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Title – **Personas**

Category: Academic Practice, Work and Cultures

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'the democratic educator breaks through the false construction of the corporate university as set apart from real life and seeks to re-envision schooling as always a part of our real world experience, and our real life', Bell hooks (1994).

The formal approach to Learning and Teaching enhancement concentrates on pedagogies from theoretical frameworks mostly based within the discipline of Education. This narrowly focused approach often negates ~~against~~ prior learning and experience. Thus, ~~a new~~ Lecturer who has previously worked in ~~industry~~nursing or retail would rarely be asked to reflect on their ~~applicable~~ skills and experience in a range of situations such as people management, motivation and challenge. However, these skills could be invaluable in the HE context. –

~~The~~ 'Personas' Video Learning Object ~~seeks to explore~~ the notion of persona in terms of lecturing performance and pedagogy. Informed by Erving Goffman's (1959) ideas of the presentation of self in everyday life, 'Personas' ~~seeks to explore~~ looks at every-day teaching interactions and how these strategic encounters are used to 'sell' a particular self-image and persona, ~~and, in turn, use these to benefit the learning context.~~

In the eight recorded interviews ~~forms each~~ chapter ~~with~~ has a ~~different~~ 'persona' theme: ~~such as~~, Lecturer as magician, charismatic lecturer, bar manager, industry practitioner, performer, ~~e~~European scholar, scientist and carer. As an experienced film maker I have ~~sought to use~~ ~~traditional~~ ~~established~~ televisual interviewing techniques. The interviews were structured ~~on~~ ~~around~~ questions of teaching and learning, communication, performance, charisma and life experiences. Space was given to interviewees to develop ideas and narratives in an intuitive and spontaneous way.

~~Academic developers are able to draw up from previous, often considerable, teaching experience, often considerable, to help elaborate pedagogic approaches and strategies that their tutees learn from. Academic enhancement is seen as a demonstration and imitation of.... This form of modelling 'walks' the learners through the processes that our minds automatically go through as 'experts'. Therefore, modelling the process and making thinking explicit.... There is also a notion that Academic developers are engaged in modelling model behaviours that they want the learners to adopt. This is often evident in use of language and mannerisms. Modelling does seek aims to stimulate reflection on the process that the learner has experienced. A, but any reflection is usually limited to the recent activity or learning outcome.~~

Experiential learning, however, seeks to engage the learner in an authentic, first-hand experience. The Learner develops a model of how the world works by relating new knowledge to existing knowledge. ~~This~~ theory encourages learning from mistakes and experimentation. The resultant

'deep learning' experience can lead to affective as well as cognitive learning. New Lecturers and experienced Lecturers come to the lecture theatre with a range of previous non-academic authentic experiences. These experiences are often perceived to be redundant and so not effectively reflected on. This because they are some-how seen as irrelevant to a practical approach that is theory-based practical approach.

The 'Personas' project seeks to re-evaluate this traditional approach attitude and instead builds an experiential approach with that can have real resonance and impact on Learning and Teaching in HE. This innovative project seeks to move away from positivistic modes of reflectivity into an arena of expanded modes of reflectivity.

'Personas' engages with the notion of Lecturers as Stars. Richard Dyer's in his seminal 'Star theory' discusses and defines the relationship of movie stars to their audiences – 'what is important about the stars, especially in their particularity, is their typicality or representativeness. Stars relate to the social types of a society'. Similarly, in 'Personas' the crucial relationship of the 'audience' to the performer-star performer in a lecture/classroom/lab is unpacked. One member of the Academic staff featured is a member of the Magic Circle and regularly uses a range of magical performance strategies in his lectures.

The 'Personas' project seeks to explore the relationship of the 'real' lecturer as portrayed in dominant cinema with that of the perceived real persona of the lecturer. Representation of 'professors' on television such as Brian Cox, Simon Schama, Robert Winston et al are openly discussed in view of the impact on student expectations of their lecturers' performance and persona.

An examination of the relationship of the Lecturer to moving images is also a related focus. One lecturer talks about using 'teachable moments' from popular television in her discussions on the craft of teaching in primary education.

Issues of credentialism and charisma are also effectively addressed. 'it is almost essential for lecturers to brand themselves and create a persona' comments a new lecturer who has spent ten years in show business.

In the eight, recorded interviews each chapter has a persona theme. Lecturer as magician, bar-manager, industry practitioner, performer, european scholar, scientist and carer.

The lecturer-as-carer provides an engaged model of practice. This lecturer vividly records recalls the graduation of her students and how this engendered change, 'some of them shook my hand, some of them didn't. I felt guilty that I had not got to know them'. The highly experienced lecturer then resolved to adopt a more caring approach in tutorials where she would 'find out about family and friends' of her students. Adding to the debate about how much a University lecturer should 'care' for their students the lecturer-as-bar-manager remembers her first day as a Cambridge Don. The words of advice were from on her highly decorated head of college, 'don't try to be clever, we are all clever here. Just try to be kind'.

This timely project will inform and develop the understanding of how experienced and less experience lecturers perceive and navigate their way through developing their identity, self and

personas in Higher Education and from this helps us all to identify the range of skills we need to operate effectively in that context.—

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