – it posits instead that literacy is a social practice, not simply a technical and neutral skill […]. It is about knowledge: the ways in which people address reading and writing are themselves rooted in conceptions of knowledge, identity, being." (Street, 1984:7-8)

In addition to their insistence that literacy practices like writing are inherently tied up with personal identity, NLS theorists maintain that the setting in which individuals communicate, such as the home and the workplace are characterised by clearly differentiated sets of literacy practices, texts and events.

By acknowledging that the clearly differentiated sets of literacy practices, texts and events experienced by students at university are inevitably emotionally charged processes, we can create a new appreciation of the complexities of students' entanglements with those

practices. This emotional aspect of writing is often unappreciated by lecturers who have their appreciation of students' fears around writing blunted by the pressure to focus on constant emphasis on writing as just the vehicle through which students' learning is transmitted. For this reason, there is a need to foreground and deconstruct the emotional processes underpinning the act of academic writing rather than focusing on it simply as a transparent medium of learning for assessment purposes.   However, universities have not traditionally embraced academic writing as a form of situated social practice that can play out differently for students with different writing histories and experiences with often very negative consequences for students struggling to understand what is required of them as writers in academia.

WHAT DOES 'GOOD WRITING' LOOK LIKE IN HIGHER EDUCATION?

A powerful, if conflicting, model of good writing predominates in HE. It is a utilitarian, skills-based, autonomous model that presupposes that writing, once grasped, has universal applications, which are devoid of any ideological or cultural values (Street, 1996). It assumes, often simplistically and inaccurately, that lecturers and students can clearly identify and articulate what good writing is. The ubiquity of autonomous approaches to academic writing in HE means that they constitute a given, which often operates as an invisible or taken for granted dominant discourse informing undergraduate academic writing and writing development practices (Lea & Street, 1998; Lillis, 2001).   This largely tacit approach to academic writing development in HE has fashioned entrenched polarising discourses which generate a crude binary between students who can or cannot write to an appropriate standard (Williams, 1997). This means that students are, more often than not, taught a subject without the opportunity to engage explicitly with the writing processes that underpin the self-conscious presentation of subject-specific learning through written summative assignments. Due to the dominance of the autonomous model of academic writing development discussed above, HE lecturers do not traditionally spend time articulating and demonstrating the particular writing practices that they expect their students to produce in summative written assignments. This lack of an explicit, process-based critical pedagogy around writing militates against students' understanding about how they could, or should,

write for their discipline successfully. The failure to articulate this understanding often leads to heightened anxiety when students receive negative feedback on their summative written assignments (French, 2016 paper pending).

An uncritical acceptance of this dominant, yet tacit, utilitarian approach to academic writing and development writing practices in HE legitimises their dominance, and has a number of implications. Firstly, it is the incomprehension and unfamiliarity of dominant academic writing practices (McGivney, 2003), which often creates anxiety for many students, especially those from widening participation (WP) backgrounds (Lillis & Turner, 2001; Ivanic et al., 2000). This is because many assumptions about academic writing practices still have their origins in a time, now long-past, when students were part of a more homogeneous, elite group who entered university via the successful completion of educational qualifications that relied on long-established essayist forms of academic writing (French, 2013). This shared writing history no longer exists, as students today often start their degrees having completed professional or vocational qualifications such as BTEC that rely on evidence-gathering, portfolio-based literacies as well as completing A Levels or International Baccalaureate; whilst many mature students, have either never acquired any formal educational qualifications or have been out of education for a long time (Davies et al., 2006).

The dearth of critical discussion around academic writing practices in HE creates a compliant and conformist writing climate that often results in a situation where lecturers expect certain kinds of writing from students (who are penalised if they fail to deliver). This kind of writing environment, it has been argued, hinders students' critical thinking about their subject, inhibits experimentation and stifles the creative expression of ideas (Ivanic, 1998; Lillis, 2001) as well as leading to increased anxiety and fear of failure (French, 2016). In the current HE writing environment, therefore, the question of what actually constitutes good writing only becomes visible or a pedagogic issue when students are deemed to not be able to produce it thus creating powerful deficit discourses around the question of academic writing development which are difficult to dispel unless the very foundation of writing as an autonomous skill can be challenged.

CONSTRUCTING DEFICIT DISCOURSES AROUND 'POOR' ACADEMIC WRITING

The importance of getting academic writing right creates a lot of anxiety and even fear around academic writing practices for students, especially if they feel or, as is often the case, are frequently told through their lecturers written feedback, that their writing requires attention if their grades are to improve.   Emotional responses to writing in HE are constantly mediated through the production of summative written assignments, which often require different kinds of writing, such as discursive and reflective essays, report writing and the written feedback that they receive on those assignments. This constant emotional interplay between individuals and their written texts within the academy reflects the complexity and mutability of academic writing practices and the different (compliant and resistant) identities and constructions that they create for those using them.

Significantly, often lecturers' frustration and irritation about the poor quality of some students' work often centres on their poor writing skills even though students are, more often than not, taught a subject without the opportunity to engage explicitly with the processes, such as expected writing practices for assessment, that underpin the self-conscious, field-congruent presentation of subject-specific learning through written summative assignments.   Due to the dominance of the autonomous model of academic writing development, HE lecturers do not traditionally spend time articulating and demonstrating the particular writing practices that they expect their students to produce in summative written assignments. This lack of an explicit, process-based critical pedagogy around writing militates, I would argue, against students' understanding about how they could, or should, write for their discipline successfully.

WRITING AS A SIGNIFYING PRACTICE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

For Butler (1990:45) "…identity is a signifying practice."   This chapter argues that due to the primacy of academic writing in HE it functions as a form of socially situated practice which creates opportunities for "identity negotiation and identity investment" (Butler, ibid:264). Deficit or remedial models of academic writing support are most often offered alongside the acculturation approach (Starfield, 2004)

as a response to students who are struggling with academic writing, despite their immersion in the culture of their discipline. Officially, deficit provision exists for students who need help in getting the technical aspects of their academic writing, (like spelling, grammar, structuring assignments and referencing right). One could argue, more controversially, that it exists for students who have failed to pick up on the tacit cues about academic writing development that acculturation offers. That is, the deficit resides with the support model, not the students.

Critical pedagogies of academic writing development, like those outlined below offer opportunities for lecturers (and students) to enact critical forms of academic identity-work that embody distinct, often conflicting and contradictory, writing identities. This chapter argues, therefore, that students' academic identities in HE are largely signified through successful participation in everyday academic writing and writing development practices such as reading the field, creating presentations, writing summative assignments such as essays, reflective journals and reports.

SOURCES OF WRITING ANXIETY AND HOW TO TACKLE THEM

I) Change of setting

Each new qualification/educational experience that students embark on requires different kinds of writing practice. Adapting to change and new expectations creates anxiety – especially when assumptions about writing are often tacit. It is therefore suggested that lecturers draw attention to the different disciplinary conventions of writing in their subject, using reading and the students' own work to model the form of the writing as well as the content.

II) Fear of failure
Tacit expectations, regarding appropriate disciplinary writing practices make students risk-averse and worried about trying anything different or new. Fearful of producing the wrong kind of writing, failing students struggle, often fruitlessly (and alone) to unlock the secret of the right kind of writing which they are convinced will improve their grades. Lecturers do not usually admit to students they have struggled, or do struggle, with their own academic writing. Instead, the achievement of academic writing, more often than not, appears

to be a kind of trick which lecturers, positioned discursively as expert writers, have mastered, and which students in turn, must learn to master themselves. If, however, more cognisance was taken of how students learn to write for HE purposes (like their lecturers did before them when they were undergraduates) then closer links with writing development could be developed between what is taught, how it is taught, and what is learnt. Lecturers could then question how and why students need to learn to write in particular ways for their discipline. This could help explain the clearly demarcated territories between subject-specific content currently found within HE.

III) Challenging trajectories of individualised success

Typically, HE written assessments valorise individualised trajectories of academic success, achievement and progression (Alexander, 2010; Simon, 1999). Moreover, HE, in the UK at least, does not traditionally value the experience of trial and error as part of the development of academic writers. Consequently, there is little positive attention paid to students' often complex, painful and erratic development as effective academic writers. An overtly social approach to developing academic writing skills challenges the idea that there is little connection between students' understanding of a subject and its sociocultural, literacies-based context (Scardamalia & Bereiter, 2003). Social pedagogies of learning entail an altogether more social or collective, "pedagogy of mutuality" (Bruner, 1996:56), which reflects the teaching practices popularised by Dewey (1933) and Vygotsky (1962). For Dewey (1933) education, or more accurately learning, was mediated through an overtly dialectic process between individuals and the various learning communities that they were a part of. His students were encouraged to reflect on, and learn, from each other as well as apply their learning to personally relevant problems. This ensured that what they learnt could evolve beyond a fixed curriculum or body of knowledge. Clegg (2008) discusses how undergraduates are part of wider social and cultural communities of practice in university. By working to build writing communities of practice and emphasising the importance of social interaction around academic writing practices, lecturers can challenge the idea that good writing is all about individual effort and understanding and more about finding and being able to justify a position within one's disciplinary field.   Thus, students should be encouraged to read and discuss each other's written work – either through virtual

learning platforms or face to face. This would complement the modelling and discussion of recognised writers in their field.

IV) Acknowledging the value of struggle

There is a need for students to engage collectively in formative, low stakes, disciplinary-based academic writing practices, through which they can struggle with their writing and even fail without penalty, as an everyday part of their learning. However, disciplinary-based lecturers often struggle to address students' struggles effectively, not least because they are not trained as writing developers nor do they feel that they have the time to incorporate academic writing development into their taught sessions. However, embedded and collaborative academic writing development can be taught practically as an on-going relational process, defined and reified over time by the social and communicative practices that all students engage in as part of their subject-specialist studies (Wingate et al., 2011). Indeed, working to create a more open, supportive learning community around the development of academic writing, within disciplinary teaching practices is both important and necessary. Students, through formative and other forms of low-stakes writing should be exposed to risk, uncertainty and experimentation through supportive writing development practices, delivered in subject specific contexts. Reclaiming the significance of struggle and failure can in this way become ultimately positive processes of academic writing development that are especially valuable for those students who are very anxious about their ability to write and who have many, often very painful, experiences struggling, and failing, with academic writing (French, 2016, pending).

V) Building communities of academic writing

Academic writing development can be viewed more productively as a social and communal practice rather than the acquisition of a set of individual attributes or skills. New academic writing development practices in HE should be social and reflexive constructs defined by the interplay and interrelatedness of texts, writing events and writing identities in HE, not by the fixing of those elements into correct configurations. As a critical pedagogy, communities of practice introduce the idea that learning emerges through active "legitimate peripheral participation", by individuals in "a community of practice", located in a specific domain (Lave & Wenger, 1991:31).

In this model, learning occurs when an individual is engaged in the social practices of a community, because "learning is an integral and inseparable aspect of social practice" (ibid:31). Being engaged in communities of practice therefore:

> "refers not just to local events of engagement in certain activities with certain people, but to a more encompassing process of being active participants in the practices of social communities and constructing identities in relation to these communities." (Wenger, 1998:4)

Reflecting this idea, Candlin (1998:7) suggests that academic writing and writing development practices should be seen as:

> "a 'vehicle' by which to lead 'apprentices' through a process of continual improvement into membership of the disciplinary academy".

Drawing on Lave and Wenger's (1991) idea that, over time, repeated exposure to, and experience of, a community's practices means that new members in academia can be supported and gain experience until they are confident and competent enough to move from peripheral, to central participation in shared, disciplinary-based, practices such as, in the case of higher education, academic writing and writing practices.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has hopefully opened up a space to think about how students can begin to tackle and understand academic writing practices in Higher Education more positively. It seeks to demystify the processes and often tacit expectations round academic writing in order to lessen the anxiety that so many students experience, before they even put pen to paper. It asks lecturers to consider the emotional impact of their feedback to students and to try and facilitate more collaborative and supportive writing communities through their teaching. In conclusion, we should never deny the importance of academic writing development to students' progression and achievement, rather we should acknowledge that we can do a great deal more to ensure that it is not a fearful and traumatic experience that they have to go through alone.

REFERENCES

Alexander, R. J. (2010) Speaking but not listening? Accountable talk in an unaccountable context. Literacy. 44(3):103-111

Barton, D. & Hamilton, M. (1998) Local literacies: Reading and Writing in One Community, London: Routledge

Brinkmann, S. (2012) Working with Everyday Life Materials. London: Sage

Bruner, J. (1996) The Culture of Education. London: Harvard University Press

Butler, J. (1990) Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity. New York: Routledge

Clegg, S. (2008) Academic identities under threat? British Educational Research Journal. 34(3):329-45

Candlin, C. (1998) Researching writing in the academy. In C. Candlin; S. Carrington & V. Luke (2010) Literacy and Bourdieu's sociological theory: a reframing. Language and Education. 11(12):96-113

Davies, S.; Swinburne, D. & Williams, G. (2006) Writing Matters. London: The Royal Literary Fund

Dewey, J. (1933) How We Think. Boston: D.C. Heath

French, A. (2013) 'Let the right ones in!' Widening participation, academic writing and the standards debate in higher education. Power and Education. 5(2):236-247

French, A. (2016) 'Fail better': Reconsidering the role of struggle and failure in academic writing development in higher education. Innovations in Education and Teaching International. (pending publication)

Gee, J.P. (1996) Social linguistics and literacies: Ideology in Discourses. London: Taylor & Francis Ingold, T. (2011) Redrawing Anthropology: Materials, movements, lines. Aldershot: Ashgate

Ivanic, R. (1998) Writing and Identity: the discoursal construction of identity in academic writing. Amsterdam: John Benjamins

Ivanic, R.; Clark, R. & Rimmershaw, R. (2000) "What am I supposed to make of this?" The messages conveyed to students by tutors' written comments. In M.R. Lea & B. Stierer (eds) Student writing in Higher Education: New Contexts. Buckingham: Open University Press

Lave, J. & Wenger, E. (1991) Legitimate Peripheral Participation Communities of Practice in Situated Learning. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Lea, M.R. & Street, B. (1998) Student Writing in Higher Education: an academic literacies approach. Studies in Higher Education. 23(2):157-172

Lillis, T. (2001) Student Writing: Access, Regulation, Desire. London: Routledge

Lillis, T. & Turner, J. (2001) Student writing in higher education: contemporary confusion,

traditional concerns. Teaching in Higher Education. 6(1):64-73

McGivney, E. (2003) Staying or Leaving the Course: Non-completion and Retention of Mature Students in Further and Higher Education. Leicester: NIACE Publications

Scardamalia, M. & Bereiter, C. (2003) Knowledge Building. In J.W. Guthrie (ed) Encyclopaedia of Education. New York: Macmillan

Simon, B. (1999) Why No Pedagogy in England? In J. Leach & B. Moon (eds) Learners and Pedagogy. Milton Keynes: Open University Press

Starfield, S. (2004) Recent research into student academic writing. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers

Street, B. (1984) Literacy in Theory and Practice. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Street, B. (1993) Cross-cultural Approaches to Literacy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Street, B. (1995) Social Literacies: Critical Approaches to Literacy in Development, Ethnography and Education. London: Longman

Street, B. (1996) Academic literacies. In J. Baker; C. Clay & C. Fox (eds) Challenging Ways of Knowing in English, Mathematics and Science. London: Falmer Press

Vygotsky, L.S. (1962) Thought and Language. Cambridge: MIT Press

Wenger, E. (1998) Communities of Practice, Learning, Meaning and Identity. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Williams, J. (ed) (1997) Negotiating Access to Higher Education: The Discourse of Selectivity and Equity. Buckingham: SRHE & Open University Press

Wingate, U.; Andon, N. & Cogo, A. (2011) Embedding academic writing instruction into subject teaching: A case study. Active Learning in Higher Education. 12:69-81

CHAPTER

1
3

BEYOND TOKENISM: BRIDGING THE INCLUSIVITY GAP VIA CO-CREATED CURRICULA

Catherine Hayes and Sarah Graham

INTRODUCTION

Embracing students as partners alongside other key stakeholders in the co-creation of academic curricula has become an expected norm in the context of higher education. The focal aim of higher education is to ensure the societal impact of students can be evidenced in terms of problem solving ability, employability and social impact. The mechanisms via which this aim is achieved are subsequently aligned with the need to consider pedagogic practice that is pragmatic, efficient and purposeful in terms of addressing the generic transferrable skills of a future generation. All of this occurs amidst an uncertain contextual backdrop of politics, change and institutional culture.

Enhancing the concept of student agency ensures the notion that authentic learning can be embedded across academic curricula. In terms of graduateness this can be characterised by the transition from superficial to deep learning processes, ensuring that learning can, as far as possible, provide a transferable skill base relevant to the needs of society. It also facilitates the notion that progression to further learning can be advocated throughout programmes so students embrace the notion of lifelong learning before they enter a specific workforce or individual employment niche.

For the purposes of this chapter, curriculum is defined as the overall holistic structure and individual content of a programme but which extends beyond the academic to the social. We contend it is indeed a lens through which students' active participation and co-creation can be illuminated and extended (Bovill, 2014).

When contextualised within individual Higher Education Providers (HEPs), all co-creation of curricula can be regarded as a fundamentally unique case study that is contextually bound and usually framed within a specific signature pedagogy or academic discipline. These specific case study illustrations are used to further inform evidence based and informed decision making processes involved in curriculum justification, development and subsequent implementation. This insight essentially provides a means of addressing the inclusivity gap in Higher Education (HE) but also provides a creative tension in defining the culture and commitment of institutions to democratic and fair processes of social development and academically robust progression.

This chapter will extend understanding and move beyond a tokenistic approach by providing an insight into how co-creation can facilitate students in a democratic process that advocates diversity, and in doing so, helps to close the inclusivity gap.

DEFINING THE INCLUSIVITY GAP:
WHAT DOES IT MEAN IN THE CONTEXT OF ACADEMIC CURRICULA?

We can traditionally define an inclusivity gap as any characteristic that contributes a barrier to effective educational integration. Our students are all fundamentally unique, each with their own particular set of defining situational issues that ultimately frame and define how and what they have the capacity to learn.

In common with the rest of this book, we could define the most obvious as being age, gender, nationality, learning capability, physical disability, mental health, non-traditional learning origins or academic pathway to university. Regardless of all this, students' realities are constructed of so many variables that this may give them connection to others or purely highlight how uniquely individual all of us are. This remains the fundamental beauty of education as a social science – we are all social creatures each with our own particularity. A one-size fits all curriculum might not exist but where unique individuals can contribute it is in the establishment of an ethos that is truly authentic, collaborative and inclusive – where value for difference is more valuable than the homogenisation of human experience into faceless metrics and correlations.

The nature of all academic curricula are shaped by formality and informality – what is bracketed under each can be startlingly different and can be engaged with by students as part of formal or informal learning that ultimately contributes to an holistic and societally driven education system.

As the concept of learning gain develops an increasingly elevated profile across all academic curricula, as academics we need to identify the inclusivity gap as a potential mechanism for incorporating our students as the ultimate resource in democratic change agency. As we do this we need mechanisms of assuring the quality and robustness of a higher education facing the greatest generational changes we have ever encountered. To be an integral part of bridging the inclusivity gap in this context and being able to contribute to this ought to be regarded as a privilege and a fundamental need to consider how best we move forward as educators.

MEANING MAKING, TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING AND EPISTEMIC COGNITION

For the purposes of this chapter, we define meaning making to be the interpretation of phenomena or events that can be deconstructed, interpreted and reconstructed as students make sense of the information, experience and values they are facilitated in developing. The opportunity this affords students though, is one which can potentially embed an ethos of informed creativity in the development of co-created curricula. Historically, this has been one of the critical yet tokenistic elements of integrating and extending democratic values into HE. In terms of the positional power of students relative to academic staff and stakeholders this has gone some way to redressing imbalance in the inclusion rather than the representation of students in curriculum development.

Transformative learning becomes an embedded part of the knower; it is what provides 21st century higher education students with transferrable knowledge and which ought to equip them for lifelong societal contribution not just the concept of employability. To achieve any degree of transformative learning, necessitates the processing and subjective recall of information that can be retrieved from memory and effectively articulated to the outside world.

Interpretation is as much embedded in epistemic cognition as relaying a story or meaning, one which can be defined in planning as procedurally combinational (Kelly, 2016). The term combinational refers to information processing and the subjective recall of information that means specific information can be retrieved from memory and articulated. It can clearly be argued from a social constructivist perspective that memory is dependent on transformative learning which becomes an embedded part of the knower and subsequently the focus of any conscientious curriculum development process.

FUNDAMENTAL APPROACHES TO THE CO-CREATION OF CURRICULA

McInnis et al. (2012:37) described the collaboration of students in the co-creation of curricula as "change agents in shaping learning experiences". The concept of authentic learning across degree programmes has become apparent through the multifaceted approaches to placement integration and work based learning. Billet (2014) has advocated strongly, the difficulties in developing curricula that focus on professional practice and their potential to harness student agency. Integration of modularity (individual units of study which collectively form a programme) is pivotal to the success of programmeness (the holistic integration of curriculum content that can be constructed from social opportunity as well as academic learning). Being a proactive member of the curriculum development team in a participatory context enhances their capacity for deep learning, yet often HEPs adopt a tokenistic approach to their inclusion and the value of their active contributions (Bovill et al., 2014).

Tinto and Pusser's (2006) now seminal acknowledgement of the discourse and narratives surrounding student engagement has facilitated a move in pedagogic research and practice to realign and refocus academic content to that of experiential learning processes. This, in tandem with Bovill's (2014) contention that facilitating the process stems from an institution's capacity to advocate cohesion and autonomous self-direction in the development of professional practice, has changed the face of co-creation and added immeasurably to the opportunities we are now afforded in closing the inclusivity gap.

Here, we provide and recommend the development of a systematic mechanism of being responsive in the proactive engagement of students as co-creators who individually experience processes of learning and tangibly feel inclusion at the forefront of academic learning pathways in the context of higher education.

ETHICAL DIMENSIONS OF CO-CREATION WITH STUDENTS AND THE SUSTENANCE OF COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

The co-creation of an academic curriculum is about more than amplifying the student voice or developing the visibility of democratic decision making in the politically fraught context of higher education. It ought to be about integrating them in a process of participatory action research, which as a by-product equips them with several defining characteristics. Students should be facilitated in becoming graduates who have been enabled, prepared and elevated in self-belief and confidence by the process of working collaboratively for the benefit of their subsequent student cohorts.

Amidst the potential for these attributes to be developed, there ought also to be a clear ethical consideration of the impact of engagement in the co-creation of curricula. The complexity of the real world is an addition to the time constraints students have in working towards their academic studies, their assessment processes and significantly, their opportunity for social integration and relaxation. Since it is often the latter that is sacrificed by students to engage in this work, academic institutions must be cognisant not to overburden students or place unrealistic expectations on them as they become an integral part of the work as key change agents. This engagement on a positive note, can be regarded as an activity that will enhance students' abilities as problem solvers and decision makers to engage professionally and to demonstrate a capacity for self-regulation and deep learning (Litchfield et al., 2010; Hearle & Cogger, 2011; Cook-Sather et al., 2015).

GUIDING PRINCIPLES, SYSTEMATIC AND STRATEGIC APPROACHES TO THE PROCESS OF EDUCATIONAL CO-CREATION

Illuminating the need for a democratic approach to progression and development in preparing students for societal roles is now regarded as the epitome of social engagement and endeavour in higher education. However in pragmatic terms the optimistic rhetoric of this means that execution can be a nebulous and ambiguous process. Whilst it is undoubtedly transformative for both academics and students and closes the power balance characteristic of didactic approaches to curriculum design and delivery, there is much to be done in extending inclusion in student engagement.

The provision of a theoretical framework for implementation of curriculum development that can be metrically evaluated and justified in terms of impact beyond anecdotal commentaries is essential. The impact of student engagement in the process, also needs evaluation and monitoring in terms of the ethical basis of student inclusion in curriculum development and indeed how far their commitment to this endeavour should stretch in relation to their other academic and social commitments as students.

The 8 stages of this theoretical framework are outlined in Table 1.

TABLE 1. EIGHT STAGE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT VIA INCLUSIVE AND COLLABORATIVE INTEGRATION

(Adaptation of Eisenhardt's (1989) Process of Building Theory from Case Study Research)

Stage 1: Initiation	
Processes	**Rationale for implementation**
Clear framing and operational definition of proposed curriculum development	✓ Reduces ambiguity and provides methodological focus ✓ Outlines procedural regulation and quality assurance processes
Acknowledgment of the existence of published literature and evaluative documentation and feedback on current processes	✓ Enables theoretical constructs of curriculum design, justification and development to be grounded in the published or acknowledged extant evidence base
Identification of issues of inclusivity throughout the curriculum	✓ Maintains and develops theoretical flexibility in the curriculum development process
Consideration of how an existing theory or hypothesis could impact on the focus of inquiry	

Stage 2: Evaluative Case Selection and Sampling Technique

Processes	Rationale for implementation
Define a specific research population from the context of academic curricula provision	✓ Enhances the external validity of the findings to be integrated back into inclusive academic curricula ✓ Aids in establishing the power balance between academics, stakeholders and students in the development process ✓ Ensures robust yet collaborative processes of curriculum development and justification in terms of what is quality assurance and quality enhancement (particularly relevant in relation to the establishment of 'learning gain')
Operationalise a theoretical sampling technique from extant academic curricula or if a new development, the approaches that have been implemented and adopted across other HEPs	✓ Provides a focused emphasis on those specific phenomena from extant curricula and evaluative commentaries that can prove, extend or develop further an existing evidence base

Stage 3: Developing the Specifics of Curriculum Design and Methodology

Processes	Rationale for implementation
Establishment and implementation of multiple metric and qualitative data collection methods /mixed methods approaches (focus groups / questionnaires)	✓ Provides a mechanism of triangulating data so that theoretical emergence from the curriculum development process can be clearly grounded in theory. This enables an evidence-based approach to evaluation following enrolment of initial and subsequent cohorts
The inclusion of multiple representative collaborators (academics, stakeholders and students)	✓ Strengthens grounding of theoretical basis of curriculum development by inclusive triangulation of the established evidence base
The combined impact of metric and qualitative established in relation to the proposed programme, institutional capacity to deliver and the recommendations of representative collaborators	✓ Combined and synergistic perspectives facilitated from the multiple contributors to the curriculum development process in relation to the collated evidence base ✓ Facilitates the notion of divergent and inclusive perspectives and strengthens the methodological process of grounding

Stage 4: Establishment of Initial Evaluative Commentary

Processes	Rationale for implementation
Synergised data collection between collaborators in curriculum development	✓ Enables data enrichment from multiple sources - e.g. representative academics / students / stakeholders, ensuring quality assurance processes
Implementation of potentially flexible and opportunistic data collection methods - e.g. extant NSS, DHLE, institutional evaluative reports, published pedagogic literature	✓ Enhances the analysis phase speed and provides purposeful and contextually relevant adjustments to the data collection process ✓ Allows collaborators to exploit emergent themes and potentially fundamentally unique characteristics of a newly developed curriculum

Stage 5: Analysis Phase

Processes	Rationale for implementation
Specific, focused curriculum analysis of 'programmeness' and integration into 'modularity'	✓ Gain familiarity with evaluative data and preliminary generation of the academic justification for new or modified programmes
Identification of emergent pedagogic theoretical perspectives for dissemination via conference / publication or best practice initiatives	✓ Collaborators can move beyond superficial thematic analysis to deep conceptual explanation of theoretical emergence in relation to inclusivity across the academic curriculum

Stage 6: Framework and Establishing a Workable Academic Curriculum

Processes	Rationale for implementation
Focus on the implementation process of the new / adapted academic curriculum. The application of systematic logic across the process of operationalising the curriculum, identifying opportunities for piloting of new / specific components	✓ Provides conclusive confirmation of pragmatic or operational issues that extend knowledge and provide a strategic focus for pedagogic justification
Examination of specific causation factors of the inclusivity gap in relationships and interactions – i.e. the 'why' rather than the 'how' of where the curriculum is deemed non-inclusive	✓ Provides enhanced levels of internal validity to the newly proposed curriculum that extends beyond a rhetoric of the 'ideal' closure of the inclusivity gap

Stage 7: Justification of the Curriculum Development Process

Processes	Rationale for implementation
Iterative comparison with opposing and contested viewpoints from the extant literature / evaluative processes and affirmation of consistency with that which identifies issues of relevance to the inclusivity gap	✓ Enhances the degree of apparent internal validity that the 'programmeness' can extend into its 'modularity' ✓ Highlights and extends the claim of external validity for the curriculum justification and development processes

Stage 8: Curriculum Development Completion

Processes	Rationale for implementation
Statement of completion of the initial phase of curriculum development and validation processes, which must be followed by iterative cycles of evaluation and monitoring	✓ Provides a stage of completion for all collaborators, where new ones may be recruited for the next phases of development and progression

CONCLUSION

Facilitating experiential learning in the real world context of professional practice can afford students a raft of opportunity to engage in democratic and inclusive processes which ultimately improve educational provision for future academic cohorts. This altruism is demonstrative of their capacity to extend their reach in capability and in the articulation of their developing skill sets as graduates. Where this can be framed in an opportunity to take risk, develop confidence and bridge the inclusivity gap it is hard to refute that the process of co-creating academic curricula can be beneficial in building the social learning relationships that define educational provision in the context of higher education. Increasing agency and the capacity for democracy in higher education is just one part of this wider picture. It can be debated that focus on engaging students in not just what they learn but how, has the potential to dilute academic rigour and that whilst closure of the inclusivity gap ought to be an ultimate aim of all educationalists, there is also a role for pragmatism in the process. This raises the question of whether any curriculum can ever truly be a one size fits all and whether this be highlighted as a little mentioned but valuable bonus that characterises all educational provision. In acknowledging that education is a social science curricula can be framed and characterised by all partners celebrating the fact that whoever academics and students are, they are ultimately all brilliantly and uniquely different.

REFERENCES

Billett, S. (2014) Integrating learning experiences across tertiary education and practice settings: A socio-personal account. Educational Research Review. 12:1-13

Bovill, C. (2014) An investigation of co-created curricula within higher education in the UK, Ireland and the USA. Innovations in Education and Teaching International. 51(1):15-25

Bovill, C.; Cook Sather, A. & Felten, P. (2011) Students as co creators of teaching approaches, course design, and curricula: implications for academic developers. International Journal for Academic Development. 16(2):133-145

Cook-Sather, A.; Clarke, B.; Condon, D.; Cushman, K.; Demetriou, H. & Easton, L. (2015) Learning from the student's perspective: A sourcebook for effective teaching. London: Routledge

Eisenhardt, K.M. (1989) Building theories from case study research. Academy of Management Review. 14(4):532-550

Hearle, D. & Cogger, N. (2011) Student Engagement Final Report: Involving Students in Curriculum Design, Higher Education Academy. [online] https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/curriculum-design-cardiff-university-impact-student-involvement (accessed 15/5/17)

Kelly, G. (2016) Methodological considerations for the study of epistemic cognition in practice. Handbook of Epistemic Cognition, pp393-408

Litchfield, A.; Frawley, J. & Nettleton, S. (2010) Contextualising and integrating into the curriculum the learning and teaching of work-ready professional graduate attributes. Higher Education Research & Development. 29(5):519-534

McInnis, C.; Ramsden, P. & Maconachie, D. (2012) A handbook for executive leadership of learning and teaching in higher education. A handbook for executive leadership of learning and teaching in higher education. Office for Learning and Teaching, Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education

Tinto, V. & Pusser, B. (2006) Moving from theory to action: Building a model of institutional action for student success. National Postsecondary Education Cooperative. Pp.1-51

INCLUSIVITY AND ACADEMIC WRITING: DRAWING ON PRACTICE IN AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION

Robert McLaren

Academic writing tasks are a major component of many university courses. Writing is used for assessment in disciplines as diverse as nursing, computer science and fine art. For this reason, universities must address academic writing as a central part of their efforts to close the inclusivity gap. This chapter aims to introduce readers to a wide range of reforms that can be implemented in this area. In the first part of the chapter, I make the case that such reforms are needed because academic writing in Higher Education (HE) is not inclusive in its current from. I then explore the range of possible reforms, drawing on examples of where they have been implemented, including in America, where there is a stronger tradition of teaching writing in higher education.

ARE HIGHER EDUCATION ACADEMIC WRITING ASSIGNMENTS INCLUSIVE?

There is sufficient evidence to conclude that academic writing tasks in HE are not inclusive for all students. Some students struggle with these assignments for reasons apart from underlying academic ability. This includes students with specific learning differences (SpLDs) and students from non-traditional backgrounds. To be clear, the benefits of inclusivity go beyond these groups. However, it is by looking at the difficulties faced by these students that we can see that writing assignments are not already inclusive.

In this section, I look at how academic writing excludes many students by using three groups as examples (students with specific learning differences; students with English as an additional language; and

students from non-traditional backgrounds). In each case, I set out the evidence that students in these groups struggle with academic writing assessments and show that current support for these students, while often valuable, does not constitute inclusive practice.

SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFERENCES

Specific learning differences include dyslexia, dyspraxia and attention deficit (hyperactivity) disorder (autistic spectrum conditions are sometimes also counted). Connelly (2014:np), surveys several studies on dyslexia and academic writing which suggest that students with dyslexia produce work graded lower than others even though the "quality of ideas expressed within a written essay has been reported to be as good as those students without dyslexia."

In addition, this lower attainment can be linked to dyslexia as a cognitive profile. Connelly (2014) shows that dyslexic students write more slowly and pause more as they write. This may be evidence that, for dyslexic students, their difficulties with working memory interfere with the task of composing academic writing (Ghani & Gathercole, 2013). This is because, if one struggles to keep the complex elements of sentences in one's mind (a working memory task) it may lead one to pause or slow down (Grant, 2010). Furthermore, since working memory issues are also associated with other SpLDs, such as attention deficit disorder and dyspraxia, writing assignments may also fail to be inclusive for these students (Grant, 2010).

In part because of these issues, SpLD students typically have access to specialist one-to-one study skills tuition (Diversity and Ability, 2016). Students use these sessions to develop strategies for academic writing, e.g. making an essay plan so that small sections of the essay can be written without taxing one's working memory with the task of keeping the whole structure of the essay in mind. However, this is clearly not an example of inclusive practice but of targeted support. And it would be prohibitively costly to simply universalise this support by giving all students the same level of access to one-to-one tuition.

STUDENTS WITH ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

It is perhaps unsurprising that students with English as an additional language (EAL) can face difficulties with academic writing; difficulties that are linked to the student's linguistic profile. These can include issues as diverse as grammar (Ferris, 2004) and use of academic sources (Le Ha, 2006). Furthermore, as Berman & Cheng (2001) show, even where such students perform well in their studies, they are more likely than native English speakers to experience academic writing (in English), as difficult. As Wingate (2015) notes, it is not only international students who may have English as an additional language, home students from non-traditional backgrounds may also have English as an additional, or second language.

One explanation for the difficulties faced by EAL students is that academic writing in English requires specific English language skills that many EAL students do not possess upon entering HE (see discussion in Grabe, 2001). Another explanation for the difficulties that many EAL students have with writing tasks is that these assignments require students to be acculturated to the UK higher education institution in ways that EAL students typically are not (Duff, 2010). Of course, native speakers will face similar challenges (in becoming socialised into English-language academic discourse) but likely not to the same degree.

In response to the issues described above, many UK universities offer targeted support for international EAL students, but such support is not so frequently provided for home students with EAL. Unlike targeted writing support for SpLD students, support for EAL students tends to be class-based; however it is not credit-bearing and sometimes takes place outside of term time (Wingate, 2015).

STUDENTS FROM SOCIO-ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS

The UK government uses a region-based metric (POLAR)[1] to define socioeconomic disadvantage for the purposes of two major components of HE policy: the widening participation agenda and the

[1]The metric is called Participation of Local Areas (POLAR)

Teaching Excellence Framework (for the former see Department for Business Innovation and Skills, 2013; for the latter see Department for Education, 2016). Thiele et al. (2015:1425) used POLAR in research to find, in agreement with earlier studies, that "students from the most deprived areas performed less well than more affluent students". There are currently no studies of the relationship between POLAR and academic writing attainment in particular. However, authors such as Warren and Pokorny (2016) have argued that the widening participation agenda creates a need to reform policies around academic writing. Furthermore, evidence from the American HE system does address socioeconomic disadvantage and attainment in academic writing directly. In American universities, first year students are often tested on their writing skills; these placement tests are used to sort students with less advanced academic writing skills into remedial or basic writing classes (Long & Boatman, 2013) and, as Attewell et al. (2006) show, students with low socioeconomic status are more likely to be placed in these classes.

In America, students who are placed in remedial writing classes are often described as underprepared students: their pre-HE education is blamed for not preparing them for HE. Given that so called remedial students are more likely than others to be socioeconomically disadvantaged, and socioeconomically disadvantaged students suffer from poor-schooling (Goldhaber et al., 2015), the poor-schooling hypothesis may serve to explain the link between disadvantage and underperformance in academic writing. In addition, the difficulties that socioeconomically disadvantaged students have with regard to writing can be explained in a similar way to those experienced by EAL students. That is, students with low socioeconomic status may face a greater challenge than others in acculturating themselves to the norms of an academic discourse (Colyar, 2011).

Some socioeconomically disadvantaged students will, of course, receive the targeted support discussed above, because some will be EAL or SpLD (although, as noted above, Wingate (2015:41-42) shows, the provision for EAL students is often unavailable to home students with EAL). Some universities do provide writing workshops and one-to-one drop-in sessions for any student who feels they need it (Wingate, 2015). In one sense, this drop-in support can be considered inclusive practice, since it is available to any student. Yet it could also be seen as a form of targeted support, which happens

to rely upon – often staff guided – self-referral.

MODELS FOR INCLUSIVE PRACTICE

This section looks at three suggestions for making academic writing tasks more inclusive. These are

1. Universalising special arrangements

2. Providing compulsory academic writing modules

3. Embedding writing teaching in the curriculum.

The aim here is not to choose between these approaches but to introduce a wide range of options, identify some of the strengths and weaknesses of each, and explore in what ways the approaches can be combined. A key finding is that inclusive practice requires that we address the way writing is taught as well as assessed.

UNIVERSALISING SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS

As discussed in previous chapters, currently, in many universities, only those students with identified disability needs tend to be offered special arrangements. These may include:

- extra time for written assignments

- special marking guidelines coversheets to accompany work

- alternative assessment forms – e.g. opt out of writing assessment or special arrangements made for exams.

Each of these special arrangements can be universalised to make them genuinely inclusive.

EXTRA TIME FOR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

There are many reasons why an individual student may produce written work more slowly than the majority. Perhaps, then, the length of time allocated for written assignments (exams and coursework) should be increased for all students. This policy is being explored by some departments at the University of Brighton (Cater, 2016), where some exams have been extended for all students. The policy would prevent some students from having to request special deadline extensions or sit their exams in different rooms (so as not to be disturbed by those leaving earlier than them).

In evaluating these practices, we should distinguish between extra time in course work and exams. With regards to coursework, a longer deadline does not necessarily give students more time for the work. If another task starts during the deadline, students may not be able to take advantage of the full time given for the first task. For this reason, deadlines should be extended as part of a wider review of the course and it may be necessary to extend the deadlines of all tasks, including those at the end of a semester. The same does not apply to exam-based assessment because exam tasks do not overlap. However, exams pose their own challenge because the time allowed for an exam partly defines the task: exam length plays the role that word-limit plays in coursework writing. For this reason, simply extending the time of an exam may not increase inclusivity for slower writers. To avoid this problem, the length of the piece that students produce in exams should not only be limited by the length of time given for the exam but by the length of the exam script, i.e. the word count.

COVER SHEETS

In some universities, students with SpLDs place cover sheets on their written work, supplementing the general marking guidelines. The Singleton Report into dyslexia in higher education recommended that universities adopt some version of this policy (National Working Party On Dyslexia In Higher Education, 1999) and the Association of Dyslexia Specialists in Higher Education (2004) also made the case for policies of this kind. Cover sheets differ between institutions and departments, but they can recommend that markers do not

take account of spelling errors and/or grammar and punctuation.

A policy of this kind could be universalised quite simply. Cover sheet guidance could be added to the general marking guidance that relates to all students. The move is justified when the learning outcomes do not refer to proficiency in spelling or grammar. However, in many cases, a writing task will relate to learning outcomes whose demonstration requires clear writing, which arguably includes accurate spelling and good grammar. For instance, the command to critically reflect on the role of the nurse in treating long term conditions is a command to communicate something. The success of a critical reflection is dependent on the clarity with which the reflections are communicated. While the medium of communication need not be writing (see alternative assessment below), where writing is the method of assessment, spelling, grammar, and punctuation do become relevant. However, what this suggests is that careful consideration must be given to the learning outcomes of a module and the need for explicit marking criteria. Where spelling etc. are important parts of the assessed learning outcomes, they should be made explicit, and thought needs to be given to where and how these are taught. It is no longer sufficient to expect that all students are securely skilled when they arrive at higher education.

ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT

Another response to students' difficulties with writing tasks has been to offer alternative modes of assessment for some students. Perhaps the most common form of alternative assessment is the viva voca (an oral presentation followed by questioning by examiners). But there are even more options. Black (2004) details a case in which a student was allowed to record a radio segment instead of submitting a written assignment (as did the rest of her class). This special arrangement can be universalised by giving all students a choice of assessment options. The approach is being explored by the SPACE project at the University of Plymouth (SPACE, n.d. cited in JISC, 2016). The major challenge for universal alternative assessment is that each form of assessment requires the exercise of different skills; so the model must provide each student with the opportunity to develop a wide range of skills sets, e.g. writing a case study, scripting a podcast, and giving a presentation. Only if

students have the opportunity to develop this wide range of skills can they make meaningful choices between assessment options, as opposed to being pushed towards one option because it is the one that is best supported by teaching.[2] The need for support in making the choice has been raised by SPACE student feedback: "assessment choice is a great idea as long as you have enough information to make the decision sensibly" (student studying Health and Social Care, cited in Ibid:np.).

In addition to these challenges, we must recognise that the universalisation of alternative assessment does not address itself directly to the challenge of making academic writing inclusive. Because academic writing tasks are not currently inclusive, alternative assessment can be a powerful tool to make a course as a whole more inclusive. However, assuming that academic writing is a skill that students (on some types of courses) should develop, we still need to make courses more inclusive in respect to writing in particular.

PROVIDING COMPULSORY ACADEMIC WRITING MODULES

The point made above about the value of gaining academic writing skills exposes a key limitation of any approach that focuses solely on universalising special arrangements. Special arrangements are made at the point of assessment; but, arguably, the root of the inclusivity problem in academic writing is that academic writing is not taught in an inclusive way prior to assessment. Indeed, as Morley (2008:129) writes "UK universities have not seen the teaching of writing as a mainstream learning activity for undergraduates". Perhaps, then, teaching writing should be brought into the mainstream; academic writing could be taught as part of a course in much the same way that universities teach other subject-related skills. It is worth noting that a student studying biology will often receive in-class teaching in statistics. This is because statistical work is required as part of later modules and students may lack skills in statistics prior to the course. The same could be said for academic writing (including in the sciences).

---

[2] my thoughts here have benefited from discussion with Julian Ingle

One interpretation of this proposal is to have a compulsory module in academic writing. This is a common practice in American HE, where so called freshmen composition classes are common and have a history dating back to the late 1800s (Stanley, 2010). In these classes, students are set writing tasks designed to help them develop skills such as academic writing style, writing well-organised text, and use of evidence in writing (see for example DeBoer, 2013). Adopting this practice could be viewed as a universalisation of the kinds of targeted support discussed in the first part of this chapter. However, as we saw from our discussion of socioeconomically disadvantaged students, the American tradition is problematic in relation to inclusive practice. American composition teaching is typically divided between standard and remedial (or basic) writing classes. Students who do poorly in a general writing test or who come to university with poor qualifications are placed into the remedial classes. What's more, unlike standard composition classes, remedial classes do not award credits towards the student's degree.[3] This system therefore fails to be truly universal and embedded within each student's course of study.

This problem could be avoided by rejecting the streaming element of the composition class model and placing all students in the same class. Any experiment with the composition class model aimed at improving inclusivity should, indeed, take this approach. However, given the ubiquity and long history of streaming in the American system, we should consider the possibility that something about class-based writing teaching creates a pressure for streaming. One explanation for the persistence of the practice of streaming in America is that (non-remedial) composition classes are credit baring and so, if all students took such a class, students who struggle with academic writing would risk failing or getting a bad mark that affects the rest of their degree. This may create pressure for a separate non-credit bearing (i.e. remedial) class. However, this problem could be avoided by making the single, universal, class non-credit bearing. (This option is less attractive to American universities because students pay for their education per-credit rather than per year).

_____

[3] *For an overview of this system of streaming see Long and Boatman (2013)*

EMBEDDING WRITING TEACHING IN THE CURRICULUM

The composition class model is not the only way in which teaching academic writing can be incorporated into the mainstream of university teaching.

As we have seen above, the composition class model may tend toward streaming because it teaches academic writing as a set of skills abstracted from any particular academic discipline. This feature of the composition class model has also been criticised as ineffective for all students; it is argued that general writing skills are not easily adapted to writing in particular academic disciplines and so academic writing should be taught in the disciplines. If the generalised nature of composition classes is indeed problematic from the point of view of inclusivity, then teaching writing within subject modules may be preferable.

An alternative model is the writing in the disciplines (WiD) approach that has been implemented in many American universities (Bazerman et al., 2005). In the UK, the WiD approach is taken within Queen Mary University of London, supported by their Thinking Writing centre. This approach is based on the understanding that each discipline has its own norms of academic writing and that students may struggle to apply skills gained from modules that teach generic academic writing skills to the discipline in which they are studying (Sutton, 1997). WiD requires that courses are redesigned to incorporate discipline-specific writing teaching within the subject modules themselves. As Ingle (2016:155), in Thinking Writing, explains, "in practice, this involve[s] carefully staging and sequencing of writing activities", many of which are formative, not summative. Another feature of some WiD teaching is that students use writing as a means of peer discussion. Students may write critical reviews of each other's writing work and hone their writing in response to others' reviews (ibid.). Importantly, these writing tasks are presented as the means by which students engage with the ideas and information in the course, not as a course on writing skills that just happens to take place alongside the subject teaching. An attraction of this approach, from the point of view of inclusivity, is that it provides writing teaching for all students and appears to provide no room for streaming (to introduce streaming into WiD one would have to introduce it into the subject as a whole).

There are, however, some questions about how WiD may interact with the other policies for inclusive practice. WiD fits well with the universalisation of extra time. The structured nature of writing assignments and the practice of peer review and discussion could be disrupted by individual students having different deadlines. Secondly, where students are required to write short pieces during contact time, care must be taken to ensure that the time given is sufficient to allow slower writers to produce a reasonable amount of (spelling and grammar checked) text. In contrast, a course that employs WiD may find it difficult to incorporate universal alternative assessment. This is in part because each student's learning of discipline-specific writing depends upon their peers' engagement in the same. Moreover, even if peer review and discussion were removed, a module that is built around a formative writing task will have little room to also teach the skills required for alternative assessment types.

CONCLUSION

We have seen that academic writing assignments at university must become more inclusive. This aspect of higher education leaves many students at a disadvantage and targeted support, as opposed to inclusive practice, is still the main way in which universities attempt to address this problem. However, there are promising models for inclusivity reforms to academic writing. In surveying the ways that writing assignments can be made more inclusive we have seen the importance of focusing on both assessment and teaching. In addition, while it can be tempting to craft reforms by adjusting existing practice - e.g. universalising special arrangement or support - we must also consider redesigning courses themselves to give the teaching of writing a more significant place.

REFERENCES

Attewell, P.; Lavin, D.; Domina, T. & Levey, T. (2006) New Evidence on College Remediation. Journal of Higher Education. 77(5) [online] http://muse.jhu.edu/article/200923 (accessed 12/12/16)

Association of Dyslexia Specialists in Higher Education (2004), Guidance for Good Practice: Institutional Marking Practices for Dyslexic Students. [online] http://adshe.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/marking_guidelines1.pdf (accessed 15/12/16)

Bazerman, C.; Little, J.; Bethel, L.; Chavkin, T.; Fouquette, D. & Garufis, J. (2005) Reference Guide to Writing Across the Curriculum, Parlor Press. [online] http://wac.colostate.edu/books/bazerman_wac/ (accessed 12/12/16)

Berman, R. & Cheng, L. (2001) English academic language skills: Perceived difficulties by undergraduate and graduate students, and their academic achievement. Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics. 4:1-2 [online] http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ645304 (accessed 12/12/16)

Black (2004) Amending assessment for a dyslexic student. In M. Herrington with D. Simpson (eds) Making Reasonable Adjustments with Disabled Students in Higher Education: Staff Development Materials: Case Studies and Exercises. University of Nottingham. [online] https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/studentservices/documents/makingreasonableadjustments. pdf (accessed 12/12/16)

Cater, I. (2016) Inclusive Practice at the University of Brighton: Our journey so far. NADP Journal of Inclusive Practice in Further and Higher Education. No. 7
Connelly, V. (2014) Dyslexia and writing: poor spelling can interfere with good quality composition. Brookes eJournal of Learning and Teaching. 6(2) [online] http://bejlt.brookes.ac.uk/shortarticle/dyslexia-and-writing-poor-spelling-can-interfere-with-good-quality-composition/ (accessed 12/12/16)

Colyar, J. (2011) Discourses of Remediation: Low-Income Students and Academic Identities. American Behavioral Scientist. 55(2) [online] http://abs.sagepub.com/content/55/2/121.short (accessed 12/12/16)

Department for Business Innovation and Skills (2013) Widening Participation in Higher Education. [online] https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/226357/13-P155-widening-part-HE-2013.pdf (accessed 12/12/16)

Department for Education (2016) Teaching Excellence Framework: year 2 specification. [online] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teaching-excellence-framework-year-2-specification (accessed 12/12/16)

DeBoer, F. (2013) Introductory Composition Syllabus. [online] http://fredrikdeboer.com/teaching-portfolio/ (accessed 12/12/16)

Diversity and Ability (2016) DSA - Find Your Way. [online] https://www.dnamatters.co.uk/resources/dsa/intro/ (accessed 12/12/16)

Duff, P.A. (2010) Language Socialization into Academic Discourse Communities. Annual Review of Applied Linguistics. 30. [online] http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.brighton. ac.uk/docview/723764805?pq-origsite=summon&http://ezproxy.brighton.ac.uk/ login?url=accountid=9727 (accessed 12/12/16)

Ferris, D. R. (2004) The "Grammar Correction" Debate in L2 Writing: Where are we, and where do we go from here? (and what do we do in the meantime …?). Journal of Second Language Writing.13(1)

Ghani, K. A. & Gathercole, S. E. (2013) Working Memory and Study Skills: A Comparison between Dyslexic and Non-dyslexic Adult Learners. Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences. 97. [online]
http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1877042813036781 (accessed 12/12/16)

Goldhaber, D.; Lavery, L. &Theobald, R. (2015) Uneven Playing Field? Assessing the Teacher Quality Gap Between Advantaged and Disadvantaged Students. Educational Researcher. 44(5) [online]
http://edr.sagepub.com/content/early/2015/06/29/0013189X15592622.abstract
(accessed 12/12/16)

Grabe, W. (2001) Notes Toward a Theory of Second Language Writing. In T. Silva & P.L. Mastsuda (eds) On Second Language Writing. New Jersey: Erlbaum Associates

Grant, D. (2010) That's the Way I Think: Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and ADHD Explained. London: Routledge

Ingle, J. (2016) Engaging with academic writing and discourse. In H. Pokorny & D. Warren (eds) Enhancing Teaching Practice in Higher Education. London: Sage

JISC (2016) Supporting an inclusive learner experience in higher education. [online]
 https://www.jisc.ac.uk/guides/supporting-an-inclusive-learner-experience-in-higher-education (accessed 12/12/16)

Le Ha, P. (2006) Plagiarism and overseas students: stereotypes again? ELT Journal. 60m(1)

Long, B.T. & Boatman, A. (2013) The Role of Remedial and Developmental Courses in Access and Persistence. In   L.W Perna & A. Jones (eds) The State of College Access and Completion. New York: Routledge

Morley, J. (2008) Writing support in British higher education: an institutional case study. In P. Friedrich (ed) Teaching Academic Writing. London: Continuum

National Working Party On Dyslexia In Higher Education (1999) Dyslexia In Higher Education: policy, Provision and Practice. The University Of Hull

SPACE project (n.d.) Alternative and inclusive assessment case studies - a staff development resource. [online]
http://www6.plymouth.ac.uk/files/extranet/docs/SWA/5.9%20Alternative%20and%20
inclusive%20assessment%20case%20studies%20-%20a%20staff%20development%20
resource.pdf (accessed 12/12/16)

Stanley, J. (2010) The Rhetoric of Remediation: Negotiating Entitlement and Access to Higher Education. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press

Sutton, B. (1997) Writing in the Disciplines, First-Year Composition, and the Research Paper. Language and Learning Across the Disciplines. 2(1) [online]
http://wac.colostate.edu/llad/v2n1/sutton.pdf (accessed 12/12/16)

Thiele, T.; Singleton, A.; Pope, D. & Stanistreet, D. (2015) Predicting students' academic performance based on school and socio-demographic characteristics. Studies in Higher Education. 41(8) [online]
http://srhe.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/03075079.2014.974528 (accessed 12/12/16)

Warren, D. & Pokorny, H. (2016) Introduction: Teaching in the changing landscape of higher education. In H. Pokorny & D. Warren (eds) Enhancing teaching practice in higher education. London: Sage

Wingate, U. (2015) Academic literacy and student diversity: the case for inclusive practice. Bristol; Buffalo: Multilingual Matters

CHAPTER

1
5

RETENTION MATTERS: RETHINKING RETENTION AND BELONGING FOR MATURE PART-TIME UNDERGRADUATES

Kate Carruthers Thomas

INTRODUCTION

The increasing exposure of Higher Education (HE) in England and Wales to market forces and the switch to a funding system relying primarily on fees paid by students (through loans provided by government) have markedly increased student retention's significance to an institution's economic health. High – or low – retention rates are seen as indicators of a higher Education Provider's (HEP) health and reputation in; one of several measures by which institutions are audited and ranked. Retention, undoubtedly, matters. This chapter however, considers the matter of retention, reimagines it, not from an institution-centric perspective, but in a way that acknowledges students' relational engagement in HE. It problematises a model of retention characterised by linearity, boundedness and homogeneity which dominates a stratified sector with a diverse undergraduate population.

The chapter draws on the findings of a recent enquiry (2012-2015) into retention and a sense of belonging for mature part-time undergraduates in English HE (Thomas, 2016). A multiple case study of four pseudonymous English universities: three post-1992: Northern City, Modern Eastern, New Ecclesiastical and one pre-92, Metropolitan Elite, the enquiry used semi-structured interview and mapping methods to collect data from n=60 mature part-time undergraduates (in a range of subjects and in all stages of first degree study) and n=26 university staff occupying strategic, operational management, academic teaching and student support roles.   The research was conducted in the midst of a dramatic decline in part-time undergraduate applications; "a collapse in part-time study … arguably the single biggest problem facing higher education at

the moment" (Hillman, 2015:4).   By 2014/15 part-timers made up only 23 per cent of all undergraduate entrants compared to 40 per cent in 2010/11 (Callender, 2015:17). All four case study institutions experienced a 50% decline in their first year, part-time enrolments during the course of the research.

THE MATTER OF RETENTION

Student retention is understood as "the extent to which learners remain within a higher education institution and complete a programme of study in a pre-determined time-period" (Jones, 2008:1). Two measures: the completion rate, which records the proportion of students who continue their study until they have gained their qualification, and the continuation rate, which indicates the proportion of entrants who remain on their course of study in the academic year following entry to HE (National Audit Office, 2007) are used within England and Wales. Both are frequently reversed (non-completion and non-continuation) in institutional and national reports to highlight proportions of students who leave their courses of study rather than those who stay. Any student who leaves before completing their course not only "wastes the resources that were committed to recruiting and enrolling them" (Yorke & Longden, 2004:9), but also represents lost institutional income in the form of tuition fees, and associated costs such as residential fees.

While non-standard definitions and variations in data collection practices make accurate international comparisons of retention data difficult, overall retention rates for full-time students in the UK are considered better than for many European countries and the United States of America (van Stolk et al., 2007). However this masks a complex picture across institutions and modes of study. Massification of the UK HE system has resulted in hierarchies of more/less valuable HE (Bathmaker et al., 2008:122); an uneven geography of status and student profile. High tariff institutions, those with "high qualification on entry, limited low participation neighbourhoods students and long-standing university charter" (Longden, 2013:142) tend to enjoy high retention rates; lower and low tariff (the second layer with the obverse attributes) (ibid) have lower rates of retention overall. It is generally accepted that lower entry qualifications and non-traditional educational backgrounds are linked to lower retention rates; older

students are at a higher risk of early withdrawal than younger, and degree completion rates decrease as the age of students on commencement increases (Higher Education Funding Council of England, 2009:42). Attempts to increase and widen participation in HE have long been in tension with the retention agenda and it remains the case that those students structurally more vulnerable to withdrawal occupy post-1992 institutions.

Moreover, there is a continuing and stubborn disparity between the non-continuation rates for full-time and part-time first degree students. In 2011/12 full-time non-continuation rates ranged between 1.5 per cent and 17.7 per cent, an average of 7 per cent, while comparable rates for part-time first degree students ranged between 4.3 per cent and 56.8 per cent, an average of 34.1 per cent (Higher Education Statistics Agency 2015). It is possible with few exceptions therefore, to imply mature when referring to part-time students. In 2013/14, 91.7 per cent of UK-domiciled, first year, first degree, part-time students were twenty-one years old or over, and 58 per cent of these were aged 30 and over (ibid).

In broad terms, mature part-time undergraduates are more likely to be female and white, studying in a post-1992 HEP and for a sub-degree level qualification, have family responsibilities and to be employed; in actuality, they are "a heterogeneous group, with a very different set of characteristics, motivations and needs, as compared to their full-time counterparts" (Oxford Economics, 2014:III). The overlapping dimensions of their lives include pre-existing relationships and friendships, local connections, personal interests and pursuits, faith communities and commitments within the wider community. Very often they see themselves as workers who study (Callender & Wilkinson, 2011; Butcher, 2015) rather than students. HE choices of mature part-time students are primarily shaped by the need to remain local and to an extent access HE without standard qualifications. Face-to-face, part-time provision in England is clustered primarily, although not exclusively, in post-1992 universities which, "most often accessed by non-traditional students, carry the least status" (Read et al., 2003:268).

Yorke (1999), Davies and Elias (2002) and Rose-Adams (2012) agree that external circumstances are more likely to disrupt the learning of part-time mature than full-time, young learners. The multiple

responsibilities which accrue with age, including employment and family/caring commitments, mean that learning careers are more vulnerable to redundancy, relocation, family break-up, or illness. A study of Open University students who had withdrawn from their programmes found participants "all faced terminal barriers, ranging from caring responsibilities and longstanding learning difficulties, to pressure on finances to prioritise work over study at that particular point in time" (Hewitt & Rose-Adams, 2013:160). Narrow parameters of non-continuation and non-completion are problematic in the context of changing engagements with HE – for example, combining or interrupting degree study with periods of employment or caring responsibilities – which leads to the lengthening of the total period of study.

According to current norms and policies, "students can and should complete their HE in three (or four) years with no interruptions … any deviation from this model is perceived to be a reflection of either student or institutional failure" (McGivney 1996:54). The dominant model of retention in UK HE is one premised on full-time study; "generally conceived … with a focus on the economic variables of time and measurable outcomes" (Hewitt & Rose-Adams, 2013:147). This reflects the interests of the institution and, by implication, the sector and the state. The rules, rhythms and traditions of a traditional university model continue to dominate the field of HE in England and Wales, shaping and governing play. Despite expansion, fair access and widening participation agendas, successive waves of government policy reinforce this bias. The essential topography of the territory holds firm and different ways of engaging with HE are kept to the periphery.

RETENTION – AND BELONGING

Tinto's longstanding model of student persistence (1975) and its later modifications (1987, 1988), was developed in the context of the HE system within the United States of America, but remains influential far beyond it, notably within England and Wales. The model, emerging in a climate of civil rights protests and clashes, was groundbreaking in its time, incorporating anthropological theories of rites of membership and sociological theories of suicide into the problem of student departure. Tinto suggests individuals' ability "to

become competent members of academic and social communities of the college" (1988:452) relies on a raft of variables, including student congruency (institutional fit) and integration in academic and social spheres of the HEP, as well as social and demographic characteristics. Tinto's model has become a touchstone for retention literature, strategy and practice on this side of the Atlantic, although common themes are partially disguised by different terminology and emphasis. Its enduring authority may be partially explained by the compatibility of its structured approach – separation, transition, incorporation – with a developing audit climate in English HE and a tendency for institutions to implement frontloaded transition packages and targeted interventions to support their retention rates.

Tinto's model underpins the analysis and recommendations of the meta-analysis of What Works (Thomas, 2012), a national, multi-institutional, two-phase student retention and success programme, whose recommendations are widely referenced across the UK HE sector and more or less explicitly in many institutional retention strategies. A key passage in the final report considers the relationship between student retention and belonging in HE:

> "At the heart of successful retention and success is a strong sense of belonging in HE for all students. This is most effectively nurtured through mainstream activities that all students participate in … our definition of 'belonging' is closely aligned with the concept of student engagement, encompassing both academic and social …"   (ibid:6)

Belonging is, Thomas states, "critical to student retention and success" (ibid:10). The concept of belonging in HE bears comparison with Tinto's integration and congruency; it encompasses both academic and social spheres, and addresses the relationship between individual and institution. Significantly, Thomas's report identifies living at home, combining study with employment, and entering HE later, as ways of engaging which "make it more difficult for students to fully participate, integrate and feel like they belong in HE, which can impact on their retention and success" (ibid:10). Those who find it most difficult to develop social bonds within the space of HE, it is argued, are those who do not participate in clubs, societies, the students' union and shared living arrangements, i.e. "students who live at home, are part-time, older and/or are on courses with

extended contact/workplace hours" (ibid:10). Belonging in HE, it is inferred, is dependent on particular kinds of student behaviour or practices of belonging, enacted within campus boundaries. Although the social demographics of class, ethnicity and gender across HEPs vary, the majority presence of young full-time undergraduates in the system results in institutional practices which stabilise an exclusive hegemonic student culture, a shared map of meaning which creates a sense of identification with others:

> "the bars and student-friendly pubs where students can meet new people, the halls of residence, the canteens and faculties around which networks of acquaintances can be formed. The student community is stitched together out of these places; it relies on this geography." (Crang, 1998:5)

Less often articulated is that the narrative of belonging in HE, so closely associated with the matter of retention, positions in deficit, those students whose way of engaging in HE precludes such practices and behaviours, usually those categorised as non-traditional or non-standard, i.e. "students who differ significantly from the traditional student body" (McGivney, 1996:11). Coupled with an institution-centric perspective on belonging, the focus is on a homogenising idea of University X's students for whom university is the primary if not only focus, "rather than a heterogeneous notion of individuals" (Hewitt & Rose-Adams, 2012:162).

Nearly all of our students work … many of them over thirty hours a week, in part-time jobs.

Faculty Executive, Modern Eastern

The entwined narrative of retention and belonging is not only problematic in relation to mature part-time undergraduates but to many young undergraduates' **complex lives and necessarily differential engagement in HE**. High tuition fees and loans rather than grants mean there is an increasing trend away from de-location and towards employment alongside study for a significant proportion of students, most intensively among non-traditional students including the young. These students make a significant financial commitment to HE, but it is only one of multiple spaces in which they are simultaneously engaged.

Unintentionally no doubt, by stressing the role of mainstream social as well as academic activities in belonging (and therefore retention) **What Works** reinforces the deficit status of those students who for a range of reasons are distinterested in, or prevented from, engaging with such activities: living in halls of residence, eating communally with other students, participating in sports, societies, voluntary or evening social activities. Unintentional but influential nevertheless; this version of belonging in HE and its relation to retention has been so widely - and largely uncritically - adopted in the sector.

THINKING 'SPATIALLY' ABOUT RETENTION AND BELONGING

"The way we imagine space has effects," writes Massey (2005:4), a key figure in the diverse project of feminist and Marxist geography. In imagining a wider territory for retention: the "complex social process of student-institution negotiation" (Ozga & Sukhnandan, 1998:316) and belonging, this chapter aims to loosen the hold of binary positions and consider spaces between. It uses a geographical imagination to disrupt the dominant narrative of retention and belonging, to emphasise mature part-time undergraduates' persistence and withdrawal as more student-centred, agentic, negotiated processes in the contested space of HE.

Massey (2005) conceptualises space as social relations shaped by power and makes three propositions: that space is the product of interrelations on multiple scales; that distinct and heterogeneous trajectories coexist in space; and that space is always under construction. These attributes are encapsulated as "space as a simultaneity of stories-so-far" (Massey, 2005:11). This both resonates with mature part-time undergraduates' simultaneous navigation of complex territories of study, employment, home and caring commitments and strains against ideas of **successful engagement with HE as a linear, measurable** phenomenon occurring between two fixed points and within the bounded space of a single institution.   Linear measurement is problematic for complex lives; "loose ends and ongoing stories are real challenges to cartography" (ibid:107).

In a multiple case study of four English universities, Thomas (2016) uses Massey's spatial concepts to map a wider and more nuanced territory of retention and belonging in English HE, a sector imagined as the

product of social relations shaped by power: academic and disciplinary discourses, tradition, patriarchy, economics, and government. The HE sector is:

> "one of a network of specialised places of knowledge production (elite; historically largely male) which gained (and continues to gain) at least a part of its prestige from the cachet and exclusivity of its spatiality."
>
> (Massey, 2005:75)

It is a plural, fluid and contested space, shaped by economic and political drivers and subject to rapid change, a stratified system as multiple mission groups and league tables demonstrate. Belonging is inherently geographical, connecting "matter to place through various practices of boundary making and inhabitation" (Mee & Wright, 2009:772). The latter argue for "a thorough theorisation of belonging and … the differences between a sense of belonging, practices of belonging and formal structures of belonging" (ibid:774).

> *It's in the lifeblood of this institution to recruit mature and part-time, and therefore it has become second nature to us to make sure that we're set up for them.*
>
> *Executive, New Ecclesiastical*

Practices of belonging within a place not only mark the claims of particular groups to particular territories, but in doing so, inevitably identify and exclude the other. Difference is defined and articulated through relationships of power.

This enquiry found that each of the case study institutions told stories about itself as part of a positioning process through which they mapped and protected their locations within the Institutional stories "stabilise meaning of particular envelopes of space-time" (Massey, 1994:5) securing the institution as "a site of authenticity … singular, fixed and unproblematic in its identity" (ibid).

> *We're a modern university, somewhere towards the group of universities that embrace more of a widening access agenda.*
>
> *Executive, Modern Eastern*

> *We've moved away from a discrete widening participation agenda towards inclusion … as an organisation we put emphasis on having an inclusive approach to students, to learning and support.*
>
> *Executive, Northern City*

They articulate mission and ideals, become formalised and embedded in strategies and corporate plan, indicate who belongs within their boundaries. The stories quoted above position part-time and mature students within the strategic space of each institution.

The enquiry also found however, that the peripheral and increasingly precarious positioning of part-time students in HE undermines institutional rhetoric of inclusion and that mature part-time undergraduates' experiences of being on campus sat awkwardly with an institutional rhetoric of belonging.

> *Nearly all of our students work … many of them over thirty hours a week, in part-time jobs.*
>
> *Faculty Executive, Modern Eastern*

"Relational positioning - the way regimes of power differentiate one group from another … include or exclude them from the body politic … shapes the lived experience of a locality" (Brah, 1996:189).

In a bespoke exercise entitled Mapping Belonging, participants were provided with a photocopy of their campus map and asked to use different coloured pens to mark the places where they felt they belonged and places where they did not, alternatively referred to as hot and cold spots. This research tool adapts participatory diagramming, a technique widely used in social geography and development studies to explore:

> "the taken-for-granted things … [it] involves the participants reflecting on their activities in a way that is not usually done; it gives them distance from what they are usually immersed in and allows them to articulate thoughts and feelings that usually remain implicit."
>
> *(Rose, 2014:27).*

Across all four case studies, mature part-time undergraduates' maps of belonging revealed limited engagement with the campus beyond their classrooms including negligible engagement with the familiars of contemporary student life – the Students' Union building, the bar, the gym. The amount of time part-time students have to spend on campus limits the spaces they occupy in it.

One thing I've definitely realised is that this is our bit and we don't belong in that bit. We're not accepted anywhere else. You can walk through the Students' Union and they don't even look at you.

Student, Metropolitan Elite

I've got so much stuff needs doing at home, why would I want to spend any more time here than I need to?

Student, New Ecclesiastical

We're only here one day a week, it's difficult to make those bonds. I don't think they've necessarily done anything wrong, but it's just somewhere I come to once a week.

Student, Northern City

One student, taught in a satellite building which was literally, off the campus map, ringed the entire campus site in blue: 'I've just said 'cold' for the whole thing because I don't even know where it is' (Student, New Ecclesiastical).

Students' maps of belonging provided tangible evidence of spaces between institutional rhetoric of belonging (and by association, retention) and the lived experiences of mature part-time undergraduates in the spaces of HE.

They'll hopefully see that their tutor is a friendly, approachable person who actually wants them to come and see them.

Student Advisor, Modern Eastern

Senior staff talked enthusiastically about personal tutoring systems as a way of connecting individual students to a large, often impersonal institution, a key plank of retention and engagement activity.

However, academic teaching staff were anything but enthusiastic about centrally imposed, large-scale frameworks of connection:

> *'I thought, how are we going to manage this? Do we give a group of students' names to a member of staff who they might not actually ever meet?'*
>
> Programme leader, New Ecclesiastical

Students, too, struggled with the logistics of the system:

> *'We do have a personal tutor we just don't have a lot of contact with them. It comes down to time and when we're in the university and when they're in the university.'*
>
> Student, Modern Eastern

Some interviews with senior staff also revealed resistance to a blanket rhetoric of belonging:

> *'I'm absolutely sure there's stuff that could be done … to create, enhance or strengthen that sense of 'belonging' for part-time and mature students, but if you're geared predominantly to full-time undergraduate students, then your estate is geared up for that. … As an institution, you may want to shift to accommodate the needs and issues of other groups of students, but the logistics and costs are quite difficult.'*
>
> Senior Executive, Northern City

SHARED OWNERSHIP

The onus to bridge this gap falls significantly on the academic teaching staff involved with mature part-time undergraduates.

> *'I would guess that part-time students are almost always on the back foot in a way, and that's made up for by the care and attention from the programme staff … 'There's a very strong understanding of the context and environment in which those people are working.'*
>
> Manager, New Ecclesiastical

> *I think retention is high, achievement is higher because I and my colleagues see the student as an individual, you need to think about their whole life situation.*
>
> *Lecturer, Metropolitan Elite*

Academic teaching staff referred to creating nurturing spaces: protective enclaves, a village within the big city of the university.

Formal personal tutoring systems were ineffective in comparison with the localised, intensive relationships mature part-time students develop with individual tutors.

> *They'll do Skype, they'll do email, they'll do late night tutorials if that's what we need. … The tutors are really supportive, it's just the wider university system is not geared up for part-time students.*
>
> *Student, Northern City*

> *The idea is that we have to pull out all the stops to retain students…   We just have to bend over backwards, really; do anything to get that student through.*
>
> *Course Leader, Modern Eastern*

This places demands on individual staff to work beyond core hours and to make lengthy preparations for mitigating circumstances and board meetings. Professional and temporal boundaries become stretched and porous.

What seems most practical and meaningful for part-time students and individual staff is a version of shared ownership on a localised level. Shared ownership develops at the human interface between institution and individual, in isolated pockets of the institution or in a departmental framework. Each case study offered examples of compensatory behaviour by staff to bridge gaps between rhetoric and experience, between difference and belonging. It is hard to measure and it doesn't figure in institutional rankings, but this is critical work. It takes root in part-time students' learning, and encourages persistence

and the development of an evolving sense of a place for themselves in the context of higher level study.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Structural factors of age and gender (in particular) position mature part-time undergraduates as problematic in relation to the dominant narrative of belonging and retention, restricting their access to the means of belonging recognised and validated in dominant institutional discourses. The institution-centric version of retention perpetuates a linear trajectory and boundaried space of learning, despite the fact that, as this chapter has shown, retention is a contested term, measured in multiple ways, and variable across institution and attendance mode. Uniform statements of belonging as a retention solution are incompatible with the diversity and complexity of the mature part-time undergraduate population and this entwined rhetoric reinforces a binary way of thinking: in defining a measure of institutional success it simultaneously defines individual failure: failing to become "competent members of academic and social communities of the college" (Tinto, 1988:452); failing to follow the designated path through HE (even though other paths may be available).

This chapter has attempted to map a wider more complex territory for retention, a rethinking and reframing of the dominant narrative. In the dominant narrative of belonging and retention, belonging is bounded within campus space and by dominant practices. Imagining a wider territory for the "complex social process of student-institution negotiation" (Ozga & Sukhnandan, 1998:316) involves challenging the predominance of reductive quantitative measurements of completion and non-completion and recognising the significance of persistence and shared ownership.

REFERENCES

Bathmaker, A.; Brooks, G.; Parry, G. & Smith, D. (2008) Dual-sector further and higher education: policies, organisations and students in transition.
Research papers in education. 23(2):125-137

Brah, A. (1996) Cartographies of disapora: contesting identities. London: Routledge

Callender, C. (2015) Putting part-time students at the heart of the system? In N. Hillman (ed) It's the finance, stupid! The decline of part-time higher education and what to do about it. London:HEPI

Callender, C. & Wilkinson, D. (2011) The impact of higher education for part-time students. Evidence Report 36. UKCES. [online]
http://www.ukces.org.uk/assets/ukces/docs/publications/evidence-report-36-impact-of-he-for-pt-students.pdf (accessed 8/3/2013)

Crang, M. (1998) Cultural geography. London: Routledge

Davies, R. & Elias, P. (2002) Dropping out: a study of early leavers from higher education. Research Report RR386. Department for Education and Skills. Norwich: HMSO

Hewitt, L. & Rose-Adams, J. (2013) What retention means to me: the position of the adult learner in student retention. Widening participation and lifelong learning. 14:146-164 (Special issue: Winter 2012-13)

Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) 2015. Table T3e: Non-continuation two years following year of entry: part-time first degree entrants by age marker and continuation status. [online] http://www.hesa.ac.uk (accessed 4 July 2015)

Higher Education Funding Council of England (2009) A guide to higher education. [online] http://www.hefce.ac.uk/data/year/2009/A,guide,to,UK,higher,education/ (accessed 11/9/17)

Hillman, N. (ed) (2015) It's the finance, stupid! The decline of part-time higher education and what to do about it. London:HEPI

Jones, R. (2008) Student retention and success: a synthesis of research. EvidenceNet. York: HEA

Longden, B. (2005) Messy Business. In J. Wellington; A. Bathmaker; C. Hunt; G. McCulloch & P. Sikes (eds) Succeeding in your doctorate. London: Sage

McGivney, V. (1996) Staying or leaving the course: non-completion and retention of mature students in further and higher education. Leicester: NIACE

Massey, D. (1994) Space, place and gender. Cambridge: Polity Press

Massey, D. (2005) For space. London: Sage
Mee, K. & Wright, S. (2009) Geographies of belonging. Environment and planning A, 41:772-779

National Audit Office (2007) Staying the course: the retention of students in higher education. London: The Stationery Office

Oxford Economics (2014) Macroeconomic influences on the demand for part-time higher education in the UK: Report to HEFCE. [online]
http://www.hefce.ac.uk/media/hefce/content/pubs/indirreports/2014/
Macroeconomic,influences,on,the,demand,for,PT,HE/2014_ptdemand.pdf
(accessed 6/10/ 2015)

Ozga, J. & Sukhnandan, L. (1998) Undergraduate non-completion: developing an explanatory model. Higher education quarterly. 52(3):316-333

Rose, G. (2014) On the relation between 'visual research methods' and contemporary visual culture. The sociological review. 62:24-46

Rose-Adams, J. (2012) Leaving university early: a research report from the back on course project. Milton Keynes: The Open University

Read, B.; Archer, L. & Leathwood, C. (2003) Challenging cultures? Student conceptions of 'belonging' and 'isolation' at a post-1992 university. Studies in higher education. 28 (3):261-277

Thomas, K. (2016) Dimensions of Belonging: Rethinking Retention for Mature Part-time Undergraduates in English Higher Education (unpublished doctoral thesis, Birkbeck, University of London, 2016)

Thomas, L. (2012) Engagement and belonging in Higher Education in a time of change: a summary of findings and recommendations from the What Works? Student Retention & Success programme. Executive Summary. Bristol: HEFCE

Tinto, V. (1975) Dropout from higher education: a theoretical synthesis of recent research. Review of education research. 45:89-125

Tinto, V. (1986a) Limits of theory and practice in student attrition. Journal of higher education. 53(6):687-700

Tinto, V. (1987) Leaving college: rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Tinto, V. (1988) Stages of student departure: reflections on the longitudinal character of student learning. Journal of Higher Education. 59:438-455

Van Stolk, C.; Tiessen, J.; Clift, J. & Levitt, R. (2007) Student retention in higher education courses. International comparison. Cambridge: National Audit Office

Yorke, M. (1999) Leaving early: undergraduate non-completion in higher education. London: Taylor & Francis
Yorke, M. & Longden, B. (2004) Retention and student success in higher education. Maidenhead: Open University Press

CHAPTER

16

LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS - THE ESTATE PARADOX

Caroline Pepper

Universities are investing significant capital to enhance, develop and refurbish learning environments to improve the student experience, gain higher National Student Survey scores and re-develop space that is no longer fit for purpose. Embedded within this brief is a need to remove barriers to enable learning spaces to be used by everyone without the requirement for customisation. There are legislative business requirements to ensure that campus and study environments effectively support equality, diversity, and inclusion strands which are integral to an institution's corporate responsibility. This is identified under the Equality Act 2010. Beyond the standard hard building regulations and guidelines which are easily quantifiable, there is what could be described as the softer concerns. These may include the identification of diverse differences in learning requirements of mature or postgraduate students; the support of cultural and religious requirements and differences; the need to provide services and facilities for stakeholder families; and consideration for students with specific learning differences (SpLDs). The Equality Change Unit (2009:np) states that "the responsibility for creating an inclusive environment rests not solely with the designers of the built environment, but with the project team and anyone who makes a decision or acts in a way that creates, alters or influences the nature of the environment." Stakeholder engagement is critical to the design process yet the main contradiction within higher education is the disconnect between traditional planning of the built environment (quantitative requirements) in which success is focused too heavily on delivery on time on budget, and academic practice (qualitative requirements). A paradigm shift is required within estate planning and project delivery to ensure effective stakeholder engagement and address the actual needs of the end user rather than perceived needs.

The paradox that all universities face is that in designing learning spaces there is no one successful design formula from both a physical and psychological aspect. One size does not, and cannot, fit all. A space which may support one stakeholder's needs and requirements may alienate another's. Using the notion that learning spaces require a positive emotional connection with users akin to a sense of place and by drawing on personal experiences both positive and negative, this chapter explores Loughborough University's (UK) strategic approach to the development of learning environments and challenges in designing, developing and the service provision of learning spaces to effectively support students' needs.

Definition of a Learning Space

Warger and Dobbin (2009) define the term learning environment in its broadest sense as encompassing learning resources, technology, modes of learning, and connections to societal contexts. There is a requirement to create space which is able to connect cultural dimensions, student behaviours and pedagogy, however the impact of various aspects of learning spaces on pedagogy is not readily substantiated empirically. There is also little reference in current literature of the requirement to support deviation from standard student behaviour and norms. The thesaurus definition of learning spaces states that "they reflect mutually supporting ways in which learning as an activity and space as an environment construct and modify each other. They both shape and are shaped by practice. Learning space is the product of design processes that rely on assumptions of relationships between forms of space and general practices of learning." There is a struggle to consider the notion of individualism within this context.

A better and more holistic definition of the term learning space is Monahan's (2002) use of the phrase built pedagogy. This is referred to as the architectural embodiment of educational philosophies and translates as the way in which a space is designed and shapes the learning that takes place. Blackmore et al. (2010) suggest that the focus should be on people and learning places and not spaces. Place attachment and spatial identity is critical to learning. It is place attachment and various bounded places that impact on social interactions critical to student engagement and learning.

Loughborough University is starting to understand the relationship and connectivity of learning environments and this is underpinned by a formal governance project board structure. This is a significant step change. The project board encompasses a wide range of stakeholders including senior academic members of the university in recognition of the strategic importance of the development of learning spaces. It incorporates the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Teaching, deans and associate deans for teaching. It also includes staff representing various professional and support services including facilities management (FM), information technology services, library and technology enhanced learning services. The critical end users are represented through the Students' Union. Students should be at the heart of every project and although students are ephemeral by the very nature of academic programmes, the student body is the constant. There is a mutual awareness of the need to better connect from all perspectives to establish and deliver a shared vision, however there is a notable absence of representation from student welfare services who provide direct support to students with disabilities and mental health conditions. Email activity on the specialist tutor ADSHE jiscmail (2016:np) for some time centred around the lack of appropriate, confidential and individual rooms available in most universities for one-to-one specialist study support. It was generally agreed that this is "an essential pre-requisite, not an option for reasons of confidentiality; limiting distractions; having the opportunity to pull in a range of multisensory resources and give the opportunity to get up and move around". Academic and personal tutors are also experiencing difficulties with finding quiet and confidential space to talk with students when they regularly share offices. As one tutor commented: "where universities are expanding, and new buildings are being designed, there ought to be provision made for dedicated small meeting rooms. I know of quite a few institutions where this request is being ignored/dismissed despite strong cases being made". Surely, if we are to create more inclusive learning environments, this needs to be made top priority?

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY –
AN ESTATE OR PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH?

There is a revolution occurring within higher education with the blurring of conventional boundaries. Students are sometimes referred

to as e-students, they move seamlessly between physical and virtual environments as a blended learning model, therefore estate and building master planning should also align effortlessly with learning and teaching strategy, however there is still a real disconnect. Space, like time, is money. In a typical institution, the second largest cost is the provision, servicing and maintenance of accommodation. Without efficient space management, the resources tied up in an institution's estate are not used to best effect. The National Audit Office (1996) argues therefore, that reducing estates costs by using space more efficiently can release funds for other important activities. This has become embedded as a primary objective in estate strategy. The initial planning stage of a building project is all too often focused on density, how many students / desks can fit in a room. This is also known as the sardine effect to ensure value for money. Historically this has been the case in many institutions including Loughborough. Barnett and Temple (cited in Boys, 2006:62) produced a report which identified that "space planning does not depend on simple co-efficiencies as staff, student numbers and space occupancy, as an undeviating formula but should be driven by a complex set of factors related to institutional aspiration and missions." The question is, therefore how does this translate in the built environment?

Loughborough University's current learning space strategic aim is:

> "To build capacity within the teaching space provision by maximising the quality, flexibility, utilisation and operational support of all teaching space to ensure that the ideal number, size, location and layout fulfils all the University's learning and teaching needs to enhance the student experience."

> (Pepper, 2014:np)

Although this suggests a very estate-driven strategy with hard measurable quantitative outcomes and no reference to aspirations, mission or more importantly inclusivity, within the context of a closer pedagogical alignment, the strategy does consider the following principles which have been created through extensive stakeholder consultation, these include (ibid:np):

- optimum quality and geographical stock of teaching space through the creation of teaching hubs

- encouragement of students to learn by conversation not isolation

- appropriate environments with diversity of design and layout to support blended and informal learning

- appropriate and future-proofed provision of learning and support technologies which is intuitive and consistent across all teaching space.

To enable a greater understanding of Loughborough's approach, each principle will be considered in further detail.

The first principle, the optimum quality and geographical stock of teaching space through the creation of teaching hubs, was established to progress from the traditional perspective of formal and informal learning space viewed as binary opposites. There is an understanding of the interrelationship and balance between formal and informal learning spaces, therefore Loughborough has brought them together under one roof. The consolidation of learning and teaching activities into key locations has also enabled the alignment of key amenities including toilet provision, eateries and vending. Maslow (1943) would suggest this is addressing the lower level prerequisite physiological requirements. Research by O'Connor (2005:np) identified that "the ability to eat and drink whilst studying contributes to making a space attractive to learners from both a convenience and a pedagogical perspective and to ensure learners stay focused whilst studying". The concept has also aided the delivery of associated student services to add value. This has included direct access to student services including careers and study support. These factors help to contribute to the notion of a sticky campus. This relies on the concept of attracting and retaining students on campus. This became a key strategic aim in the creation of the Loughborough in London campus development which opened in September 2015. There was a need to establish both a strong identity away from Loughborough but also utilise the metaphor a home to base predominantly international students to create a connected environment where learners want to remain on

the campus irrespective of curricular / timetabling commitments due to the conducive and encouraging environment.

The teaching hub provides structure, convenience and efficiency. It creates a vibrant and bustling and potentially transient learning environment due to the optimisation of timetabling. This is appealing for many as it becomes the heart of activity, although can be perceived as an uncontrollable and intolerable environment for some students who experience sensory-overload e.g. students on the autistic spectrum. This may make some areas within university uncomfortable or even unbearable. They may find it difficult to filter out background noise or may experience it at a greater intensity than others. The creation of the teaching hubs, although successful in supporting university strategy, could be described as incongruous and divisive. It has ultimately reduced student choice. It has created a lack of alternative solutions for formal teaching spaces as the estate requires maximum utilisation to ensure efficiency. Accessibility of additional student services with the hubs effectively caters for the masses, but could alienate others who struggle with the lively environment.

The second strategic principle is encouragement of student to learning by conversation not isolation. This notion impacts on both formal and informal learning spaces. Within the formal context a number of strategies have been deployed to encourage active rather than passive learning and space can facilitate this. The traditional tiered lecture theatre, although an incredibly successful and an efficient model of mass delivery which supports the conventional estate perspective, discourages interaction. There are a range of collaborative and space hungry designs slowly infiltrating campus development to support a more collaborative and engaged approach to learning. This includes the Loughborough Design School Harvard Hybrid (illustrations 1 and 2) which is based on collaborative pods of 6 or 8 which can be used in both didactic and collaborative modes, and a Turn and Learn design based on 2 rows per rise to enable both traditional and collaborative activities. This design assumes that all students' preferred mode of learning is through collaboration and peer engagement. This may not be the case for students who display a neurodevelopmental profile which may be characterised by impaired social interaction and communication. Further work is required with key university stakeholders to address and fully support these issues.

Illustration 1

Illustration 2

Informal learning spaces which have been developed beyond the teaching hub concept to provide both choice and convenience are a valuable way to encourage interaction. There is recognition of the requirement for a positive emotional connection with users. Kuh et al. (2005:93) defined the "physical and the emotional as inextricably intertwined to form an almost palpable sense of place, one that has profound, if not always clearly understood, meaning to many members of the campus community". In classical Roman religion, Genius Loci was defined as the protective spirit or atmosphere of a place as there was clear recognition of the need to feel safe and sheltered within an environment. Why should 21st century students be different? Human behaviour dictates the need to feel in control.

This is a psychological factor focusing on students' subjective feelings of connectedness or cohesion to the institution. Goodenow (1993) suggested that the feeling of belonging may have a direct and powerful influence on students' motivation. Apply this in the context of informal learning provision and from a students' perspective there is the need for belonging, familiarity, ease and connectedness with areas to enable learning. The development of informal learning spaces which extend beyond the bustle of a teaching hub concept is a step towards providing choice for all students.

The third strategic principle is appropriate environments with diversity of design and layout to support blended and informal learning. Diversity in design is applicable to both the formal and informal environment. Within the teaching hub concept, in order to effectively support pedagogy, a balance of different styles of rooms and layouts has been created. This includes the traditional layout to support the mass delivery of content to the more collaborative designs facilitating increased interaction and participation. It also includes a range of capacities, designs and colour schemes. If estate project managers were given more autonomy, the perceived successful design formula would become ubiquitous throughout the campus. This is based on the notion that students want vibrancy and stimulation through colour and design. There is certainly a place for this, however evaluation from student feedback continually identifies the preferred teaching space in Loughborough University is the Design School (illustrations 1 and 2). This is based on a neutral design with muted colours and natural wood. Ten undergraduate students interviewed in a recent focus group believed that the lecture theatre provided a calming and professional environment to effectively facilitate learning. This is a powerful message about the importance of effective design and reinforces Freed and Parsons' (1997) statement that some students such as those with attention deficit (hyperactivity) disorder and autism spectrum condition may be more sensitive to colour in the learning environment due to heightened sensory responses and strong visual processing abilities. Graetz (2006) noted that in any learning environment students are awash in environmental information, only a small fraction of which contains the sights and sounds of instruction. Vibrant colours may appear stimulating and interesting but may distract from the business of learning.

Diversity in design is also represented by a range of furniture layouts. This includes traditional rows, collaborative tables and what is known as node chairs (illustration 3). These are chairs on casters with a flip-over writing tablet. They have been designed for maximum flexibility. When used with a range of colours they can enable the instructor to anonymously assign groups for collaboration. The furniture works well in small seminar rooms to support approximately 30 capacity, but scaled-up can create an environment which can be perceived as chaotic and unstructured. The furniture also facilitates movement in the classroom due to the casters. For the restless and the fidgety who may welcome the ability to move, this can be distracting to the lecturer and fellow peers. To summarise, the effectiveness of this design following ongoing evaluation, the term marmite was used.

Illustration 3

The final principle is appropriate and future proofed provision of learning and support technologies which is intuitive and consistent across all teaching space. This incorporates the hard learning room requirements including induction loop and voice reinforcement technologies, projection facilities with the appropriate lumen brightness to support the visually impaired and technologies to aid physical accessibility. It also includes the requirement to utilise technology to enhance learning. Many students prefer using technology and enjoy coaching or mentoring others to do the same. According to (JISC) technology is inherently enabling and learners with relatively

low traditional literacy levels can use digital resources at a higher level than anticipated to achieve their own outcome.

There are a range of learning technologies deployed to support the academic delivery. These include voting systems which have widely been adopted to facilitate the students' active engagement in their learning. Such systems also provide the lecturer with a means through which students can be given instant anonymised feedback within a classroom context. This is especially important within large cohorts where there can be a danger of reducing students' involvement in learning to that of passive bystanders. Voting systems enable a safe and anonymised feedback mechanism which supports a student who may not have the confidence to openly respond in a lecture environment.

Loughborough has invested in learning enhancement technologies including ReVIEW lecture capture, which is one of the single most transformative technologies to arrive in higher education and increasingly universities are achieving a large scale roll-out to help maintain competitive advantage. Lecture capture can support students to provide a study-aid for review and revision, assist students who do not have English as their first language, help accommodate different learning styles and importantly assist students who have particular educational needs. As a resource it has become highly valued by students and has been identified in the top ten student priorities for four consecutive years. As a learning technology it is nonetheless following a typical adoption curve which requires continual work and commitment to embed within academic practice as there is a fear that the recording of lectures will ultimately impact on attendance. It also exposes academic practice both good and not so good. According to (JISC), learners on the autistic spectrum may find the busy classroom environment too distracting and it is helpful for them to access and revisit lecture content at a later stage. It is also suggested that lecture recording may benefit dyslexic learners as they can focus on understanding rather than note-taking and have the ability to triangulate details afterwards. Institutionally it is valued from a wider perspective and can benefit all students.

Effective learning spaces to support students require robust and ubiquitous Wi-Fi and accessible power. This is a fundamental requirement to all students, however especially prevalent to students

who may require supportive technologies to aid their learning. This may be through the use of mobile and portable devices with assistive apps. All too often additional power and network beyond the lecturer's podium is perceived as a nice to have and therefore value engineered out of a project at an early stage. This highlights the importance of appropriate stakeholder engagement throughout the project not only to ensure that the brief supports requirements but also protects the brief during project delivery.

THE FUTURE OF PHYSICAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

The term student experience has become ubiquitous and embedded within discussions at every level. Following the 2012 decision to increase student fees to £9,000 per year, and the proposed further increase with the Teaching Excellence Framework, there is a shift to a more demanding culture among students as they bear the increased burden for the cost of tuition. Universities are being confronted with a new generation of students who, with legitimacy, are stating, I expect quality learning environments. These are reasonable requests and they positively challenge the status quo. Students are both consumers and partners in their education. With this in mind the physical learning environment and associated infrastructure will, and must, continue to evolve, however the estate rhetoric must also change to redress the efficiency verses effectiveness balance. This chapter has suggested that space can either enable - or inhibit - different styles of learning and one size does not fit all. A balance of design, layout and technology is required to support pedagogy, but more importantly there needs to be a greater understanding of how to effectively support the inclusivity agenda through the physical built environment. All universities would benefit from robust empirical research into this area coupled with continued effective stakeholder engagement.

REFERENCES

ADSHE Jiscmail (2016) emails contributed to a thread about lack of room space (Karisa Krcmar & Mark Worral). Association of Dyslexia Specialists in Higher Education. [online] http://www.adshe.org.uk (accessed 15/12/16)

Blackmore, J.; Bateman, D.; O'Mara, J. & Loughlin, J. (2010) The connections between learning spaces and learning outcomes: people and learning places. Centre for Research in Educational Futures and Innovation [online] http://www.learningspaces.edu.au/docs/learningspaces-literature-review.pdf (accessed 3/11/16)

Boys, J. (2006) Towards Creative Learning Spaces, rethinking the architecture of post compulsory education impact on space of future changes in higher education. London: Routledge

Equality Act (2010) [online] http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents (accessed 2/12/16)

Equality Challenge Unit (2009) Managing inclusive building design for higher education. Equality briefing and process checklist. [online] http://www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/managing-inclusive-building-design-for-higher-education/ (accessed 26/9/16)

Freed, J. & Parsons, L. (1997) Right-Brained Children in a Left-Brained World. New York: Fireside

Goodenow, C. (1993) The psychological sense of school membership among adolescents: Scale development and educational correlates. Psychology in the Schools. 30:70-90

Graetz, K.A. (2006) The Psychology of learning environments in Learning Spaces [online] http://www.educause.edu/research-and-publications/books/learning-spaces/chapter-6-psychology-learning-environments (accessed 27/10/16)

Kuh, G.; Kinzie, J.; Schuh, J. & Whitt, E. (2005) Student Success in College: creating conditions that matter. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

Maslow, A. (1943) Hierarchy of Needs [online] http://www.changingminds.org/explanations/needs/maslow.htm (accessed 21/1/16)

Monahan, T. (2002) Flexible space and built pedagogy: Emerging IT embodiments. Inventio. 4(1)

National Audit Office (NAO) (1996) Space Management in Higher Education a Good Practice Guide. [online] http://www.smg.ac.uk/documents/NAO_report_1996.doc (accessed 12/1/16)

O'Connor, R.A. (2005) Seeing DuPont within Sewanee and Student Life. The Library Planning Task Force, Final Report for the Jesse Ball DuPont Library. 57-76.Web.28 May 2012. [online] http://www.library.sewanee.edu/libplan/LPTF%20Final%20Draft%204-11.pdf (accessed 18/1/16)

Pepper, C. (2014) Learning and Teaching Space Strategy. [online] http://www.lboro.ac.uk/media/wwwlboroacuk/content/facilitiesmanagement/downloads/space/Learning%20and%20Teaching%20Space%20Strategy%20May%2014.pdf (accessed 15/5/16)

Warger, T. & Dobbin, G. (2009) Learning Environments: Where Space, Technology, and Culture Converge. [online]
https://www.net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/EL13021.pdf (accessed 12/10/16)

https://www.tel-thesaurus.net/wiki/index.php/Learning_space (accessed 3/11/16)

https://www.jisc.ac.uk/guides/meeting-the-requirements-of-learners-with-special-educational-needs/learning-disabilities-and-difficulties (accessed 27/10/16)

https://www.jisc.ac.uk/guides/meetins-the-requirements-of-learners-with-special-educational-needs/autistic-spectrum (accessed 29/10/16)

CHAPTER

17

IDENTIFYING AND BRIDGING GAPS THROUGH THE STUDENT VOICE

Amarpreet Kaur

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will consider the extent to which the student body is or can be involved in decisions regarding their learning, teaching and assessment within higher education. From the perspective of a thoroughly engaged student, who was a course representative, programme review panel member and involved in a number of a focus groups, this unique insight will critically explore what the student voice can offer. Moreover, it will deliberate how implementable what students desire as best practice is and shed insight to how the student voice has previously been accommodated within Higher Education (HE), from a programme level through to faculty and university wide changes, with examples from a student perspective. During my bachelor's degree I was fortunate to be elected by my peers as a course representative for all three consecutive years. Throughout this time I acted as a bridge between staff and students to help create positive change and ensure that the wider student voice was heard. From working with university staff I was able to develop a balanced perspective on what students wanted/expected in relation to how implementable/feasible this could be. By providing two-way feedback on student-staff expectations and experiences we aimed to enhance the student learning experience in an inclusive manner so that students could feel like they were getting the most out of their education.

It was through this role I was enabled to access a range of focus groups and similar roles at which the student perspective was key to the decision(s) being made. It was also because of this role that I began to appreciate the diversity within the student body and understand the unseen adjustments which empower students to proactively engage with their learning in ways that made their higher

education more accessible to them. As such, this chapter will share how learning, teaching and assessment respond to inclusivity within higher education, guided by this enlightened student perspective.

ISSUES OF INCLUSIVITY

Initially, when faced with student disengagement dilemmas as a course representative I could only testify to the implications this had on engaged students. From lack of engagement with subject materials such as seminar reading, right through to low attendance I had very little insight to why students would choose not to participate in something they had opted in to. I place emphasis on choose because I later came to understand that it was not always a choice, rather it was sometimes a situation that prevented them from being included. I have always taken my status as a full-time student as my primary role, thus this has superseded many of the decisions I have made in higher education. For example, my availability for extra-curricular activities or part-time work was centred around my academic timetable; at no point did either of these take precedence over my academic timetable. Hence, if there was ever a scheduling overlap, there was rarely a time when attending and participating in a taught session was not priority. As such, my personal attitudes and beliefs towards education and my role as a student originally shadowed my understanding of what I used to consider others' excuses. However, when I began to question my peers it transpired that many had a desire to want to be more engaged with their learning but often there was an unavoidable underlying circumstance or priority which prevented them from doing so.

Some well-cited conditions included long commutes and/or family commitments (National Institute of Education, 1977; National Union of Students, 2008), which from my department's perspective usually surrounded discussions on timetabling and attendance. I remain surprised at the extent to which consideration is given to such instances as I highly doubt they would be as widely accepted in the world of work. However it is noted that many workplaces are increasingly becoming more flexible. I like to think that an inherent part of higher education is preparing students for graduate employment, thus whilst I can appreciate the extended consideration, I continue to question how beneficial it truly is. However, some higher education

providers (HEPs) have actively tried to accommodate and respond to such inclusivity issues raised by the student voice by implementing 10am starts, avoiding taught sessions after 4pm and having multiple teaching sessions on the same day where possible. These initiatives were strategically implemented in the hope of increasing attendance, and some have been more successful than others in doing so.

Nonetheless, this is a direct example of how the student voice has previously been acknowledged within HE and showcases how some universities have responded to it. It demonstrates the balanced measures universities try to make in order to be more inclusive and enhance the student experience. Whilst the implementation of these student-focused ideals fluctuate according to demands and/ or requirements in each faculty it is noted that departments do try to facilitate these desires as best as possible (Ramsden, 2008). In cases where these ideals have not been met, for example lectures and seminars timetabled after 4pm, course representatives have been successful in having some sessions re-timetabled. Again, this is indicative of engagement with the student voice and of how universities can listen to students to reach mutually desirable outcomes.

Perhaps more reasonable circumstances affecting any inclusivity gap, are those surrounding disorders, disabilities or health conditions. I only deem these more excusable in the overarching essence that they can be unpredictable and therefore suggestively less controllable than the circumstances discussed in the previous paragraphs. This judgement does not negate that there may be elements of long commutes or family commitments that are also unforeseeable, merely that I assume the majority can be planned to a greater extent. Unlike several other barriers to learning, teaching and assessment, matters surrounding disorders, disabilities and health conditions are usually considered highly individualised. As such, at least initially, they require direct engagement from the individual student with staff to ensure more inclusive arrangements are made to accommodate their needs (Manchester Metropolitan University, 2016a; University of Cambridge, 2016a).

Most, if not all HEPs have some form of a disability service which usually works with students who access them to generate a strategy for their education which is mindful of their individual needs. Official

names vary across institutions but some are known as Personal Learning Plans or Student Support Documents, etc. (Manchester Metropolitan University, 2016b; University of Cambridge, 2016b), and are aimed at assisting students with all areas of their education, whether it be teaching, learning and/or assessment. Provisions vary according to the student's individual needs but generally offer supporting/alternative practices to assist in these areas, thereby acting as examples of perhaps the most extensive provisions made to include specific cohorts in higher education. Support/adjustments can range from utilising note-takers or library assistants to having rest breaks in exams, or even doing alternative forms of assessments, depending on the student's needs. However, it remains pertinent that the individual student ensures that their support continues to be fruitful to them; whether through their own voice or that of an advisor/tutor, rather than through the collective student body.

The examples provided above address two very different ways in which HEPs listen to and take student voice into consideration in relation to inclusivity. Both present ways in which students can be involved in decisions regarding their learning, teaching and assessment, i.e. sharing their thoughts and comments with course representatives or by utilising existing structures themselves. The first however is more collective in that it is geared towards creating change or advocating initiatives that are likely to affect larger groups of students. The latter on the other hand is more individualised and generally only impacts the students who intentionally seek some form of personalised adaptation. Both indicate ways in which the student voice can be accommodated within higher education to combat the inclusivity gap, but only that in relation to the collective student voice will be discussed further.

LISTENING TO AND IMPLEMENTING STUDENT VOICE

It is evident that the student voice is often taken into consideration and that it can offer substantial direction to identifying areas and reasoning to issues surrounding inclusivity within higher education. Student voice has proven to make great impact in the shaping of many areas within higher education (The Union MMU, 2015) and has been the driving force behind many initiatives and positive changes. Course representatives can work with staff within their

own departments, faculties and the wider university to influences changes at all these levels. For example, in 2014 I was involved in a focus group for assessments and results; the group comprised of course representatives from every department within the faculty. We each brought perspectives from our own courses, these were collated and later used to spearhead a movement to penalise late submissions without approved exceptional factors with 0% as a result, across the university. It is recognised that the implementation of this initiative took several months as did other initiatives surrounding how and when profiles of results were released due to the scale on which they were to affect the student body.

Similarly, some changes made within my department in response to student feedback to staff, such as switching a summative assessment from a group presentation to an essay also could not take immediate effect. However less significant requests, such as using white backgrounds on presentation slides instead of black could be actioned within days. Despite the time differences in being able to fulfil response to student desires, what remains important is that the student voice was listened to and valued. We appreciated that our department cared about what we wanted and what we had to say, that they were honest about the possible resolutions and made us feel that we could actively shape our course. It remains unfortunate that the nature of some changes means that the cohort that requests them do not get to actually benefit from them, but it is nice to know that we have made a positive difference for future cohorts. Because I was a course representative for three years, although some of the changes I advocated for consequently did not directly affect me as I progressed through the programme, I still got to hear how the other cohorts responded to them. It was always satisfying to learn that the changes we pushed for were pleasing to those who did not know they were once a problem and that the department stayed true to their word.

Needless to say, it is clear that students can be involved in decisions regarding their learning, teaching and assessments to varying extents and in many cases be the voice to advocate the need for adjustments (National Union of Students, 2015). Students know the problems they face, therefore when staff engage with us and listen, they do not have to guess why students adopt certain practices, or puzzle over what students desire (Wilson, 1981). By listening to,

and working directly with, students highly valuable feedback can be gained to improve the student learning experience in a more inclusive manner. As course representatives develop, inherent to the role, they hear about, and from, a diverse range of students which they then go on to advocate for. As such, even though students with long commutes / from non-traditional access routes into higher education / international students may not ever attend staff-student meetings, staff can be sure that in many cases their thoughts and opinions are still being promoted. It is noted however that this can be dependent on how active course representatives are and some may be less so than others. Nonetheless, if presented with the task, many course representatives would happily seek further student perspectives to issues on which they have little insight. After all, that is core to the essence of their role. Therefore, the student voice can also be utilised to help staff solve the dilemmas they face in teaching students, as well as highlighting the problems students encounter in their learning.

Most often what students want or expect to see as best practice can eventually be delivered (Gurung & Schwartz, 2009). Sometimes it may take a considerable amount of time and on rare occasions they may not appear feasibly possible. For example, whilst it is noted that suggestions for unit changes are generally actioned the following academic year, other factors may prevent them being implemented. It has previously happened that students expressed the desire for an increased range of units, however due to staff availability and/or popularity of them this could not be delivered by the department. In such circumstances, it was not that student voice was being ignored, more that the staff had to readdress the situation to find alternative solutions, because areas of education that students feel strongly about do tend to reoccur. In this instance, once this issue reached Programme Committee, staff were then able to collectively float innovative ideas in response to student feedback to see if other adjustments could be made. It was later confirmed that the department would make all optional units available to both second and third year students and simply adjust the assessments accordingly. Although this was not considered to be best practice by students, it was deemed to be a suitable temporary measure until such a time that an increased range of units could be designed and offered to students in line with staff availability. This example highlights the collective efforts department staff are willing to make

for students and empirically evidences just how involved students can be in regards to decisions surrounding their learning and teaching in higher education.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has shared a course representative's perspective on what the student voice can offer in HE and several examples of the extent to which students can be involved in decisions regarding their learning, teaching and assessment. It has presented how implementable students' desires can be and some of the challenges staff may face in delivering to these expectations. The insight reveals how the student voice has previously been accommodated within HE and highlights the value extended to the student voice at various levels throughout an institution. It showcases how staff and students can work together to reach mutually beneficial and actionable outcomes, and discusses issues that students face and how these have been formerly addressed by HEPs. The chapter expressed how the student voice can be used not only to identify issues but also to help bridge them. It is wholeheartedly believed that the student voice will always be the progressive way forward in higher education when balanced with open-minded staff, and it is hoped that this chapter has conveyed this conviction.

REFERENCES

Gurung, R.A.R. & Schwartz, B.M. (2009) Optimizing Teaching and Learning: Practicing Pedagogical Research. Chichester: John Wiley & Son Ltd

Manchester Metropolitan University (2016a) About Us: Social Model of Disability. The Disability Service. [online]
http://www.mmu.ac.uk/sas/studentservices/learner-development/about-us.php
(accessed 14/8/16)

Manchester Metropolitan University, (2016b) Disabled Students. The Disability Service. [online]
http://www.mmu.ac.uk/sas/studentservices/learner-development/disabled-students.php
(accessed 14/8/16)

National Institute of Education, (1977) The Neglected Majority: Facilities for Commuting Students, A Report. ERIC: US Department of Education. [online]
https://ia600506.us.archive.org/7/items/ERIC_ED144214/ERIC_ED144214.pdf
(accessed 14/8/16)

National Union of Students (2008) Student Experience Report. London: National Union of Students

National Union of Students (2015) Comprehensive Guide to Learning and Teaching. London: National Union of Students

Ramsden, P. (2008) The Future of Higher Education: Teaching and the Student Experience. The Higher Education Authority. [online]
http://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu.documents/3463853/he-debate-ramsden.pdf?AW
SAccessKeyId=AKIAJ56TQJRTWSMTNPEA&Expires=1471177946&Signature=76wUFP2urR
OUBEOKe6TXudoJdfI%3D&response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3DThe_
future_of_higher_education_teaching.pdf (accessed 14/8/16)

The Union MMU, (2015) Course Representatives: Making Positive Change. [online]
https://www.theunionmmu.org/news/article/8880/Making-positive-change/
(accessed 14/8/16)

University of Cambridge (2016a) Support for Students: Current Students. Disability Resource Centre. [online]
http://www.disability.admin.cam.ac.uk/students/current-students (accessed 14/8/16)

University of Cambridge, (2016b) Student Support Document. Disability Resource Centre [online] http://www.asociacevsp.cz/files/documents/info%20cambridge%20(1).pdf
(accessed 14/8/16)

Wilson, J.D. (1981) Student Learning in Higher Education. New York: John Wiley & Sons

PART 3

CHAPTER

18

THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA – A PREREQUISITE FOR ITS INCLUSIVENESS

Lelia Kiš-Glavaš

This chapter examines Croatia's response to the changing participation in higher education within the broader diverse social context as laid out in the Bologna Process (2010) which encouraged benchmarking academic standards across European Higher Education Providers (HEPs). The process included consideration of the links between equitable participation in, and successful completion of, learning in higher education, and employability options leading to more equal opportunities for life outcomes. Lifelong student-centred learning was a central issue with explicit acknowledgement of prior learning, including informal learning. The aim of the Bologna Process was that the student population in Higher Education (HE) would reflect the diversity of society at large (London Communiqué, 2007). As Biggs and Tang (2011) state, widening participation challenges academics across institutions to address the quality of their teaching and assessment to develop a truly inclusive approach.

The education system in Croatia (Hrvatska, 2017) begins in preschool institutions, which include those run by local authorities and private nursery schools (e.g. run by religious communities), and institutions which provide preschool programmes. Children who are 6½ years or over must attend compulsory elementary education, which lasts eight years. There is an adult education system for those over the age of 15 who fail to complete elementary education.

Upon completing their elementary education, children may continue optional secondary education which is divided according to curricula into gymnasiums, vocational schools (technical, industrial and craft-based) or art schools (music, dance, art). Gymnasiums provide a comprehensive syllabus that lasts four years and includes a final examination, the state matura. Programmes in vocational and

art schools last from one to five years, and usually end with the production of a final assignment, but it is also possible to sit the state matura if pupils have completed four years of secondary education. Since 2010, state matura results have been the basis for entry to higher education institutions. Along with secondary education, there are also programmes that prepare people to work in their chosen vocations and adult education programmes. Elementary and secondary education in state schools is free.

Higher education is conducted in higher education institutions through university and professional studies. Higher education institutions are divided into polytechnics, colleges of applied science, faculties and art academies.

University studies equip students for work in science and higher education, in the business world, public sector and society. University studies are organised and implemented at universities, which are comprised of several faculties, and may be at the level of undergraduate, graduate or postgraduate studies.

Professional studies provide students with the knowledge and skills they will require to work in professional occupations. Professional studies, which last two to three years, are conducted in colleges of applied science or polytechnics, and may be conducted in universities.

The educational system in Croatia is illustrated in figure 1.

Chart of the educational system

HIGHER EDUCATION

| Postgraduate university studies | Postgraduate specialist studies |

| Graduate university studies | Specialist graduate expert studies |

| Undergraduate university studies | Expert studies |

↑ Entry the labor market

State matura | matura examinations | Final assignment

SECONDARY EDUCATION

| Four year | Five and four-year programmes | Three-year programmes | Two-year one-year and adapted programmes |

VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

Eight year
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

PRE-SCHOOL INSTITUTION

Figure 1: Chart of the educational system in Croatia (Hrvatska, 2017)

In Croatia, theoretically, everyone has an equal right of access to all levels in the education system, and the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia (1990) explicitly states that it is necessary to take several additional measures to make HE truly accessible to everyone, especially to individuals from vulnerable social groups. These key vulnerable groups will be highlighted before going on to discuss

the National Plan for the Improvement of the Social Dimensions of Higher Education which sets out goals and time frames for widening participation in higher education in Croatia.

A pilot programme developed agreements between the Ministry of Science and Education and public universities, university colleges of applied science, and community colleges (Beljo Lučić, 2012). The programme spanned three academic years from 2012/13 to 2015/16, and three out of its five agreed general directives involved social dimensions within higher education: (i) acquiring qualifications, (ii) facilitating access to study and financial support for students from lower socioeconomic groups and for students with disabilities, and (iii) facilitating access to, and ensuring quality of, study for students aged over 25 years.

Further development of the programme encompassed academic years 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18 and also included two strategic objectives relating to widening participation: (i) equal access to higher education for full time students in the Republic of Croatia, and (ii) encouraging completion and graduation from higher education (i.e. reducing drop-out rates). This is to be achieved by subsidising fees and co-financing materials costs (https://vlada.gov.hr, 2015). In the past few years, there has been an increased investment in student scholarships. Between 2014 and 2020, 22,000 scholarships are promised for students in lower socioeconomic groups; 15,000 scholarships are to be made available for students in the STEM disciplines (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), in ICT (information communication & technology) and other identified priority subjects. In addition to the 5,000 state scholarships annually allocated, an extra 4,500 will be allocated for students from lower socioeconomic groups and 3,000 for STEM and other priority fields (http://www.strukturnifondovi.hr, 2014).

In 2014, the Croatian Parliament adopted the Strategy of Education, Science and Technology that stipulated one of the development priorities of Croatian education was to include underrepresented groups within the higher education system. The Strategy, in the section on higher education, lists several tasks that are aimed at enhancing the social dimensions of higher education in Croatia. One of these tasks refers to enabling underrepresented and vulnerable groups in higher education, as well as reducing factors that contribute to their limited enrolment.

This task was entrusted to the intersectoral National Group for the Improvement of the Social Dimension of Higher Education which acts as an advisory body to the government of the Republic of Croatia, the Ministry of Science and Education, Rectors' Conference, and the Council of Universities and University Colleges of Applied Science, whose establishment was encouraged by one of the measures of the national strategy.

Since its establishment at the end of 2015, the National Group has highlighted the following underrepresented and vulnerable groups of students in higher education (as well as some of the factors that make them vulnerable): students whose parents have lower levels of education; students from families of lower socioeconomic status; female students in technical fields and male students in the humanities; mature students; students with children; students with disabilities; students from vocational schools; students working whilst studying; students who need to travel to study; student-children of Croatian war veterans; students belonging to the Roma minority; LGBT students; students from alternative care; homeless students or those at risk of homelessness; students from rural areas, small towns or islands; refugees and asylum seekers.

I was personally a member of this working group, primarily serving the role of chairperson of the Committee for Disabled Students at the University of Zagreb, and a role as representative of the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences (http://www.erf.unizg.hr/en/about-us/about-the-faculty, 2017) whose mission is to carry out education founded on scientific knowledge in the areas of educational rehabilitation, speech-language pathology, and social pedagogy with the aim of including vulnerable groups and groups under risk into the community, by influencing individuals and social environments as well as influencing policymaking and social benefits.

Students whose parents have lower levels of education

Studies show lower academic achievement of students coming from families with less educated parents (Burušić et al., 2010; Jokić, et al., 2010; Gregurović & Kuti, 2009). Students whose parents have lower levels of education more often enrol at vocational schools, particularly those offering 3-year courses. The academic gap that

these students have to cover if they want to continue their education at a higher level significantly impedes the continuation of their education (Matković et al., 2014).

The EUROSTUDENT sample research (Šćukanec et al., 2016) shows that, typically, children of highly educated parents more often engage in higher education. While 17% of fathers in the general population have secondary or higher education, they represent 34% of fathers of students in HE. Conversely, 18.5% of men aged 40-60 have only primary education; as few as 5.1% of students have fathers who come from this demographic. Students whose parents have only primary or secondary education significantly more often assess their financial difficulties as very serious or more serious compared with students whose parents have higher education (Šćukanec et al., 2016).

Students from families of lower socioeconomic status

The research of Košutić et al. (2015) showed that one third of students mentioned the lack of financial resources as a reason for not continuing their education. The same research showed that when asked about financial assets, high school students who are planning to go to college differ from those who do not or who still do not know. Students who stated that they are planning higher education have parents with the most assets.

Students from lower socioeconomic status groups usually opt for entering full-time employment and these students estimate the intensity of study obligations as lower than those who do not work (Šćukanec et al., 2016). This suggests that they may underestimate the time commitment needed for studying and may be at greater risk of dropping out from study.

Female students in technical fields and male students in the humanities

According to Jugović (2015), gender stereotypes about professions and disciplines of study are an important factor in the choice that young people make about their area of study. There appears to be a belief that one's own gender has less talent in a particular profession

or field of study, and is associated with a lower likelihood of selecting that area of study. Therefore, men significantly outnumber women in technical sciences (70%) and women make up the significant majority of students in humanities and social sciences (74%), and in the field of medicine and health care (71%) (Šćukanec et al., 2016).

Mature students

Only 8% of students in Croatia enrol at universities for the first time after the age of 21 years (Šćukanec et al., 2016). Hauschildt et al. (2015) compared data from EUROSTUDENT concluded that Croatia, with only 21%, comes 17th amongst European countries that have students older than 25 years. The Scandinavian countries are on top with Finland having 58%, Sweden second with 53%, and Norway coming a close third with 52%. Austria and Switzerland have 46% and 44%, respectively.

There are indications that older students are less likely to complete their first year of study (Mihaljević Kosor, 2010), and that social integration into higher education is more difficult for them (Doolan et al., 2014).

Mature students are more likely to have financial concerns. Fifty one percent (51%) of students who start studying aged 21 years or older assess their financial difficulties as very serious or serious, whilst only 36% of younger students cite this as a concern (Šćukanec et al., 2016). In addition, students who started studying after the age of 21 years are more likely to have a full-time job than those who started studying before they turned 21 (Šćukanec et al., 2016).

Students with children

Only 3% of students in Croatia have children (Šćukanec et al., 2016). Parents are an underrepresented group when compared with other European countries. Comparing EUROSTUDENT data, Hauschildt (2015) found that Croatia comes 25th out of 29 countries.

Student-parents claim that studying is more difficult for them than for students who do not have children. Doolan et al. (2014) cite the

fact that they estimate time available for study to be severely limited for them. Most student-parents (65%) are also employed full- or part-time (Šćukanec et al., 2016), thus limiting their time even more. Šćukanec et al. (2016) have shown that 15% of students in Croatia temporarily stop studying for up to one year, and the same thing is done by 22% of student-parents.

Students with disabilities

The cohort of students labelled as having disabilities is heterogeneous; therefore, their needs in higher education are diverse and individualised. However, their abilities and needs are generally viewed in relation to the type of disability experienced. This ranges from the need for physical accessibility or availability to all areas; the need for services (physical impairments); the need for a personalised approach to text (visual impairment); the need to ensure a communication intermediary (hearing impairment); the need for flexibility in deadlines and sometimes in the daily rhythm of activity (chronic illness or mental health issues); the need for adapted teaching materials and methods of assessment (students with specific learning differences and sometimes students with physical and sensory impairments). In addition to adjustments within the jurisdiction of higher education provision, the inclusion of students with disabilities depends on the issue of transition to higher education in terms of social and living accessibility. Croatian HE providers need to consider the possibility of adapted transport and housing, assistance in halls of residence or dormitories and canteens, and offer the use of assistive technology (Kiš-Glavaš, 2012).

Urbanc et al. (2014) have shown that experiences of disabled students, regarding accessibility to individual faculties and adjustments of teaching, are diverse and uneven. This can range from highly positive and supportive experiences to some that indicate insensitivity and lack of knowledge amongst the teaching staff and other participants involved. Students rightfully recognise that the system is comprised of people, and that it is not enough to rely on technological advancements that make it easier to follow lectures. It is essential to provide, and insist on educating and training teaching and non-teaching staff.

Students who have completed vocational school

Students graduating from vocational schools are significantly less likely to progress to higher education than those from traditional schools. Baranović (2015) suggests that whilst almost all (98.5%) of high school (gymnasium) students and three quarters (75%) of four-year vocational school students plan to go on to higher education, only 16.5% of three-year vocational school students cite that they expect to do so. These latter cohorts of students face the barrier of being less likely to pass the necessary exams for progression (the state matura) (Matković, et al., 2014).

Doolan (2010) states that students who have finished some vocational schools express dissatisfaction with the way secondary education prepared them for college, both in terms of content and in terms of work habits. Likewise, there are indications that it is more difficult for students from vocational schools to pass exams in their first year of higher education study (Mihaljević Kosor, 2010; Doolan, 2010). This concern is anecdotally mirrored in parts of the UK where many academics are concerned at the lack of preparedness of students with non-traditional A-levels or vocational qualifications like BTechs.

Students who work during studies

Students with full-time jobs have less time for study obligations than students who do not work (Šćukanec et al., 2016). EUROSTUDENT data (Šćukanec et al., 2016) shows that almost half of all students (44%) had undertaken some paid full-time or part-time work during the semester during which the study was conducted. Students whose parents do not have higher education themselves; students who enrolled for higher education study after the age of 21 years; and student-parents are the most represented in full-time work.

Students who travel to study

According to EUROSTUDENT data (Šćukanec et al., 2016), 13% of students travel to study in another county. According to Doolan et al. (2014), students travelling to study from one Croatian county to another cannot be present at all classes due to travel costs, but

also due to irregular public transport lines and time being spent on travelling. These students have less time for studying.

Student-children of Croatian war veterans

The Croatian War of Independence was fought from 1991 to 1995 against the aggression of the associated Great Serbian forces – the extremists in Croatia, the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA), and Serbia and Montenegro (Croatian Encyclopaedia, 2017).

According to the 2009 data about the War, at least 12,500 people were killed on the Croatian side, and 1,030 people were considered missing. Wounded people are considered as war-affected people (according to data from 1999, 33,043 people were injured, 9,816 of whom were civilians); people detained in Serbian camps, children without parents; and veterans with permanent health disorders (Croatian Encyclopaedia, 2017).

A small, but significant number of children (302) of Croatian war veterans killed in the Croatian War of Independence are now of age to be accessing higher education (Ministry of Croatian Veterans / Ministarstvo hrvatskih branitelja, 2016). The loss of a parent has a long-lasting negative impact on academic achievement. The negative impact is greater the longer the time a child has been growing up without the parent(s), and the psychological consequences of early parental loss are more prominent as the child gets older (Kovač, 2015). This will affect the wellbeing of students in higher education.

Students belonging to the Roma minority

The Roma people have inhabited the territory of the Republic of Croatia from the 14th century. The Roma minority in Croatia is not homogeneous – they speak different languages, have different religious beliefs, and their position is marginalized. According to the 2001 census, 9,463 Roma people were registered in Croatia, but it estimated that between 30,000 and 40,000 Roma people live in Croatia. Living conditions faced by most of the Roma people are difficult, especially because of the high unemployment rate, insufficient involvement in the education system, inadequate

housing conditions, and the arrangement of areas inhabited by the Roma people. In 89% of Roma households, no family member has a permanent source of income (Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Governments of the Republic of Croatia / Ured za ljudska prava i prava nacionalnih manjina vlade Republike Hrvatske, 2017).

Members of the Roma minority enter secondary education less frequently, which presents an obstacle in continuing their education to a higher level (Baranović, 2009). Baranović continues to discuss how a relatively small number of student members of the Roma minority express aspiration for higher education, and only a few actually take part. The report outlines data from the Ministry of Education and Science that in 2007 there were only 10 students from the Roma minority attending higher education.

LGBT students

Findings of a study conducted on a sample of high school students in Croatia show that LGBT students are more often exposed to emotional abuse and physical violence than are their heterosexual counterparts (Jugović & Bezinović, 2015). Thus, they can be seen as a potentially vulnerable group of students in higher education in Croatia (Institute for the Development of Education / Institut za razvoj obrazovanja, 2017).

Students coming from alternative care

In Croatia, around 200 children without adequate parental care or coming from orphanages and foster families finish high school, with some of them wanting to continue their education. However, young people from alternative care often enrol into vocational programmes, after which continuation to a higher level is more difficult. Furthermore, financial difficulties make it difficult for this cohort of young people to continue their education at a higher level (Šimić et al., 2011).

Homeless students and those who are at risk of homelessness

The Croatian Homeless Network reported cases in 2015 and 2016 of young people (among whom were several students) who sought help at regional centres and homeless shelters due to unexpected life circumstances which made them lose their existing place of residence (Office of Ombudsman of Croatia / Ured pučkog pravobranitelja, 2017).

Students from rural areas, small towns, and islands

People living in rural areas are at greater risk of poverty and social exclusion. They have poorer health care and higher unemployment rates (Operational Programme 'Effective Human Resources 2014-2020' / Operativni program Učinkoviti ljudski potencijali 2014.-2020., 2015).

The reasons for underrepresentation of students coming from rural areas include: financial difficulties because higher education institutions are located in cities; schools in rural areas often do not have the same resources as those in urban centres; support of the family and environment for studying is often lower in rural areas as they are not traditional participants in higher education; there is a problem of digital divide in relation to students from urban area who have greater access to the internet and digital resources.

Refugees and asylum seekers

Refugees and asylum seekers in the European and Croatian area are identified as a vulnerable group whose integration must be systematically supported by the national state. The European Commission has recognised refugees, asylum seekers and asylum grantees as a vulnerable group at all levels of education (European Commission / Europska komisija, 2008). The lack of knowledge of the Croatian language and lower socioeconomic status together with the lack of integration into society, education systems, and the labour market, as well as accommodation problems are just some of the problems that these potential students are faced with every day.

Other vulnerable groups

The National Group has further identified the vulnerable position of part-time students, as well as those involved in professional or expert studies.

Part-time students in Croatia comprise about 27% of the overall student population, and about two-thirds of those work while studying (Šćukanec et al., 2013). Their study also indicated that these students are also the ones most likely to have left school earlier than those who go on to full-time study. Half of full-time undergraduates state an intention to continue to postgraduate studies, and only about one third of those studying part-time intend to do the same.

According to EUROSTUDENT research, gymnasium school students make up two thirds of students in higher education, while those from vocational schools make up two thirds of students enrolled on professional studies.

Students report that the average total cost of professional studies have far higher costs than university students, with an average of 29,239 HRK per semester at private colleges and a smaller, but still above average, cost of 16,281 HRK per semester at public colleges. The average cost of students at university is only 14,012 HRK. Despite this, students at universities are more likely to receive scholarships, while students of professional studies primarily have to rely on the income coming from their jobs. More than one third of Croatian students assess their financial difficulties as serious or very serious; this is particularly true for students at public university colleges of applied sciences and community colleges.

FUTURE PLANS: The National Plan for the Improvement of the Social Dimension of Higher Education

The National Group plans to develop several objectives for underrepresented and vulnerable groups in the following areas:

- Improve widening participation in higher education by systematically collecting and processing data

- Increasing attention to, and removing barriers for, access to higher education
- Providing equal opportunities for all students throughout their studies
- Raising graduation rates
- Raising employment rates for the first four months after graduation
- Improving financial support
- Quality assurance.

The National Plan is stepping forward towards widening participation by proposing concrete objects, sub-goals and activities to be carried out primarily by the institutions and bodies in higher education. Additionally, it proposes measurable indicators within a set timeframe for monitoring these achievements.

Activities for implementation are diverse and numerous, but will include:

- Systematisation of existing data and the development of new methodologies for collecting new data
- Stronger collaboration within the secondary education system and improvements in career guidance
- Creation and implementation of a series of measures for equal opportunities for underrepresented and vulnerable groups of students
- Revision of the existing academic programmes and adjustments to make curricula more inclusive for all students; this will include making student internships obligatory
- Student services will be developed to include psychological, career, and academic guidance; counselling services will be made available for all students to access
- Creation and implementation of educational training for university academic, professional, and administrative staff
- Reform of the system of part-time studies
- Facilitation of additional funds for courses with a high rate of employment after graduation with the aim of capacity building

- Facilitation of additional funds for courses with a high share of graduate members of underrepresented and vulnerable groups
- Provision of scholarships for underrepresented or vulnerable students
- Financial aid to students with need
- Ensuring financial aid meets the real costs of study
- Increasing accommodation capacity in halls of residence
- Internal quality assurance to promote and evaluate programmes to widen participation, including external validation or accreditation procedures.

Counselling and student support centres along with adequate and timely financial support have been identified as key activities.

Running in parallel to activities to increase accessibility are the measures for ensuring successful planning or inclusivity. This is expected to be a major challenge for Croatian higher education, and requires a substantial shift in the expectation, understanding, and thinking of the role of university teachers. They are expected not just to teach, but also to engage in encouraging the full professional and personal development of each of their students.

This chapter has presented an illustration of how inclusive higher education is being approached in one country in Europe, Croatia. Many issues and difficulties are the same as those for higher education in the UK. However, the prelude to higher education is slightly different and whilst we have many student cohorts in common, we have additional groups of students – like those who have experienced the war for independence. Since the Strategy of Education, Science and Technology was adopted by Parliament in 2014, higher education providers have been working towards solutions to include underrepresented groups. We have had some success but we continue to monitor our improvements by closely measuring our set indicators.

Note:

To create this paper, three still unofficial documents have been used, two of which are available in draft version and one is still in the progress of being written:

• Members of the National Group for Improvement of the Social Dimension in Higher Education (2016): Underrepresented and vulnerable groups in higher education in Croatia (Članovi Nacionalne skupine za unapređenje socijalne dimenzije visokog obrazovanja (2016): Podzastupljene i ranjive skupine u visokom obrazovanju u Hrvatskoj), http://public.mzos.hr/Default.aspx?art=15067&sec=3674

• Members of the National Group for Improvement of the Social Dimension in Higher Education (in progress): National Plan for Improvement of the Social Dimension in Higher Education in Croatia 2017-2021 (Članovi Nacionalne skupine za unapređenje socijalne dimenzije visokog obrazovanja (u izradi): Nacionalni plan za unapređenje socijalne dimenzije visokog obrazovanja u Republici Hrvatskoj 2017.-2021.)

• Kiš-Glavaš, L. (2016), National Group for Improvement of the Social Dimension in Higher Education: Guidelines for Improvement of the System of Support for Students with Disabilities in Higher Education in Croatia (Nacionalna skupina za unapređenje socijalne dimenzije visokog obrazovanja: Smjernice za unapređenje sustava potpore studentima s invaliditetom u visokom obrazovanju u Republici Hrvatskoj), http://public.mzos.hr/Default.aspx?art=15067&sec=3674

REFERENCES

Baranović, B. (2009) Život Romkinja u Hrvatskoj s naglaskom na pristup obrazovanju. Izvještaj o rezultatima istraživanja. Udruga žena Romkinja „Bolja budućnost". [online] http://www.ijf.hr/socijalna_ukljucenost/adminmax/files/Izvjestaj_ZivotiObrazRomkinja.pdf (accessed 12/12/17)

Baranović, B. (2015) Materijali za radionice s nastavnicima proizašli iz projekta Socijalni identiteti, pristup visokom obrazovanju i odabir studija, financiran sredstvima Hrvatske zaklade za znanost.

Beljo Lučić, R. (2012) Promjena modela financiranja visokih učilišta u Hrvatskoj 2012-2015, Ministarstvo znanosti, obrazovanja i sporta

Biggs, J. & Tang, C. (2011) Teaching for Quality Learning at University. 4th edtion. Maidenhead: Open University Press and McGraw-Hill Education

Burušić, J., Babarović, T. & Marković, N. (2010) Koliko daleko padaju jabuke od stabla? Odnos obrazovnih postignuća djece i obrazovne razine njihovih roditelja. Društvena istraživanja, 108-109 (4-5:709-730)

Croatian Encyclopaedia (Hrvatska enciklopedija) (2017). Domovinski rat, Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, Zagreb, mrežno izdanje. [online] http://www.enciklopedija.hr/natuknica.aspx?id=15884 (accessed 12/12/17)

Doolan, K. (2010) "My dad studied here too": social inequalities and educational (dis)advantage in a Croatian higher education setting. Doctoral theses, University of Cambridge

Doolan, K.; Košutić, I. & Barada, V. (2014) Institucijski poticaji i prepreke za uspjeh u studiju: perspektiva studenata/ica (Izvješće o nalazima istraživanja). Zagreb: Institut za razvoj obrazovanja. [online] http://www.ipa-equality.eu/publikacije/ (accessed 12/12/17)

Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences (2017) About the Faculty. [online] http://www.erf.unizg.hr/en/about-us/about-the-faculty (accessed 12/12/17)

Gregurović, M. & Kuti, S. (2010) Učinak socioekonomskog statusa na obrazovno postignuće učenika: Primjer PISA istraživanja, Hrvatska 2006. Revija za socijalnu politiku, 17(2:179-196)

Hauschildt, K.; Gwosc, C.; Netz, N. & Mishra, S. (2015) Social and Economic Conditions of Student Life in Europe: Synopsis of Indicators. EUROSTUDENT V 2012-2015. Bielefeld: W. Bertelsmann Verlag

Hrvatska.eu (2017), Land and People, Education and Science. [online] http:www.//croatia.eu/article.php?id=35&lang=2 (accessed 12/12/17)

Institute for the Development of Education (2017) Project E-Quality: Linking quality and social inclusion in higher education in Croatia. (Institut za razvoj obrazovanja: Projekt E-Quality: Povezivanje kvalitete i socijalne uključenosti u visokom obrazovanju u Hrvatskoj). [online] http://www.iro.hr/hr/politike-visokog-obrazovanja/socijalna-dimenzija/equality/ (accessed 12/12/17)

Jokić, B. & Ristić-Dedić, Z. (2010) Razlike u školskom uspjehu učenika trećih i sedmih razreda osnovnih škola u Republici Hrvatskoj s obzirom na spol učenika i obrazovanje roditelja: populacijska perspektiva. Revija za socijalnu politiku, 17(3:345-362)

Jugović, I. (2015) Rodna dimenzija odabira područja studija, u: Baranović, B. (ur.). Koji srednjoškolci namjeravaju studirati? Pristup visokom obrazovanju i odabir studija. Zagreb: Institut za društvena istraživanja, 165-185

Jugović, I. & Bezinović, P. (2015) Školska iskustva i percipirana dobrobit učenika koji osjećaju istospolnu privlačnost, u: Zarevski, P., Jurin, T., Modrić Stanke K. (ur.). Zbornik skupa 22. Dani Ramira i Zorana Bujasa, Zagreb, 16-18.travnja, 2015, 89

Kiš-Glavaš, L. (2012) Studenti s invaliditetom u sustavu visokog obrazovanja u Republici Hrvatskoj, u: Opće smjernice (Kiš-Glavaš, L. ur.), priručnik za nastavno, administrativno i stručno osoblje sveučilišta, Sveučilište u Zagrebu, 35-69

Košutić, I.; Puzić, S. & Doolan, K. (2015) Društveni i institucionalni aspekti odluke o studiranju i odabira visokoškolske institucije, u: Baranović, B. (ur.). Koji srednjoškolci namjeravaju studirati? Pristup visokom obrazovanju i odabir studija. Zagreb: Institut za društvena istraživanja, 123-163

Kovač, D. (2015) Growing up Fatherless and Education Outcomes. Rad proizašao iz doktorske disertacije - predstavljen na Sveučilištu Princeton. [online] http://www.ers. princeton.edu/events/ers-events/dejan-kovac-princeton-university-%E2%80%9Cgrowing-fatherless-effects-paternal-mortality (accessed 12/12/17)

London Communiqué (2007) Towards the European Higher Education Area: Responding to Challenges in a Globalised World. [online] http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/Declarations/London_Communique18May2007.pdf (accessed 12/12/17)

Matković, T.; Buković, N.; Lukić, N. & Doolan, K. (2014) Destination uncertain? Trends, perspectives and challenges in strengthening vocational education for social inclusion and social cohesion. Luxembourg: European Training Foundation. [online] http://www. etf.europa.eu/webatt.nsf/0/17E7427BD455393CC1257BC10032C7E5/$file/VET%20x%20 social%20inclusion_Croatia.pdf (accessed 12/12/17)

Mihaljević Kosor, M. (2010) Rani odlazak sa studija: determinante nezavršavanja studija u hrvatskom visokom obrazovanju. Revija za socijalnu politiku, 17(2:197-213)

Ministry of Croatian Veterans (Ministarstvo hrvatskih branitelja) (2016) [online] https://branitelji.gov.hr/fond-za-stipendiranje-hrvatskih-branitelja-iz-domovinskog-rata-i-djece-hrvatskih-branitelja-iz-domovinskog-rata-1489/1489 (accessed 12/12/17)

Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Governments of the Republic of Croatia (Ured za ljudska prava i prava nacionalnih manjina Vlade RH) (2017) Nacionalni program za Rome, Središnji državni portal. [online] https://pravamanjina.gov.hr/nacionalne-manjine/ostvarivanje-prava-romske-nacionalne-manjine/nacionalni-program-za-rome/obiljezja-roma-u-rh/385 (accessed 12/12/17)

Office of Ombudsman of Croatia (2017) Izvješće pučke pravobranieljice za 2016. Godinu. [online] http://ombudsman.hr/hr/naslovna/novost/1061-izvjesce-pucke-pravobraniteljice-za-2016-godinu (accessed 12/12/17)

Operational Programme 'Effective Human Resources 2014-2020' (no date) (Operativni program Učinkoviti ljudski potencijali 2014.-2020.) [online] http://www.strukturnifondovi.hr/op-ucinkoviti-ljudski-potencijali-2014-2020-780(accessed 12/12/17)

Šćukanec, N.; Sinković, M.; Bilić, R.; Doolan, K. & Cvitan, M. (2016) Socijalni i ekonomski uvjeti studentskog života u Hrvatskoj: nacionalno izvješće istraživanja EUROSTUDENT V za Hrvatsku za 2014. Zagreb: Ministarstvo znanosti, obrazovanja i sporta RH. [online] https://vlada.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/Sjednice/2015/238%20sjednica%20Vlade/238%20-%204. pdf(accessed 12/12/17)

Šimić, A.; Kusturin, S. & Zenko, A. (2011) Smjernice za zadovoljavanje potreba mladih izašlih iz sustava skrbi. Zagreb: Udruga „Igra" i Forum za kvalitetno udomiteljstvo djece

The Croatian Constitution, revised text (Ustav Republike Hrvatske, pročišćeni tekst). (no date) [online] http://www.zakon.hr/z/94/Ustav-Republike-Hrvatske(accessed 12/12/17)

The Decision of the Croatian Government on the conditions, criteria, and manner of subsidizing participation fees of studies of full-time students, and co-financing of material costs for public higher education institutions in the Republic of Croatia in the academic years 2015/2016, 2016/2017, and 2017/2018 (Odluka Vlade Republike Hrvatske o uvjetima, kriterijima i načinu subvencioniranja participacije redovitih studenata u troškovima studija i sufinanciranje materijalnih troškova javnim visokim učilištima u Republici Hrvatskoj u akademskim godinama 2015./2016., 2016./2017. i 2017./2018.). [online] https://vlada.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/Sjednice/2015/238%20sjednica%20Vlade/238%20-%204.pdf(accessed 12/12/17)

The European Commision (Europska komisija) (2008) Migration and Mobility: Challenges and Opportunities for EU Education Systems [online] http://www.eubusiness.com/topics/education/migration-eu-education/ (accessed 12/12/17)

The Strategy of Education, Science, and Technology (Strategija obrazovanja, znanosti i tehnologije), Narodne novine, br. 124, 2014.

Urbanc, K.; Laklija, M.; Milić Babić, M. & Branica, V. (2014) Multidimenzionalna analiza socijalne uključenosti studenata s invaliditetom u visokoškolskom obrazovanju – kvalitativno istraživanje, U: Uzun, T. (ur.): Multidimenzionalna analiza socijalne uključenosti djece s teškoćama u razvoju i studenata s invaliditetom u obrazovnom procesu, Izvješće o istraživanju, Hrvatski savez gluhoslijepih osoba Dodir. [online] https://www.dropbox.com/s/mqyuntrm4q0b9fu/Research%20report.pdf?dl=0(accessed 12/12/17)

CHAPTER

1
9

TRANSFORMING THE LEARNING JOURNEY THROUGH INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM DESIGN

Nick Morton and Rachel Curzon

INTRODUCTION

This chapter reflects upon the transformative journey higher education (HE) students take from entrant to graduate. In particular it explores the design and co-creation of an integrated, inclusive curriculum purposely intended to support students on this learning journey, and thereby help to close the inclusivity gap.

During 2015-16, Birmingham City University embarked on an ambitious project of Transforming the Curriculum across all faculties and programmes. The motivation for this was both to improve the university's standing within the UK HE sector and to ensure the delivery of excellent teaching provision. The project was designed to encourage a fundamental review and clarification of the academic offer and its underlying philosophy, underpinned by the guiding principle of the university's Academic Plan: to pursue excellence by providing practice-led, knowledge-applied education that is interdisciplinary, employability-driven, and internationalised (Birmingham City University, 2016a).

This chapter reflects on the strategy employed in the Faculty of Computing, Engineering & the Built Environment (CEBE), a science-based faculty which delivers programmes ranging from Architectural Technology and Construction Management, Automotive and Mechanical Engineering, to Computer Science and Film Production Technology. The transformation of its programmes through a student-centred process to create a positive learning journey for all students does not impose detailed, prescriptive structures, but proposes a common framework and explores transferable practices based on primary experience and wider understanding with links to appropriate literature.

Birmingham City University is a large urban university spread across three principal campuses with over 23,000 students. The university aims to provide "quality, student-focused education in a professional and friendly environment" with a focus on "practical skills and professional relevance [which] is producing some of the country's most employable graduates" (Birmingham City University, 2016b:np). At the heart of the University, as demonstrated through the actions of both staff and students, are four core values (Excellence, People-focused, Partnership Working, and Fairness and Integrity) (Birmingham City University, 2016c). The university's mission, "to transform the prospects of individuals, employers and society through excellence in practice-based education, research and knowledge exchange" (Birmingham City University, 2016d:np), is reflected by the approach taken in CEBE.

The students at Birmingham City University are a diverse mixture of full and part time, undergraduate and postgraduate, home and international individuals; over 80 countries are represented in the student population (Birmingham City University, 2016b:np). The university has a higher-than-average number of commuter students whose home and term-time addresses are the same, and in 2014-15 71% were in this category (Birmingham City University, 2016e:np). Additionally, whilst the HE sector reported in 2013-14 that the student population (UK domiciled, full-time, undergraduates) was 78% white and 22% Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME), the student population at Birmingham City University was 55% white and 45% BAME (Birmingham City University, 2015:np). 58% of students are under 21, whilst 26% are between 21-24 years of age. 64% of students are female, 36% male, and ten per cent of students declared a disability in 2013-14; but the proportion, in particular, of male to female varies considerably between faculties. Considering our particularly diverse student population is therefore an especially important component of transforming the learning journey and ensuring inclusivity.

THE STRATEGY: EMBRACING A FLIPPED CURRICULUM TO PROMOTE INCLUSION AND ENCOURAGE ACTIVE LEARNING

The strategy that was developed and applied in CEBE is based on a value-added curriculum. This is defined as the range of opportunities that reflect the student partnership ethos: greater representation

and involvement in key decision-making processes in programme development and delivery, an extended focus on induction and transition, and co-design of active learning and teaching (field visits; practical labs; etc.). The university has a longstanding commitment to student partnership, with encouragement and support (through a variety of mechanisms) for students to be proactive change agents and to share their ideas of learning and teaching with staff to enhance learning opportunities (Birmingham City University, 2016f).

The University advocates that "student engagement should not be confined just to the curriculum, but should be woven throughout the fabric of the whole student experience" (ibid:np) and, embracing this view, the learning and teaching strategy in CEBE is founded on a move to flipped learning. This method provides students with the opportunity to practice professional skills in a hands-on way, and a flipped curriculum enables them to do so from early in the programme, moving from formative, introductory tasks through to evaluation and reflective problem-solving at higher levels (Bergmann & Sams, 2012; Berrett, 2012; Bowen, 2012). This approach also lends itself to work-based learning modes of delivery, where that practice knowledge can be very easily mapped to what happens in an actual industrial setting. Flipped learning also presumes a general move away from didactic PowerPoint teaching to active learning in smaller groups facilitated by a range of additional support mechanisms (Gibbs, 1988; Kolb, 1984; Kolb et al., 2014). Adopting techniques which encourage active learning can have many positive impacts, including increased critical discussion, enhanced transferable skills, deeper learning and a greater willingness to share and apply knowledge in the perceived safe environment of the smaller group (Meyers & Jones, 1993; Prince, 2004; Keeler & Steinhorst, 1995; Freeman et al., 2014; Bea, 2011).

This shift towards flipped learning encourages a more inclusive attitude to learning and teaching, delivered through a range of related pedagogic approaches variously described as social learning (Fry et al., 2008), learning by doing or problem-based learning (Boud & Feletti, 1998; Schwartz et al., 2001; Savin-Baden, 2000) and understanding different learning styles / conceptions of learning (Biggs & Tang, 2011; Entwistle et al., 2000 & 2013; Race, 2007 & 2010; Ramsden 2003). It uses a variety of techniques to encourage participation and engage a wide range of learners.

ESTABLISHING SHARED PRINCIPLES

Turning to the process of curriculum design, key to the transformation of the learning journey to embed inclusivity was the creation, discussion, and agreement of a set of guiding principles, honed through extensive debate with staff and student groups. These principles aimed to build a shared understanding of how our overarching philosophy - an enriched curriculum delivered through an active learning approach - would be translated into the design and approval of our programmes.

The framework is built on the following features:

1) *Designing innovative, internationally-relevant programmes that lead to graduate employment*

   - active involvement all our key stakeholders (students, staff, industry partners, professional bodies, and others) in the design and approval process

   - this draws on the belief that stakeholder engagement and collaborative design enhances the quality and relevance of the programmes. Research completed by others in this field (for example, Bovill et al., 2011; Bovill, 2014; Voogt et al., 2015; Oliver & Hyun, 2011) has been particularly useful in refining the approach taken.

2) *Delivering an outstanding learning experience through contemporary and innovative pedagogy*

   - continually challenge ourselves to improve the quality of our learning and teaching practice

   - engage and inspire our students by applying the principles of flipped learning to our curriculum

   - design assessment that excites and engages students as active partners in their learning

   - enable all students to be part of a bigger research or innovative practice initiative through their final

year project, blending the creation of an artefact with reflective evaluation in the form of a research paper

Through understanding not only what is required in terms of quality assurance but having an awareness of the debates in this area (including Gibbs, 2010; Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2014; Aithal et al., 2015; Carey, 2013; Skolnik, 2010), our approach to learning and teaching strives towards genuine quality enhancement. An additional output of this new approach should also be an enhanced community of learning (Tinto, 1997, 2000 & 2003) which in turn should have positive implications for student experience, retention and success. Exploring how assessment can be used to engage students and enhance their learning (Gibbs & Simpson, 2004; Astin, 2012; Boud et al., 2014; Knight, 2012) has been an important area of discussion, and has led to the creation of consciously varied approaches to assessment.

3) *Supporting students to engage in shaping their learning*

- design tutoring and mentoring initiatives to support our diverse students into induction and transition, through personal and professional development, and into graduate employment

- actively involve students in decision-making to add value and reflect a partnership ethos

- create in or near-curricula memorable experiences for every programme.

Birmingham City University has a longstanding commitment to student engagement through its staff-student partnerships, mentoring schemes and peer interventions at university, faculty and school level. We believe that this principle offers multiple positive outcomes cross-cutting student retention, progression, success, and satisfaction, whilst also enhancing the individual experience of students. The effectiveness of such an approach is evidenced through various findings (Bovill, 2013; Bovill & Felten, 2016; Cook-Sather et al., 2014; Healey et al., 2014; Johnson, 2015; Kahu, 2013; Kuh et al., 2008; Morton et al., 2014; Nygaard et al., 2013; Streitwieser & Light, 2010; Thomas, 2012).

FROM PRINCIPLES TO REALITY: DESIGNING AN INTEGRATED CURRICULUM: MAKING THE IMPLICIT EXPLICIT

In pursuing this holistic approach to curriculum design, we were acutely aware that students would need to understand how inclusivity would feed into the lived experience of their programmes. Therefore, as part of a shared approach adopted across the university, all programme specifications now include Statements of Intent specifically designed to prepare students for critical aspects of their learning experience. They address in detail a wide range of topics including widening participation; information and digital literacy; sustainability and global citizenship; and inclusivity itself.

Within each programme, these themes have then been developed in a context-specific form; for example, the redesigned BSc Construction Management programme includes a module entitled Professionalism and Citizenship to address inclusivity within the construction industry. Data published in 2016 indicate that only 4% of the UK construction industry workforce is drawn from the BAME community, whilst the proportion of women has been largely static for several years at around 13% (Glenigan, 2016). Those with a disability represent approximately 14% of the workforce, compared to 19% in the general population (deGraft-Johnson et al., 2009). By confronting and exploring aspects of diversity, inclusion and exclusion as a core part of the curriculum, we will build appreciation at a formative stage of our students' own professional development, and enable them to become agents of change within the industry. Such an approach may be unusual in a traditionally technical subject such as construction, but, endorsed by our partners in the design process, this commitment is made explicit through a student-centred framework shaping the learning and teaching strategy. It is founded on the changemaker principles developed at the University of Northampton, and delivered through social innovation (Curtis, 2013; Alden Rivers et al., 2015):

1. Believe in responsibility to make positive changes in society
2. Have the power and resources to make a difference (tangible and intangible)
3. Take initiative to bring about innovative change, local and systematic

4. Work with others to maximise impact, working in groups and networks
5. Know and live authentically according to one's values
6. Practice empathy by engaging in another person's world without judgement.

Each module will embed changemaker attributes such as emotional and social intelligence, intended to shape our students as life-long professional learners able to make positive changes both in their own lives and in wider society.

ENGAGING STUDENTS IN THEIR LEARNING

Practice-based study is at the heart of all these programmes. By using flipped learning as a vehicle to actively engage students in the learning process, we will encourage them to apply theoretical knowledge and fundamental principles to real-world problems (through the medium of case-study work; projects sourced from placement experience and industrial partners; and applied research), and by facilitating a reflective approach to this process so that students are able to appreciate learning requirements and assess their own learning gain (Higher Education Funding Council for England, 2017).

For example, in the first-year module Socio-Technical Systems, on the redesigned BSc Business Information Systems programme, the content will be supplemented by structured workshops based on an organisational case study which will be presented to the students in segments relevant to the topic of the week. The workshops will require students to apply problem solving, or discuss a specific aspect and report back, or role play, etc. Crucially, in addition to the element of active reflection facilitated through the flipped curriculum, students will be expected to make an active contribution to the development of a positive and inclusive learning culture. For example, undergraduate students who have previously been through a placement year, or other form of industry engagement or extra-curricular project, will be asked to share aspects of their experiences with their colleagues. Such positive role models help to engender a proactive approach to learning from all students, and reinforce the employability benefits of our programmes.

Indeed, enhancing graduate employability is central to the approach to learning and teaching across the faculty. Subject experts, including graduate recruiters, have also had input into programme review and development, mainly focusing on wider graduate attributes such as developing a portfolio of work, the ability to demonstrate flexibility and adaptability, and encouraging innovation.

A CURRICULUM CASE STUDY: RE-ENGINEERING ENGINEERING

As a detailed example, the faculty's Engineering degree programme has been subject to a root and branch reappraisal encompassing programme structure, teaching material and style, intended to directly address core concerns around student satisfaction, retention and employability. Crucially, those changes have been directly driven by the views of current and former students and their employers, gathered through various means including online and face-to-face discussion groups. The redesigned curriculum places a much greater emphasis on the practical aspects of the subject - learning by doing - rather than lecturing, and on the development of a much more engaging weekly timetable for students. The programmes will provide opportunities for students to work in multidisciplinary teams, reflecting the need for today's engineers to be broadly based and appreciative of the skills of their peers, and in support of widening participation we are working with the WISE campaign (https://www. wisecampaign.org.uk) to offer inspiration and practical advice to female students interested in engineering careers.

One feature common to all routes and levels is our intention that our programmes must provide momentum to the students' learning. To achieve this, not only must the content and delivery style be attractive, but the pace of delivery must also be engaging. Students must want to attend the university and naturally engage with the programmes, rather than having to attend for monitoring purposes. We have therefore carefully developed the curriculum to be inclusive of diverse backgrounds, qualifications and learning styles, to deliver a stimulating agenda and a carefully structured, thematic approach to the learning journey:

Level 4: Learning to think like an engineer

We have redesigned the first-year curriculum to be a generic primer for all our engineering disciplines, featuring a much broader syllabus which offers the students a greater range of learning opportunities and styles, and two clearly-defined practical skills modules. All students are supported through a comprehensive, peer-led approach to transition into higher education, beginning with pre-arrival outreach and providing ongoing mentoring during the crucial first phase of university life (Morton et al., 2017). Small-group tutorials closely integrated into the teaching programme will run throughout the year.

Level 5: Focusing on your engineering discipline

In the second year, level 5, students start to focus upon their chosen discipline, but we have deliberately introduced an interdisciplinary activity to bring them together to work in teams on challenging projects. Not only will this reinforce the interdisciplinary nature of engineering and enhance students' communication skills, but it will also equip them with the skills needed to go out on industrial placements the following year.

Level 6: Becoming a graduate engineer

To generate meaningful projects, industrial partners will be asked to supply real project challenges to our students, presented at the end of the year, back to industry in an exhibition setting. We believe that industrial input here will increase the students' employability and create a challenging and memorable event for our students. It will also increase the dialogue between staff and industry and generate a useful and positive media presence.

Thus, through an iterative process of evaluation, reflection, and redesign, we have created a structured study programme that we believe will be accessible to a diverse range of students, and will support engagement and success in their academic endeavours.

REFLECTIONS

The process of curriculum review and redesign has proven to be an immensely rewarding undertaking, and has led to many interesting and challenging conversations. Ongoing discussions with our various stakeholders have directly informed the content of the programmes and have formed an invaluable part of our development. However, we should not understate the resources necessary in both intellectual and practical terms, and there have certainly been the usual concomitant difficulties of time pressures and compromise inevitable with any such major project. Nevertheless, our experience has suggested a number of transferable principles and examples for others to consider adapting and employing:

Develop shared principles in a collegiate and transparent setting

Time invested in the creation and agreement of ground-rules proves invaluable in establishing a firm foundation for inclusive curriculum design. We drew upon the wider literature to provide an integrated set of principles guiding design, pedagogy, student engagement, and the learning environment, before any detailed work commenced.

Be open to the possibilities offered by co-creation of the curriculum

By reaching out to our internal and external stakeholders to be directly involved as partners in the transformation project, we ensured authenticity in the design process. Students were involved at every step, from initial concept, through development stages in steering and focus groups, to the final approval panels.

Set clear expectations to prepare students for the learning journey

In making explicit our commitment to inclusive, personal and professional development, we believe our students will be enabled both as individual learners and as agents of positive change in their profession and wider society.

Structure the curriculum to scaffold learning for the benefit of all

By establishing a thematic focus for each level of study, supported with transition and mentoring projects, we will create a clear path to success for diverse student groups.

Next steps

Of course, designing an integrated, inclusive curriculum is merely the beginning of a much longer-term process of monitoring and review. Evaluating the success of these new programmes, and the learning and teaching approaches adopted within them, will enable us to consider their effectiveness in enhancing the student learning journey and truly delivering upon our commitment to inclusivity.

REFERENCES

Alden Rivers, B.; Armellini, A. & Nie, M. (2015) Embedding social innovation and social impact across the disciplines: identifying "Changemaker" attributes. Higher Education Skills and Work-Based Learning. 5(3):242-257

Aithal, P.S.; Rao, S. & Kumar, P.M. (2015) Quality Enhancement in Higher Education Institutions: A case study of SIMS. International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development. 2(5):18-31

Astin, A.W. (2012) Assessment for excellence: The philosophy and practice of assessment and evaluation in higher education. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield

Bean, J.C. (2011) Engaging ideas: The professor's guide to integrating writing, critical thinking, and active learning in the classroom. London: John Wiley & Sons

Bergmann, J. & Sams, A. (2012) Flip Your Classroom: Reach Every Student in Every Class Every Day; International Society for Technology in Education. Washington, DC: International Society for Technology in Education

Berrett, D. (2012) How 'Flipping' the Classroom Can Improve the Traditional Lecture. Chronicle of Higher Education. 58 (25):A16-A18

Biggs, J. & Tang, C. (2011) Teaching for quality learning at university. 4th ed. Buckingham: The Society for Research into Higher Education & Open University Press

Birmingham City University (2015) Staff and student profiles 2015 version 2 'HESA core data 2013-14 for UK domicile, Full-Time, Undergraduates. [online] http://www.bcu.ac.uk/about-us/corporate-information/equality-and-diversity/key-terms-and-populations (accessed 26/10/16)

Birmingham City University (2016a) Birmingham City University Academic Plan 2015-16. Birmingham: Birmingham City University

Birmingham City University (2016b) Birmingham City University: About Us. [online] http://www.bcu.ac.uk/about-us (accessed 26/10/16)

Birmingham City University (2016c) Birmingham City University: Core Values. [online] http://www.bcu.ac.uk/about-us/job-hunters/core-values (accessed 26/10/16)

Birmingham City University (2016d) Birmingham City University: Mission Statement. [online] http://www.bcu.ac.uk/about-us/corporate-information/missions-statement (accessed 26/10/16)

Birmingham City University (2016e) PPD (Planning and Performance Department). Newsletter, issue 8, Birmingham: Birmingham City University

Birmingham City University (2016f) Birmingham City University: Student Engagement. [online] http://www.bcu.ac.uk/about-us/celt/student-engagement/overview (accessed 26/10/16)

Boud, D. & Feletti, G. (1998) The Challenge of Problem-Based Learning. London: Kogan Page

Boud, D.; Cohen, R. & Sampson, J. (eds) (2014) Peer learning in higher education: Learning from and with each other. New York: Routledge

Bovill, C. (2014) An investigation of co-created curricula within higher education in the UK, Ireland and the USA. Innovations in Education and Teaching International. 51(1):15-25

Bovill, C.; Bulley, C.J. & Morss, K. (2011) Engaging and empowering first-year students through curriculum design: perspectives from the literature. Teaching in Higher Education. 16(2):197-209

Bovill, C. (2013) Students and staff co-creating curricula: An example of good practice in higher education? In E. Dunne & D. Owen (eds) (2013a) The student engagement handbook: Practice in higher education. Bingley: Emerald

Bovill, C. & Felten, P. (2016) Cultivating student-staff partnerships through research and practice. International Journal for Academic Development. 21(1)

Bowen, J. A. (2012) Teaching Naked: How moving technology out of your college classroom will improve student learning. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

Cook-Sather, A.; Bovill, C. & Felten, P. (2014) Engaging students as partners in learning and teaching: A guide for faculty. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

Curtis, T. (2013) UoN Changemaker campus presentation. [online] http://www.slideshare.net/curtistim/uon-Changemaker-campus-presentation-sept-2013 (accessed 21/12/17)

de Graft-Johnson, A.; Sara, R.; Gleed, F. & Brkljac, N. (2009) Gathering and Reviewing Data on Diversity within the Construction Professions. Bristol: University of the West of England

Entwistle, N. J.; Tait, H. & McCune, V. (2000) Patterns of response to approaches to studying inventory across contrasting groups and contexts. European Journal of the Psychology of Education. 15:33-48

Entwistle, N.; McCune, V, & Tait, H. (2013) Approaches and Study Skills Inventory for Students (ASSIST) - report of the development and use of the inventories (updated March, 2013). [online] https://www.researchgate.net/publication/50390092_Approaches_to_learning_and_studying_inventory_ASSIST_3rd_edition (accessed 21/12/17)

Fry, H.; Kettridge, S. & Marshall, S. (eds) (2008) A Handbook for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education: Enhancing Academic Practice. 3rd ed. Abingdon: Routledge

Freeman, S.; Eddy, S.L.; McDonough, M.; Smith, M.K.; Okoroafor, N.; Jordt, H. & Wenderoth, M.P. (2014) Active learning increases student performance in science, engineering, and mathematics. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. 111(23):8410-8415

Gibbs, G. (1988) Learning by Doing: A Guide to Teaching and Learning Methods. London:Further Education Unit. Out of print, but available at: http://www2.glos.ac.uk/gdn/gibbs/

Gibbs, G. & Simpson, C. (2004) Does your assessment support your students' learning? Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. 1(1):3-31

Gibbs, G. (2010) Dimensions of quality. York: Higher Education Academy

Gleningan (2016) UK Industry Performance Report. [online] https://www.glenigan.com/email-marketing/kpi-report-2016   (accessed 21/12/17)

Healey, M.; Flint, A. & Harrington, K. (2014) Students as partners in learning and teaching in higher education. York: Higher Education Academy

Higher Education Funding Council for England (2017) Learning gain [online] http://www.hefce.ac.uk/lt/lg/ (accessed 21/1/17)

Johnson, B.W. (2015) On Being a Mentor: A Guide for Higher Education Faculty. 2nd Edition. New York: Routledge

Kahu, E.R. (2013) Framing student engagement in higher education. Studies in Higher Education. 38(5):758-773

Keeler, C.M. & Steinhorst, R.K. (1995), Using small groups to promote active learning in the introductory statistics course: A report from the field. Journal of Statistics Education. 3(2):1-8

Kolb, D. A. (1984) Experiential Leaning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development. London: Prentice Hall

Kolb, D.A.; Boyatzis, R.E. & Mainemelis, C. (2014) Experiential Learning Theory: Previous Research and New Directions. In R.J. Sternberg & L.F. Zhang (eds) Perspectives on thinking, learning, and cognitive styles. New York: Routledge

Knight, P. (ed) (2012) Assessment for learning in higher education. London: Kogan Page

Kuh, G.D.; Cruce, T.M.; Shoup, R.; Kinzie, J. & Gonyea, R.M. (2008) Unmasking the effects of student engagement on first-year college grades and persistence. The Journal of Higher Education. 79(5):540-563

Meyers, C. & Jones, T.B. (1993) Promoting Active Learning. Strategies for the College Classroom. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

Morton, N.; Vincent, W. & Curzon, R. (2014) Student Academic Partners in Built Environment Education [online] https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resource/student-academic-partners-built-environment-education (accessed 21/12/17)

Morton, N.; Vincent, W.; Schiessel Harvey, N. & Curzon, R. (2017) 'Thank you for taking the time to understand': a critical reflection on peer-led interventions in enhancing early experiences of higher education'. International Journal of Construction Education and Research. forthcoming

Nygaard, C.; Brand, S.; Bartholomew, P. & Millard, L. (eds) (2013) Student Engagement: Identity, Motivation and Community. Oxfordshire: Libri Publishing

Oliver, S.L. & Hyun, E. (2011) Comprehensive curriculum reform in higher education: Collaborative engagement of faculty and administrators. Journal of Case Studies in Education. 2:1

Prince, M. (2004) Does active learning work? A review of the research. Journal of engineering education. 93(3):223-231.

Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (2014) The UK Quality Code for Higher Education: A brief guide. [online] www.qaa.ac.uk/qualitycode   (accessed 21/12/17)

Race, P. (2007) The Lecturer's Toolkit: a practical guide to assessment, learning and teaching. 3rd ed. Abingdon: Routledge

Race, P. (2010) Making Learning Happen: A Guide for Post-Compulsory Education. 2nd ed. London: Sage

Ramsden P. (2003) Learning to Teach in Higher Education. London: Routledge

Savin-Baden, M. (2000) Problem-Based Learning In Higher Education: Untold Stories. Buckingham: Open University Press/SRHE

Schwartz, P.; Mennin, S. & Webb, G. (2001) Problem-based Learning: Case studies, experience and practice. London: Kogan Page

Skolnik, M.L. (2010) Quality assurance in higher education as a political process. Higher Education Management and Policy. 22(1):1-20

Streitwieser, B. & Light, G. (2010) When Undergraduates Teach Undergraduates: Conceptions of and Approaches to Teaching in a Peer Led Team Learning Intervention in the STEM Disciplines - Results of a Two-Year Study. International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. 22(3):346-356

Thomas, L. (2012) Building Student Engagement and Belonging in Higher Education at a Time of Change: final report from the What Works? Student Retention and Success programme. York: Higher Education Academy

Tinto, V. (1997) Classrooms as communities: Exploring the educational character of student persistence. Journal of Higher Education. 68 (6):599-623

Tinto, V. (2000). What have we learned about the impact of learning communities on students? Assessment Update. 12(2):1–2

Tinto, V. (2003) Learning better together: The impact of learning communities on student success. Higher Education Monograph Series. 1(8)

Voogt, J.; Laferrière, T.; Breuleux, A.; Itow, R.C.; Hickey, D.T. & McKenney, S. (2015) Collaborative design as a form of professional development. Instructional Science. 43(2):259-282

20

CHAPTER

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE –
THE ROAD TO INCLUSIVITY

Nick Gee

INTRODUCTION

Higher Education Providers (HEPs) in today's marketplace are seeing an ever-increasing need to meet the demands of a richly diverse student and stakeholder body. We need to maximise student engagement and experience; to score well in league tables and satisfaction surveys; to promote social mobility; and to be seen as current and accepting even though the landscape of the sector has changed dramatically in recent years. This can pose challenges to staff as these changes to their workplace, since they began their own careers, can lead to a damaging mix of fear, resistance, apathy or malaise.

Higher Education Providers have gone through many rebrands to try and achieve this aim and to secure their positions in application, attainment and attrition league tables. However, this has, in certain circumstances, resulted in a model being implemented (in good faith) which links closely with that particular provider's model and core values, but does not necessarily consider the needs of all. Often it can be seen that so-called inclusivity strategies have been implemented because there is a general awareness that one is needed; but if implementation only happens as a tick box exercise, it can be perilous and not achieve the desired results.

What is required is a deeper mindfulness and an emotionally intelligent appreciation of our staff, student and stakeholders' diversity coupled with a genuine, honest and open desire to be current in our thinking and truly inclusive of all.

This chapter will highlight and consider the pitfalls of corporate inclusion for HEPs in today's society. We live in a world where

accountability is key, and discrimination has become almost a throw-away phrase levelled at any person or organisation who does not meet the expectations or their end users.

Staff are incredibly busy and do not necessarily think that there is anything wrong with their teaching or service provision. In many cases there isn't anything wrong as such, but to stay abreast of the reality, we need to take time out to self-check and to consider our customs and practices. It is understood that this can be very fear-provoking for academics who have forged long and eminent careers in their fields by doing things the way they have always done them, often without turbulence of scandal.

Sadly, however, today one does not have far to go to find a lawyer who will attempt to sue people for doing pretty much anything which has made them unhappy, either recently or in the past, and we do have to give some serious thought to how inclusive, open and appropriate we are in our customs and practices. The greater the appreciation we have, the more universally we can design our learning and teaching strategies and overall service provision.

Through reading this chapter and engaging with its activities, you will be able to consider carefully what the needs of your students and stakeholders may be, how best to facilitate these needs and set out on a journey to really get to grips with the rich diversity which makes up the education sector.

The activities in this chapter can be carried out individually; over different time periods; alone or in groups/teams. Whilst this chapter is aimed primarily at academic staff, it would be very useful for all staff to undertake these activities, particularly those at both the top and the bottom of your HEP's hierarchy as fully inclusive provision runs from the front door, right through to the Vice Chancellor's office with no breaks in between.

To achieve true inclusivity, we first need to consider the emotional intelligence required to underpin inclusive thought and practice, and this chapter will aim to outline the potential pitfalls of corporate inclusion whereby practices and resources can be badged as inclusive when in fact they are not, as off the peg measures rarely succeed in being accessible for all. Many organisations, and on occasions

education providers pay lip service to the notion of needing to be seen as inclusive and open, as it is generally seen as the right stance to take. However, measures which are rushed, ill thought out, or otherwise restrained seldom achieve the goals to which they purport.

Many organisations can be guilty of feeling they have it right, and thereby rolling out their corporate model throughout their facilities. But how often is it questioned whether the measures taken are appropriate for the customer?

Many organisations use corporate land marking to draw us into their brand, and thus we know what to expect when we arrive at certain establishments. Consider the budget hotel industry; wherever you travel in the world, a hotel from a large budget chain will look and feel the same. The model is rolled out on a huge scale.

We are all very familiar with this corporate model which screams: this is who we are, what we do and how we do it. One quickly identifies that everything is the same from the fixtures and fittings, the layout, style, menus, everything down to the language and phrases used by the staff is often standardised. But is this appropriate? I, for one, cannot confidently say that I have ever met a standard human being.

So, too, can we go down our high street and know exactly where the well-known cosmetics suppliers are situated as their overpowering aroma hits us, and (supposedly) draws us in to the brand. Many high-end hotels and fashion houses have spent millions of pounds on commissioning their own signature scent (White, 2011). This can be welcoming and homely, reassuring and classy, but is it what the population at large needs? Several mid- to high-end fashion outlets have adopted a signature look and feel, but it is so often accompanied by on-trend fads such as mood lighting (bring a flashlight with you), and a very select demographic of staff who are on hand to serve you, not necessarily to help you. Counters are often set at a standard height, as are clothes rails, and often there will be an oversized accessible changing room set deep within the shop which can only be accessed after negotiating many other obstacles. Most stores will have a more accessible area, such as the immediate vicinity of the accessible changing room or toilet but the ethos of being truly inclusive has not transferred through to the entire brand and shopping experience.

It can of course be argued that this is difficult to achieve. For example, the accessible facilities might be set nearer to the doors or around the edges of the store, which might be more logistically viable in providing clear access routes, but does this inadvertently give the message that accessibility and inclusivity are bolted on rather than taken to the heart of the business? By keeping these facilities on the periphery, we are not achieving true inclusivity at all.

In essence, this is what happened in the UK when a positive duty was first put on all public bodies to promote disability equality (Disability Equality Duty, 2005), and again in 2011 under the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act (2010). In response to these duties almost every retail outlet and facility accessed by the public set to work installing ramps, widening doors and dropping kerbs. And then stopped. This kind of tick box approach to inclusivity is not only blinkered and outdated, but can be costly for organisations in the longer term as retrofitting facilities is more costly than getting it right from the outset. We also live in a time when there is an ever-increasing culture of litigation and bad press is instantaneous in this digital age. It is generally accepted therefore that whilst we will not get it right for everyone all of the time, we must follow our duty to be anticipatory in our approach (Equality Act, 2010) and therefore ensure that as far as reasonably practicable we are mindful and prepared to take a truly inclusive approach from the ground up.

Whilst the Equality Act (2010) requires us to be anticipatory in our approach and provision, I would urge the reader to be aware that there is a fine line between anticipatory and prejudiced as it can be hard for us to anticipate unless we have a preconceived idea, experience or other reason to think in a certain way. The key is to let these preconceptions inform a deeper consideration to ensure all angles are considered as far as reasonably practicable and foreseeable. Taking this approach can help to avoid the pitfalls of becoming casually racist, sexist, ableist, etc.

These examples relate not only to the service, retail and leisure industries, but to all industries as the approach and subsequent challenges are prevalent across all sectors, including higher education and this is particularly relevant in the current climate whereby fee-paying students are often regarded as customers.

Most large organisations have spotted this change and have at least a passing awareness of their duties under the Equality Act 2010. However, most boardroom agendas cite umbrella phrases such as Equal Opportunities, Equality and Diversity or Inclusion and tend to focus around accessibility and disability, which only goes part way towards meeting our duties as achieving true inclusivity on a universal scale requires much greater thought and empathy.

To achieve inclusivity and build in emotionally intelligent measures to enable us to do so, we first need to get to grips with the three key components which form the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). In short, these are referred to as what, how and why (Meyer et al., 2014).

- Principle I: Provide Multiple Means of Representation (the "what" of learning)

- Principle II: Provide Multiple Means of Action and Expression (the "how" of learning)

- Principle III: Provide Multiple Means of Engagement (the "why" of learning).

For this chapter I would like to introduce a further component of 'who'.

- Ensure awareness and inclusion of all stakeholders (the "who" of learning) .

IDENTIFYING THE 'WHAT'

QUESTION

What is your core business, service you provide or product that you sell?

To take our first step towards achieving inclusivity we need to identify what our purpose is and what exactly we do in the sector. Rather than coming up with a quick surface response, we need to take some time and go on a journey to check we actually understand fully what the purpose of our core business is, and being mindful that there is seldom only one.

Most people can operate in life with a surface knowledge of many things, and a working understanding of who provides which services and where to go to access the things we need. However, we can also often be guilty of thinking we know what certain establishments do, and as a consumer this can lead to us feeling let down if, ultimately, we do not receive the service we were expecting.

As we live in an ever increasingly litigious society and are by default needing to become more customer-focused, it is imperative we understand what we do, how we do it and where this fits into the marketplace to deliver and meet the expectations and requirements of those who access our services.

It is common that when asked about the function of certain establishments we may provide something of an 'off the peg' catch all answer such as supermarkets sell groceries, hospitals treat the sick, educational establishments teach people and airports send and receive passengers on flights.

Conversely, we can make assumptions of certain professionals whereby we think we know what their jobs entail. Shopkeepers sell goods, nurses treat the sick, teachers teach, pilots fly planes. Not incorrect, but blinkered. How much more do each of these establishments and professionals actually do and how? What additional things do they do explicitly which we may just never have noticed, or implicitly behind the scenes which we have never made it our business to find out?

Inclusivity starts with a knowing anticipation and this cannot be achieved until we have taken a journey to see what goes on around us, to look at our roles within our sector of employment and how this impacts on our students, customers, clients, service users etc.

Take for example your Educational Establishment. It may well be

that many students expect that they will attend here to be taught. Others may feel that they attend to be facilitated to learn. Some may be here to develop their practical and specialist skills in honing a trade; some may be studying as a fun pastime after retirement, whilst others are fresh out of college and looking for the qualifications they require to secure their footing on the first rung of the career ladder.

These factors are well and good, but they are still only a surface scratch of the service that most HEPs provide the world over. So, let's take another look, a closer look, through the eyes of an emotionally intelligent practitioner.

How many people, on any given day are just passing through your HEP? Who is there for a conference being hosted by another department, of which you have no idea what they do? Who is there to deliver teaching or office equipment? Are there any exhibitors or traders on site today? Who is that visiting lecturer who is looking a little lost? Who is moving into halls of residence for the first time today, and is anyone moving out? Why? How come there seem to be two parents sitting in the foyer looking anxious and worried. When is your next open day, and do you know who is attending? Who is, as you read this book, overseas presenting at a conference, or exhibiting at the careers fair at the local college? What government or other projects are being worked on right now, and how many collaborations are being worked on between your HEP and others? What community and charitable work is going on, and are you involved in any way?

Okay, so now we have looked a little wider we can see that there are, in fact, many other work streams in which our HEPs are involved, which we may never have considered, or have only considered when they directly affect us and our position within our places of work. But this in itself is an exclusive approach, which breeds silo working and is at odds with our desire to achieve inclusivity.

*REMEMBER THIS THOUGHT POINT -
YOU CANNOT DO INCLUSIVITY EXCLUSIVELY.*

Activity

This week's challenge comes in three parts.

Firstly, take a look at your HEP/Faculty's internal directory and pick out a department or section the work of which you know little or nothing about. Try to select a department which, if you are being honest, you feel you probably ought to know more about. Okay, that's the easy part done. Now comes the challenge... I want you to contact that department or a member of staff who works within it whom you do not already know, or at least do not know well, and arrange to meet with them to find out more about what they do.

Secondly, prepare a short set of notes (don't worry, these are just for you to see) about what you think that person or department does. How do you get in contact with them if you need to? Would you ever need to refer anyone to them and if so, how do you do it? How long have they been established? How many people are there in their team? etc.

Lastly, after your meeting, refer to your notes. How accurate were you? Did you have a good appreciation of what they do, and did you learn anything new? Did you identify the potential for closer partnership working and what benefits can you see in this? How did you feel when you were making the first move to contact this department that you knew nothing about? How did they receive your request, and what clues does this give you as to how your students might feel when they are asked to make contact with people and departments whose roles are unclear to them?

Tip

For ongoing CPD in this area and to further develop your skills of being an inclusivity champion, make it your mission each month to find out about one new project which you do not have awareness of or involvement with that is taking place within your HEI. See if there are any links which can be established and whether there is any collaborative work which you could initiate? Is there a way you can offer support, assistance or expertise with any of these projects, and can you receive the same from them? Be careful not to be seen to be jumping on other people's bandwagons. Remember this is about working together inclusively not touting for accolades.

QUESTION

Who do you provide your service to/for, and what does your client base look like?

Building on what you learnt from your new introductions, you will have gained a greater insight into the fact that your organisation is much larger than your part in it. In order for an organisation of any kind to work inclusively it needs to be formed with all component parts being well knitted together.

In this section we are going to delve further into identifying some of these component parts, by really getting to grips with who we work with, for and on whose behalf.

To gain a greater appreciation of this the following task needs to be undertaken more than once. At first you need to look, and then you need to make sure you are seeing, and finally we will move on to stringing it all together in an inclusivity plan.

Activity

To complete this task, you will need to clear some time in your diary over the course of three weeks in your institution to look, and more importantly, see the demographic of those who come into contact with your institution and see if you know what they are doing there. I suggest that you undertake this exercise at least twice, but preferably more.

Week one.

In the first week your mission is to observe from afar. Grab a coffee, pull up a chair in an inconspicuous location, but where you can still see most of the comings and goings at your workplace. Ideally, I would suggest this be somewhere in your institution's reception area. In this first week your sole task is to observe, not to interact. Don't worry, there is method in this as what you are actually doing is taking your first steps towards balancing your requirement to be anticipatory, without making prejudiced assumptions.

I would suggest that you take up your seat for periods of an hour or so at a time, and over varying hours each day throughout the week. Just sit and observe, noting whether there are any peak times of activity, and if so, what sort of activity.

Complete the table (appendix 1) using a simple tally mark to record your findings. For the final section, just write brief bullet point words such as study, making delivery, cleaning and so on. Don't worry that most of this is likely to be a best guess as that is the whole point!

As you are recording your findings, try to make a mental note of whether the people you have observed appear to be relaxed or hurried, at ease or stressed. Does anyone look confused or upset, and who looks happy to be here? What or who are they bringing with them, and are they moving around individually or together in groups? Keep this in the back of your mind for when you return to do next week's observations.

Week two.

Whilst last week was purely supposed to be observational, this week is all about getting out there, interacting, networking and generally getting stuck in.

For this week's task, you need to return to the general area where you undertook your previous observations. This time however, don't worry about setting yourself up with a chair and a position on the periphery as you won't be sitting down if you do this right.

Be prepared that this week's task might take you out of your comfort zone a bit, but fear not, this will all be useful, and we need to be aware that we cannot be inclusive without first being a part of what is going on around us.

Your only brief for this task is to get involved! Talk to people as they are passing through the foyer. Make an effort with anyone who appears to be lost or upset, speak to the happy crowds as they pass by. What is making them happy? This week is all about capturing the feelings and emotions which are cycling around your organisation daily.

Remember the key here is that you are looking to gain a deeper knowledge of your user/client/colleague base and you are striving for emotionally intelligent practice, so don't be afraid to get emotionally involved, in fact it is a pre-requisite.

If you do this right you won't have time for your coffee this week, but better still how about inviting someone who looks like they need help, advice or guidance to have a coffee with you whilst you really get to grips with what is happening.

This time, use the tally chart retrospectively if you can, as whilst it is important to make notes of your interactions, so you can reflect on them later, it is important that you are not seen to be surveying people.

Again, it is recommended that you float around the key areas of your building for about an hour at a time, and over different time slots throughout the week so you can get a full flavour of what goes on whilst you are usually somewhere else doing your thing.

Be aware that this week might leave you feeling a bit exhausted and somewhat overwhelmed as you will have received many different responses to your interactions. If you feel like this, then good! This means you have done it right. It's also worth considering here that if this short snapshot has worn you out, how would it feel to be sitting in the position of your receptionist all day every day? Is this the first time you have had a small insight into some of the work they do, and how it may make them feel on a daily basis?

Week three.

This is where you consolidate your findings and begin to string it all together.

So, over the past couple of months you have met with different people, observed the general footfall through your institution and spoken to people to see how they are feeling. This should have left you with a large amount of very rich data, and now is the time to see what you can do with it.

For this week's task you are best to take yourself off to somewhere quiet. You are best to do this part behind the scenes, in your office, off site, or at home.

The brief this week is to look back at your tally charts and reflect on the interactions you had with people and any notes you made.

Using this data, complete the table (appendix 2) to identify any patterns or trends, recurrent themes, issues that surprised or worried you and any issues that made you feel content or inspired. Remember that you will need to empathise with the stories of those whom you have observed and met. Anticipatory vs prejudiced once again.

Once you have done this and completed the table, select one interaction or observation which has stuck in your mind for positive reasons and one which has stuck in your mind for less than positive reasons. You will need these as we move on to the more practical elements of our emotionally intelligent journey, the 'how' bit.

IDENTIFYING THE HOW – UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING (UDL)

QUESTION

How do you deliver your service to meet the requirements of your client base?

Remembering that Universal Design for Learning relies upon the 3 core principles of multiple means of representation, expression and engagement we can now look at how to embed this in our practice.

Hopefully by reviewing your tables of data you will have identified that the demographic of people accessing your organisation is widely varied. This also stands for your own client base, and as teachers we need to appreciate that our students come from all walks of life and backgrounds, may hold different beliefs and values, may have disabilities or access requirements and may view their interaction with us in entirely different ways.

With this in mind, we cannot have a one-dimensional approach and that is where the principles of Universal Design for Learning, or UDL come in.

In this section we are going to consider our own teaching methods, challenge our own perceptions and beliefs and, hopefully, update and improve our emotionally intelligent approach to inclusive teaching which will in turn improve staff and student satisfaction, attainment, feedback and market credibility.

Activity

Have a think about a regular lesson which you teach or session which you facilitate. This can be formal classroom based teaching, tutorial based discussion, forums which you run or meetings that you chair.

Now spend a while gathering up all the current resources you use to do this, get it all in one place so we can have a look at it all together.

It is likely that you will gather a varied assortment of items whilst undertaking this task, do not worry, include everything you can think of.... Some potential pointers are given on the next page, but before you refer to those, see how you get on gathering the items without any prompting.

Next, we are going to work our way through these resources and apply a set of considerations to each. Do not worry if you have items in front of you which are not listed, as the considerations themselves, in the spirit of inclusivity, are transferable and universal.

Considering the 3 principles of UDL, plus the fourth which I have added, it's now time to run each of your resources you have gathered through a simple 4 stage test, see (appendix 3).

Books

PowerPoint or other visual slides

Paperwork

Lesson plans

Assessment briefs/criteria

A list of learning objectives/ outcomes

A meeting Agenda

A tick list/progress evaluation chart

USB Stick/s

Pens and paper/flipchart

Diary or planner

Laser pointer

Bottle of water/Mug of coffee

Floor plan/photograph of room you are using

ID card/name badge

Room keys

Uniform/fleece/jacket/robe

Through applying this simple check to our techniques and methods, we can quickly identify that there may be several factors which we had not previously considered. For example, it is often through applying this test that we realise we have not innovated or changed our technique for several years, and in some cases, we may not even be able to rationalise why we use the things we do, we just well.... do!

We may see that we have not involved our stakeholders in any kind of evaluation recently, and so we may not be able to say with any certainty that we know we are meeting the diverse needs and requirements of our consumer base.

The reason that the water or coffee is important is that so often we maintain our own needs in this regard but stop our clients from doing the same i.e. by enforcing no eating/drinking rules or failing to factor in suitable rest breaks for our audience. With regards the uniform/id badge etc, can this be seen as a piece of armour which we hide behind or a tool by which we maintain and assert power or authority?

To be inclusive and to really mean it, we need to master and practise sound skills of empathy. We need to appreciate that there are many stakeholders involved in all that we do, both directly and indirectly and we need to look more widely, involving people at all times.

Consider this – your teaching methods are simple/straightforward to you because you are used to them, you are in charge of them, you wrote them, etc. We can apply this to any setting whereby we are the consumer and we may not be aware of what may seemingly be straightforward to the service provider. For example, how often have you stood in a long line in a shop/railway terminal/bus station etc? The agents at the counter may know that on average a line of 20 people will be cleared in approximately ten minutes, but the person at the end of the line may not know this and may be anxious, worried, cross, disheartened etc. Some establishments (typically theme parks) have mastered emotionally intelligent signage, displaying messages such as approximate wait time from this point, 10 minutes, etc. Simple, but very effective. Some multi-centre catering and lounge outlets in large and busy places such as airports may have emotionally intelligent digital signage displaying messages such as more room available in lounge B or typical wait time at border control 40 minutes, allow at least 20 minutes on foot from here.

Admittedly, it can be hard to see how these strategies translate into learning and teaching practise, but the underpinning ethos certainly does. For example, have you considered saying to your audience phrases such as 'There are a lot of slides to cover in this session, but don't worry hard copies are available and you can access them online too' and 'we will be stopping for a break part way through' or 'It is usual for the content of this lecture/subject matter to be a bit upsetting or worrying, but there is plenty of support available to help you to master it, and if you are unsure or would like me to slow down, please just let me know'. Other inclusive and supportive phrases may be appropriate such as 'I would recommend you start your data collection at least 4 weeks before you come to start writing your account' or 'if you need any specialist support or any reasonable adjustments please let me know confidentially outside of the session so we can make sure everything is in place for you early on'.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this chapter has hopefully set you off on the road to becoming an inclusive practitioner through adopting an emotionally intelligent and user-focused approach, underpinned by empathy and understanding of diversity. The road is long, there will be many twists and turns, and the need to take pit stops at regular intervals to check you are still heading in the right direction is to be expected. So, go forth and be inclusive, enjoy the journey and be brave enough to ditch the old route map you have been keeping in the boot for more years than you may care to admit. And, if in doubt, simply stop, take a step back and ask yourself: "would this be good enough for me, my family or friends if they were encountering this for the first time?" Road test your new initiatives on friends and colleagues who are from other backgrounds or different schools/ faculties. After all, this will give you a good indication of how your students feel!

REFERENCES

Equality Act 2010. [online] http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/ (accessed 13/9/17)

Meyer, A.; Rose, D. & Gordon, D. (2014) Universal Design for Learning: Theory and Practice. Wakefield, MA:CAST

White, C. (2011) The smell of commerce: How companies use scents to sell their products [online] http://www.independent.co.uk/news/media/advertising/the-smell-of-commerce-how-companies-use-scents-to-sell-their-products-2338142.html (accessed 13/9/17)

APPENDIX 1

Day and Date	Time of observation and duration	Location

	Under 18	18-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-60	Over 60
Male									
Female									

Student	Staff	Visitor

White (all)	Black (all)	Asian (all)	Unknown

How many have any visible disability?

Reason for being here

APPENDIX 2

Number of observation sessions in Week 1	Average length of session	Location

Number of observation sessions in Week 2	Average length of session	Average length of conversation

Location

Total number of staff	Total number of students	Total number of other visitors

Total Male	Total Female	Average age

Total White	Total Black	Total Asian	Total unknown

Busiest day observed	Busiest time of day observed

Any patterns/other notes

APPENDIX 3

Stage one – What

What is the item/resource?

What does it do?

Stage two – How

How do I/others use it?

How do I know it works?

Stage three – Why

Why did I start using this item?

Why do I still use it?

Stage four – Who

Who does this benefit?

Who does this disadvantage?

Who else other than me may benefit from being allowed to use it?

Stage five – Stringing it all together

Considering the diversity of your client base, using activities 1 and 2 to remind you, how can you adapt or enhance your current service delivery to better meet the needs of your audience?

CHAPTER

2
1

ESTABLISHING THE EVIDENCE FOR INCLUSIVE CURRICULA: IS SUPPLEMENTARY LECTURE CAPTURE AN EFFECTIVE APPROACH TO SUPPORTING STUDENTS?

Karl P Nightingale & Vikki Anderson

ABSTRACT

One of the strengths of the UK undergraduate cohort is its diversity, reflecting the high proportion of the population entering higher education (HE) and the wide range of communities from which it is drawn. However, this diversity also represents a challenge to the sector to develop curricula that enable all students to engage fully, and succeed in their studies. Here we focus on the barriers that many undergraduate programmes present to students and the outcomes of our action research studies which suggest that supplementary lecture capture may be an effective way to support learning.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter addresses a central theme of the book: how can we develop inclusive curricula that accommodate the diversity of students in undergraduate cohorts? However, we also focus on a crucial follow-on question … and how will we know that they are effective? ... and how we resolved this in our own action research. This was informed by our complementary roles and perspectives. As a Learning Support Advisor, Vikki Anderson has a detailed understanding of the barriers faced by students and the learning strategies that can help overcome them, whereas as an academic programme lead, Karl Nightingale has experience of the development of undergraduate courses and the factors that influence curricula. A concerted approach to developing inclusive curricula is long overdue. This partially reflects the significant number of students who disclose conditions that can impact on their learning (e.g. students with a known disability: 14% of the undergraduate cohort, HESA, 2017) and the difficulties that many face on their

programmes (Mortimore & Crozier, 2006). However, change is also necessary because of the problems inherent in the use of reasonable adjustments (e.g. the within-programme adjustments made to level the playing field for individual students). This is because students experiencing academic difficulties can fall through the gaps (e.g. students with no apparent underlying condition or who fail to engage with learning support services) but also because some adjustments are ineffective due to a lack of consistent implementation within courses, or are inappropriate for their context (e.g. students are too time pressured to access materials prior to sessions). This calls for a universal design approach to curriculum development (McGuire et al., 2006), where inclusive practice is incorporated into all aspects of curricula and aims to accommodate all students' needs, rather than the current practice of retro-fitting reasonable adjustments for individual students with identified disabilities.

WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS TO LEARNING IN UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES?

The diversity of our undergraduate cohort ensures that a wide variety of factors can influence students' ability to learn effectively or, conversely, create barriers to their full participation. Factors such as gender, age, native language, socio-economic background and family circumstances can all affect an individual's experience of HE, and suggest that it is no longer appropriate (if indeed it ever was) to talk about a typical learner. This diversity also extends to students who face specific challenges throughout the learning process. For example, students disclosing specific learning difficulties (SpLDs), show evidence of differences within a learning difficulty (Kirby, 2016); across learning difficulties (e.g. Griffiths, 2007; Lingam et al., 2010; Kirby et al., 2014) and alongside other conditions such as mental health problems (Chasson et al., 2011; Nelson & Gregg, 2012). Furthermore, students may experience secondary effects of feeling that they are in a specifically labelled group, such as low self-esteem, social isolation, anxiety and fatigue, suggesting that personal circumstances (as well as the extent of students' learning difficulties) can determine what is disabling in one context but not another. This suggests we need to understand individuals' intrinsic strengths and weaknesses, as well as the extrinsic variables affecting them, to identify the barriers inherent to many curricula. These barriers can be complex – Cairney

and colleagues' (2013) environmental stress hypothesis highlights how the range of demands encountered at university can create a cycle of negativity. For example, learning to function independently without the protective factors of parental support and/or scaffolding from teachers, coupled with organisational difficulties and problems with study skills (due perhaps to automatic language processing difficulties or lack of appropriate skill development) can result in "cumulative adversity" (Hatch, 2005:130).

This may be particularly the case within the STEM disciplines (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths), as these subjects often require students to engage with large volumes of underpinning knowledge before they can progress to more advanced topics. Covering this breadth of material typically results in high contact hour programmes (e.g. >20hrs / week), often with a focus on lecture delivery. For many students, taking coherent lecture notes during what are often conceptually complex and/or detailed presentations is a challenge. However, this can be a real barrier to learning for those who experience difficulties with writing, spelling, or in concentrating for extended periods of time (Mortimore & Crozier, 2006; Olofsson et al., 2012).

EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY APPROACHES TO INCLUSION - WHERE DOES LECTURE RECORDING FIT IN?

Technology assisted learning often forms an integral part of support strategies for students with learning difficulties but in a broader sense can also underpin universal curricula by enhancing the learning experience for a wide range of students (Laurillard, 2008). Some aspects of technology enhanced learning are relatively narrow in scope (e.g. classroom communication systems or clickers can make lectures more engaging; Crouch & Mazur, 2001), but others can be more widely applied. For example, online learning materials can enrich learning environments (figure 1), create new modes of learning (e.g. discussion boards), or enable the reimagining of the traditional lecture format (e.g. lecture flipping, Crouch & Mazur, 2001).
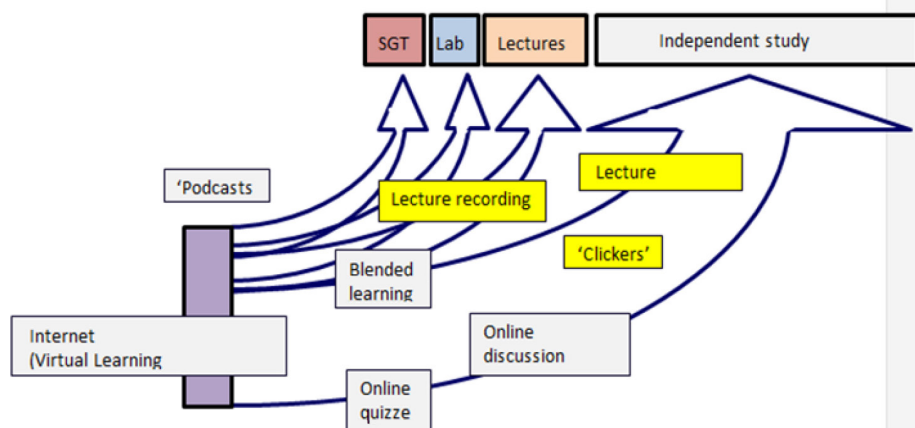
Figure 1: Technology enhanced learning can enrich many of the teaching environments in traditional STEM programmes, particularly the independent study that underpins the majority of students' learning. 'SGT' = small group teaching (e.g. seminars, journal clubs, problem-based learning) and Labs = laboratory based practicals.

Importantly, learning materials in digital formats (e.g. audio or video podcasts) and/or the new learning environments facilitated by technology (e.g. online discussion boards, online quizzes) are often engaging and bring variety to curricula. These can be used to complement traditional face-to-face sessions, either (i) by supporting independent study with online learning materials or (ii) by integrating e-learning and traditional sessions to create a variety of blended learning environments. Arguably, both these approaches are inclusive: varying learning materials, formats and environments makes for a more engaging curriculum, especially if this encourages active learning (e.g. computer modelling, quizzes with instant feedback, peer group discussions) and can engage students with a wide range of learning preferences. Furthermore, online delivery gives students flexibility in both the place (e.g. learning at home) and pace of learning (Gordon, 2014), offering

significant advantages for those with access and/or time constraints (e.g. students with physical disabilities, mature students); those with concentration or working memory difficulties, or those who might struggle to take notes at the lecturer's pace of delivery (e.g. some students with SpLDs, Mortimore & Crozier, 2006). Despite this (and perhaps surprisingly), students with a range of disabilities show a mixed response to e-learning environments (Seale et al., 2008), possibly because poor design can introduce barriers and preclude engagement (Habib et al., 2012) but also because a single approach is unlikely to accommodate their diversity and learning support needs (Seale et al., 2008). This may explain why there is an achievement gap for students with disabilities in distance learning programmes (Richardson, 2009) but also emphasises that curricula need to be flexible and encompass a variety of learning environments, materials and support approaches.

WHAT CAN LECTURE CAPTURE OFFER?

Lecture recording software (e.g. Panopto, Echo360) is now a mature technology and it is remarkably straightforward to generate audio-visual podcasts which can be subsequently published in a virtual learning environment (VLE). These are typically an audio recording of the lecturer's voice talking to their PowerPoint slides, although versions that can record the lecturer at the podium or a talking head are easily made if a video camera is available. Offering these recordings as back-up or supplementary learning materials is now well established in HE and they are highly valued by students (Soong et al., 2006), both for their insurance value (e.g. if students miss a lecture) but also as a means of revisiting the lecture if they have difficulties with a particular concept. Interestingly, the majority of students appear to use recordings in a strategic or targeted manner, reviewing only a small number of recordings and/or honing in on the one or two slides where they have problems (Soong, et al., 2006). Studies demonstrate that these are useful and engaging learning materials, though as an optional support it is not surprising that their impact on students' academic performance is unclear (Heilesen, 2010). The most detailed study to date suggests that supplementary lecture recordings have no discernible impact on the overall cohort but can impact on the performance of the subset of students that use them regularly to support their learning (Brooks et al., 2014).

This prompts the question of whether lecture capture can contribute to inclusive practice. To date, this is an under-researched area but supplementary recordings can support students with difficulties in attending scheduled sessions (e.g. some mature students) and are known to be useful in supporting international students (Pearce & Scutter, 2010) and a range of students who need academic support (e.g. accommodations, Vajoczki et al., 2010). In an earlier study we showed that students who rely heavily on these materials often have non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB) or disclose dyslexia (Leadbeater et al., 2013), suggesting that recordings can address their difficulties with the lecture format. However, the small number of students involved suggested a more comprehensive study was needed to evaluate whether lecture recording is a genuinely useful approach to supporting student learning.

HOW DO WE EVALUATE INCLUSIVE PRACTICE: WHAT IS THE NATURE OF EVIDENCE REQUIRED?

If our aim is to create curricula that can empower students to engage fully and achieve academic success, it is important to explore how changing the learning environment can affect outcomes. Nevertheless, using action research to evaluate inclusive practice is difficult. One problem is the relatively small number of students with specific learning needs in many cohorts, but this is complicated by their diversity and varied needs – not all interventions will help all students. However, a further set of difficulties centres on determining the aims of the study. Is student satisfaction with an intervention sufficient to establish best practice, or should we focus on more concrete outcomes such as student engagement or impact on academic performance? There is no right answer to this - the investigator(s) and their context (e.g. expertise, opportunity); the intended audience for the study outcomes, and the nature of the intervention will all influence study design (e.g. many would expect extensive evidence to encourage significant changes in practice). Our approach was informed by an understanding of the difficulties students encounter in lectures but also by the type(s) of evidence needed to convince academic colleagues to engage with lecture recording. We therefore focused on students who might require additional support (e.g. students with a NESB), those who disclose mental or physical disabilities or SpLDs) and identified three areas of

interest: (i) whether there is a widespread problem with the lecture format (ii) understanding students' use of lecture recordings and (iii) whether these had any discernible impact on students' academic performance.

STUDY 1:
ACTION RESEARCH EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF SUPPLEMENTARY LECTURE RECORDING IN UNDERGRADUATE MEDICINE

Our first study used an action research approach to focus on students' use of supplementary lecture recordings in the context of years 1 and 2 undergraduate Medicine. This had the advantage of being a large cohort programme (340 students), which includes around 30 international students and 15 students disclosing conditions that might impact on their learning (e.g. mental health or physical disabilities, SpLDs) per year, allowing us to compare these students' use of lecture recordings with the general cohort.

We used a combination of questionnaires and recording download data (e.g. date and duration of access) to analyse the students' behaviour and found it was consistent with many of the findings of earlier studies (Heileson, 2010). Approximately 80% of the cohort reported using the recordings, with a wide variation in usage (from heavy use to no use at all). Most students reported adopting a targeted approach, often using recordings either immediately after lectures, or as a revision aid during the vacations. This was reinforced by the download data, which showed steady access during term time (possibly supporting post-lecture note taking) but with heavier use during the following vacation (e.g. for revision).

Interestingly, when we used the statement 'I have problems taking notes in lectures' to identify students who experienced difficulties in lectures, a significant proportion - 25% of the cohort - agreed, even in Year 2, when students have had more time to develop these skills (figure 2). This surprised us, given the high A-level grades required to enter Medicine, but is consistent with findings that a substantial proportion of medical students experience academic difficulties (Yates & James, 2006), particularly with the new skills needed when entering HE (Mullen, 2010). Those reporting difficulties increased in students disclosing NESB (36%) or conditions that could impact on

their learning (e.g. SpLDs 57%; mental health difficulties or physical disabilities 40%), suggesting that note-taking is a problem for many of these students. This prompted us to examine whether lecture recordings could be a useful way to overcome these difficulties, so we correlated students' reported use of recordings (e.g. hours use/week) with whether they disclosed having difficulties taking notes in lectures. This showed a strong positive correlation, suggesting that students who have problems taking notes, used the recordings more, presumably to address these difficulties. This evidence, together with the observation that all of the students who disclosed SpLDs reported using the recordings, suggests that a wide range of students use recordings as part of their independent study.
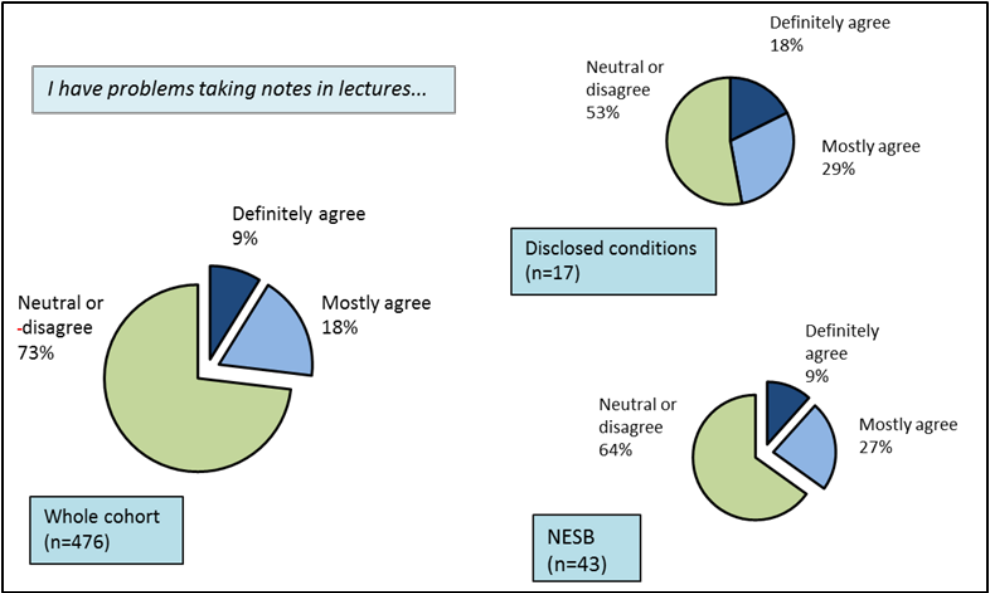
Figure 2: A significant proportion of years 1 and 2 medical students report having problems taking notes in lectures. 26% of students 'Definitely agree' or 'Mostly agree' with the statement 'I have problems taking notes in lectures', whereas this increased to 47% for those who disclosed conditions that can impact on learning (e.g. SpLDs or mental health difficulties or physical disabilities). 36% of respondents from a Non-English Speaking Background (NESB) disclosed these problems. (Years 1 & 2 Medicine, 2012-16; n = 476) Response rate= 245/340

Our finding that supplementary lecture recordings were widely used was encouraging but raised questions about how students used them and whether this affected their academic performance. This, and questions about the cohort and participants (e.g. are medical students representative? Why are the numbers disclosing dyslexia so low?), suggested we should extend the study.

STUDY 2:
USING A STUDY WITH DEFINED PARTICIPANTS TO COMPARE STUDENTS' USE OF LECTURE RECORDINGS

Our first study showed the advantages and disadvantages of using action research to evaluate an intervention - we could examine real world responses to lecture recording and explore its potential in the context of complex learning environments. However, our inability to define the participating cohort also limited our capacity to generate strong evidence and draw conclusions. In our second study, we used a design based on a typical HE approach (lecture – delay for revision – exam), but with defined participants, in this case, 100 students engaged on undergraduate degrees in the Biological Sciences (e.g. Medicine, Nursing, Physiotherapy, Biochemistry, Pharmacy) but where half disclosed dyslexia and the remaining half did not disclose any conditions that impacted on their learning. We used a combination of three study approaches (questionnaire, focus groups and quantitative measurements of learning) to discover whether these students experienced difficulties with lectures, how they tried to overcome them, and whether supplementary lecture recording could be useful in supporting their learning. Recognising the need to use appropriate terminology and having engaged with the various challenges surrounding this (Evans, 2014), we decided to refer to our participants as 'dyslexic' or 'neurotypical' students.

QUANTITATIVE OUTCOMES: QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES AND IMPACT ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Study participants received a questionnaire focussing on their experience of lectures, including whether they had difficulties with the format and how they overcame them. This confirmed the findings from Study 1, in that a significant proportion of students

agreed with the statement I have difficulties taking notes in lectures but was much more pronounced than in the Medicine cohort (72% of students disclosing dyslexia (figure 3) vs. 57% of students with conditions that can impact on learning in years 1 & 2 Medicine (figure 2).
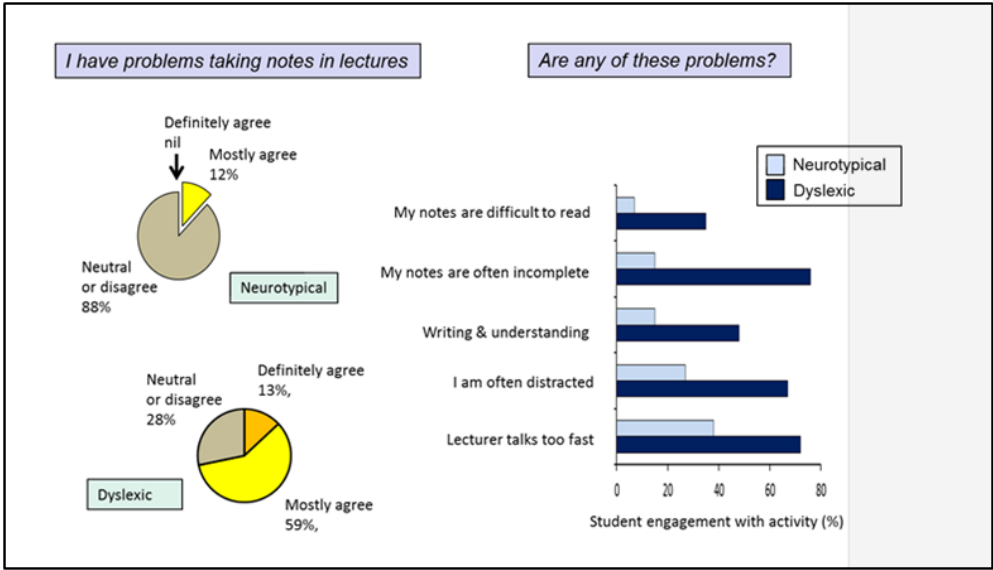
Figure 3: Data from Study 2 Questionnaire

These data, and responses identifying a variety of problems that can arise in lectures (figure 3, right), confirmed that the format presented multiple challenges to a majority of students disclosing dyslexia. Subsequent responses showed that many students used online learning materials to overcome these difficulties, suggesting that online lecture recordings could also be effective. However, our data on the impact of these materials on academic performance was mixed. We found that lecture recordings can support learning, as determined by increased grades, but are no more effective than textbooks and not all students disclosing dyslexia showed increased attainment, suggesting that the approach is not universally effective in supporting academic outcomes.

FOCUS GROUPS:
STUDENTS' VIEWS ON USE OF LECTURE RECORDINGS

A second part of the study examined the students' perceptions of their learning. Study participants were divided into nine small groups (i.e. four containing only students with no known SpLDs and five consisting of those who had disclosed dyslexia) and used a semi-structured approach, where questions focused on the students' learning strategies, including note-taking in lectures, together with their use of, and views on, different learning materials. These discussions were recorded and transcripts made, allowing us to identify the themes that emerged. Here we have divided the students' discussions into two broad themes and include representative comments to illustrate particular viewpoints.

THEME 1: **Difficulties with the lecture format and students' strategies to overcome these**

Our initial questions focused on the difficulties students experienced in lectures, with a significant proportion of participants commenting on their poor concentration and/or being easily distracted:

"After about 40 minutes of a lecture, I zone out completely and then I come back in the last five minutes in the summary and I'm like 'Oh - what happened?'"

(neurotypical student)

Several students in the dyslexic-only focus groups also highlighted the impact of visual perceptual difficulties; problems with retaining information in short-term working memory and/or with spelling unfamiliar technical terms:

"If it isn't written on the slide or something and is difficult to spell, you're so busy working out how to write it down, you've forgotten or missed what the lecturer was saying."

(dyslexic student)

These difficulties prompted several students to prepare for lectures by reviewing learning materials in advance (e.g. PowerPoint handouts), although this was only mentioned in the dyslexic-only focus groups, perhaps because it is encouraged by the university's Learning Support Team (prior release of learning materials is regarded as a reasonable adjustment).

"It is engaging if you have done the reading before and they have put the lecture notes on before and the reading is up. I always try and do it because when you go to the lecture you actually understand what they are talking about."

(dyslexic student)

THEME 2: **Students use of learning materials, including lecture recordings**

A second theme centred on the learning materials students used to support their independent study. This initially focused on recommended textbooks, with the majority of students recognising their value as a reliable, systematic source of information. However, there were a number of negative comments on their use, with many students finding textbooks to be too text heavy and inefficient for resolving queries, particularly in the face of rapid, online search engines:

"I'd rather use the Internet than textbooks, it's a lot quicker."

(neurotypical student)

"Videos are less daunting than a textbook."

(dyslexic student)

A majority said they watched online videos to obtain an overview of a topic; to get an alternative explanation of the material or to understand visual concepts, suggesting that online videos can complement textbooks.

In contrast to textbooks, students' responses to supplementary lecture recordings were very positive, often with a focus on their use as a resource for those unable to attend a class or as a way of revisiting lectures:

"You can't take in everything the first time."

(dyslexic student)

Recordings appeared to be seen primarily as support for consolidation immediately after lectures, however comments that they could "refresh your memory" (dyslexic student) suggested they were also used for revision. Students with experience of using recordings were positive about aspects of the technology, notably that it allowed flexibility in where study could take place and the pace at which the materials could be used. Dyslexic students in particular commented that this enabled them to take notes at their own pace and have breaks when required. Both neurotypical and dyslexic students described a variety of ways of using the technology to match their personal learning strategies, including overlearning:

"I won't learn by hearing something once, so with the PowerPoint recording, I can go over it again, and again, and again."

(dyslexic student)

Many students also appreciated the ability to fast-forward and pinpoint slides that could respond to their queries:

"I don't think I'd ever listen to a lecture again because of the time. I'd use it to find something that I'd missed – then go to the right point to listen."

(neurotypical student)

Some students said that learning from a recording was "easier". For some, this seemed to be a response to fatigue but, this and other comments suggested that some students may need guidance on how to use recordings effectively.

"It's time consuming, but easier."
(dyslexic student)

"After a 5 hour day on a Monday I really don't feel like sitting there, making notes and looking at lecture notes but I can stick the recording on and I'll still be revising and listening to it."
(dyslexic student)

A potential downside to recording use was highlighted by several students who stressed that the process was time consuming, both in terms of revisiting a lecture they had attended, or because note-taking often took more than an hour per recording. One student commented that the time required to take notes from recordings meant they did not attend lectures. Whilst this could be advantageous for some individuals, another comment suggested that routine recording may impact on student behaviour in lectures:

"It makes me complacent in lectures if I can go home and listen to it. What's the point of coming in to university if you're going to go home and listen to the same thing?"
(neurotypical student)

In contrast, several comments, primarily from dyslexic students, stressed that recordings allowed them to focus on understanding rather than note-taking:

"If you are in a lecture room, and think 'I don't get this', instead of panicking you can think 'oh well – I'll watch it later'."

(dyslexic student)

Similarly, whereas most students suggested recordings would have little impact on lecture attendance because they valued the routine of attending taught sessions or aspects that would not be captured on recordings (e.g. Q&A, non-verbal cues), some disagreed. Interestingly, those students who stated that they had chosen not to attend lectures due to the availability of recordings focused on the flexibility afforded by the technology:

"I would use the recording and drop the lecture itself and do some more revision with the time."

(dyslexic student)

STUDY 2: SUMMARY OF THE STUDY OUTCOMES

The use of a mixture of quantitative and qualitative approaches gave several clear outcomes. We found that a large proportion of students who disclosed dyslexia had difficulties in lectures, with many having developed strategies to overcome them, including using online support materials. However, the impact of lecture recordings on learning was less clear, as students' academic performance when they revised with recordings was no more effective than when they used textbooks, a format that can present problems for students with dyslexia. Furthermore, several students failed to show any increase in exam performance after viewing recordings, suggesting that they may be ineffective in some cases, possibly due to a lack of appropriate guidance in how to use these materials. Despite this, comments made in focus groups showed that many students found

them a useful tool for consolidating lecture notes and supporting revision, with dyslexic learners in particular emphasising how recordings helped them to compensate for specific difficulties in the learning process.

WHAT EVIDENCE DO WE NEED TO ESTABLISH BEST PRACTICE IN INCLUSION? SOME CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has discussed some of the advantages of using different approaches to evaluate whether an intervention such as lecture recording can enhance inclusive learning, and the types of evidence that can be generated. Both studies outlined here have their limitations (e.g. relatively small cohorts, low numbers of participants, single disciplinary background, focus on dyslexia only) but together we argue that they support the wider use of supplementary lecture capture in undergraduate programmes and suggest that this can contribute to the inclusive curriculum.

What else can we learn from our experience? Our mixed study approach was important. Action research allowed us to understand the problems of rolling out a technology and how students (and colleagues) respond in real life, whereas our study with defined participants enabled us to create a critical mass of data to allow conclusions to be drawn. Likewise, both quantitative (e.g. questionnaires, download analytics) and qualitative data (e.g. focus group discussions) reinforced each other to give insight into how the students responded to the recordings. This is a strong argument for using both approaches in future research, particularly as further studies are needed, e.g. in other disciplines, and focusing on barriers to learning other than dyslexia.

Finally, although we recognise that although lecture capture makes a relatively small contribution to inclusive education, it is one of a variety of approaches that can contribute to flexible learning environments and support strategies, enabling a diverse range of students to have equal opportunities to succeed.

REFERENCES

Brooks, C,; Erickson, G.; Greer, J. & Gutwin, C. (2014) Modelling and quantifying the behaviours of students in lecture capture environments. Computers & Education. 75: 282-292

Cairney, J.; Rigoli, D. & Piek, J. (2013) Developmental coordination disorder and internalizing problems in children: The environmental stress hypothesis elaborated. Developmental Review. 33:224-238

Chasson, G.S.; Timpano, K.R.; Greenberg, J.L.; Shaw, A.; Singer, T. & Wilhelm, S. (2011) Shared social competence impairment: Another link between the obsessive-compulsive and autism spectrums? Clinical Psychology Rev. 31:653- 662

Crouch, C.H. & Mazur, E. (2001) Peer instruction: Ten years of experience and results. Am. J. Physics. 69:¬970-977

Evans, W. (2014) 'I am not a dyslexic person I'm a person with dyslexia': identity constructions of dyslexia among students in nurse education. J. Advanced Nursing. 70:360-372

Gordon, N. (2014) Flexible Pedagogies: Technology-enhanced learning. The Higher Education Academy. [online] https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/workstreams-research/themes/flexible-learning/flexible-learning-projects/flexible-pedagogies   (accessed 20/10/16)

Griffiths, C.B. (2007) Pragmatic abilities in adults with and without dyslexia: a pilot study. Dyslexia. 13:276-96

Habib, L.; Berget, G.; Sandnes, F.E.; Sanderson, N.; Kahn, P.; Fagernes, S. & Olcay, A. (2012) Dyslexic students in higher education and virtual learning environments: an exploratory study. J. Computer Assisted Learning. 28:574-584

Hatch, S.L. (2005) Conceptualizing and identifying cumulative adversity and protective resources: implications for understanding health inequalities. J. Gerontology: Series B 60:130–134

Heilesen, S.B. (2010) What is the academic efficacy of podcasting? Computers & Education. 55:1063-8

HESA. Higher Education Statistics Agency (2017) Table 6a - Full-time HE student enrolments by level of study, subject area**, sex, age group, disability status and ethnicity 2015/16. [online] https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/overviews?keyword=All&breakdown[0]=581&year=620 (accessed on 2/8/17)

Kirby, A. (2016) Co-occurring Specific Learning Difficulties. British Dyslexia Association. Dyslexia & co-occurring difficulties Conference 20th October, 2016 [online] http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/events/view/name/dyslexia-and-co-occurring-difficulties-conference (accessed 15/12/16)

Kirby, A.; Sugden, D. & Purcell, C. (2014) Diagnosing developmental coordination disorders. Arch. Disease Childhood. 99:292-296

Laurillard, D. (2008) Technology enhanced learning as a tool for pedagogical innovation. J. Philosophy of Education. 42:521-533

Leadbeater, W.; Shuttleworth, T.; Couperthwaite, J. & Nightingale, K.P. (2013) Evaluating the use and impact of lecture recording in undergraduates: Evidence for distinct approaches by

different groups of students. Computers & Education. 61:185-92

Lingam, R.; Golding, J.; Jongmans, M.J.; Hunt, L.P.; Ellis, M. & Emond, A. (2010) The association between developmental coordination disorder and other developmental traits. Pediatrics. 126:1109-1118

Mcguire J.M.; Scott, S.S. & Shaw, S.F. (2006) Universal design and its applications in educational environments. Remedial & Special Education. 27:166-75

Mortimore, T. & Crozier, W.R. (2006) Dyslexia and difficulties with study skills in higher education. Studies in Higher Education. 31:235-51

Nelson, J.M. & Gregg, N. (2012) Depression and anxiety among transitioning adolescents and college students with ADHD, dyslexia, or comorbid ADHD/Dyslexia. J. Attention Disorders. 16:244-254

Olofsson, Å; Ahl, A. & Taube, K. (2012) Learning and study strategies in university students with dyslexia: Implications for teaching. Procedia-Social & Behavioural Sciences. 47:1184-1193

Pearce, K. & Scutter, S. (2010) Podcasting of health sciences lectures: Benefits for students from a non-English speaking background. Aust. J. Educational Technology. 26(7)

Richardson, J.T. & Wydell, T.N. (2003) The representation and attainment of students with dyslexia in UK higher education. Reading & Writing. 16:475-503

Seale, J.; Draffan, E.A. & Wald, M. (2008) Exploring disabled learners' experiences of e-learning: LEXDIS Project report. [online] http://eprints.soton.ac.uk/64850/1/LEXDIS_ProjectReport_Dec08.pdf (accessed 14/10/16)

Soong, S.K.A.; Chan, L.K.; Cheers, C. & Hu, C. (2006) Impact of video recorded lectures among students. Who's learning? Whose technology? Proceedings of the 23rd annual ascilite conference. The University of Sydney. [online] http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.582&rep=rep1&type=pdf (accessed 10/1/18)

Vajoczki, S.; Watt, S.; Marquis, N. & Holshausen, K. (2010) Podcasts: Are They an Effective Tool to Enhance Student Learning? A Case Study from McMaster University, Hamilton Canada. J. Educational Multimedia and Hypermedia. 19:349-362

Yates, J. & James, D. (2006) Predicting the "strugglers": a case-control study of students at Nottingham University Medical School. BMJ. 332:1009-13

CHAPTER

2
2

David Roberts

All the images used in this chapter were made or commissioned by the author who retains the copyright, unless otherwise stated.

ABSTRACT

Lecturing in Higher Education is dominated by PowerPoint presentations characterised by text and bullet points. But research tells us this is harmful because it overloads our minds' abilities to process text whilst simultaneously under-exploiting our ability to comprehend through imagery. This chapter presents an alternative way of using PowerPoint that inverts how we use it so it takes advantage of visual processing abilities and presents text in cognitively-digestible ways. The method privileges very large, high-quality images not as supplements but as the means to convey substance and meaning and applies to many student cohorts in various disciplines because it is cognitive, not disciplinary. The chapter concludes with demonstrations and advice on finding copyright-appropriate images.

INTRODUCTION

It is a truism that a picture's worth a thousand words; but Higher Education (HE) appears to have forgotten this. In the most visual era of human evolution, when students coming to university have been exposed to multimedia learning and teaching for most of their lives, universities persist for the most part with lecture slides overloaded with text. It's often called Death by PowerPoint, and it refers to the tendency for presenters to fill slides with text and bullet points and then read them out or say something very similar. They're not all like this; but most are, and that's because of how PowerPoint itself formats slides. PowerPoint has become an easy target, to the extent that it's now "parodied, disparaged and blamed for failures to communicate clearly" (Kosslyn, 2007:77).

Recent research argues convincingly that text-filled slides are both counter-pedagogical and harmful for learning. This is because we can only process a limited amount of information at any given time, and because privileging text overloads our ability to process words and at the same time neglects our ability to process images (Ayres, 2015).

For some students, this can be a nightmare.

The point of this chapter is to present an alternative way of using PowerPoint that inverts how we use it so it takes advantage of visual processing abilities and presents text in cognitively-digestible ways. Image-based lectures that stimulate engagement and prompt active learning can be "created with approximately the same level of technical expertise that it takes to master PowerPoint or Blackboard" (Schrand, 2008:79). This does not mean we stop giving students text; we can still do that, but it can be relocated to the notes view area of PowerPoint, so it doesn't obscure valuable images. The method privileges very large, high-quality images, not as supplements, but as the means to convey substance and meaning along respected pedagogic lines. Text can still be an important part of the teaching content. It is just rebalanced with imagery to reflect how our brains work.

The approach comes from Multimedia Learning (MML) research and has been tested with students. Students reported enhanced engagement, active learning processes, anticipation and enjoyment, as well as better recall and attention. Before we proceed, it's important to note the wider context in which all this is happening.
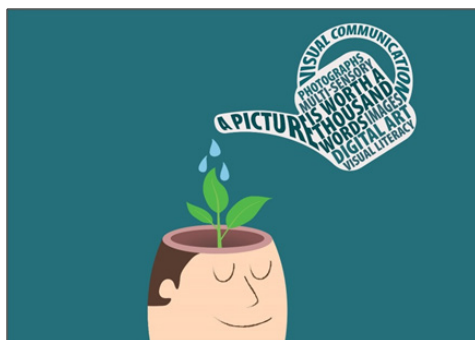
A DIGITAL VISUAL WORLD

Today's HE students are the most visual of any university cohort, not because HE students now are any more special than their forbears, but because there is a "pictorial turn" in human evolution, according to Peter Felten (2008:60) and others. We learn through imagery as infants long before we learn through text, and images inform our development alongside words as we grow up. But globalisation and digitisation challenge the hegemony of text. 300 million images per day are uploaded to Facebook, (Cuthbertson et al., 2015:158) and by 2015, Facebook hosted roughly a quarter of a trillion images. Infographics, once the rare preserve of a few specialist outlets, are commonplace in TV, newspapers and magazines all over the world. Exhibitions of all kinds are now accessible online (Paul, 2003). Popular TV series from Lost to The Walking Dead, sport and peer-to-peer digitally-distributed films are accessible at the click of a mouse. Louis Tietje and Steven Cresap (2005:np) propose in accordance with these developments that visuals are now "the main means of communication and expression in postmodern culture".

Yet university teaching is out of sync with the evolving visual contexts from which their student clients come. If they use them at all, academics mostly use images as supplements and peripherals rather than as the medium through which a message may be conveyed. Instead, we load PowerPoint slides with text, and the speaker normally stays close to what's on the slide, except in some disciplines like Art that have an inherent tendency towards the visual. Most Social Sciences, Anthropology, Psychology, History, Language, Business Studies, along with Maths and other science-based subjects, remain text-centric. This chapter is about changing how we deliver lecture content to bring it in line with the visual world that influences all our students. Global context merges with pedagogic research in the shape of Multimedia Learning.

MULTIMEDIA LEARNING (MML) RESEARCH.

Multimedia Learning is defined as the process of "building mental representations from words and pictures" (Mayer, 2014:2). This literature claims that we learn better with images and text than with text alone (Mayer & Moreno, 2003). It identifies two channels through which the brain processes auditory and textual information, and visual information. This is referred to as dual processing. In presentations and lectures characterised primarily by text, the first channel is over-loaded and the second is under-used. MML posits that if we divide information delivery more equitably between the two channels and take advantage of our visual processing abilities, we would be better able to engage with and understand the material we are presented with.

Adherence to text-centricity is bad for students' learning experiences then, for two reasons. First, slides full of text overload short-term memory processing (Paivio, 2007). Second, that reliance on text wastes the potential all sighted students have to explore, interpret and engage the world through their eyes – what they do every day of their lives beyond the lecture theatre. MML theory is perhaps especially interesting for dyslexic learners because using images and limited text exploits under-utilised visual capacity whilst reducing stress on short-term memory. The process is about words for the ears and pictures for the eyes. Whilst it may be unfamiliar in the teaching world, it's commonplace beyond the academy. We attend museums and galleries that provide audio support for visual experiences.
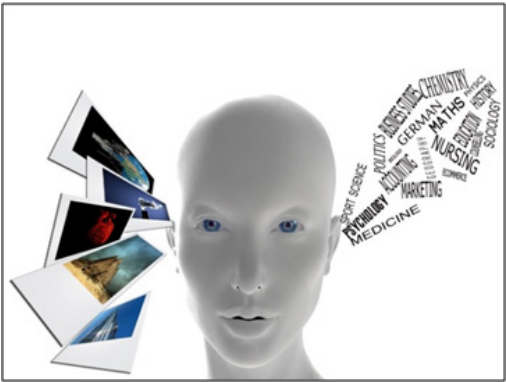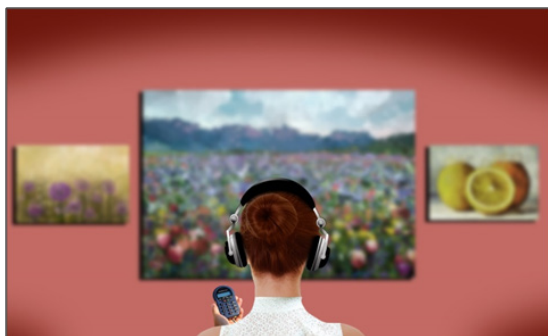
We read newspapers that use images to complement text. This disconnect between the wider world and the academy, and my own disdain for my own lectures, and those of others I saw at conferences, stimulated a search for alternatives. Engaging with MML literature and watching the world beyond the academy embrace imagery led me to instigate a visual method in my own lectures. The next section discusses how this worked at Loughborough University, England, UK, across a wide range of disciplines in ways that benefitted a wide range of students.

USING IMAGES IN LECTURES

The visual method for large group lectures derived from MML scholarship was developed, introduced and evaluated over a three-year period. This section looks at how it works in practice, how to find images and how to integrate them.

The first consideration is the type of image. This method deployed three categories: literal, figurative and paradox. Literal images are the simplest. They manifest a visual representation of a subject. For example, if discussing the EU, we may use an image of the EU flag, here.

But more valuably, when subject matter is alien to students' direct experiences, we may use literal images to describe what students may never have seen. Images may bring otherwise abstract or unfamiliar places and practices to life in ways that even the most eloquent text alone cannot. Equally importantly,

they displace excessive slide text that overloads students' processing capacities and short-term memory, according to a plethora of MML and other research. Even basic, illustrative, figurative images have a triple role. First, they provide description of the unfamiliar. Second, they remove the causes of memory overload so injurious to many students. Third, they allow students to more effectively split their attention between the speaker and the screen, instead of a situation where one contests the other for mental space.

Figurative images as a second category may also be referred to as metaphorical images. A visual metaphor is an "image… used in place of another to suggest an analogy between the two images" (Williams, 1998:np). Metaphor images were very popular with students. Eppler (2006:205) argues that visual metaphors "support learners in connecting what they already know (the properties of the metaphor domain) with new material (the domain unto which the metaphor is being applied)". This mirrors the idea of active learning in which students build on existing knowledge and criticise what they already believe to be truth. The learning potential is especially valuable "when the power of a metaphor is combined with the appeal and directness of visualisation" (ibid). Visual metaphors may be used to convey complex messages as opposed to serving a more illustrative purpose. If we think back to the EU flag example, if the stars on the flag were linked with barbed wire, the image conveys a subjective meaning the lecturer may discuss.

S/he may propose that for some, the EU is seen less as an objective and neutral community for progressive, peaceful change and more as a barrier to migration for some people beyond its borders. The image becomes a discussion point that isn't duplicating the spoken word, that students may focus on

and absorb the component parts of, interpreting their meaning and bringing their existing knowledge to the fore as a foundation upon which the lecturer's commentary may build. Importantly, a visual metaphor helps render the unfamiliar more familiar by suggesting a parallel phenomenon. Visual metaphors or figurative images "support learners in connecting what they already know (the properties of the metaphor domain) with new material (the domain unto which the metaphor is being applied)" (ibid:206). The following are some examples of metaphorical images.

This image supports a conversation about biological evolution, presenting most of the process in one image, and allowing dissection and discussion of its component parts in ways that better exploit audio-visual processing.

Reproduced with permission of the artist Christophe Kiciak,
http://www.kiciak.fr

Another supports a discussion of tensions between liberal and critical feminisms over pole dancing. The image's component parts associate pole dancing not simply with autonomous sexuality and free choice but also with privileging masculine preferences, suggesting an illusion of progress for women.

A third example of the relationship between energy production and environmental harm, illustrates further the type of metaphor image easily integrated into lectures. This one was created to suggest a relationship between consumption, or capitalism, or liberalism, or markets and the impact of early third millennial technologies and beliefs on the natural environment and planetary existence.

This metaphor image of a pill and dollars has been used to underpin discussion of the cost of medicine generally or to raise questions about the market as a valid means of deciding who gets what and how much healthcare. It has been particularly helpful in discussing antiretroviral re-search, breast cancer treatment and global child mortality. It may of course also present as a par-adox for those who believe healthcare should be free, supporting discussions of socialist ideology and political morality.

A third type of image is the paradox image. A paradox is a statement that may appear to be self-contradictory but which may simultaneously communicate a truth (Eliason, 1996:341). Paradox images may present as puzzles, creating temporary confusion, generating internal attempts at reconciling meaning.

A well-known example is the eternal triangle. The diamond with blood presents a problem: love is not immediately associated with violence until we examine concepts like hypermasculinity, domestic violence, honour killing, dowry murder and so on. This image was used to support a discussion of capitalism and conflict (blood/conflict diamonds).

If we return to the matter of evolution, a paradox seems to present - ape and human in one entity – supporting a discussion of evolutionary relationships between humans and hominoids.

The first consideration when choosing images has been the type of image, outlined above. A second consideration is its scale and its visible relationship to the usual accompanying text. We are often used to images as a secondary element to a slide, sometimes occupying a relatively minor portion of slide space. MML approaches privilege the image, which here means their occupation of the entire slide. Images can be inserted or better still embedded in a few simple steps involving changing the background of the slide just as we might if we wanted to change its colour. For many, this brings up immediately the question of text. An emerging consensus proposes that if we are to use images, it would be counterproductive to then cover them with text. Various design gurus like Nancy Duarte (2008) and Guy Kawasaki (2012) propose very limited text, normally never more than one line which, for the lecturer can act as a prompt and for students can act as a reminder. This approach can produce some anxiety for academics and students alike because we may still need to impart large amounts of text for many good reasons. Fortunately, PowerPoint's notes view can accommodate as much

text as could have been put on a slide. This can quickly and easily be accessed from the view tab and saved as part of the usual slides.

Students have, to date, mostly been very interested in, and supportive of, visual learning. Quantitative testing over 3 years across 9 academic disciplines revealed that 90% of students exposed to the method preferred slides with large images and limited text, to slides full of text. Of those, 65% preferred metaphor and paradox images to illustrative images, but both were valued more highly than text alone. Qualitative, focus group research showed there are a number of reasons for these preferences (Roberts, 2017:np).

The first is that eliminating large swathes of text per slide makes students feel less overwhelmed. According to MML research, this probably has much to do with excessive text overloading human processing capacity; wasting visual processing ability and filling up short-term memory so thought tasks are harder to complete (Mayer & Moreno, 1998). A second reason for preferring imagery and text to text alone is that students claim to feel a connection to an image but not to words alone. To illustrate this point, one said she "felt she was there in the image" when they were shown. This brought students into contact with the subject of the lectures in ways text alone can't achieve. Students declared that this led to a third reason for their preference: they felt engaged and included, rather than disconnected and bored. One student said "the slides were almost a breath of fresh air as the images allowed me to concentrate on what the lecturer was saying and I was able to take more in." Another considered that by comparison, image-based lectures were more worth attending than their text-centric counterparts. A very small minority (3%) said they preferred text to images; that text can be relocated to the notes view for such students. A fourth reason became clear – they were better able to recall what had been said in the lecture, because the words were hooked to the images. One student commented that normal revision from text was a struggle because it didn't stay in her memory very long. With images, she said she could remember what the concepts and issues had been surrounding the image. A variety of students have remarked that they can recall lecture content a year later.

LOCATING IMAGES

There are various ways to find images that say what we might normally say with text, which explain a complex relationship and which illustrate a point we want to make and/or that render familiar the unfamiliar. I begin with what I want to convey and start searching using terms or words that describe that. If I wanted to talk about evolution, an image search reveals a range of pictures that may or may not be to my liking. As I find images, I interrogate them for the meaning I want to communicate, and choose accordingly. A search for 'evolution' brings up timeline images, for example. In this, a primitive ape-type being crouches on the far left and on the far right is an upright human. But additionally, the search brings up political, philosophical and religious images that can express a complex debate. One is a variant of Michelangelo's The Creation of Adam. It involves a human arm reaching out, but instead of connecting with God's hand, it connects with an ape's arm. This might support a discussion of whether humans are a creation of God or whether we are explained in a more Darwinian sense, being descended from apes. I also teach about conflict. I wanted to convey what a nuclear war would be like; having grown up in the Cold War with the ever-present threat of such carnage, I wanted my students to understand important technical issues like the Circular Error of Probability; but I also wanted them to have a sense of its human consequence. I googled the wrist-watch that survived the atomic blast on Nagasaki, stopping at 11.02 am, the moment the bomb detonated, and used it to tell the story of what happened on that day. Students said they were "spell-bound" as the story developed as they watched it. They wondered who had worn it, how the watch got to the museum it's in and so on. If I can't find what I want this way, I turn to other sites like DeviantArt. If I find something I think is really useful, I write to the artist. One outcome was the image of evolution (above), by Christophe Kiciak, who was delighted to have his work used this way. I also seek ways to express meaning through visual metaphors. If the academic topic I want to convey has an associated metaphor, I search that. For example, if something isn't what it appears to be and might be dangerous, a suitable metaphor might be a wolf in sheep's clothing. Searching for the term may yield an apposite image that communicates what you mean but using the visual processing channel instead of overloading the text-auditory channel with text and speech. There are many ways and it may feel

slow at first but we get quicker the more we do something and the benefits can be substantial.

COPYRIGHT

For the most part, Google Advanced Image Search and Flickr allow users to filter image searches by type of copyright licence. This means we can search for an image of an ape with human eyes (for example) and designate that the only images generated in the search are Creative Commons (CC) licenced images. In addition, sites like DeviantArt contain some of the most imaginative images, but they are almost all copyright-protected. However, because it is a community of artists, they are often supportive of direct requests to use work for educational purposes, especially as it's another way their work may be disseminated. Furthermore, departments may choose to fund innovative teaching methods backed by first class scholarship; my own department funds regular purchases of copyright-covered images from sites like 123RF. Such images can constitute an investment since they only need to be bought once but can be used for however long they are pertinent to the subject we are teaching. To complicate matters further, however, the rules about copyright vary from place to place. For example, in the US, most images are free to use for educational purposes. In the UK, copyright is much harsher, but claims are only likely where an image has been misappropriated for financial profit. Whatever we do, we must attribute the images to their creators or owners, and this can be done on the images themselves (perhaps in a semi-opaque font size that doesn't detract from the effect the images are meant to have); or on an end slide. Universities normally provide guidance on copyright rules, and in addition often have subscriptions and licences to image repositories that allow us to use selected items appropriately.

CONCLUSION

MML research suggests images and text work better for learning and understanding than text alone, partly because university students now come from a distinctly more visual context than their forebears, but mainly because people are dual processors whose brains are better suited to a combination of visual and text processing. When images are combined with limited text, it argues, our brains split the workload which then reduces pressure on working memory and mental processing. Furthermore, testing has shown that key characteristics of active learning are present, considered by many to be more effective and sustainable than passive learning. The opportunity to exploit this understanding of imagery in learning has never been greater as the accessibility of images continues to increase exponentially. If we do only one thing, it should be to end Death by PowerPoint.

REFERENCES

All the images were made or commissioned by the author and copyright David Roberts (2016) – except for image 6 ('biological evolution') by Christophe Kiciak, who gave his permission for it to used in this chapter.

Ayres, P. (2015) State-of-the-Art Research into Multimedia Learning: a commentary on Mayer's Handbook of Mutlimedia Learning. Applied Cognitive Psychology. 29(4):631-636

Cuthbertson, R.; Furseth, P.I. & Ezell, S.J. (2015) Innovating in a service-driven economy: insights, application and practice. London: Palgrave Macmillan

Duarte, N. (2008) Slide:ology: the art and science of creating great presentations. Sebastapol, Ca: O'Reilly Media

Eliason, J.L. (1996) Using paradoxes to teach critical thinking in science. Journal of College Science Teaching. 25(5):341-344

Eppler, M. (2006) A comparison between concepts maps, mind maps, conceptual diagrams and visual metaphors as complementary tools for knowledge construction and sharing. Information Visualization. 5(3):202-210

Felten, P. (2008) Visual Literacy. Change: the Magazine of Higher Learning. 40(6):60-64

Kawasaki, G (2012) Enchantment: the art of changing hearts, minds and actions. New York: Portfolio

Kiciak, C. (n.d.) [online]   http://www.kiciak.fr/p77750736#h288fa048 (accessed 21/12/17)

Kosslyn, S. (2007) Clear and to the point: 8 psychological principles for compelling. New York: Oxford University Press

Mayer, R. (2014) The Cambridge Handbook of Multimedia Learning. (2nd edition) New York: Cambridge University Press

Mayer, R. & Moreno, M. (1998) A split-attention effect in multimedia learning: evidence for dual processing systems in working memory. Journal of Educational Psychology. 90(2):312-320

Mayer, R. & Moreno, M. (2003) Nine ways to reduce cognitive load in multimedia learning. Educational Psychologist. 38(1):43-52

Paivio, A. (2007) Mind and its evolution: a dual coding theoretical approach. Abingdon:Taylor & Francis Group

Paul, C. (2003) Digital Art. London: Thames and Hudson

Roberts, D. (2017) 'The Message Is The Medium': Evaluating The Use Of Visual Images To Provoke Engagement And Active Learning In Politics and International Relations Lectures. Politics. [online] https://doi.org/10.1177/0263395717717229 (accessed 21/9/17)
Schrand, T. (2008) Tapping into active learning and multiple intelligences with interactive multimedia: a low-threshold classroom approach. College Teaching. 56(2):78-84

Tietje, L. & Cresap, S. (2005) Radical Pedagogy. [online] http://www.radicalpedagogy.org/Hegemonic_Visualism.html (accessed 18/5/15)

Williams, B (1997) The effects of metaphoric (visual/verbal) strategies in facilitating student achievement of different educational objectives. (Dissertation, The Pennsylvania State University, 1997). Dissertation Abstracts International, 58, AAT 9817605

Williams, B. (1998) Creating Effective Visual Methaphors p.2 [online] http://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=5&ved=0CDUQFjAE&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.personal.psu.edu%2Fstaff%2Fv%2Fq%2Fvqw%2FPortfolio%2FVislMeta.pdf&ei=FxZiVe7lC8GsU9vhgfgG&usg=AFQjCNFfV8D7xsu5KYjhTjsDKwkVHRY-Ow&sig2=tqlTHQlMMa_anqDQfX5Lf
(accessed 24/5/15)

23

ANY ISSUE THAT IS GETTING IN THE WAY: THE ROLE OF THE STUDENT SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE TUTOR IN PROMOTING INCLUSIVE PRACTICE.

Justine Devenney

In this chapter the question of promoting inclusivity will be addressed via a case study from the School of Architecture and Design at the University of Brighton, UK. Specifically at the impact of having a dedicated Student Support and Guidance Tutor (SSGT) role within the course team, with particular reference to student engagement and retention.

The role of the SSGT is an innovative one and has been evolving over the past three years; as such the University of Brighton now has a dedicated SSGT in every individual school. Broadly speaking their role is all about ensuring inclusivity by working to support students and academic staff on any issue that has the potential to affect student engagement with their course.

BACKGROUND

The original concept behind having dedicated SSGTs was to bridge the gap between students, academic staff in schools and central student services, with the aim of enhancing student retention and engagement. Based directly in schools and ideally located in rooms close to the centre of the hub of the school, SSGTs would be easily accessible and highly responsive to meeting the needs of individual students. They are key in terms of ensuring students feel included and have a sense of belonging in their academic community. When students feel they are part of a learning community and there is a member of staff who is there to help with any issue, however big or small, they are far more likely to succeed academically.

A consistent service for students has helped with the issues they felt there were around varied levels of support. Research undertaken in 2013/14 (Hughes & Devenney, nd) concluded that students feel

it is very helpful to have someone who is always there for help with personal issues. One Architecture student wrote: "sometimes you just need to talk to someone who doesn't really know you, can't judge you and can't be biased towards you. It just helps knowing there is someone there."

SSGTs are not counsellors but many do have counselling backgrounds and they are employed within the Counselling and Well Being Team. They work with students on a 1-1 basis to help with a wide range of issues, some highly complex, so will often use counselling skills. Where necessary they will refer students on to more specialist services and, where appropriate, help them in accessing such support.

Five years ago there was a somewhat fragmented picture with regard to SSGTs at the university. Previous attempts had been made to consolidate the role but a number of schools had no one in post and there was a lack of co-ordination of the work across the institution. Moreover retention across the university was poor in some areas. As such a number of high-level initiatives were introduced to try and rectify the situation. A decision was taken to expand the role of the SSGTs with a view to them being located at local level in individual schools and work with students in an inclusive way to enhance engagement, and as a consequence improve retention.

Drawing on research into retention issues the publication of What Works? report on student retention and success (Thomas, 2012), was timely as findings focused on initiatives to help enhance retention. There was also evidence that many students with additional needs were not accessing support from student services until towards the end of their degree and as such the right support was not always in place. Brighton attracts a diverse range of students and prides itself on inclusivity but there was no cohesive way of monitoring and supporting those who had issues of a pastoral nature. Those with issues affecting their ability to study often felt they had no one to talk to who understood the nature of how personal issues can affect a student's academic experience.

As the role was formalised it was clear it would be beneficial to have a key person within each school to be part of both recruitment and to then act as a link for the SSGT who would be managed within student services. The What Works? report had highlighted

that "the academic sphere is the most important site for nurturing participation of the type which engenders a sense of belonging" ensuring that both academic and support staff were part of the recruitment process and effective partnership working could be set in place (ibid:17). Discussions were held with heads of schools on an individual basis and most heads wanted to be part of the developments and saw the value for their students. There was a named academic to work with and this link proved invaluable in ensuring the role of SSGT was consolidated. This case study focuses specifically on how the role of SSGT in the School of Architecture and Design is pivotal to promoting a culture of inclusivity. The student cohort within this school is very diverse in terms of need. There are a significant number of international students and a high number of students have dyslexia. The study of architecture is all consuming and academically very demanding. Moreover, the cost of living in Brighton is high, meaning an increasing number of students face real financial difficulty in terms of housing and supporting themselves. All these issues have the potential to impact on retention, so being able to see an SSGT when problems first emerge is crucial. When surveyed 92% of students said that if they were thinking of leaving the course they would talk to their SSGT.

STUDENT STRESS AND INCLUSIVITY

It is well documented that student stress has been steadily increasing over recent years. Alarmingly the number of students to drop out of university with mental health problems has more than trebled in recent years. Data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (nd) reveals that a record 1,180 students who experienced mental health problems left university early in 2014-15 representing a 210% increase from 380 in 2009-10.

In August 2016 a survey by UK magazine The Architects' Journal (Waite & Braidwood, 2016) reported that 26% of architecture students had received medical help for mental health problems resulting from their course, with workload and debt among the leading causes while a further 26% said they worried they would need to seek help in the future. Altogether, more than half of the students who responded reported concerns about mental health related to their course. The problem was more acute with female respondents, of

whom almost a third had sought support for mental health issues compared to 26% of male respondents.The report prompted much debate amongst architects, educators and students alike. Some of the underlying causes are fairly clear: high student fees, a lengthy course where to qualify can take seven to eight years, the pressure of mounting debts, the need to take on paid work alongside studying, and job prospects.

The report findings came as little surprise; the most common student issue brought to the SSGT across all courses is consistently stress and anxiety related. Worryingly a significant number of students are being prescribed medication by their GP seemingly as a matter of course, just to help them manage the day-to-day reality of their studies. The studio environment is pressured; assessment methods such as critiques, presentations and peer reviews cause even the strongest students a huge amount of anxiety.

In an article for Dezeen, Professor Robert Mull (2016), newly appointed Head of School of Architecture and Design at Brighton and former director of architecture and dean of The Cass, addressed some of the common concerns within architectural educational practice that too often promote long hours, stressful competition and a worrying degree of discrimination. He argued that as educators we are all responsible for addressing such issues.

At Brighton, however, being able to see the SSGT when anxiety first emerges has proved to be hugely beneficial. It can often prevent problems from becoming worse and students know from the outset that when things get tough, either in or outside of university, there is someone to turn to. Year-on-year around 50% of the entire cohort of 565 students will seek some form of advice or support from the SSGT.

Feedback from both student surveys and focus groups used to show that the majority of students felt that being highly stressed and anxious was just part of the culture. You just had to accept it. Many were reluctant to seek counselling and for the majority counselling was not the answer. Since having an SSGT in post the number of students going for counselling for academic concerns has significantly dropped.

The SSGT for Architecture has now been in post for three years and there is clear evidence that just having someone to calm you down and talk you through things can be enormously beneficial. As one student said: "someone to keep me on track."

Moreover the SSGT role is well placed to signpost and help students with study skills. In this respect a little personalised help can go a long to reducing anxiety and improving confidence. The message to students is that whilst some stress and worry can be a valuable part of the learning experience – extreme anxiety and lack of confidence can be avoided by getting pastoral support specific to the academic environment and culture of the school.

The SSGT runs an annual survey and year-on-year feedback indicates that having a consistent service for students has helped with the issues they felt there were around varied levels of support. Students cite that it is very helpful to have someone who is always there for help with personal issues.

When asked if SSGT advice had been helpful 97% of students said it had been very or extremely helpful and 98% of students agree that it had enabled them to continue their student life at university

The SSGT can also act as an intermediary between staff and students to help with advice on practical arrangements. Tutors' survey responses regularly cite that that the provision of an SSGT enables them to spend more time on academic issues and in addition on course organisation.

Having a dedicated SSGT within the course team has resulted in more open discussion about inclusive practice. Why do so many students now seek support? Are student lives really more complex? Are mental health issues so much more common or is this because there is far less stigma in coming forward?

There are a number of key issues that both students and staff alike are identifying as reasons for this apparent rise in mental health issues. Over-protective parenting, parental pressures, narrow exam-orientated schooling not preparing students for higher education and an obsession with individual perfection. All indicate that many students are struggling to feel included, adapt to university life and more independent thinking.

By embedding pastoral support within the academic sphere students can discuss anxiety issues in relation to their own learning. This can be hugely empowering. On creative courses such as architecture, students often take a long time to understand how their design thinking works or grasp the iterative process and if you think you have to get everything right first time this inevitably creates huge anxiety which, left unchecked, can lead to withdrawal. Regular sessions with their SSGT often helps students see that they need to have more self-compassion, better adaptive thinking and develop their own resources.

This is not to minimise severe mental health issues experienced by some students, and many students do indeed have very complex lives. But when we talk about mental health problems what do we actually mean if they are purely subjective? What is far more helpful is for students to understand there is a continuum of mental health; it is not an either/or condition of either being happy or ill.

CONCLUSION

Getting to grips with university and all its new responsibilities and experiences is often a catalyst for all sorts of issues; students can pathologise completely normal experiences such as housemate issues, heartbreak, peer pressure, and academic stress then feel as if they don't fit in. Indeed the lack of confidence some students have in their own thoughts and opinions can be quite alarming. So having a neutral member of staff with whom students talk things through can really help students to build self-confidence, to find their own voice, to follow their passions, to take risks, and to enjoy what they do for its own sake.

REFERENCES

Higher Education Statistics Agency (no date) Statistics [online] https://www.hesa.ac.uk/tags/statistics (accessed 21/12/17)

Hughes, C. & Devenney, J. (nd)   The impact on engagement and retention of Student Support and Guidance Tutors (SSGTs) in the School of Architecture at University of Brighton) AMOSHEE Insight. [online] https://www.amosshe.org.uk/resources/Documents/AMOSSHE_Insight_project_summaries_2013-14.pdf (accessed 12/9/17)

Mull, R. (2016) We are all responsible for the state of architectural education in the UK. De Zeen. [online] https://www.dezeen.com/2016/08/04/robert-mull-opinion-architecture-education-uk-mental-health-students-volunteering/ (accessed 1/12/16)

Thomas, L. (2012) Building student engagement and belonging in Higher Education at a time of change. [online] https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/what_works_final_report.pdf (accessed 1/12/16)

Waite, R. & Braidwood, E. (2016) Mental health problems exposed by AJ student survey 2016. The Architects' Journal. [online] https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/news/mental-health-problems-exposed-by-aj-student-survey-2016/10009173.fullarticle (accessed 1/12/16)

PROMOTING INCLUSIVITY THROUGH THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Dennis Duty & Paul Armitage

THE CHANGING FACE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Widening participation in Higher Education has radically altered the make-up of the typical student cohort with greater numbers of students attending from previously under-represented groups. The resulting increase in non-traditional (NT) students has been discussed in the introduction chapter. A definition of non-traditional eludes us, but students can display varying levels of characteristics that would normally indicate being non-traditional (Slowey & Schuetze, 2002; Gilardi & Guglielmetti, 2011). These would include, but are not limited to, age, ethnicity, accommodation, being first generation, family circumstances and disability. Furthermore, they may not have the traditional types of qualifications and may have generally low levels of achievement, and display different learning styles. Exposed to university for the first time, students are confronted with adjusting to a different way of learning in the form of the lecture-tutorial system (LT), but for NT students in particular, it can be challenging (Thomas, 2002).

THE UNIVERSITY TEACHING ENVIRONMENT

The LT system has a lineage that can be traced back to the original concept of the university. In its pure form it is potentially effective, but that effectiveness is predicated on very small tutorial groups and, at the same time tends to suit the more traditional learner. The structural and learning issues with the lecture are rooted in the issue of class sizes and there is a well-established body of research at pre-university education indicating that the smaller the class then the more opportunities there are for learning to take place. In higher education (HE) whilst the research is less voluminous, there is nevertheless some evidence for a concern with the teaching

environment in universities. Costin (1972), for example, synthesised existing research on learning and teaching in HE and generally found that learning was improved where the teaching environment facilitated discussion. Subsequent research has generally supported the premise that smaller classes are generally more effective for student learning (Glass & Smith, 1979; Sivan & Kember, 2000), and that NT students in particular are more likely to benefit from, and prefer, smaller class sizes (Drane & Smith, 2005; Williams, 1992).

Widening participation and the introduction of fees has forced universities to focus more on the student experience, a major component of which is the way in which students are taught. The LT system persists as the dominant form of delivery, but there are doubts about its effectiveness. Bligh (2000:20) was unequivocal in terms of what were the use of lectures, stating that they should never be used to "…promote thought, change attitudes, or develop behavioural skills…". It was a view supported by Laurillard (2002:92-93) who argued that because the lecture places responsibility on the student to learn, it potentially disadvantages a significant proportion of the contemporary student population.

Contemporary conditions in HE institutions have produced a version of the LT system that speaks more to efficiency than effectiveness and is manifest in large tutorial groups, or sometimes the removal of the tutorial element completely. This is particularly the case in year 1 when cohorts tend to be large. There is recognition that change is essential to meet the needs of the predominant type of student (Roberts, 2011), but an equal recognition of the constraints and culture embedded in institutions that act as a major barrier to change. However, inaction may cost the industry and students dearly, a point not lost on Ericksen (1995:20) who suggested that:

"Failure to acknowledge the existing student profile will result in incongruities which arise when structures are utilised which are in fact aligned with values appropriate to another system."

Written over 20 years ago, its sentiments are perhaps even more relevant today.

THE PROBLEM CONTEXT

It is in this context of an increasingly heterogeneous student body that this case is presented. It forms part of a doctoral thesis that looked at the issue of student retention on the first year of the undergraduate business programmes at the University of Huddersfield. The research spanned 7 years, from 2002-2008 inclusive, and over this period 753 students were recruited to the business programmes. There is a total of 10 programmes, but the majority share 5 core modules with the opportunity to take an option. Huddersfield is typical of many post-92 institutions, taking a high proportion of NT students who are largely local. Additionally, the student body reflects the local community demographics with 20% of the cohort made up of British Asian students. Mature students (over 21 years) constitute 20% of the total, and 60% of students were local and living in the family, or privately-owned accommodation. Furthermore, the proportion of students classified as first generation went from 50% in 2004 to 60% in 2008. Recent data from an internal study of the Business Management course indicated that this figure had increased to 75%.

In 2002 and 2003 all modules were delivered through the LT system, but observations identified problems related to low academic performance and low progression rates particularly amongst NT students. Further investigation exposed a number of key problems as follows:

- Nearly 30% of students failed to progress onto year 2 of the programmes

- Students cited difficulties in understanding theory in lectures, problems of taking notes, and inability to interact with, and ask questions of tutors

- Attendance was very poor, often as low as 30%

- An inflexible timetable caused problems for students with commitments outside of university

- Students in different tutorials for the same module complained of different standards of teaching

- There was a generally low level of achievement across the modules.

CHANGING THE TEACHING ENVIRONMENT

The response was focused on what happened in classrooms, the place where the vast majority of contact with the university occurred, especially for NT students. It involved changing the way in which teaching was delivered and was comprised of the following actions:

- Replace the LT system with a single two hour seminar for each of the 5 core modules. Instead of 1 lecture, and 6 or 7 tutorials there were now just 4 seminars for each module

- Stipulate a minimum 10-minute break during the seminar

- Aim to minimise the number of different staff teaching the same module (ultimately to reduce this number to one).

Depending on the number recruited in a particular year, seminar sizes were on average about 25, but never more than 30 students.

RESEARCH METHOD AND DATA COLLECTION

For seven years (2002-2008) various types of data were collected. they consisted primarily of attendance, student performance, and background variables. Student attendance and performance was compared between the 2002-2003 cohorts and the 2004-2008 cohorts. Qualitative data were obtained through an open question survey where year 2 students were asked to list three things they liked and disliked about the LT and seminar systems.

Because of the nature of this study it avoids many of the problems that dog classical educational experimentation methods. It would be wrong to classify the methodology used here as experimentation, but it nevertheless avoids many problems of setting up experiments. There was no artificial creation of subject and control groups because these were provided naturally as a result of the change in delivery method in 2004. The control group was made up of all students in the 2002 and 2003 cohorts, and the experiment group consisted of all of the students who entered between 2004 and 2008. Data

collection took place on a longitudinal basis as part of the natural process, and so circumvented many of the observational issues often associated with research. In essence the approach taken here has all the benefits of the randomly controlled trial but without the drawbacks.

In order to control for variance between cohorts, means were compared for a number of key variables. This revealed no significant differences in terms of group demographics such as gender, ethnicity, entry UCAS points, and international students. However, in the experiment group there were 37 Polish students whose attendance and performance were significantly higher than the cohort average. These students were omitted from the final analysis to avoid results skewed in favour of the seminar system.

THE RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

TIMETABLE SCHEDULING

Figure 1 illustrates an example of a typical student timetable under the LT system (2002 and 2003 cohorts). The problems with this structure are both practical and pedagogical. In practical terms there are 5 lectures, one for each core subject where all students need to be in attendance. This structure tends to speak to a student that is traditional, both in the sense of having no outside commitments beyond attending university, and in terms of learning style. The problem is that the majority of students on the course lived at home and a significant number were mature. These students invariably had commitments such as paid jobs and in a not insignificant number of cases, various family commitments. Even if the NT student could attend they still had to contend with a learning environment that was challenging given their learning styles and preferences. Also there were some structural issues with how the LT system operated. In some cases the lecture was preceded by the tutorial, and often there was a significant time lapse between the lecture and the tutorial, thus exacerbating the already fragmented learning experience. Other structural issues revolved around when sessions were scheduled. For example, scheduling a single session for one day, or perhaps having a large gap between sessions resulted in poor attendance as students would not come in at all or leave after the first session respectively.

	09:15	10:15	11:15	12:15	13:15	14:15	15:15	16:15	18:15
M'day	Markets and Govt (L)			Intro to Business (T)	Managing info (T)				
T'day	Option			Intro to Business (L)					
W'day									
Th'day								Markets and Govt (T)	
F'day		Accounts (L)	Accounts (T)				Managing info (L)		

Figure 1: A typical student timetable under the LT system

Changing the delivery system to seminars away from LT allowed a student-centred approach to timetable scheduling. This started in induction where students were asked to submit time slots when they were not available during the week. With this data timetables could be provided to students on an individual basis. For each of the 5 core modules there would be one of 4 seminars a student could attend. So for example, the student who had a job on a Tuesday would simply not be scheduled any classes on that day, and the student who had children at school would not be scheduled classes before 10am or after 3pm. It was not uncommon for students with a place on the course to enquire about timetables before commencement and to be provided with a personalised schedule based on information they provided. Additionally the system could deal with permanent changes in a student's circumstances, such as changes in work shifts or family commitments simply by providing an alternative timetable. Also, if a student had some issue where they could not attend their timetabled session in a particular week, then they could arrange to attend any one of the other 3 seminars for that module.

As a result of the benefits observed in the first couple of years of running seminars, the system was used as part of the marketing literature for the business courses. It was particularly useful on open days where prospective students could be provided with information about how the seminar worked and the benefits for students, especially NT students.

	09:15	10:15	11:15	12:15	13:15	14:15	15:15	16:15	18:15
M'day	Markets & Govt		Intro to Business						
T'day									
W'day									
Th'day			Operations				Managing Info		
F'day			Option		Accountancy				

Figure 2: Typical student timetable under the Seminar system

IMPACT ON STUDENT ATTENDANCE

The introduction of the seminar system in 2004 seemed to coincide with an improvement in attendance. Figure 3 shows the average attendance rates for each of the 5 core modules over the 2002-2008 period, and the increase in 2004 is sustained through 2008. Checks were carried out to identify whether there could have been a systemic change in 2004 that could have impacted on attendance but none was found. T-tests comparing attendance averages for the 2002-2003 period with the 2004-2008 provided highly significant results for every module.

Figure 3: Average attendance by module 2002-2008

IMPACT ON STUDENT PERFORMANCE BY MODULE

The data for student performance shows a remarkably similar pattern to attendance with an increase in student performance across all 5 modules from 2004. Again, there were found to be no systemic changes (e.g. grading processes) that might account for the similar pattern of improvement in all 5 core modules. T-tests on each module produced highly significant results indicating that the intervention was the cause of the improvement.
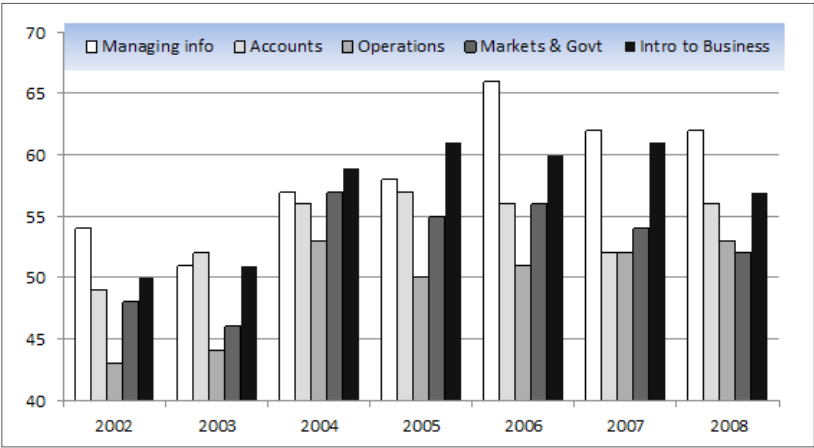
Figure 4: Average performance by module 2002-2008

IMPACT ON STUDENT PERFORMANCE BY STUDENT TYPE

Whilst the module performance data provides evidence of the impact of using seminars as opposed to lectures, the data is aggregating all student types. When results are scrutinised from the perspective of different student types it reveals some interesting differences. Figure 5 shows the average performance across all modules but by age, gender, entry UCAS points, and overseas Chinese students. Focusing on two characteristics that could indicate how NT a student is, namely ethnicity and UCAS points, we can identify higher gains the more NT a student is. This seems to resonate with the theory that seminars play to the learning styles of certain types of student. Furthermore, under the seminar system Asian students gained significantly more than white students. However, the extent to which ethnicity may be a

causal variable is mitigated somewhat due to Asian students entering with an average UCAS point score of 220 compared to 280 for the rest of the students. Of particular interest are the results for Chinese students. Whilst the sample numbers are too small to establish a significant link, it still suggests that Chinese students are impervious to changes in the learning environment.

Categories	Lecture		Seminar		Difference between Seminar and lecture average marks
	Number of students	Average mark	Number of students	Average mark	
All	181	47.6%	351	56.5%	8.9% ***
0-199 Ucas points	60	45.0%	76	52.0%	7.0% ***
200-299 Ucas points	34	50.1%	116	55.4%	5.3% **
300+ Ucas points	20	61.9%	54	64.2%	2.3%
Male	104	45.8%	210	54.5%	8.7% ***
Female	61	50.1%	141	59.5%	9.4% ***
Asian	31	42.0%	84	53.0%	11.0% ***
White	128	49.7%	262	57.7%	8.0% ***
Chinese	12	50.0%	13	50.3%	0.3%

P<0.001***, P<0.01**

Figure 5. Student performance by category.

IMPACT ON STUDENT PROGRESSION TO YEAR 2

Progression into the second year is important, both for the individual student, and for the institution. Figure 6 provides summary statistics for progression to year 2. The 3 categories are, progress, academic fail (student completed all assessments but failed to achieve sufficient credit to progress), and other non-progression which includes withdrawal, and non-completion. A chi-square test indicated a very strong probability that the seminar system was responsible for the improved progression to year 2. Under the LT system 7 students failed their final exams in both 2002 and 2003, whilst only 9 failed between 2004 and 2008, or 1.8 students per year. This represents a potential 26 additional students progressing to year 2 between 2004 and 2008, or £156,000 in saved fees (£3000 per year over 2 years). Extrapolating this to the current context of £9000 annual fees would potentially realise £468,000.

	Progress	Academin fail	other non-progression	Total
Lecture/Tutorial 2002-2003	148	14	46	208
Seminar 2004-2008	399	9	100	508
Total	547	23	146	716

Figure 6: Student progression 2002-2008

STUDENT FEEDBACK

The responses for the open question survey were analysed through a process of aggregation in order to categorise responses into one of 3 areas. The far right hand column in Figures 7 (LT) and 8 (Seminar) indicate the categories with SO representing structural and organisational issues, TL representing teaching and learning, and CE communication and engagement issues. The next column indicates the percentage of students who mentioned that particular category. Generally the two tables are a mirror image of each other. For the LT there were 107 positive, and 207 negative comments, whereas the seminar received 225 positive and 95 negative. Students cited the ability to interact with the tutor and fellow students, and pointed to the learning challenges posed by the large lecture. It is interesting to note how students were well aware of what constituted good teaching, and particularly how even in seminars if chalk and talk methods were used they were considered ineffective. With regards to the LT system, students were cognisant of how the system should work, but that it often didn't. There was also a clear appreciation of the flexibility in the seminar-based timetable.

LECTURE-TUTORIAL

Positive Responses

Total number of responses	107	
Number of responses per student	0.89	
Short, flows faster, get through work, splits up time	23%	SO
Good if the lecture-tutorial system works as it should	20%	TL
Good for information, knowledge accumulation, getting notes	20%	TL
Easy to hide, use phone, not attend, sign in friends	6%	SO
Good if teaching is good	4%	TL
Relaxed can concentrate, no interruptions	4%	TL
In same class with everyone	6%	SO
Can be anonymous, don't have to join in if don't want	3%	SO
Simple structure easy to follow, predictable	3%	SO

Negative responses

Total number of responses	207	
Number of responses per student	1.73	
Can't ask questions, no interaction, one-way communication	43%	CE
Poor teaching, limited methods, Death by Powerpoint, Boring	34%	TL
Too fast to take effective notes	23%	TL
Disruptive and noisy, too many distractions	18%	TL
Too many people in lecture, lecturer focus on teaching to a small group, ignores others	15%	SO
Lecture-tutorial system doesn't work/not organised	13%	SO
Difficult to concentrate/easy to switch off	12%	TL
Inconvenient timetables, no breaks, too lon	10%	SO
Learning issues, don't learn anything	3%	TL

Figure 7: Positive and negative responses for the LT system

SEMINAR		

Positive Responses

Total number of responses	225	
Number of responses per student	1.88	
Can ask questions and contribute	46%	CE
Good tutor-student interaction, more personal	35%	CE
Better learning environment, learn/understand more.	33%	TL
More time to learn, breaks, easy to make notes	19%	TL
Interactive teaching, variable methods, good teaching	16%	TL
Interaction with peers, group work	16%	CE
Convenient timetable, easier to attend.	13%	SO
Can concentrate, few distractions	10%	TL

Negative responses

Total number of responses	92	
Number of responses per student	0.77	
Too long, time can drag	25%	SO
Too long if break too short or no break.	13%	SO
Poor teaching makes it boring and too long	11%	TL
Concentration problems towards the end	9%	TL
Boring	8%	TL
Not enough theory, too much discussion	7%	TL
Room size, seminar size, breaks, timetabling	3%	SO

Figure 8: Positive and negative responses for the seminar system

CONCLUSION

The observed results indicate that changing the delivery method to a more student centred and interactive format seems to have benefited all students, but particularly so NT students. The seminar encourages attendance, both through the flexibility it offers, but also because it is student focussed. The smaller classes allow a deeper level of engagement than that provided through the LT system, and additionally fosters a strong sense of belonging, often considered critical for student integration into the university culture.

The conversion to the seminar system was not easy however, requiring not just the structural changes presented here, but also a change in culture. Many academic staff found it challenging teaching in a seminar environment and often fell back on delivery styles they were comfortable with. This is a fundamental criticism of the LT system, but it also forms the basis of most negative comments of the seminar system when tutors use chalk and talk for a 2-hour session. Ultimately, the movement to one tutor per module would address the problem of differential teaching, and contribute to student satisfaction in the seminar system. There are other challenges to this approach, for example where modules are delivered by other schools there is less scope for changing because of lack of control, and the complexity of timetabling that results. However, it is possible to make the changes on just the modules that are controlled.

The benefits for students and the institution are clear, and as a result the 2-hour seminar became the default delivery method in the Business School where possible. However, in the context of commercialisation where the focus has moved onto efficiency, we have witnessed a gradual erosion of the seminar in favour of a reversion back to the LT approach. Whilst it is true that the LT system is potentially less resource intensive (especially if tutorial sizes are in excess of 20 students and cohorts are very large) the policy may be short-sighted. In the long run seminars not only improve student outcomes and foster integration and belonging, but also benefit the institution in the form of retained fees, and in higher retention and student satisfaction.

REFERENCES

Bligh, D. (2000) What's the use of lectures? San-Fransisco: Josey-Bass

Costin, F. (1972) Lecturing versus Other Methods of Teaching: A Review of Research. British Journal of Educational Technology. 3:4-31

Drane, D. & Smith, H. (2005) The Gateway Science Workshop Programme: Enhancing Student performance and Retention in the Sciences through Peer Facilitated Discussion. Journal of Science Education and Technology. 14(3):337-352

Eriksen, S. (1995) TQM and the Transition from an Elite to a Mass System of Higher Education in the UK. Quality Assurance in Education. 3(1):14-29

Gilardi, S. & Guglielmetti, C. (2011) University Life of Non-Traditional Students: Engagement Styles and Impact on Attrition. The Journal of Higher Education. 82(1):33-53

Glass, G. & Smith, M. (1979) Meta-analysis of research on Class size and Achievement. Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis. 1(1):2-16

Laurillard, D. (2002) Rethinking University teaching: A Framework for the effective Technologies. London: Routledge

Roberts, R. (2011) Traditional practice for non-traditional students? Examining the role of pedagogy in higher education retention. Journal of Further and Higher Education. 35(2):183-199

Sivan, A.L. & Kember, D. (2000) An Implementation of Active Learning and its Effect on the Quality of Student Learning. Innovations in Education and Teaching International. 37(4):381-389

Slowey, H. & Schuetze, M. (2002) Participation and exclusion: A comparative analysis of non-traditional students and lifelong learning. Higher Education. 44:309-327

Thomas, L. (2002) Student retention in Higher Education: the role of institutional habitus. Journal of Educational Policy. 17(4):423-442

Williams, E. (1992) Student Attitude Towards Approaches to Learning and Assessment. Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education. 17:45-58

CHAPTER

2
5

AN APPROACH TO INCLUSIVE PLACEMENT SUPPORT WITHIN A BUSINESS SCHOOL CONTEXT

Michelle Blackburn and Susan Jones

This chapter shares the experiences and lessons learnt when delivering high-volume placement support within a Business School context. We will identify the Business School and Higher Education (HE) context before exploring the support provided for students when applying for, participating in, and returning from, a year-long industrial sandwich placement. To fully appreciate how the Business School supports students with specific learning difficulties (SpLDs) it is important to provide an insight into the extensive provision available as standard practice for all our placement students. This allows the discussion to then further explore the additional resource dedicated to SpLDs and its success.

Sheffield Business School (SBS), part of Sheffield Hallam University, UK, is deeply committed to enabling its students to gain work experience, particularly (but not exclusively) through a year-long sandwich placement. This is because as an institution we have a strong belief that completing a sandwich placement enables students to achieve successful outcomes post-graduation. This driver is clearly supported by evidence from statistics (in-house, not published) which at its simplest showed that all students within SBS who completed a sandwich placement earned over £4,000 more in their first year, compared to students who had chosen not to complete a sandwich year. As an extension of this, SBS seeks to reflect the Higher Education Academy (2015:3) objective that "… all students regardless of location, situation, programme or mode of study, should have equitable access to opportunities to enhance their employability, make successful transitions and manage their careers".

Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) is actively committed to the equitable access across a range of student demographics as is stated in SHU's Strategy to 2020 document which captures Supportiveness and Inclusion as an institution core value (Sheffield Hallam University, 2015a:2).

This cascades into SHU's Learning and Teaching Strategy 2015-2020 (2015b:3) which states:

"We will provide an excellent and inclusive educational experience for our students and through our learning and teaching they will be stimulated, presented with new challenges and perspectives and supported to succeed".

Third, this inclusive approach is shared with our students via our Student Charter (Sheffield Hallam University [a] n.d.) which lists a number of commitments, three of which have particular resonance when it comes to examining inclusion in placement support for students with SpLDs.

EMBEDDED EMPLOYABILITY

Sheffield Business School (SBS) is one of four faculties within SHU and its undergraduate degrees which have employability embedded within the curriculum, often in the form of specific employability-related modules (subjects). Many modules also contain work-related learning, for example via business projects. Additionally, all but one of these degrees offer a year-long (sandwich year) placement opportunity as do many of SBS's post-graduate programmes (which are outside of the scope of this discussion). This reflects policy recommendations from the Higher Education Academy (2015:1) which state that "employability should be embedded into all learning and teaching policies, processes and practices – particularly in the curriculum". Indeed, SBS's approach, while varied across subject reflects Knight & Yorke's (2006:14) employability ideal through the adoption of the following 5 approaches: learning contracts; industrial sandwich placements; pre-placement support; on-placement support; and post-placement support.

LEARNING CONTRACTS

Learning contracts are the final piece of the jigsaw when it comes to sector recommendations for placement support. A report by York Consulting and University of Leeds (2015) for the Higher Education Funding Council of England (HEFCE) identifies a number of practices that would demonstrate good practice support for learning contract students undergoing a placement.

York Consulting and University of Leeds (2015:ii) in a report prepared for HEFCE suggest that students with SpLDs are often grouped with other students under the umbrella of disability support. This sector norm is one adopted within SHU which recognises students with learning, physical and mental health differences via a learning contract process which is designed to identify and offer resources to support study. One key feature to note in the learning contract process is that students are provided with the following assurance when it comes to disclosure: "once you agree, this document [learning contract] is shared with relevant staff in the university. It will not be shared with anyone outside the university without your permission" (Sheffield Hallam University [b] n.d.).

Having established the use of learning contracts within SHU it is now possible to look at comparative sector data. A HEFCE sponsored report addressing support for higher education students with specific learning difficulties (York Consulting and University of Leeds (2015) suggested that students with SpLDs are increasingly represented within universities. Their report states that around 7.5% of students in the 2012-13 academic year (ibid:i) had SpLDs. In 2014/15 SHU had 31,508 students, 3,628 (12%) of whom said that they had a disability (Sheffield Hallam University, 2016a) which suggests that SHU could claim to have proportionally more students with disabilities (whether related learning, physical or mental health challenges) than many other UK higher education institutions.

INDUSTRIAL (SANDWICH) PLACEMENTS

In 2014/15 SBS had 657 (59%) of students without a learning contract undertaking either a UK or an international year-long industrial sandwich placement. When it came to students with a learning

contract, 27 students gained a placement from a learning contract population of 96, representing a 28% success rate. It is difficult to find statistics that enable a benchmarking of this success rate. A report by Resolution UK using Labour Forces Survey and National Statistics noted that an employment gap of 33% existed between those with and without a disability (Gregg & Finch, 2016:6). While this figure exists, we believe it is too blunt to be meaningful. National data on disability does not include the variety of learning difficulties we capture in our learning contracts, nor does it directly reflect the age range and indeed confidence and aspirations of our students.

What is clear to us, however, is that there is a big attainment gap when it comes to placement success amongst those with and without a learning contract. This gap is clearly not something we were satisfied with and as a consequence we have strengthened our efforts to support students with learning contracts who are looking for placements. There is one further demographic differential that needs to be considered. For the 2013/14 academic year, 96.3% of students were from state schools or colleges, 38.8% of whom were from National Statistics Socio-Economic Classes 4–7 (i.e. households where the main occupants' workplace relationships were classified as either: small employers and own account workers; lower supervisory and technical occupations; semi-routine occupations; or routine occupations). Additionally, 18.2% of students were from low higher education participation neighbourhoods. This represents some measure of success in the widening participation agenda but also brings with it additional responsibilities when related to the sandwich year placement as this case will explore (Sheffield Hallam University, [c] n.d.).

One simple way to demonstrate the SBS commitment to placements, is to summarise the size and scale of the team working on this agenda. In the year 2015/16, around 1,200 Level 5 students within SBS on sandwich degrees were searching for a placement year and a further 714 students were out on placement. So, there were nearly 2,000 students requiring placement-related support each year. Within SBS this support is provided by the Student Engagement and Employment Team.

PRE-PLACEMENT SUPPORT

The brief for this team is to lead on the co-curricular agenda and to ensure that this agenda delivers enhanced employability and supports students in developing and achieving their placement and graduate role ambitions. This team runs a number of initiatives including placement reps, common purpose leadership awards, student societies linked to course themes as well as the placement process. So, how does this team provide support for students with learning contracts and those from less represented groups when it comes to placement search? Firstly, by supporting the team with continuing professional development. For example SBS staff attend courses (and the annual conference) of ASET, the work based and placement learning association. We do this to learn more about how other UK higher education institutions "ensure opportunities are inclusive, safe and supported" ASET (2014:10).

Within the employability team at SBS there remains a degree of caution when it comes to a one size fits all approach. To help demonstrate this we asked one of our students (Matilda – who agreed that we could use her real name) to share some of her placement story:

"I have bad dyslexia along with other difficulties, and once I have disclosed this, I find that people jump to the conclusion that I am stupid, or not as capable as others; this is not the case, I'm extremely intelligent and just as capable as anyone else, I may just have to approach tasks differently to get the same result…

As a student with learning, mental and physical disabilities university is daunting enough without having to apply for a work placement at the same time… there's the worry of, what job can I realistically do? I was personally worried that if I disclosed my disabilities at the beginning I wouldn't even get to an interview stage, so then it resulted in my disclosing after I'd been offered the job, which made me feel guilty that I'd mislead the employer, yet another thing for me to worry about!…

My tutors tried to support me through the application process, but it's difficult when none of them knew exactly what struggles I was experiencing. For example, my biggest problem is reading, the thought of it gives me panic attacks… [to] read about companies and to read through the application thoroughly was really hard for me….

… use of the word disabled, I know I have disabilities, but I don't feel as though I am disabled… It's hard to describe maybe?"

Matilda graduated with a first-class award in 2015/16 after successfully completing a placement year. It is clear from Matilda's statement that she doesn't want to be seen as disabled and this is one of the challenges SBS faces when supporting students with varying needs. Indeed, SBS takes a great deal of care to ensure that adjustments to practice do not "have the potential to be stigmatising and divisive particularly where other students perceive advantage or special treatment" (Higher Education Academy (2015:5).

Within their frameworks York Consulting and University of Leeds (2015) and the Quality Assurance Agency (2010) suggest reasonable adjustments which can be problematic to achieve. For example, in a recent innovation, all students with a learning contract at the start of their placement-seeking year are discretely invited to attend a one-to-one meeting with their Placement Year Student Support Officer (PYSSO). At these meetings the PYSSO speaks with the student about the potential benefits and challenges of disclosing disability information to potential employers, coping with placement search (physically and emotionally) and feelings about the word disabled and how rejection of this label might limit support and access to opportunities (e.g. from disability confident employers). We face particular challenge in the area of disclosure. Students can often be reluctant to declare disabilities because of perceived discrimination. This generates student well-being concerns within the SBS team as we are aware of cases where withholding this information has led to anxieties and unexpected challenges surfacing for the student while they are on placement.

As previously highlighted, our learning contract process guarantees that students have control over their own data and therefore we cannot disclose information to employers without the student's express permission even when we believe it to be in their best interest. Instead we have to find other routes (aside from PYSSO discussion) to surface the issue. For example, SBS developed a Placement Blog (to act as a valuable source of peer to peer support). This blog, populated by students who are on, or have returned from, placement adds an authentic voice offering what could be seen by the learning contract student as more objective support, for example:

> *"Don't be afraid to disclose your disability; it's the 21st century and employers are not allowed to discriminate against you, BUT speak to someone at student support and Central Careers to help you phrase it the right way, and ensure you put a positive spin on it; e.g.: I have dyslexia, but this means that I am extremely creative and often use my initiative to think of new ways to complete and improve a task."*

One other approach used to ensure that all students with a learning contract engage with their PYSSO relates to their risk assessment. All placements are risk assessed and when a student with a learning contract secures a placement offer, the placement risk is automatically assessed as medium. This means that for the placement to be approved the student must meet with the PYSSO and during this meeting the PYSSO has the time and opportunity to discuss with the student their plans for the placement year (including disclosure if this hasn't happened already). It also gives the PYSSO an opportunity to talk through the job description and discusses strategies to use when entering the new workplace for the first time and how to cope with the issues that might arise. Assessment as a medium risk also triggers a process which ensures this student is given more support calls by their PYSSO during their placement year. Finally, the PYSSO signposts the learning contact student to internal SHU support (e.g. employability support, learning support, psychological assessment, assistive technology and in-house support worker services) and external provision (e.g. applications for Disabled Student's Allowance.

SBS has a placement representative (placement rep) scheme – where students who have completed their placement year volunteer to spend a year supporting placement seekers. This scheme is highly regarded by both its participants and employers. In the year 2016/17 of the 714 student who have returned from placement, just under 200 have volunteered to become placement reps. Their role includes producing a Be Inspired By newsletter about their placement experience (shared with placement seekers), speaking about their placement experience in lecture and seminars and engaging with placement seekers to actively support their placement seeking efforts. SBS strongly believes that placement reps have a key role to play when it comes to supporting students with learning contracts as they are able to share their direct experience of the entire placement journey.

Perhaps of greater significance is the role our placement reps play in inspiring students from under-represented groups to apply for a placement. Historically we have (perhaps mistakenly) thought that pitching case studies of successful placements with big employers like Microsoft, Disney, Google and the Metropolitan Police would be sufficient to inspire all students that a placement was for them. As an institution we became swept away by impact and large brands and didn't recognise that our student demographic might consider these prospects either terrifying or unattainable. This was brought home to one of the authors, when during a presentation on opportunities with Nestle, the question was asked "do normal students get normal placements?" This gave the team tremendous pause for thought and caused us to reshape our offer. We now embed our placement reps within employability modules, where they can talk honestly and openly about their experiences in a diversity of organisations. When we recruit our reps, we encourage those with a normal story to apply as they have a significant role to play in inspiring others from under-represented groups. Our academics now tell a diversity of stories from both large and small businesses to show the scope and scale of the placement offer.   Our placement reps target areas of concern like living and working in London and their authentic voice about what it's like living and partying on their placement wages. They serve to inspire and potentially unlock the doors to placement for all of our students but most specifically those from less represented groups.

Support for students from less represented groups is further extended by our Placement Employability Tutors (PETs) who are responsible for managing the placement support of students within specific course areas. This includes referring students on to specialist support (for example faculty employability advisors who provide practical career and job search support to placement seekers) and offering personal industry expertise at key points during the recruitment process. Where PETs are able to add particular value is through their personal connection with the student. The PETs often (but not always) have taught the placement seeking students and are more likely (than not) to be teaching on Level 5 employability modules. Through this route, they are able to establish a trust relationship with students and ask key questions, like "What's stopping you from applying for that placement?"; "How did that video interview go?" etc. It is through questions like these that the PETs are able to identify those from under-represented groups who don't have the confidence to engage in placement seeking and potentially need active support and role modelling. PETs use their own experiences, stories from previous placements students and, as previously highlighted, placement reps as buddies to instil confidence; help these students explore the full extent of opportunities that are open to them; and to help them carefully consider the career development potential of a placement (and their own worthiness to apply). SBS PETs are passionate and knowledgeable about what they do. They are given training and advice on supporting a diverse student population either through cascaded learning from colleagues who have attended ASET workshops or through written advice and guidance compiled by PETs with a deep interest in a specific area.

There are two other behaviours that we try and adopt to support our students when they are looking for a placement – the first is integration of statements about disability awareness, disclosure and employee rights into our briefing materials and handouts. The second is that when we advertise vacancies we avoid the first-come-first-served basis for submitting paperwork as some student cohorts would be disadvantaged by such an approach.

ON-PLACEMENT SUPPORT

Helping students with learning contracts or from under-represented groups secure a placement is not the end of the story. These students may benefit from appropriate support while they are undertaking their placement. We recognise for example that some students experience increased anxiety during their placement year (when they can be far from home and their student network). This can prove problematic as students become reluctant to seek help from existing support networks believing that their placement year is their opportunity to "stand on my own two feet". Our PYSSO is confident within this dynamic and has built up a significant level of expertise when it comes to encouraging students to ask for help and in signposting them to a range of support services that they can use while they are on placement and away from Sheffield. The PYSSO will also help the employer to support the student but can only do this when the student has given the PYSSO permission to talk with the employer. We acknowledge something of a blurring of the lines here. We passionately want to support our student while on placement, but we also need to acknowledge that during their placement year the student has become an official employee of that employer and as a consequence the employer has a duty of care to that student under existing Health and Safety Executive Management Standards for Work Related Stress (Health and Safety Executive, n.d.) as well as current employment law and the Equality Act (2010).

All of our students are allocated a Work Experience Mentor (WEM) while they are on placement. These are academics from the business school. While acting as mentors to all of their allocated students they have a key role to play in supporting students from under-represented groups. These students might not have pre-existing role models of good workplace behaviours, or may lack objective sources of advice on what is appropriate within their working environment. Their WEM is able to speak with authority about what employers expect from placement students and what the students need to do to model future graduate standard performance to potential longterm employers.

We are delighted that this approach has had clear and positive results. In the year 2014/15, 55% of students who failed their placement

year had a learning contract (in-house, unpublished). In the year 2015/16 when this new approach was adopted, no student with a learning contract failed their placement year.

POST-PLACEMENT SUPPORT

The last link is the return from placement to university. The PYSSO will signpost a student who experienced anxiety or gained insight into learning or other difficulties while on placement to the support available via a learning contract or disabled student support services. Trigger points include early voluntary or compulsory exit from placement.

Additionally, high performing students from under-represented groups will be invited to take up career impact support. Within its advertising literature the programme states that "applications are particularly encouraged from black and minority ethnic students, care leavers, LGBT students and students with a disability." This again reflects our efforts to avoid stigmatising or conferring special advantage which might prove problematic when it comes to engagement with the programme (Higher Education Academy, 2015:5), the literature makes it clear that the programme is open to all. This programme is run by the Careers and Employability service and seeks to link students with a 2:1 or first with graduate employers. The support includes workshops, intensive application support and employer network events.

GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS

Having provided an overview of placement support for students with leaning contracts and from under-represented groups within SBS, it is useful to briefly revisit the York Consulting and University of Leeds (2015) good practice recommendations for support of learning contract students undergoing a placement but highlight how the practice within SBS differs. The table below identifies the differences and extra practice implemented by Sheffield Hallam University.

York Consulting & University of Leeds recommendations	Sheffield Hallam University approach
Creating of placement learning contracts	We use pre-existing learning contracts (not placement specific learning contracts) – which we believe are sufficiently broad, particularly with the input of our PYSSO.
Signposting students with learning contracts to staff supporting students on placement	We do more than signpost students with a learning contract to support staff – with our risk management approach – we make our support staff very difficult to avoid!
Identifying peer role models amongst staff, who experienced similar challenges in the workplace	We believe that peer to peer role modelling is much more powerful and use our placement representatives to fulfil that role.
Managing risk e.g. dyslexic students processing medical data	We work with our students around disclosure and managing risk – as is highlighted by our risk assessment – however we cannot intervene without the student's express permission given Data Protection Act (1998) requirements and we cannot usurp the employer's duty of care.
Requesting reasonable adjustments for the workplace to adopt in support of the specific placement student with issues identified in a learning contract.	If a student agrees to disclosure then our PYSSO spends time working with the student and employer to secure a supportive and productive arrangement.

CONCLUSION

The discussion thus far illustrated our journey in supporting students with a learning contract and from under-represented groups during their search and delivery of their year-long placement. It provides an insight into the processes that the business school currently adopts to ensure these students are fully supported and feel confident throughout their placement journey. Through these widening participation initiatives an increasing number of students are successfully completing a year-long placement as evidenced by the 100% placement pass rate of students with learning contracts in 2015-16.

To provide high quality placement support we recommend that courses and institutions who are setting up sandwich year placement programmes offer genuine support to a diverse student population with the following as a minimum:

- Additional support for students' SpLDs during their placement seeking year as their challenges are often greater than for other students

- Help for students from under-represented groups that enhances confidence and ambition. This should be applied to all students (or be voluntary) as these students do not want to be singled out

- Identify clear lines of named support for students while on placement – so they know where to go for help

- Actively generate opportunities to speak with students about disclosing disabilities (both when and how) to employers

- Encourage students to continue to engage with their support networks and to recognise the wealth of challenges presented by a placement year

- Try and develop a common language around disability so that students are happy to have conversations without feeling the weight of labels.

While we are very pleased with our outcomes for student with learning contracts, and feel confident with the recommendations we are making above, we still believe there is further work to be undertaken. For example, we will:

- explore the boundaries of what qualifies as a sandwich year placement as asking some students with a learning contract to commit 30 hours a week for 48 weeks is not appropriate and is not a choice they would make in their own working lives

- identify routes that would provide peer to peer mentoring support to all students while they are on placement. As a start we believe it needs to be sufficiently professional, robust and discrete such that students trust it, use it and are ably supported by it

- spend time educating employers as SBS is sometimes approached by employers who ask us to recommend our 'top 2 best students' to go on placement. We are not sure what employers are looking for when they talk about 'best' – as this can be very course specific but also very personal, for example is it grades, attitude, creative mind, interpersonal skills, technical knowledge…? We are very clear that we will not select 'the best' whatever the criteria. Not only is this inappropriate from an Equality Act (2010) perspective, it also demonstrates limited thinking amongst some of our employers. This approach could prevent students with learning contracts becoming successful candidates. We need to continue to develop messages that will help some employers to understand some of the benefits of having a diverse workforce and the effort that is involved in developing role criteria and an application process that is designed to support all potential candidates.

REFERENCES

ASET (2014) ASET Good Practice Guide for Work based and Placement Learning in Higher Education. [online] http://www.asetonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/ASET-Good-Practice-Guide-2014.pdf (accessed 21/12/17)

Equality Act (2010) [online] http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents (accessed 21/12/17)

Gregg, P. & Finch, D. (2016) Employing new tactics: The changing distribution of work across British households. Resolution Foundation Report. [online] http://www.resolutionfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Employing-new-tactics.pdf (accessed 21/12/17)

Knight, P. & Yorke, M. (2006). Learning and employability series one. Employability: judging and communicating achievements. London: The Higher Education Academy

Health and Safety Executive (n.d.) What are the Management Standards? [online] http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards/ (accessed 21/12/17)

Higher Education Academy (2015) Framework for embedding employability in higher education. [online] http://www.employability.ed.ac.uk/documents/HEA-Embedding_employability_in_HE.pdf (accessed 21/12/17)

National Centre for Universities and Business (2015) Student Employability Index 2015. [online] http://www.ncub.co.uk/reports/student-employability-index-2015.html (accessed 21/12/17)

Quality Assurance Agency (2010) Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education Section 3: Disabled students - February 2010. [online] http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/disability//practice/pdf/qaa.pdf (accessed 21/12/17)

Sheffield Hallam University (2015a) Strategy to 2020. [online] https://www.shu.ac.uk/about-us/governance-and-strategy/strategy (accessed 21/12/17)

Sheffield Hallam University (2015b) Learning and Teaching Strategy 2015. [online] http://extra.shu.ac.uk/sas/quality/AcademicPoliciesDocuments/Learning%20and%20Teaching%20Strategy%202015-2020.pdf (accessed 21/12/17)

Sheffield Hallam University (2016a) Sheffield Hallam University Facts and Figures 2016 Strategic Planning and Intelligence. [online] https://portal.shu.ac.uk/sites/thesource/universityperformance/FactsFigures/SHU%20Facts%20and%20Figures%20-%20Winter%20201516.pdf (accessed 21/12/17)

Sheffield Hallam University (2016b) Career Impact. [online] https://careerscentral.shu.ac.uk/getting-experience/career-impact (accessed 21/12/17)

Sheffield Hallam University (n.d. a) Our Charter. [online] https://www.shu.ac.uk/about-us/governance-and-strategy/governance/our-student-charter (accessed 21/12/17)

Sheffield Hallam University (n.d. b) What is a learning contract and how do I get one? [online] https://students.shu.ac.uk/shuspacecontent/disability/learning-contract-get (accessed 21/12/17)

Sheffield Hallam University (n.d. c) [online] http://www4.shu.ac.uk/mediacentre/fast-facts (accessed 21/12/17)

York Consulting and University of Leeds (2015) Support for Higher Education Students with Specific Learning Difficulties. [online] http://www.hefce.ac.uk/media/HEFCE,2014/Content/Pubs/Independentresearch/2015/SupportforStudentswithSpLD/HEFCE2015_spld.pdf (accessed 21/12/17)

26

DIVERSIFYING THE CURRICULUM AND ENGAGING STUDENTS THROUGH ARCHIVES AND OBJECT HANDLING

Charlotte Clements and Georgina Brewis

"Objects, although concrete, actually represent a vast continuum of abstract ideas and inter-related realities" (Falk, 2002: x). This is just one reason why objects in museum collections have been used for educational purposes, not only in informal settings, but also in higher education. This chapter discusses the delivery in 2016 of a small project at University College London (UCL) called Diversifying the curriculum: a staff-student partnership to select archival material and objects for use in teaching and learning across two faculties. The project sought to identify and digitise new archival sources as well as to select a range of objects for use in the teaching of two new undergraduate history modules across two faculties: UCL Institute of Education and UCL History Department. While existing literature mainly focuses on teaching with objects in a museum setting, this project used more everyday items from the twentieth-century history of charity and youth in Britain to compile a curated teaching collection of objects and digitised documents for use in higher education teaching.

Three key motivations lay behind our desire to develop new teaching and learning resources for these modules. First, we wanted to ensure that the history curriculum we asked students to engage with better reflected not only the diversity of the student body at UCL, but also the experiences and perspectives of a more diverse range of people in the past. Second, we sought to enhance experiential learning and by so doing, ensure that course content was fully accessible to students with different learning styles. Third, we wanted to promote student engagement and student-centred learning by including students in the initial project, and in the planning and delivery of the modules into which it fed.

The Diversifying the Curriculum project comprised:

- research to identify, select and digitise new archival sources

- the compilation of a small thematic object handing collection

- workshops with undergraduate students to test out these resources and design teaching activities for the forthcoming academic year.

The archive collections consulted were the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services (held in the Newsam Archive at UCL Institute of Education), the Black Cultural Archives, the Children's Society Archive, the Hall Carpenter Archive and the Child Poverty Action Group (both held at London School of Economics). Research in these archives identified a range of primary sources dating from 1914-1985 that included hand-written testimony from LGBT+ young people, papers from black youth clubs, reports of experimental youth work with Asian girls, campaigning material and ephemera from gay rights and anti-poverty campaigners and material on feminist approaches to work with young people. In particular, we worked closely with the Children's Society's archives and records management team to anonymise and digitise the full case files of five girls who had been in residential care in the early twentieth century. The object handling collection was purchased via online marketplaces and supplemented by personal donations. It contains a range of small objects representing the material culture of charity, voluntary organisations and youth movements in twentieth-century Britain. While not always common now, many of the objects are of a more everyday nature than many of the museum objects typically thought of as teaching tools. Items included uniform and flags from the Girl Guides, Boy Scouts, Woodcraft Folk and Boys' Brigade, First World War fundraising flags, CND and WRVS pin badges, World Refugee Year stamps, Youth Hostel Association memorabilia, 1950s Civil Defence armbands, charity collecting boxes and a wooden tea tray made by blind ex-servicemen after the First World War.

In line with UCL's Connected Curriculum aim of engaging students as partners in their education, and seeing students as co-producers of

knowledge alongside staff members, we worked with a small group of undergraduates to select and arrange the material. We recognised that students come from very different national and international backgrounds, and may engage in different ways and bring different perspectives to bear on the same material. Two participatory workshops, each lasting an hour and a half, were organised with small groups of students studying history or education. Students were a self-selected group who responded to a circular email sent to all History undergraduates and all BA Education Studies students, and were paid for their participation. At these sessions students were invited to handle objects, examine documents and offer feedback and suggestions for classroom activities. We elicited feedback via full group discussion, one-to-one conversations between students and staff and by collating students' written comments, notes and drawings. The sessions were not audio recorded but one workshop was filmed to provide material for a YouTube video about the project (see link at end of the chapter). Students were fully engaged in the workshop tasks, offering personal perspectives on the resources presented that were in some cases contradictory. However, being part of students' discussion and seeing where they disagreed was illuminating.

University College London attracts a range of students from different backgrounds, including a high proportion of international students. In particular, the BA in Education Studies – a multidisciplinary degree programme established in 2011 – has a diverse intake that is majority female, contains a very high proportion of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students and includes a significant minority of mature students. In addition, modules on the programme are popular with Erasmus exchange students. In UK higher education more generally, it is now the case that there are more female than male undergraduates and that one in four students identify themselves as something other than white (HEFCE, 2014). In view of such diversity, there is now growing recognition across disciplines of the need for a more inclusive curriculum. At UCL, the Liberating the Curriculum (LTC) working group is a group of staff and students which aims to challenge traditional Eurocentric, male-dominated curricula and to ensure the work of marginalised scholars on race, sexuality, gender and disability are fairly represented in curricula (UCL Teaching and Learning, 2016). Our own research interests also reflect this agenda and are thus inextricably linked to a wider

commitment to promoting more inclusive teaching. Teaching using objects, as recognised by Dierking (2002) involves engaging with the personal context factors and sociocultural context of learners who undertake object-based learning and this too has helped this work to counter dominant narratives.

There is a particular problem when teaching histories that have hitherto focused on a narrower group of people. The history and historiography of youth movements, for example, have had an emphasis on problematic youth and the experiences of white male teenagers. In the history of voluntary organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) the voices of beneficiaries and young people are hard to find. Such silences hinder understanding of the topic in hand, but they also fail to offer students the opportunity to feel that they are fully represented in the subjects they are being taught. This was reflected in informal feedback from the first cohort of students taking the youth module, who wanted to learn about the experiences of a more diverse range of young people in the past, particularly about Black and Asian youth in Britain. Similarly, voluntary organisations and NGOs have worked with the most marginalised social groups – including people with disabilities, vulnerable children, lone parents and older people – as well as providing important opportunities for the self-realisation and liberation of many marginalised sections of society. Yet, the actual experiences of many such groups are neglected in the secondary literature, while access to relevant primary sources remains limited. In the rest of this chapter we offer some reflections on this project. The key themes we discuss include reflecting the diversity of the student body, capturing stories from those least often heard, accommodating a range of learning styles, promoting student engagement and co-creating curricula.

NEW ARCHIVAL SOURCES

Through research to identify new primary sources from a number of different archives, we were able to present students with multiple stories that brought BAME, queer, disabled and feminist perspectives to the fore. We presented students at the workshops with a large number of such new sources, inviting them to tell us what stories spoke to them and which they found compelling. The results were a timely reminder that from our standpoint as teaching staff, the

sources we think best reflect the themes of a topic may not be the ones that will appeal most to our students. It also confirmed for us that showing a diverse student body examples of people they identified more closely with had the potential to increase engagement and improve learning outcomes.

The personal stories of people whose voices are hardest to find in the historical record proved most engaging for students, including handwritten accounts from gay teenagers about coming out in the 1970s and letters written by young girls living in the Children's Society homes in the 1930s. However, handwritten accounts from the past can provide a barrier to student engagement by being difficult to read. Students at the workshop liked being able to see two versions – a transcript or printed version was more readable, but the handwritten version evoked a more emotional response based on a belief that it offered a more direct link with the voice of the young person. Providing digested copies of the handwritten original alongside transcripts allowed students to better imagine the circumstances of the document's creation.

Another point of discussion revolved around the length of primary source extracts. A number of the extracts prepared for students were parts of longer reports with each sample running to five or six pages. These were rich textual sources, but we feared that students would reject them for being too long. Some did feel this, but others, having taken the time to read them, were very enthusiastic about their potential. They felt that being given them in advance might help slower readers, aid preparation of a considered response and also give more time for in-class discussion. In contrast, another student enjoyed reading them and giving an immediate response and felt time should be set aside for this during seminars. These diverging viewpoints could be seen as problematic, but we have used them to inform a better understanding of how this material might be received and where to fit it into the modules. Similarly to our fears about students being reluctant to decipher handwriting, we were reassured that with the proper tools and support students valued the opportunity to access a broad range of documents.

The project has also helped students engage with the specific requirements of studying history at undergraduate level. This has been especially important on the BA in Education Studies where

history forms only one of several disciplinary perspectives that students encounter during their degrees. Many students reported that they come to the history modules with preconceived ideas shaped by negative experiences of the school history curriculum and its failure to reflect their lives. When students use archival sources, even in digitised form, it helps them to do history and to link this material with the core secondary reading. We have now digitised case files from the Children's Society archives which are the very same ones used by an academic, Pamela Cox, in preparing her book on gender, justice and welfare. Enabling students to cross-reference the secondary text with the original primary sources promotes research-based learning, while the voices of the working-class girls and young women they contain capture students' imaginations.

OBJECTS

In examining the curricular use of objects, Quave and Meister (2016:1-2) note that thematic collections are "useful for promoting cross-cultural, international, and interdisciplinary perspectives". Meecham (2015: 77-94) too recognises the potential of objects to aid in internationalising the curriculum. Therefore compiling a new curated collection of objects sources is an appropriate approach to support efforts to liberate the curriculum on these history modules. Furthermore, physical objects can provide very tangible links to the past, allowing students to think about the experiences of those who might have used or worn the objects, but whose stories might not have been captured or survived in written form.

Trialling object handling in workshops helped us see how students made use of them and elicited useful feedback about how these might fit into the modules when taught. Object handling stimulated students to think about the context from which the object emerged and prompted discussion of key themes. For example, examining the original 8" vinyl Band Aid single Do they know it's Christmas? from 1984 alongside a Dr Barnardo's branded toy car resulted in workshop attendees starting a spontaneous discussion about how fundraising practices had changed in twentieth-century Britain. An exercise like this, which allowed ideas to emerge without tutor-direction and then be linked back to core module themes, worked well for students unfamiliar with the topic. Accordingly, this exercise

has been placed at the start of the module, with relevant objects brought along again in subsequent weeks to continue these high levels of student engagement. The engagement with the material culture of voluntary action which lies at the heart of the course is also reflected in assessment, with an object report set as the first assignment. This works to reinforce experiential learning in phases in a way similar to that outlined by Kolb (1984).

The sensory experience of handling objects in class allows us to engage students in different types of learning. In particular, somatic and embodied learning (Matthews, 1998) are promoted by having objects present in the classroom during most sessions of course teaching. Bringing touch, sound and smell into the classroom alongside more traditional techniques such as reading and small group discussion provides an alternative way of accessing the course content and supports students' learning. Objects allow a direct, tangible and multisensory link to the past and allow students to feel that they are encountering an authentic piece of the past, even when they understand that this authenticity is mediated. Using objects is thus a key way to support personal meaning-making and deeper conceptual understandings (Meyer & Land, 2005). The everyday and familiar nature of the objects selected is also useful in making the topic accessible and in increasing engagement with topics under study. Object handling is also linked to long-term retention of ideas and concepts, and research has shown that a majority of students surveyed, across a range of disciplines, thought object-based learning was a more effective method of learning than a lecture or talk alone (Sharp et al., 2015: 97-116). The appeal of object-based learning to different learning styles is summed up well by Chatterjee et al. (2015:7-8) who say that:

> *"Whilst it is likely that individuals will have a preference for one or more learning styles, the value of object-based learning is that it affords the learner opportunities to engage with knowledge in multiple ways, using multiple modalities and thus accommodating a range of different styles and individual preferences."*

The curated object teaching collection we produced has a number of advantages which make it useful in undergraduate teaching. It is a portable and accessible collection that can be taken into the classroom. Thus it avoids some of the pitfalls identified by Cain (2010). Once assembled, this type of collection creates fewer time and resource demands on the tutor than organising museum visits, and we were fortunate to have a small grant to cover the costs of the initial curation. Students also have the advantage of being able to interact with the objects regularly throughout their module as the collection, or relevant parts of it, are brought to each session, and can be seen during tutor's office hours. This makes it a very accessible teaching resource, as do digitised archives which are uploaded to the virtual learning environment. The collection promotes both research-led teaching (as it is compiled by research-active teaching staff for a specific module) and research-based teaching (enabling students to conduct research through object reports). Unlike in museums, in a curated teaching collection objects are specifically selected to mirror a module's topics and themes and are presented together with an inventory and suggested reading. The collection fully supports course delivery, and it can do so year after year.

CONCLUSION

The 'diversifying the curriculum project' offers two areas where we seek to advance good practice in teaching and learning. Firstly, compiling a curated collection of objects and digital archives we see as development from largely museum-based approaches to teaching using objects in higher education. As such it offers a way of working that is low-cost, and available to colleagues at universities without the rich museum collections that UCL is fortunate to possess. It offers a portable, accessible opportunity for students to engage with material culture that is woven into curriculum design, and was compiled to broaden diversity, promote inclusion and support a range of learning styles. Finally, the staff-student partnership approach enables students to be involved in shaping the content of their curriculum. Student ideas on diversity and learning styles have been taken seriously and embedded into module design. Student responses to the new material are being gathered and will continue to inform the development of the curriculum.

To view workshop with one-to-one conversations between students and staff and by collating students' written comments, notes and drawings.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w76lCnN1xmw&feature=youtu.be&yt:cc=on

REFERENCES

Cain, J. (2010) Practical concerns when implementing object-based teaching in higher education. University Museums and Collections Journal. 3:197-202

Chatterjee, H.J. & Hannan, L. (eds) (2016) Engaging the Senses: Object-Based Learning in Higher Education. London: Routledge

Chatterjee, H. J.; Hannan, L. & Thomson, L. (2015), An introduction to object based learning and multisensory engagement. In H.J. Chatterjee & L. Hannan (eds) Engaging the Senses: Object-Based Learning in Higher Education. London: Routledge

Cox, P. (2002), Bad Girls in Britain – Gender Justice and Welfare 1900-1950. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan

Dierking, L. (2002) The role of context in children's learning from objects and experiences. In S. Paris (ed) Perspectives on Object Centred Learning in Museums. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates

Falk, J. H. (2002) Foreword in S. Paris (ed) Perspectives on Object Centred Learning in Museums. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates

Higher Education Funding Council for England (2014) [online] http://www.hefce.ac.uk/data/Year/2015/eddata/Title,104183,en.html (accessed 21/12/17)

Kolb, D. (1984) Experiential Learning: experience as the source of learning and development. New Jersey: Prentice Hall

Matthews, M.R. (1998) In defense of modest goals when teaching about the nature of science. Journal of Research in Science Teaching. 35(2):161-174

Meecham, P. (2015) Talking about things: Internationalisation of the curriculum through object based learning. In H.J. Chatterjee & L. Hannan (ed) Engaging the Senses: Object-Based Learning in Higher Education. London: Routledge

Meyer, J. & Land, R. (2005) Threshold Concepts and Troublesome knowledge (2): Epistemological considerations and a conceptual framework for teaching and learning. Higher Education. 49:373-388

Quave, K, & Meister, N. (2017) Assessing the impact of curricular collections use at a liberal arts college. Museum Management and Curatorship. 32:1-18

Sharp, A.; Thomson, L.; Chatterjee, H.J. & Hannan L. (2015) The value of object-based learning within and between higher education disciplines. In H.J. Chatterjee & L. Hannan (eds) Engaging the Senses: Object-Based Learning in Higher Education. London: Routledge

UCL Teaching and Learning (2016) Liberating the Curriculum. [online] https://www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/connected-curriculum/liberating-curriculum (accessed 21/12/17)

27

CHAPTER

DEVELOPING INCLUSIVITY AND MEETING THE NEEDS OF STUDENT CARERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Charlotte Morris

This chapter reflects on the need to develop inclusivity for student carers and offers good practice suggestions, drawing on student parents as a case study; although it is acknowledged that students are frequently carers for a lone parent or to give respite to other family members who are carers. A learning and teaching fellowship project Enhancing the experiences of student parents identified and responded to concerns within a single post-1992 Higher Education Provider (HEP) and across the sector about the challenges of participation for parents and carers, with implications for retention and success. A number of studies have identified the inherent challenges of being both a student and a carer and many colleagues working in pastoral care roles had shared anecdotal concerns about the wellbeing of such students; therefore, this project was set up to investigate the experiences of student parents to highlight such complexities and identify ways in which the university can anticipate and respond to their needs. Through consultation, survey and interviews the study drew out pertinent themes of visibility, voice, understanding, awareness and representation and the university has moved forwards in addressing these wider cultural issues and practical barriers to full participation. With respect to learning and teaching specifically, the project identified a range of inclusive practices with potential for beneficial impact and enhancement of student carer experiences. This chapter outlines these positive practices, highlighting the importance of resourcing quality pastoral care, and recommends working towards an institutional culture which values caregivers and the breadth of skills and experience they bring.

The needs of student carers in Higher Education (HE) has come into focus in the UK in recent years through the widening participation agenda and introduction of Access Agreements with their requirement to proactively remove barriers to participation. Both the Care Act

2014 and the Children's and Families Act 2014, describe a carer as being someone who provides or who who intends to provide care to other adults as well as dependent children. This, therefore, includes a whole spectrum of caring responsibilities. Research (NUS, 2009) has identified that students who are carers tend to come from lower income backgrounds; in addition, pregnancy, maternity and paternity are protected characteristics under the 2010 Equality Act and so there is a strong framework for working proactively to meet the needs of this group. This chapter considers these issues and aims to provide good practice suggestions, drawing on the case study of research on student parents. In particular it focuses on inclusive pedagogies and practices, as well as considering broader cultural issues around care.

A research and development project at the University of Brighton sought to identify good practices around meeting the learning needs of student parents and the insights gained here can be broadened out to student carers more generally (while acknowledging that each student is likely to have specific needs depending on their particular circumstances). The project responded to research that identified the challenges faced by student parents represent a serious retention issue for HE (NUS report, 2009). Furthermore, changing demographics in the student population (Universities UK, 2012) mean fewer young students are predicted to apply to university over the next decade, a situation augmented by a context of economic uncertainty, austerity and rising tuition fees. This work recognises the potential benefits of participation in HE to the individual learners and their families alongside wider benefits to society (as also observed by Hinton-Smith, 2012). The Student Income and Expenditure survey (2011–12) indicated that 7% of full-time students and 46% of part-time students were parents who lived with their children; this doesn't take into account non-habiting parents, those caring for elderly relatives, grandchildren, people with physical or mental health difficulties, international students who return home to care for family members or indeed young carers and so it is essential for the sector to address these issues.

The project discussed here conducted research into student parent experiences and aimed to make recommendations for their enhancement and identify positive strategies to address any barriers to full participation in learning, teaching and university life. To this

end, the researcher undertook institutional case study research, including consultation with key colleagues and students, review of relevant documents and a university wide survey and interviews with individual students. Key findings identified positive practices around including student parents fully in learning, teaching and university life. There was an overarching perception that university is geared to meet the needs of younger students without caring responsibilities while student parents felt they had a lack of visibility, voice, awareness, understanding and representation. Overarching recommendations therefore included working towards a more inclusive culture for students who provide care through understanding and awareness; inclusive teaching and learning design and practices; valuing the knowledge and experience student carers bring; the provision of high quality pastoral care and through ensuring their needs are taken into account in all aspects of university life. This chapter will outline what is meant by inclusive teaching practices before moving on to presenting and discussing key findings.

INCLUSIVE TEACHING PRACTICES

Inclusive teaching practices aim to encourage, include and value a wide diversity of learners. Rather than making adjustments or alternative arrangements for an individual or specific group of learners only, inclusive practices are embedded in the planning and delivery of learning (Adams & Brown, 2006). They are characterised by flexibility of course design and delivery, including assessment and potentially benefit all students, recognising that all students have different learning styles and needs. Incorporating such adjustments routinely into course design may benefit a diverse body of students and support their overall wellbeing by reducing stress and enabling success (Morris, 2010). For example, spreading out assessment deadlines as far as possible benefits those students for whom stress may be triggered but it can also ensure the whole cohort are able to prepare effectively and perform better, including those with caring responsibilities who need to manage complex and unpredictable demands on their time. While implementation means more thought and time needs to be put into initial planning, overall it reduces the need for individualised adjustments and can therefore improve efficiency and ensure that institutions are meeting the anticipatory requirement (introduced by SENDA, 2005). It is recognised that

inclusivity is not simply making education available but:

"being proactive in identifying the barriers and obstacles learners encounter in attempting to access opportunities for quality education, as well as in removing those barriers and obstacles that lead to exclusion." (UNESCO, nd:np).

In summary, institutions anticipate and adapt to the needs of their students rather than students being expected to adapt to the organisation. For student parents and carers, I argue that this means not only mainstreaming good teaching practice but cultivating a positive institutional ethos around caring responsibilities and providing high quality opportunities for targeted support and pastoral care provision.

National Union of Students' (2009) research identified some specific factors which can create barriers for student parents' learning including styles of learning; modes of study; timetable provision; and deadline schedules. In the light of such sector-wide concerns and with continuing recruitment and retention challenges going forwards, it is timely to review and seek to bolster and develop provision, focusing inclusive teaching practices. These issues tap into broader concerns around widening participation, access, equality and diversity. Following the Dearing Report (1997) which stipulated that those who have the ability to benefit from higher education should have the opportunity to do so, the sector has aimed to promote and support participation from a more diverse range of learners, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds. This has historically been linked to skills enhancement and targeting child poverty and so student carers and their families might be seen as potential beneficiaries of this drive. However, widening participation is not simply related to recruitment but places additional responsibilities on HEPs to meet the learning and support needs of a more diverse range of learners. In order to charge higher student fees, universities must strive to ensure access for students (Browne, 2010) and are required to have an Access Agreement in place. This goes beyond admitting a diversity of learners towards ensuring that inclusive practices are embedded in every aspect of university life, especially learning and teaching to best enable student success.

METHODS AND METHODOLOGIES

Drawing on an overarching case study methodology, the project utilised mixed methods, comprised of a literature review, survey and interviews, consultation and document analysis. Enhancing the experiences of student parents was funded (and ethics approval granted) through the university's Centre for Learning and Teaching. The research design sought to engender broad quantitative findings, providing frequencies of response in combination with more in-depth qualitative data highlighting complexities of individual students' experiences. Narrative interview techniques were employed to capture participants' stories of their experiences alongside a semi-structured interview schedule which aimed to address areas of specific concern identified in the literature review. A university wide online survey was distributed. The survey enabled the recruitment of students for qualitative interviews as participants were given the option of taking part in further research. The following presentation of findings draws on the survey data and so a summary of respondents is provided below:

Respondents (n=130):

78.6% undergraduate
42% lone parents
91% women
84.5% full-time
58% also in paid work
13.6% also have disability
56% commuting / 43% locally based

FINDINGS

Respondents highlighted a number of positive benefits to studying in higher education and high levels of commitment to their studies and contribution with the skills, motivation and experience they bring; this needs to be stressed, as presenting a deficit model whereby student carers are viewed as a problem is unhelpful. In line with previous research, participants experienced high levels of challenge and I focus on such challenges here to emphasise the need to address potential barriers. Competing demands on their time in terms of studies, family responsibilities and in many cases paid work was of course a major challenge, requiring much forward planning and management, although, crucially, the unpredictable nature of caring responsibilities cannot always be planned for. It should be recognised that this is an issue which disproportionately affects women. In UK society, it is still generally expected that women manage the majority of caring, emotional and domestic work (Fawcett Society Report, 2016), often

performing double (or triple) shifts in order to perform all these duties (Hochschild, 1997). This is often exacerbated for student carers who need to incorporate study time into their daily routines, in some cases necessitating a triple shift, not to mention the time needed to commute between home, childcare venues, work and university.

For parents, childcare is often arranged through a combination of formal and informal care and often comes with unpredictability. Organising additional childcare at short notice can be impossible (and unaffordable). It can be particularly challenging for lone parents and those who do not have family members living locally who may be able to provide back-up care. Participants in this study tended to choose the university because it was the nearest to them, their homes, family and work responsibilities. With many therefore commuting within or from outside the city (56% of respondents), transport emerged as an issue in terms of cost, (in)convenience, reliability and access to parking. For all these reasons, timetabling and course organisation is therefore key in enabling carers to plan their time as far in advance as possible. Studying in HE has financial implications and for carers this often means negotiating complex combinations of social security, grants, loans and earnings. While many are motivated by the prospect of higher earnings, there is much precarity and risk involved (Reay, 2003) including an immediate loss of earnings for some. In addition there are often complex emotional dimensions to be navigated; carers can experience guilt associated with spending time away from caring and some respondents reported this emotional impact of studying and consequent strains on both studies and family relationships. In many cases carers have no choice but to prioritise their needs above studies and other responsibilities. Children and others requiring care often have high levels of need and this, as one participant observed, can fluctuate over time, for example, at children's different developmental stages, with changes in treatment regimes where family members are ill and with varying sets of family circumstances in ways that can be unpredictable. As Hinton-Smith (2012) argues, writing about the case of lone parents, it is important to take practical, financial and emotional complexities into account. I now move on to address the key issues around inclusive teaching to enhance such students' learning experiences.

WHAT WOULD IMPROVE THE LEARNING EXPERIENCES OF STUDENT PARENTS?

When participants were asked what would improve their learning experiences, responses fell into two main categories; the need for more flexibility generally in learning and teaching and more awareness of the specific needs of student parents / carers. Inclusive practices that could benefit these students include more opportunities for online learning, recorded lectures, revision days, reading weeks, positive, constructive feedback and good quality teaching generally. Some participants resented time spent coming to university for lectures comprised of reading from a PowerPoint presentation, perceiving that they could do this at home. It was considered that thought could go into planning courses, modules and weekly timetables and spacing out the assessments more realistically to take into account the needs of students with complex lives. As one survey respondent explained:

> *'Some modules require attendance and participation and focus solely on group work. This becomes difficult when sick children or stressful family life may prevent this. Better understanding of the way that student parents have to study is critical.'*

Use of online resources for learning was considered useful for those balancing multiple responsibilities. Carers are more likely to miss sessions due to unavoidable issues such as children being taken ill or other family emergencies and so needed ways to catch up with missed work such as recorded lectures. Ensuring that presentations and other resources are online is inclusive for a variety of learners and can be vital for carers.

Flexibility: Some students felt that there was a need for flexibility in terms of attendance, extensions and mitigating circumstances. Some universities now have Learning Support Plans for Carers in place to address this. Carers disclose their status as a carer (as with students with disabilities) and recommendations are made as to how best to adapt in order to meet their needs. A need for such an approach was reflected in the survey data:

> *'Unfortunately my child has been acutely ill this year which caused me to be off university. Given the circumstances, the last thing I needed to feel was pressurised by the university for something that was out of my control.'*

> *'I think extensions should be available for all parents, especially if assignments are due in after the holidays and the children have been off of school. It is impossible to write an essay and entertain a child at the same time.'*

These issues highlight the importance of awareness and understanding about caring responsibilities from academic staff. For some, there was a feeling of being isolated with a lack of recognition and understanding about their needs from academic staff. There was a higher concentration of student parents and carers on some professional courses in particular and so there tended to be more understanding but there was still a perception from some that it came down to individuals. This is indicative of a lack of consistency in terms of awareness and willingness to be supportive to student carers; some participants considered that in some cases this came down to whether or not the member of staff had children themselves. Such experiences can lead to a perception that the university as a whole, far from supporting students' studies, is working against their need to achieve their potential grades, to complete their studies and to participate fully in university life.

Social integration: There was an acute sense from some participants of struggling to fit in to university life and feeling different from other students, exacerbated by difficulties around participating in extra-curricular activities. This is of concern, considering the importance of social integration and belonging for student persistence (see Tinto, 1993; Thomas, 2012). Positive interactions with staff and peers and opportunities for peer-to-peer support were reported as extremely valuable by participants. While some of this can be nurtured through

extra-curricular activities, student carers often find it hard to attend events and so any opportunities of helping students to integrate with their peers within the curriculum and especially during the induction period can be invaluable. Participants found it particularly helpful to be introduced to others in similar situations for ongoing peer support and this can be facilitated within academic settings. They appreciated opportunities to share their wealth of insights and experiences within class discussions and for other opportunities to contribute to learning and university life. Building a sense of community and being valued and recognised as individuals and as a group has the potential to make a significant difference to student carers' experiences.

Academic support: Many participants experienced the challenges to study encountered by mature students generally, including returning to study and adjusting to HE, managing the workload and refreshing or updating study skills. Students found study skills most beneficial when included within the curriculum and there was also a desire for further resources. While the university provides online study skills guidance, signposting to such resources as part of learning could helpful:

> *'Lecturers should sometimes take into account the fact that some student sat for their 'A' levels decades ago and as such cannot recollect all that was taught then, so rather than assume everyone is on the same page, they can give references to materials to help such students'.*

Unsurprisingly, given the demands on time and other resources (including space), independent study was the most challenging aspect for the majority (74%). Additionally 38% struggled with assessments and 35% with lectures and seminars. In some cases this reflected problems with attendance but was also related to needing support with adjusting to study in higher education, especially after a break. Giving **good quality feedback** which is positive and constructive can be particularly beneficial for such students in helping to build confidence and develop their skills.

High quality pastoral care emerged as essential for this group, in complement to inclusive teaching practices. A number of wellbeing issues were raised including lack of sleep, difficulties in maintaining a work-life-study balance; stress and exhaustion; difficulties in finding time for managing health issues and self-care and emotional challenges. Being able to discuss these issues in confidence with understanding members of staff, whether professional student services staff or an academic tutor was invaluable. In some cases, lack of time meant it was hard to identify and access the many different sources of support on offer, and so effective signposting is a key component of pastoral care provision. As academic tutors are very often the first port of call for students, it is important that they are aware of the issues and confident in their ability to support those with caring responsibilities and to signpost for further support as appropriate. Support needs to be highly visible, accessible and proactive in targeting groups such as student carers where there is likely to be a high level of need.

However, it should be stressed that it should not be down to supportive individuals to help student parents have a good experience; rather it is of paramount importance that those with caring responsibilities are recognised and valued throughout the university and that a culture and environment supportive of parenting and caring is fostered and built into policy, practice and institutional ethos. Participants frequently mentioned that students tended to be spoken to en masse as though they were eighteen year olds. This reflects more widespread assumptions of the typical student as young, male, autonomous and without caring responsibilities and other commitments outside university (Estes, 2011; Leathwood & O'Connell, 2003). In an increasingly challenging economic context this model is becoming increasingly unrealistic. There is much scope therefore in working towards developing more inclusive, caring university cultures (Alsop et al., 2008) which recognise the realities of juggling multiple responsibilities in relation to work, study and care.

CONCLUSION

Despite potential barriers to participation which this article has touched on, student carers have much to contribute to university life and much to gain in terms of self-esteem, professional development, financial security, individual and family wellbeing and providing a positive role model with further potential benefits for widening participation (as other family members can be inspired to enter HE). They have much to contribute to the curriculum and class discussions in terms of their wealth of life and work experiences and insights, their motivation and commitment and well-honed ability to manage time and juggle commitments - they consequently provide positive role models for other students. Supporting student carers effectively, removing any barriers to learning and emphasising their right to participate fully in a meaningful student experience is essential in order to realise such benefits. The multiple responsibilities balanced by student carers necessitate targeted intervention, underpinning the importance of building robust academic and support infrastructures which work together to enhance student resilience and retention. There are individual, departmental, institutional and policy responsibilities in recognising and responding to the complex needs of many student carers. HE professionals should be empowered to feel they can make a difference, supported by their departments, while an institutional commitment to inclusive practices has the potential to benefit all learners. Ultimately, student carers' life experiences mean that they bring valuable perspectives, strong motivation, a range of highly developed skills, confidence and maturity to HE and the wider community. Therefore, it is vital that caring responsibilities are visible and valued, inclusive practices for all are implemented and the needs and challenges of this specific group are fully recognised and addressed.

REFERENCES

Adams, M. & Brown, S. (eds) (2006) Towards Inclusive Learning in Higher Education: Developing curricula for disabled students. Oxford and New York: Routledge

Alsop, R.; Gonzalez-Arnal, S. & Kilkey, M. (2008) The widening participation agenda: the marginal place of care. Gender and Education. 20(6):623-637

Browne, J. (2010) Securing a sustainable future for higher education: an independent review of higher education funding & student finance. [online] http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/11444/7/10-1208-securing-sustainable-higher-education-browne-report_Redacted.pdf (accessed 12/7/17)

Care Act (2014) [online] http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted/data.htm (accessed 12/7/17)

Children's and Families Act (2014) [online] http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents/enacted (accessed 12/7/17)

Dearing Report (1997) Higher Education in the learning society. Main Report. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office

Equality Act (2010) [online] http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents (accessed 12/7/17)

Estes, D. (2011) Managing the student-parent dilemma: mothers and fathers in HE'. Symbolic Interaction. 34(2):198 – 219

Fawcett Society Report (2016) Parents, work and care: striking the balance. [online] http://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Parents-Work-and-Care-2016.pdf (accessed 13/12/16)

Hochschild, A. (1997) The Time Bind: When Work Becomes Home and Home Becomes Work. New York: Metropolitan/Holt

Leathwood, C. & O'Connell, P. (2003) 'It's a struggle': the construction of the 'new student' in higher education'. Journal of Education Policy. 18(6):597-615

Morris, C. (2010) Enhancing student mental wellbeing and success through inclusive practices. Journal of Inclusive Practices, National Association of Disability Practitioners, UK

National Union of Students (2009) Meet the Parents: The experience of students with children in further and higher education. London: National Union of Students

Reay, D. (2003) A risky business? Mature working-class women students and access to higher education. Gender and education. 15(3):301–317

Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2005) [online] http://www.aboutlearningdisabilities.co.uk/special-educational-needs-disability-act.html (accessed 21/12/17)

Student Income and Expenditure Survey (2013) [online] https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/301467/bis-14-723-student-income-expenditure-survey-2011-12.pdf (accessed 21/12/17)

Thomas, L. (2012) Building student engagement and belonging in higher education at a time of change: final report from the What works? Student retention and success programme. Higher Education Academy: Paul Hamlyn Foundation

Tinto, V. (1993) Leaving college: Rethinking the causes of student attrition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press

UNESCO (n.d.) [online] http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/strengthening-education-systems/inclusive-education/ (accessed 21/12/17)

Universities UK (2012) University Challenge: how higher education can advance social mobility. London

GⱯP

EDITED BY

KARISA KRČMÁŘ