



## Abstract Session Synopsis - London

11:15 Workshop session one – please choose one from the following:

### 1.1 Teacher Professional Development

i)  
**Engaging in scholarship and critical reflection: your pathways to HEA Fellowship**  
*Jolanta Peters, Research and Library Services Manager, Bridgwater and Taunton College*

Jolanta Peters is an HEA Fellow and she will share her recent experiences of applying for the Higher Education Academy (HEA) Fellowship. This break-out session will focus on practical tips and advice on how to put together a critically reflective and coherent narrative of your professional practice, that enhances teaching and learning in College-Based Higher Education.

You will also gain an understanding of the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) descriptors and dimensions of practice, and the key criteria you need to meet in your application. There will be an opportunity to reflect on AoC Scholarship Framework resources and how they can support your engagement in scholarship and CPD, one of the key criteria that you will need to meet in your HEA Fellowship application. The session will also highlight a number of benefits for individual practitioners who hold HEA Fellowships.

ii)  
**Towards an understanding of the construction of the professional identity of vocational further education college teachers**  
*Mark Smithers, Assistant Principal for the Faculty of Arts and Science, Havering College of Further and Higher Education*

This thesis presents findings of a research project that was carried out within the field of Further Education (FE). The broad aim of the study was to gain a greater understanding of the professional identity formation process that vocational FE teachers undergo as they progress from the role of industry practitioner to teacher. The thesis develops and builds upon Robson's work and seeks to answer her 'call' for a better understanding of this complex identity development process that FE teachers undergo.

This study concludes firstly, that contrary to previous studies, formal initial teacher training is not highly valued by vocational FE teachers, it is placed second to experiential work-place learning on the job with the support of practitioner peers. This learning process instigated by the practitioners themselves, involved various types of networking with peers and was encouraged by managers.

Secondly, Illeris' workplace learning theory can be used as a lens to explain the rich learning process and the key elements that contribute to the formation of vocational FE teachers' professional identity. Professional identity formation takes place in a learning space influenced by workplace production, the individual, work practice and the community within the workplace.

## 1.2 Theme: Enhancing Student Learning Experiences

- i)  
**Metacognition: The key to success for all students**  
*Anna Colgan, Programme Leader, Early Childhood Degrees, Abingdon and Witney College*

Many mature students accessing higher education in further education have, on average, the lowest academic preparation and the fewest socioeconomic resources, as well as varying motivation levels and approaches to learning. These students also face anxiety and stress because of the conflict between their roles as student, worker, and perhaps parent, therefore their ability to manage these conflicting identities often depends on their self-confidence and motivation, as well as the availability of institutional and other support structures. This interactive session addresses strategies that significantly improve learning while transforming students', and tutors' attitudes, about the meaning of learning and their own active role in it.

- ii)  
**Enhancing the learning process through the use of play**  
*Alison Tonkin, Head of HE, Stanmore College*

As a small provider of Higher Education (HE) within a Further Education College, we have offered the FdA Working with children and young people and the FdA Healthcare Play Specialism (HPS). Childcare practice is founded on the concept of learning through play and the HPS profession is founded on the provision of play and recreational opportunities for children and young people in healthcare settings. This empowers us to promote a playful approach to learning for HE students, which was recently presented to colleagues across the college at a recent CPD training day.

We would like to share our playful approach to the learning process, which can be used in a range of settings and learning contexts. The presentation will include engagement with some of the strategies we use, thereby facilitating discussion and debate around the use of play and playfulness as a pedagogical approach to learning. This will help us to analyse playful learning in practice, using input from participants to further develop the rationale for play's inclusion in the HE learning environment.



### **1.3 Theme: Innovation in Digital Learning**

i)

#### **Cloud Learning: Further Education in a Digital World**

*Jodie Pinnell, PGCE Lecturer, Coleg Sir Gar*

Cloud based technologies in education are rapidly evolving, causing trends and pedagogic approaches to meet the demanding change this brings. In Wales, the clear emergence of digital competence for both teachers and learners in policy has led to nationalised virtual learning platforms and professional collaboration via cloud-based networks, proving advantageous yet also challenging. Education's responses thus far to the 'cloud' are indicating a unification of standards and curricular, yet merely scratching the surface of the potential yet to be fulfilled. What are the financial and social implications of cloud computing for teachers, learners and institutions? And, importantly, what are the pedagogical applications of such a powerful tool? With a full review of literature, this research explores the educational application of cloud networks, their emergence in Welsh and global policy, and what the 'cloud' can mean for teaching and learning in general.

ii)

#### **Reimagining a VLE at Leicester College**

*Nick Ruhl, Programme Leader FDa Graphic Design and eMedia, Leicester College*

Teachers and educational managers are often feeling under pressure to safeguard their students' academic success. It is here, that a current interest in the concept of 'resilience' and resilience-training finds its motivation, as resilience appears to capture the ability/willingness of individual students to overcome the difficulty associated with the HE-journey. In an attempt to establish the mathematical utility of the concept of 'resilience' to model student success we conducted a cross-sectional, quantitative research project based upon HE-students studying at a FE college, providing HE in the North East of the UK (N=319). We concluded that the concept of resilience is of limited value when trying to predict student's future success.



1:30 Workshop session two – please choose one from the following:

## **2.1 Theme: Developing scholarly communities**

i)  
**'From the Prosaic to the Poetic': Bringing the College HE Student Community into View**  
*Richard Pearce, Director of HE, East Surrey College*

Does it really matter whether the student body in College HE feels a sense of community? After all, surely College HE is typically akin to “going to work” or “CPD”, rather than the all-encompassing Alma Mater that stereo-typifies student life at university?

This facilitated workshop, led by a long-standing college HE leader and a senior HE student representative/youth worker, is designed to help participants identify and develop responses to questions such as the following:

- Why does community matter in College HE?
- What might a College HE Community look like?
- What are the barriers to creating this Community?
- What has been tried and failed?
- What kind of interventions have worked for participants?
- Is there something that should be explored at a regional/sector level?

After the conference, the facilitators will write up the findings from the session as a Think Piece, within a scholarly context, and share the output with the College HE Community via the Scholarship Framework.

ii)  
**Activist Strategies: Getting Past Peripheral Participation...and Empowering Reluctant Researchers!**  
*David Clemson, Research and Scholarly Practice Mentor, University Centre Peterborough*

This interactive workshop looks at drawing out experience from participants in the form of narratives about their own experience of research within HEIs. Power spectrum dynamics will be used to identify the complexity of these narratives, including contradictory narratives. Importantly both negative and positive experiences will be considered. Based on this, we look at enabling you to develop activist strategies which encourage legitimate peripheral participation in research activities, followed by collegiate engagement. We will look to give voice to ideas for strategic themes in research appropriate for AoC members.

## 2.2 Theme: The Importance of Student Social Context

i)

**Our Students and choice: A study exploring the true contextual data for college based HE and how this could impact on social mobility via the triune of access, success and progression.**

*Nathan Michael, Academic Registrar, Grimsby Institute of Further and Higher Education*

As part of a wider study students, from all disciplines, at a large mixed economy college were asked to complete a questionnaire about their history, backgrounds and living situation. This presentation explores the descriptive statistics arising from the questionnaire and contrasts these with the publicly available contextual data provided by the Office for Students. The research explores the influences the living situations and previous capitals have on likely student outcomes. The wider study draws on Bourdieu as a critical lens in which to explore the field and this presentation uses work by Littler (2018) on meritocracy to critique the potential impact that flawed data has on understanding, and therefore continued development, of college based Higher Education.

ii)

**"The Absurdity of Aspiration" where much is said but little is done. 'Deeds not words' are needed to influence student aspiration within a Further Education setting.**

*Nick Wragg, Programme Leader, Grimsby Institute of Further and Higher Education*

The last 20 years has seen a considerable research (Campbell and McKendrick 2017) and applied (Wilder 2014) focus on aspiration initiatives in Further Education (FE) settings in the UK. Unfortunately, as argued elsewhere (Croll, 2008; Archer, Hollingworth and Halsall 2007), the liberal overuse of a misunderstood label of aspiration, often offered as a panacea for improving the academic and life outcomes of young people, has resulted in few studies that examine the application of this concept in FE in a UK context. As such, in this presentation we focus on how current aspirational doctrine (Gale and Parker 2015; Spohrer 2011) plays out in practice within FE. Simply, is it the case that student aspirations are widely lauded as important but there is a lack of understanding of the practical application of this field of research.

This 'magic bullet' approach is especially apparent when there is a low aspiration 'deficit model' surrounding so-called disadvantaged students, for instance from a widening participation, special educational needs, or more generally termed low socioeconomic status background (Atkins 2010). Following Zipin (2013, 2015). This presentation will argue that there is a need for a more sophisticated and nuanced analysis of aspiration, and a wider debate involving relevant stakeholders on the practicalities of what constitutes aspirational strategy (Campbell and McKendrick 2017).

## 2.3 Theme: Innovations in Collaborative Learning in professional and technical education

i)

### **ULF Transformers Project: Skills for productivity: a new model for work-based learning practice**

*Paula Jones, ULF Senior Project Leader, National Education Union*

Employers continue to demand relevant skills from employees for productivity and growth. However, in the fields of Work-Based Learning and Learning and Development departments the emphasis is somewhat stuck around generic rather than job-specific intelligence, such as 'employability', 'soft', and 'professional' skills.

New evidence from The Transformers project suggests that conversations between employers, learning providers and employees around 'transversal' skills are beginning to reap rewards. Extensive research, collaboration and development has been underway by The Project team since 2016.

The transversal skills being put forward for consideration job roles done by all ages and levels within organisations are: willingness to learn, problem-solving, communication, teamwork and evaluation. Case studies of how employers have gathered data on these transversal skills needs are now available along with models and resources that employers have developed to stimulate discussions around personal development of highly relevant skills. This has helped enhance productivity and facilitate adjustments to previous practices based precisely on better measures for 'soft' and 'professional' skills.

ii)

### **Building Early Childhood Together**

*Mioka Drummond, Programme Leader for BA Early Childhood Studies (top up), University Centre Grimsby*

This paper is based on research which was funded by ESRC, focusing on early years practice of 'education and care' in Japan and England. Some aspects of Bernstein's pedagogical model were applied in this piece of research. This paper discusses how one state-funded childcare setting in Japan, Tenma, works on building unique childhood with practitioners, parents and children. Their practice challenges socially accepted concepts of 'childhood' and 'adulthood' by minimising invisible and visible boundaries between practitioners, parents and children.

By reducing various boundaries, practitioners and parents at this setting are able to identify their own voices, and consequently children learn to discover their voice by listening to adult voices. This practice, in turn, helps children to build their own individual childhood. Tenma demonstrated that in order to build a unique childhood for a child the whole environment including language and resources, must be created by a person, for a person. The research results and findings had a profound effect on my teaching and supporting HE students within a FE sector.



2:45 Workshop session three – please choose one from the following:

### **3.1 Theme: Pedagogic Practice in College context**

i)

#### **Growing Concerns: practitioners' positions on engaging in Professional Learning and Development in a deregulated FE sector**

*Lynne Taylerson, Teacher, Educator, Mentor, ILM Tutor and Digital Leader, Real Time Education Limited*

The ETF's workforce data (2017) revealed that 60% of FE staff were not engaging in formal Professional Learning and Development (PLD); the average amount undertaken by educators in FE is as low as 7 hours annually. This has serious implications for practitioners' currency and the quality of learning. Informal professional learning communities, however, both face-to-face and online appear to be thriving in number of networks and participants.

This contradiction invites us to ask, 'are teachers really no longer undertaking PLD?' Perhaps instead they have elected that PLD should change form, rejecting a performativity agenda (O'Leary, 2014) and instrumentalist (Coffield: 2017:2015:2009: Wiliam, 2009) PLD in favour of informal learning undertaken with agency. My PhD, part of ETF's Practitioner Research Programme, uses an approach founded on connective ethnography. It performs a netnographic investigation, (Kozinets, 2015) into PLD activities undertaken in educators' online, informal communities. The research is currently at the writing-up stage. I wish to engage AoC event participants, encouraging them to explore the value of their own informal professional networks; the workshop can also discuss the methodology used.

ii)

#### **What next for the academic subject in College HE?**

*Steve Taylor, Dean of Higher Education, Warwickshire College Group*

Recently, the academic subject has found itself at the centre of debates within the Higher Education sector. Individual disciplines, it could be argued, are in the midst of an identity crisis as they are categorised and characterised differently for the purposes of marketing, funding, coding, research excellence, teaching excellence and student outcomes. Given this context, this workshop will seek to prompt discussion for how academics, involved in teaching, scholarship and course management within College HE, can respond to these competing narratives which increasingly take their cue from data, benchmarks and metrics. Is there another story to tell? What role can be played by the College HE academic to develop a positive narrative which supports their own subject discipline, as it seeks to survive and thrive within a competitive and changing regulatory environment?

### 3.2 Theme: Transformative Learning Opportunities

i)

#### **Collaboratively re-storying College HE as a thirdspace in higher education.**

*Sarah-Jane Crowson, Scholarship and Enterprise Development Manager, Hereford College of Arts*

Current public narratives around Higher Education are generally negative, tending to focus on value for money (Richardson, 2018) and issues over Vice-Chancellor's pay (The Guardian, 2019). Although there are fewer public narratives around college HE, it is frequently mentioned in terms of the 'widening participation and access to Higher Education' agenda (EtF, 2017) and as an economical alternative to the HEI (career pilot, 2019) By contrast, dominant contemporary discourses around FE often centre on funding cuts (The Guardian, 2018, BBC, 2018) and the need for economic support (Independent, 2018).

More recently, counter-arguments have been constructed which focus on FE as a transformative educational space (Duckworth and Smith, 2019) Focusing on one college HE provider, this workshop shares the facilitator's research, which uses theories from critical spatial geography to consider how its past, present and future stories might be critically re-told as a 'thirdspace' (Soja, 1996) in education. The workshop will then use narrative theory and design fiction to facilitate participants in creating a space which is 'both real and imagined' (Soja, 1996), constructing potential futures for college HE.

ii)

#### **Reciprocity: or why and how I adopted mindfulness techniques at Coleg Sir Gar, Wales**

*Amelia Kilvington, Head of Critical and Contextual Studies, Ysgol Gelf Caerfyrddin/ Carmarthen School of Art*

Recently, there has been a huge focus upon adopting mindfulness techniques within the teaching and learning space. Having practiced these techniques personally for many years and having worked closely with several teachers from The British Wheel of Yoga, I was interested to carry out some research into the effects of these techniques at my place of work. Would the process of offering mindfulness drop in sessions have a benefit to the life of the campus?

If so, what sorts of benefits might these be? This session will begin with a brief talk about what I did, why I did it and the effects of the sessions on a range of participants. If you have become aware of mindfulness or enjoyed sessions yourself, you may well have wondered how to offer it to others safely. The session will also enable you to become more skilled at delivering brief mindfulness sessions to staff and students. Would conducting the sessions have any effects upon me? The journey has been interesting to say the least.





### **3.3 Theme: Innovations in Collaborative Learning in professional and technical education**

- i)  
**Softly, Softly: Getting a sharper focus on introducing students to photographic practice**  
*Oliver Cameron-Swan, Photography Technical Demonstrator, Hereford College of Arts*

This paper reports the findings of a small-scale active research intervention, funded by the Education & Training Foundation, which aims to improve the quality of technical photographic inductions. The work of Coffield (2009) is used to support the idea that a more democratic approach to education allows students a greater degree of involvement and inclusion in the educational process, encouraging a greater participation.

Findings from this study suggest that the change of location is an important factor in how the group benefited from the induction process, supporting Sennett's (2008) notion that the workshop is where the craftsman comes alive. There is also support for Coffield's (2009) ideas on partnership between teacher and student as each participant was able to offer ideas for improvement or change to the session in their feedback.

- ii)  
**Going Live or: How moving away from a producer led broadcast environment to a collaborative experience has benefited a vocational TV Production course**  
*Daniel Carter, Programme Leader BA (Hons) TV Production, The Grimsby Institute*

A reflective presentation focusing on the changes made to the FdA TV Production course following the closure of Estuary TV. The presentation will explain the move away from a producer led scenario within the work placements, and the shift to a more collaborative project-based design between staff and students, using feedback from the student body to illustrate the benefit of this collaborative style.

