BOOK OF ABSTRACTS: SRHE CONFERENCE 6-8 DECEMBER

Parallel Session 1:1

14:00 - 15:30 Wednesday, 6th December, 2023
Room 141
Chair Richard Davies

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30 Writing machines: Embodied gestures and generative AIs in higher education

Lesley Gourlay

University College London, London, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Digital University and new learning technologies (DU)

Abstract

The act of writing cannot be understood as disembodied information transfer, just as a technology or device cannot be regarded as an instrument or tool (Vlieghe 2016). Instead, any form of writing enrols the body in interaction with a physically tangible device, in which embodied subjectivities are formed through our prosthetic interrelationships with technologies. Generative AIs have the potential to fundamentally alter the experience of academic writing, and therefore how the embodied authoring self-unfolds. Marin (2021) takes a phenomenological approach which focuses on sensory configurations and the mediality of embodied gestures, drawing on Flusser (2014). She identifies three categories of gesture involved in academic writing: dis-assembling, assembling, and interlacing. Building on this work and utilising a heuristic approach to 'interviewing digital objects' (Adams and Thompson 2016) this paper will consist of a phenomenological investigation into the effects of GAIs on these gestures and academic writing in the age of AI.

112 Exploring the Impact of a disruptive technology on Higher Education assessment design: The case of ChatGPT

Alexander Kofinas[1], Crystal Tsay[2], David Pike[1]

[1]University of Bedfordshire, Luton, United Kingdom. [2]University of Greenwich, London, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Digital University and new learning technologies (DU)

Abstract

This exploratory study looks at the extent to which a generative AI writing tool, ChatGPT, impacts on student performance in Higher Education assessments and how effectively educators are able to differentiate AI-authored and human work. A two-phased, within-subjects experiment, involving paired academics from two UK business schools, was conducted. Preliminary findings revealed a struggle for participants in differentiating AI and human work. AI enhancements proved to be neutral to both originally high-quality and subpar student work. However, work that was crafted by ChatGPT only was of very high quality, often getting the highest grades, and it was particularly difficult to identify. It is suggested that ChatGPT's effectiveness varied according to assessment type, showing greater impacts on traditional than on authentic assessments. These findings pose more questions than answers in redefining academic integrity and re-exemplifying academic misconduct. Future research should explore what would constitute effective assessment strategies in Higher Education.

172 Chat GPT and ethics of suspicion

Liz Bennett

University of Huddersfield, Huddersfield, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Digital University and new learning technologies (DU)

Abstract

This paper examines lecturers' responses to the emergence of generative artificial intelligence tools such as ChatGPT. The paper draws on data collected at a workshop and on interviews with six colleagues at one institution. It examines what lecturers have noticed about the impact of artificial intelligence on students' assessed work. It analyses lecturers' views on how they perceive the threat of artificial intelligence to the validity of our awards and the challenges and dilemmas that lecturers encounter when revising their approach to assessment. My focus is on the changing behaviours at the level of teaching, learning and assessment rather than broader issues of institutional policy. I interrogate the data to examine how these tools affect our role informed by our values as educators. I draw on notions of hermeneutics of suspicion (Ricoeur 1965) and relational pedagogies (Gravett 2023) to illuminate the findings.

Parallel Session 1:2

14:00 - 15:30 Wednesday, 6th December, 2023
Room 139
Chair Jacqueline Stevenson

319 Working towards inclusive internationalisation: Policy, staff perspectives and implementation

Omolabake Fakunle, Velda McCune, Seongsook Choi

University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, United Kingdom

Research Domains

International contexts and perspectives (ICP)

Abstract

In this paper, we report on a study of the interplay between internationalisation and inclusion discourses and practices in a research-intensive university in the UK. Our analysis of institutional artefacts and policy documentation suggested that these two themes are often considered in isolation rather than integrated. We followed up this preliminary research with a questionnaire, interviews and focus groups with staff. We found that some staff had good awareness of relevant policy, whist others had less understanding of this wider context. Some staff talked about giving close consideration to the interplay between internationalisation and inclusion, others had not thought through this integration. We discuss the importance of connecting work on internationalisation and inclusion to ensure that conceptualisations of internationalisation are not merely reflections of diversity. Our paper contributes to an identified gap by highlighting possibilities for cultural diversity to drive inclusivity in international higher education amidst globalised narratives.

122 The operationalisation of collaborative academic practice

Hazel Messenger

London Metropolitan University, London, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

Collaborations are a key feature of contemporary practice in higher education, involving work across multiple boundaries. For those involved in their operationalisation, expertise is demonstrated in the ability to navigate complex boundary zones, often outside of 'traditional' university   structures and processes. With calls being made to bring the experiences and motivations of those working in the 'third space' into the open, this presentation discusses the operationalisation of the collaborative academic practice associated with TNE partnerships, and introduces a new model for analysing boundary work, The Collaborative Work Model (CWM).

162 Internationalisation and its impact on students in higher education: A scoping review of the literature 2011 - 2022

Jenna Mittelmeier, Sylvie Lomer, Said Al Furqani, Daian Huang

University of Manchester, Manchester, United Kingdom

Research Domains

International contexts and perspectives (ICP)

Abstract

Research about internationalisation of higher education has expanded rapidly in recent decades with few attempts to map available evidence. This scoping review synthesises articles about how internationalisation practices specifically impact students' outcomes and experiences. We identified 967 articles in 21 themes, spread across 493 journals and 27 disciplines. Of these, only 233 (22.8%) were categorised as 'designed to highlight impacts on students'. We characterise research as scattered and primarily descriptive, with limited efforts to build on previous research. However, we have synthesised five key principles that underpin practice with the most demonstrable impact on students: (1) embedding internationalisation holistically across the institution; (2) centring inclusion and connection; (3) developing active and creative learning approaches; (4) providing opportunities for reflection and personal

connection; and (5) explicitly scaffolding intercultural skills. At SRHE, we call for researchers to design more research that builds on this maturing subfield, centring evidence to inform critical practice.

Parallel Session 1:3 - Symposium

14:00 - 15:30 Wednesday, 6th December, 2023
Room 145

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5 Challenges in developing professional knowledge, education, and practices in Swedish higher education

Research Domain

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Rationale

The formation of professionals and professions is, simultaneously, a core function of contemporary universities and a field of contestation where different worldviews, rationalities and aspirations meet. In this symposium, we will present an interdisciplinary research collaboration, called PHE (Professional knowledge in Higher Education), between four academic institutions in Sweden. These institutions regularly collaborate on research activities concerning professional knowledge, professional education and learning addressing core issues for the welfare state, for social justice, sustainable development, and higher education pedagogy. We will present the main motivations for this collaboration, its goals, and examples of its ongoing interdisciplinary research. The symposium will situate our collaboration in current public and academic debates on the growing societal demand for strong, flexible, and pluralistic professional programs in higher education and in doing so, also address pressing issues related to welfare, the knowledge economy, and the labour market. Such demands pose new challenges for universities today in regard to, for example, the need for expertise and pedagogy.

Central to this collaborative project is a new interdisciplinary research school, SPETS (Studies in Professional Education and Training for Society), with doctoral students from all four institutions and inter-institutional supervision. In the symposium, five ongoing doctoral projects that represent current challenges and tensions in Swedish professional education and development will be presented. In Matilda B Svensson's research, she highlights the policy turns of teacher education in Sweden and how they affect understandings of professional knowledge. Per Holmgren and Yihua Zhang examine how digitalization impacts what is seen as valuable knowledge and pedagogy in HE today and how digitalization is used to address some of the key issues in professional programs. Reghan Borer's study concerns how public engagement is addressed in Swedish doctoral education, and Sara Svensson discusses the use of arts-based pedagogies to facilitate personal and professional development across a range of professional education programs. In Amoni Kitooke's work, he explores community-oriented aspects of professional education, particularly praxis and knowledge issues in teacher education.

These doctoral projects, in parallel with other joint activities and meeting points in this collaborative endeavour, address issues that include highly relevant intersections between digitalization, internationalisation, equity, policy and quality assurance, economic disparities, migration, and community welfare, which point to some of the challenges of developing professional knowledge, education and practices in higher education today.

Chair

Petra Angervall

University of Borås, Borås, Sweden

Christian Stöhr

Chalmers University of Technology, Gothenburg, Sweden

Anders Sonesson

Lund University, Lund, Sweden

Discussants

Petra Angervall

University of Borås, Borås, Sweden

106 Professional Knowledge Domains in Community-oriented Teacher Education: A literature review

Amoni Kitooke

University of Borås, Borås, Sweden. Lund University, Lund, Sweden

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

Initial teacher education through higher education courses and school-based practicums has been criticised for being decontextualised and insufficiently preparing teacher candidates to address the complexity and needs of the classroom, school, and local communities. An alternative, practice-intensive initial 'teacher training' uncritically offers a curriculum-scripted approach aimed at increasing standardised test scores but attends much less if at all to students' experiences and community needs. An emerging third approach, community-oriented teacher education (CoTE), combines learning in higher education, school-based practicums, as well as experiential learning and civic participation in community life. An unresolved question remains: what kinds of professional knowledge do CoTE practices and activities develop among teacher candidates? This literature review analyses the process phases of CoTE activities in 12 contexts and identifies that CoTE develops teacher candidates' theoretical, technical, practical, and critical-emancipatory knowledge.

120 Evolving professional development in nuclear reactor physics and safety through hybrid learning environments

Yihua Zhang[1], Christian Stöhr[1], Susanne Strömberg Jämsvi[2], Jens Kabo[1], Christophe Demazière[1]

[1]Chalmers University of Technology, Gothenburg, Sweden. [2]University of Borås, Borås, Sweden

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

Nuclear education providers have difficulties sustaining their programs that typically consist of small cohorts of students and tend to follow a traditional, lecture-based design. This paper presents the GRE@T-PIONEeR project as a response aiming to preserve competencies and skills in computational and experimental nuclear reactor physics and nuclear safety through the implementation of six advanced courses offered globally to PhD and Post-Doc students, nuclear professionals, and MSc students. The courses employ a flipped classroom approach within a hybrid learning environment, complemented by three hands-on training sessions on nuclear training reactors. The courses were evaluated using validated survey instruments associated with various learning-theoretical frameworks. The paper presents preliminary findings derived from one of the courses comprising asynchronous online and synchronous hybrid sessions. While course completion and performance were high both among onsite and online students, some notable distinctions between the two groups emerge. Future research will explore these differences further.

173 Valuable knowledge in teacher education: Negotiating digital technology and AI in a teacher education program

Per Holmgren

Department of Educational Sciences, Lund University, Lund, Sweden. Faculty of Librarianship, Information, Education and IT, University of Borås, Borås, Sweden

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

Digitalization is an ongoing process and includes recent developments in AI and machine learning. In Sweden, the agenda of educational and school digitalization puts continuous expectations on teachers and teacher education. For this presentation an ongoing substudy is introduced, along with its theoretical framework, research topics, preliminary findings, and analysis. The purpose of the study is to examine how a Swedish teacher education program within higher education approaches and addresses the evolving need for contemporary digital and AI competence. The aim is to contribute knowledge into which and what kind of competencies teacher educators negotiate, as well as to how contemporary advancements in digital technology influence what is seen as valuable knowledge in teacher education. Neopragmatism forms the theoretical framework. Government and educational policy documents and examinations as well as qualitative interviews with key actors are currently gathered and analyzed for data collection, using thematic analysis and content analysis.

229 The Dynamics of Detach and Connect when using Autobiographies in Professional Education

Sara Andersson

Lund University, Lund, Sweden

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

The paper reports on preliminary findings from a case study of an autobiography-based course element included in the social work professional education program of a Swedish university. In the studied course element, the aim was for autobiographies to provide a platform and catalyst for student reflections on client perspectives as well as for reflexivity in relation to students' own frames of reference. The paper seeks to investigate how students engaged with

autobiographies in relation to their conceptualizations of the future profession and how their engagement was shaped by the didactic context. Preliminarily, it is found that student displays of empathetic and personal connection and analytical detachment are informed by their conceptualizations of their future professional role. Furthermore, these patterns of connection and detachment appear to be significantly impacted by prompts and input that students receive from the didactic context, including teacher guidance and the social dynamics of the learning environment.

Parallel Session 1:4

14:00 - 15:30 Wednesday, 6th December, 2023
Conference Room 1a
Chair Gina Wisker

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116 Reimagining Research Excellence in Doctoral Education: Connecting Communities with Doctoral Research Agendas

Rebekah Smith-McGloin, Rachel Handforth, Matthew Young

Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Postgraduate scholarship and practice (PGSP)

Abstract

This paper explores emerging work on civic and community-informed models of doctoral education. Drawing on literature relating to modes of knowledge production (Liyanage et al., 2022; Miller et al. 2018; Peris-Ortiz 2016), we consider how discourses around research excellence and inclusion in doctoral education may be reimagined in this context. In this paper, we offer a tentative conceptual model for civic practice in doctoral education which we review through three recent initiatives that have aimed to connect doctoral communities to civic challenges, and engage citizens and employers with doctoral education. These include programmes seeking to legitimise broader conceptions of scholarship within the core of doctoral education through public scholar initiatives (Porter, 2021), expanding the core sets of values on which doctoral education are founded (Chiappa and Cantini, 2022), and place-based partnerships engaging civic partners in shaping doctoral research agendas (Smith-McGloin, 2022; Handforth, 2023).

331 Creative contagion – what can we learn from the REF about doctoral education?

Sian Vaughan

Birmingham City University, Birmingham, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Postgraduate scholarship and practice (PGSP)

Abstract

Prompted by the continued growth in practice research in creative disciplines and in creative methods across disciplines at doctoral level (Vear et al 2021, Kara 2017), this paper reports on work in progress to test the potential of a significant data set in the United Kingdom to reveal the extent to which creative practice is influencing change in the practices and structures of doctoral education. As a periodic quality audit of research in higher education in the United Kingdom, the Research Excellence Framework has been examined and contested from multiple perspectives (e.g., McNay 2015, O'Regan & Gray 2018). My concern here is not with the process or politics of REF, but with the potentiality of the online archives of submissions for researching changes in doctoral education. What evidence and indicators can be found of creative practice's influence on the structures, practices, and discourse of doctoral education?

291 Is Decolonising HE making headway in Professional and Education Doctorate Supervision and Examination Processes: survey findings from UK Higher Education.

Beth Cross

University of the West of Scotland, Paisley, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Postgraduate scholarship and practice (PGSP)

Abstract

Intercultural communication in high stakes circumstances can go fatally wrong due to small differences in how speakers use contextualization conventions. Misreading these conventions can lead to unconscious bias and thus play a role in perpetuating institutional forms of disempowerment of marginalised groups. Decolonising knowledge generation Is central to decolonising higher education, yet nowhere are the stakes higher for supervisors to "teach to the test" than in PhD completion. Supervisory practice is heavily influenced by perceptions of expectations in examination processes. We explore relationships between examination and supervisory practices, and the roles that regulatory frameworks and relational networks play in reinscribing existing elite relations or disrupting them. Our paper reports on survey findings from an exploratory-explanatory sequential design. We contrast reported practices to address inequalities with available audit data, looking at a range of support mechanisms that would change awareness of intercultural contextual factors and the thesis examination context itself.

Parallel Session 1:5

14:00 - 15:30 Wednesday, 6th December, 2023
Conference Room 1b
Chair Andrea Cameron

167 The Impact of Higher Education Reform on Professional Education

Matilda Bogren Svensson

Lund University. Department of Educational Sciences, Lund, Sweden. University of Borås. Department of Educational Work, Borås, Sweden

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

Increasing societal demand for robust, adaptable, and pluralistic professions presents universities with new challenges in the realm of producing professional education (PE). Most professional programs share a common objective of forming a content rooted in interdisciplinary knowledge and skills. Additionally, they grant access to stable occupations within the welfare-state context, such as: engineering, nursing, teaching, and social work. Present work addresses a methodological challenge encountered in PE-research, specifically in relation to the intricate interplay of institutional and disciplinary diversity, but also to program legitimacy and quality. The paper reports on methodological insights, examining the limitations and opportunities for PE-research delving into the formation of professional knowledge bases, by especially targeting teacher education. These insights stem from a co study in a larger PhD project addressing the impact of higher education reform on professional education.

5 An Examination of University Paramedical Students' Enculturation into the Ambulance Service-A sociological perspective

Dr John Donaghy (EdD)

Anglia Ruskin University, Chelmsford, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

The study explores student paramedics' enculturation into an NHS ambulance service trust. It illustrates the many challenges and dichotomies which face neophyte paramedics as they go from a university classroom setting into their day-to-day clinical work placements. The challenges they face are not the result of individuals alone, rather they result from an inherent subculture ingrained within the organisational structures of the ambulance service. This ethnography contributes to the social science literature on health and social care by presenting a sociological perspective of student enculturation, from the university into an often-chaotic working environment. The research explores the subculture and hidden curriculum which gives rise to it, as it seeks to understand how this appears to hamper and impede the pedagogy experienced by students. This is not the pedagogy taught in university, rather a pedagogy which arises out from the intricacies and nuances of the traditional working environment of the paramedic.

211 Investigating tutor teaching development through peer mentoring in business education

Valeria S Cotronei-Baird, Gabriella Corbo-Perkins, Alexandra Johnston, Andy Wear

University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

This paper explores peer mentoring, one component of a tutor professional development (PD) program in a business faculty of an Australian university. Peer mentoring involves matching new tutors (mentees) with experienced tutors (mentors), tutorial observations, and mentor feedback on mentees' teaching plans and practices. We investigate the impact that the mentor-mentee relationship has on conceptions of teaching, planning, and practice as perceived and reported by a) mentors and b) mentees. This exploratory study consists of semi-structured interviews with mentors and mentees, and thematic analysis of teaching plans and tutorial observation reports. The study aims to uncover the strengths and challenges of peer mentoring. The findings will contribute to scholarship on targeted tutor professional development and peer mentoring, offering insight into how to improve tutor PD and promote a culture of excellence in teaching. This project is currently underway and ethics approval has just been received. Preliminary findings will be presented.

Parallel Session 1:6

14:00 - 15:30 Wednesday, 6th December, 2023
Room 144
Chair Pauline Kneale

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82 Emotions Experienced by Instructors Delivering Assessment feedback

Jennifer Hill[1], Kathy Berlin[2], Julia Choate[3], Lisa Cravens-Brown[4], Lisa McKendrick-Calder[5], Susan Smith[6]

[1]University of Gloucestershire, Cheltenham, United Kingdom. [2]Indiana University Purdue University, Indianapolis, USA. [3]Monash University, Melbourne, Australia. [4]Ohio State University, Columbus, USA. [5]MacEwan University, Edmonton, Canada. [6]Leeds Beckett University, Leeds, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Learning, teaching and assessment (LTA)

Abstract

We explore the emotional responses that instructors experience through the giving and receiving of assessment feedback. We undertook qualitative data collection, carrying out individual semi-structured interviews with instructors from three universities who had administered a dialogic feed-forward intervention on one of their teaching units. Interview transcripts were analysed inductively using thematic analysis and five themes emerged: 1. Summative written feedback aroused largely negative emotions in instructors because they felt distanced from their students; 2. Instructors experienced a broad range of emotions related to dialogic feed-forward emerging from their proximity to students; 3. Dialogic feed-forward, as an affective encounter, was emotionally challenging for instructors; 4. Dialogic feed-forward built strong learning relationships between students and instructors, strengthening students' sense of belonging; 5. Dialogic feed-forward was transformational for instructors. We consider the implications of our findings for instructor and wider assessment and feedback practices, including emotional labour, promotional reward, and instructor professional development.

253 Student voice: what assessments do higher education students find most engaging?

Guadalupe Sellei[1,2], Kathleen M Quinlan[1], Ben Davies[3], Wissia Fiorucci[1]

[1]University of Kent, Canterbury, United Kingdom. [2]Kent Union, Canterbury, United Kingdom. [3]Independent Consultant

Research Domains

Learning, teaching and assessment (LTA)

Abstract

In this student-led project, we sought to understand what assessments students find most engaging, to characterise the features of those assessments, and understand the relationship between those features, students' emotional engagement with those assessments, and their self-perceived learning outcomes. 574 students across an English university completed a survey describing their most engaging and interesting assessments and rating 21 Likert-scale items on five design features and two perceived learning outcomes. Open-ended responses were thematically analysed. Quantitative items were analysed using descriptive statistics and correlational analysis. In the presence of appropriate support, authentic assessments that offer realism, higher order thinking (challenge via transferable skills), and opportunities to develop evaluative judgement were associated with positive emotional engagement and perceived higher academic achievement and self-confidence. The study is significant in highlighting student voices, examining experience across each student's programme rather than within a single module, and offering practical design guidance for academics.

243 Clear in advance to whom? Transparency of assessment criteria in UK Higher Education assessment policy and guidance.

Chahna Gonsalves, Zhongan Lin

King's College London, London, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Higher Education policy (HEP)

Abstract

UK universities commonly use criterion referenced assessment and inform students of assessment criteria. In their assessment policy documents, universities outline assessment criteria requirements and suggest ways in which they should be used. Using document analysis and corpus linguistic methods on 120 Higher Education institutions' assessment policy documents, this project gives insight into the characteristics of transparency in assessment criteria communication, with whom assessment criteria should be communicated, and the approaches taken in Russell-Group and non-Russell Group universities. Preliminary quantitative findings show that the most frequent criteria communication collocations relate to making assessment criteria and marking schemes 'available' to students and external examiners, but rarely to internal assessors. Transparency is characterised by availability with little promotion of activities or discussion to foster shared understanding of assessment criteria. By providing an overview of approaches to transparency of assessment criteria, this study enhances understanding and practice of assessment policy designers.

Parallel Session 1:7

14:00 - 15:30 Wednesday, 6th December, 2023
Conference Room 1c
Chair Clare Loughlin-Chow

302 The UK's institutionalisation of racialised, global inequality through its academic employment practices: Insights from the period of 2015-2020

Dina Zoe Belluigi

Queen's University Belfast, Belfast, United Kingdom. Nelson Mandela University, South Africa

Research Domains

International contexts and perspectives (ICP)

Abstract

This paper raises questions about the ineffectual impact of UK employment policy and practice in addressing academic inequalities. It is informed by a study of the academic staff composition and employment conditions over 2015-2020 within UK universities, comparing them with what was observed within the discipline of Education (Belluigi, Arday and O'Keefe, 2023). Most dire was the exclusion of academics from the majority world without passport privilege, particularly women; and the marginal employment of UK academic citizens of colour. The study demonstrates how the ways in which such data is collected, collated and then re-presented by UK bodies, too easily distorts the picture needed for ascertaining if institutions are complying with their duties as outlined in national equality legislation. The study also reveals the limits of nation-bound social regulation in addressing the reproduction of global inequalities in academia.

358 Getting the record straight: On the production of records in the context of professorial recruitment

Anna Gerchen

German Centre for Higher Education Research and Science Studies (DZHW), Hannover, Germany

Research Domains

Management, leadership, governance and quality (MLGQ)

Abstract

Focussing both on methodological reflection as well as empirical evidence, my paper peruses a critical approach to records and challenges an understanding of records as mere reports of 'what happened'. Drawing on empirical evidence regarding the documentation of personnel selection regarding professorships my research focuses on how these highly relevant decision processes are documented and what function this documentation serves. Specifically, I pursue the premise of not merely considering records and files as texts, but of understanding them theoretically and epistemologically as artefacts. My research thus shifts the focus away from the perception of records as providers of sheer factual information – an understanding not exclusive to the common-sense world, but also relevant in various research fields, including Higher Education research –, and towards the context of their production.

Parallel Session 2:1

16:00 - 17:30 Wednesday, 6th December, 2023

Room 141

75 Meme Making as a Research Methodology to Enhance the Student Experience

Gary Currie[1], Helen Tidy[1], Joanne Irving-Walton[1], Leisha Nichols-Drew[2]

[1]Teesside University, Middlesbrough, United Kingdom. [2]De Montfort University, Leicester, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Learning, teaching and assessment (LTA)

Abstract

Meme making presents a unique opportunity within the classroom to not only enhance the student experience but also to collect credible data to further develop the student experience and undertake research analysis. Although philosophically grounded in established research methodologies, such as photo-interview and photo–elicitation, meme making draws upon these established approaches in a more contemporary and relaxed manner allowing the introduction of group reflection through humour.

Participants were asked to produce a meme to convey sentiment in relation to a given topic related to either known anxiety points or wider reflection on self-development. Results were then shared and communicated to peers allowing the researcher to facilitate group discussion and further analysis.

This allowed the researcher a unique opportunity to better understand participants in relation to their anxieties and aspirations as well as enhancing the immediate student experience through the process of making the meme.

6 Wicked problem inquiries in higher science education: Philosophical analysis and pedagogical implications

Hendra Agustian

University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen, Denmark

Research Domains

Learning, teaching and assessment (LTA)

Abstract

Wicked problems have been characterised by their high epistemological and axiological complexities. These are the kinds of problems that may invade our classrooms because many of them concern many stakeholders, including our students. Several approaches have been developed to address wicked problems in various contexts. However, little is known about how they may translate into educational research and practice. This paper proposes a conceptual framework in which wicked problems are analysed from their ontological, epistemological, and ethical commitments. Chief to the arguments is a focus on epistemic practices that are strongly anchored in but also extend from

disciplinary science education. Implications for curriculum development and instruction in higher science education are presented.

Parallel Session 2:2

16:00 - 17:30 Wednesday, 6th December, 2023
Conference Room 1a
Chair Karen Jones

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37 Creating more representative policy for doctoral education and progression: using participatory methods to generate knowledge about diverse student journeys and needs

Sherran Clarence

Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham, United Kingdom. Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa

Research Domains

Higher Education policy (HEP)

Abstract

Many universities, especially those in the global North, are concerned with addressing equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in their policies, processes and practices. This is largely a response to the increasing diversity of their student bodies–international students, students from racialized backgrounds, students who identify as LGBTQI and trans, working-class students. However, while greater EDI is the goal, there are questions about the pace at, and extent to which, dominant processes and practices are changing to enable and sustain transformation, as well as whose knowledge and experiences are reflected in guiding policy. In this paper I draw on the voices of doctoral students in South Africa and the UK to unpick aspects of doctoral policy that may be undermining EDI goals. In foregrounding students' knowledge and experiences, generated through participatory research, I aim to contribute to a conversation focused on revising and rewriting policy to be meaningfully representative and inclusive.

17 The LGBTQ+ Interactive International Travel for Work Policy Development Tool – An Introduction

Frances Hamilton, Tahlia-Rose Virdee

University of Reading, Reading, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Higher Education policy (HEP)

Abstract

This presentation will provide an introduction to the newly launched 'LGBTQ+ Interactive International Travel for Work Policy Development Tool' (as of 2023).

Our previous research (Hamilton and Giles, 2021) revealed that many Higher Education Institutions ('HEIs') were lacking policy where LGBTQ+ students and staff were concerned when travelling internationally. This raises concerns for LGBTQ+ persons given the wide diversity of law and culture when considering LGBTQ+ issues on a global scale. The primary aims of the tool and website are to provide policy guidance for HEIs, businesses and individuals when considering developing or accessing policy in the area of LGBTQ+ international academic mobility.

Having recently been through developmental stages, this will be the first introduction of the novel LGBTQ+ Policy Development Tool to an academic audience. This introductory talk regarding the tool shall detail user case insights, preliminary findings of the data collected from the tool and user experience feedback.

142 Revisiting national and institutional policy texts to enhance and revise understandings of the rise of the 'student experience' discourse in English higher education

Deanna Meth

Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia

Research Domains

Higher Education policy (HEP)

Abstract

Situated within the period that saw the growth of a higher education market in England, this research uncovers new and revised understandings of when and how the 'student experience' discourse emerged as an entity. As part of a wider study on tensions in undergraduate education, an interdiscursive documentary analysis of national and institutional policies reveals a broader homogenised student-related discourse appearing prior to the 'student experience' but mirroring its increases over time. This sheds light on previous researchers' findings, also offering insights into the way in which policies intertwine and 'cannibalize' at local and national level, with some evidence that universities, under pressure to create distinctive market offers to students, may themselves have driven the rise of the 'student experience' discourse. Enhanced understanding of these shifts is key to gaining deeper insights on the impacts of changing discourses on curricula, pedagogies, academic-student relationships, and student and academic identities in universities.

Parallel Session 2:3 - Symposium

16:00 - 17:30 Wednesday, 6th December, 2023
Room 144

10 COVID-19 and higher education : Challenges and opportunities for (in)equalities?

Research Domain

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Rationale

The COVID-19 pandemic had a profound impact on the education sector itself and the lives of young people, families and educators. The implications of emergency lockdowns, the pivot to online teaching and learning, changes to work practices and the impact on student and staff wellbeing extend into multiple areas of higher education practice and research, as do equality considerations.

A growing body of literature has emerged on COVID-19 and higher education capturing a range of topics from academic development, pedagogic approaches and the flipped classroom, to higher education policy and governance, staff and student retention, internationalisation,and staff and student wellbeing across various institutional, disciplinary, and geographical contexts. A common issue arising from these studies explores the effect of the pandemic on exacerbating existing or creating new inequalities and, in some cases, mitigating them.

This symposium is a starting point to explore the plethora of scholarly contributions, focusing on the experience, impact, implications and lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic on the higher education sector from an inequalities perspective. We need to expand upon the knowledge gained from the pandemic and inform the development of future higher education systems that can be more responsive and inclusive in future times of crisis. Thus, we envisage that this symposium will address some of the following questions:

- What inequality challenges and opportunities have higher education systems and institutions emerged during and after the pandemic?
- What higher education policy and institutional responses have been undertaken in relation to the challenges and opportunities arising from COVIDd-19 ? What can we learn from them for managing future crises in higher education?
- Which inequalities in higher education has COVID-19 made more prominent? How can we mitigate them?
- What pedagogical, disciplinary, and organisational approaches and practices need to be reviewed as a result of COVID-19 to make higher education more inclusive?
- What unintended consequences have post-COVID institutional decisions had or will have in regards to addressing or reproducing inequalities?
- To what extent has COVID-19 informed existing institutional efforts towards inclusive higher education such as Equality charters, decolonising curricula etc?

Chair

Charikleia Tzanakou

Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, United Kingdom

148 Inequalities in higher education experiences during COVID-19 across Europe

Charikleia Tzanakou, Alexis Still, Audrey Harroche

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Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

Based on an EU-funded Horizon project on the impact of COVID-19 on socioeconomic inequalities, we focus on individual narratives across Europe - with an inequality lens - that experienced higher education COVID-19. The pandemic influenced access to learning, learning experience and digital skills, but also outcomes.

The swift transition to online learning and virtual learning environments created many challenges related to digital skills, access to equipment and materials for online learning, and participants critically reflected on the ways in which

the new teaching environment did not always meet learner needs and was often misaligned with the capabilities of students and teachers. Learning outcomes, employment outcomes and wellbeing outcomes seemed to be worsened over the pandemic.

Despite the negative implications of the pandemic, there were some better stories and opportunities that provided valuable lessons so that all stakeholders (individuals, higher education institutions, HE systems) can be more prepared in future times of crisis.

98 Learning from Labour: challenging student worker's precarity in UK post-92 HE

Claudio Morrison[1], Parisa Dashtipour[2], Janroj Keles[1]

[1]Middlesex University, London, United Kingdom. [2]Open University, Milton Keynes, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

This paper addresses student workers' educational and employment challenges in a UK post-92 University during the Covid-19 pandemic. Students' labour market and work-study-life balance difficulties are well known. Our research focuses on the less explored workplace dimension of precarity. The study is based on findings from a pilot project carried out at Middlesex University in 2022-2023. Using multiple methods, the research explored students' work experience and their knowledge of employment rights. Early findings show that students fill extremely challenging low-paying jobs where labour rights violations are widespread. The pandemic conjuncture has negatively impacted students with fewer jobs, higher workloads and more unpredictable schedules. Coping strategies include silent endurance but also small-scale resistance. Respondents' accounts portray highly exploitative workplace regimes which rely on student-worker's precarious condition for reproduction. We conclude that post-92 universities should not be unfairly blamed for failing students' employability. The project's ongoing impact strategy is documented.

280 Inequalities in HE during Covid-19: experiences of ethnic minority PhD students at an English pre-1992 University

Reka Plugor, Chandrima Roy

University of Leicester, Leicester, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

This article explores findings from a project conducted with ethnic minority PhD students at an English pre-1992 University from arts, humanities and social sciences disciplines. In the UK higher education there are different inequalities present, impacting various aspects such as access, attainment, and representation. In the context of post graduate research students, considerations of equality, diversity and inclusion remains an underexplored area. The

article offers insight into the experiences of inequality among ethnic minority PhD students and highlights some of the impact of Covid-19 on this group. The paper is based on thematic analysis of thirteen individual semi-structured interviews to explore their lived experiences of navigating the pandemic. Our findings highlight that the inequalities experienced by ethnic minority students have been exacerbated due to Covid-19 and there is a need for making targeted support systems available for this group of students.

385 Casting a long shadow: COVID-19 and UK female academics' research productivity.

Kate Thomas

Birmingham City University, Birmingham, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

This paper reports on research findings into female academics' experiences of grant application and writing for publication during the COVID-19 pandemic. The paper draws on diary and interview research data collected during 2021 from 28 female academics across the career spectrum in 18 UK universities. Findings show that the pandemic exacerbated a troubled relationship between 'research' and 'teaching', pushing research time even further to the periphery. While for some participants the circumstances of the pandemic had positive impacts on networking and research opportunities, most experienced competing workloads, care and service responsibilities and fatigue as detrimental to their capacity to write grant applications and academic publications. Because any reduction in research productivity presents a potential risk to longer-term career success, the paper argues for a reckoning of damage done and determined policy development to mitigate the impacts.

Parallel Session 2:4

16:00 - 17:30 Wednesday, 6th December, 2023
Room 139
Chair Dina Belluigi

382 Reading Time. A phenomenological exploration of reading habits, rhythms and practices in doctoral education in the UK.

Fadia Dakka

Birmingham City University, Birmingham, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

In contemporary doctoral education, much less attention is devoted to understanding how students engage with higher level readings, than it is to supporting the development of their academic writing skills. Reading is generally approached instrumentally for research and equated with an extractive process to retrieve, survey or review the information needed for writing.

This paper examines the under-researched area of reading habits, rhythms and practices among doctoral students in the UK, using vignettes to explore how a diverse group of doctoral students relates to, makes sense of, and engages with reading as a research practice in its own right. Through the innovative use of a rhythmanalytical-phenomenological methodology centred on the students' lived experience, the paper takes a closer look at the spatio-temporal, material, cognitive and affective dimensions of reading and draws pedagogical and philosophical implications for doctoral education and supervision whilst foregrounding mutual learning from cultural difference.

171 Creating peer learning spaces in distance education: the case of academic writing

Susanne Strömberg Jämsvi, Maria Lindh

University of Borås, Borås, Sweden

Research Domains

Learning, teaching and assessment (LTA)

Abstract

In distance education, learning often takes place without collaboration with fellow students. Hence, distance students mostly need to study on their own. The aim of this study is to enhance the quality of distance students' learning processes. An intervention was implemented where a peer-learning structure was tested targeting students' development of academic writing. The intervention consisted of a structure for the creation of learning spaces to enable student-driven collaboration around scientific writing assignments. Theoretically, the study adopts a sociotechnical approach, consequently assuming that the peer learning spaces are social spaces. A sociocultural approach informs the orientation of the intervention, where learning occurs through collaboration and interaction in a specific context. Three aspects of the construction of the peer learning space have been identified: the structuring, the perception, and the experience of it. Going forward, structural as well as social dimensions of peer learning and learning spaces will be investigated.

251 Implementing Baseline Mathematics Testing and In-Curriculum Peer Mentoring Scheme to Improve Attainment and Continuation of 1st Year Engineering and Computer Science Students Post COVID-19.

Gareth Woods, Pinar Ozbeser, Nicola Allett, Goudarz Poursharif, Ellen Pope

Aston University, Birmingham, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Learning, teaching and assessment (LTA)

Abstract

In 2022-23, the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences (EPS) at Aston University, implemented a college-wide Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) scheme in all first year Mathematics modules in response to attainment gaps observed between 2019-2022 in first year mathematics modules across EPS programmes. This work describes some of the reasons behind the attainment gaps observed, the approach taken, and some of the initial data collected to explore whether participation in these timetabled in-curriculum PAL Mathematics sessions for first year EPS Engineering and Computing students improves students' attainment in their respective Mathematics modules and enables them to continue to the next stage. This in turn allows us to explore whether participation in the PAL scheme improves the chances of successful transition into the first year and engagement with Learning Development Centre support. Analysis conducted on first year Mathematics modules demonstrated the significant impact of attending PAL sessions on students' academic performance.

Parallel Session 2:5

16:00 - 17:30 Wednesday, 6th December, 2023
Conference Room 1b
Chair Rita Hordosy

315 Promoting students' interest through culturally sensitive curricula in higher education

Kathleen M Quinlan[1], Dave S.P. Thomas[2], Annette Hayton[3,4], Jo Astley[5], Leda Blackwood[4], Fatmata Daramy[6], Morag Duffin[7], Muhammad Arslan Haider[1], Deborah Husbands[8], Richard Joiner[4], Helen Kay[9], Mary Mosoeunyane[10], Ian J Turner[5], Claire Walsh[9], Dan West[5]

[1]University of Kent, Canterbury, United Kingdom. [2]Solent University, Southampton, United Kingdom. [3]NERUPI, Bath, United Kingdom. [4]University of Bath, Bath, United Kingdom. [5]University of Derby, Derby, United Kingdom. [6]University of Leicester, Leicester, United Kingdom. [7]University of Law, London, United Kingdom. [8]University of Westminster, London, United Kingdom. [9]Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield, United Kingdom. [10]Buckinghamshire New University, Wycombe, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Learning, teaching and assessment (LTA)

Abstract

We examined the relationship between higher education students' perceptions of the cultural sensitivity of their curriculum and their interest in their programme of study. 286 (228 F) students rated the cultural sensitivity of the curriculum using a revised version of the Culturally Sensitive Curricula Scales (CSCS-R) that contained six scales. They also rated their interest in their program and the perceived quality of their relationships with teachers. Racially minoritized students (n=99) perceived their curriculum as less culturally sensitive than White students (n=182). There were no significant differences between minoritized students and White students on interest or the perceived quality of relationships with teachers. Five dimensions of cultural sensitivity (Diversity Represented, Positive Depictions, Challenge Power, Inclusive Classroom Interactions, Culturally Sensitive Assessments) predicted interest. Ensuring curricula and assessments represent diversity positively and challenge power may support students' interest while accurately reflecting an increasingly diverse society.

158 Love at the first sight? Students' attitudes towards statistics and R

Emilia Kmiotek-Meier, Marita Jacob

University of Cologne, Cologne, Germany

Research Domains

Learning, teaching and assessment (LTA)

Abstract

Statistics courses are not the most popular. Knowing students' attitudes would allow to address their concerns in an appropriate way. To research students' attitudes towards statistics and R, we used the Q-methodology (N = 33). Three attitudes emerge. (1) "Statistics for career" represents students who are interested in understanding statistical concepts and show a greater affinity with R than other students. (2) "Statistics is hard work" represents students that do not enjoy the course and do not see statistics and R as a career advantage. (3) "R is the problem" represents students (n=5) who understand the material but the application in R causes them problems. By contrasting the three attitudes (factors), it was possible to identify the areas where students had the most difficulty or enjoyed the most. In general, students are determined to understand the material and see statistics as relevant.

276 Exploring the role of research in curriculum documents and the eyes of Norwegian, Hungarian and English students

Rita Hordosy, Meryem Betul Yasdiman, Asadullah Lashari

University of Nottingham, Nottingham, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Student Access and Experience (SAE)

Abstract

Over the past few decades, there have been increased discussions on the relationships between research and teaching in higher education, subject to influence from a variety of structural and agentical factors that change over time. This paper is based on an international comparative research project, and it explores the overall patterns of how sociology BA degrees are set up in the three case-study countries of Norway, England and Hungary. It a) analyses curriculum documents to pinpoint how 'research' appears in these degrees; and b) illuminates how students at different stages of their studies see the process of sociological inquiry. The early introduction of research methods courses means students often feel they gain some level of expertise, however, at this stage research is a practice of others that exists as texts. The feelings of belonging to the sociological community are intertwined with the practice of research becoming personalised.

Parallel Session 2:6

16:00 - 17:30 Wednesday, 6th December, 2023
Room 145
Chair Camille Kandiko-Howson

127 Troubling Identity: An Illustrative Example of a Middle Woman Leader's Identity Construction in HEI in China

Zeya Li

Manchester Insitiue of Education, University of Manchester, Manchester, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Management, leadership, governance and quality (MLGQ)

Abstract

This study explores the identity construction of women leaders in Chinese Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) through the case of Liwen, a deputy dean in a junior college. The research highlights the marginalization and underrepresentation of women leaders in China's HEIs, despite societal changes. It reveals that women leaders in middle-level positions in higher education struggle to establish their leadership identities due to shifting discourses surrounding education, gender, and performance. The study adopts a post-structuralist perspective and demonstrates how Liwen manages her troubling leadership identity by adopting alternative identities of "big sister," "teacher," and "engineer." These identities enable her to reclaim authority within a specific cultural context. The research suggests that while Liwen's image aligns with the ideal educational leader, her legitimacy as a woman leader remains questioned. The study provides a valuable reference for future research on gender and identity in Chinese higher education leadership.

219 STUDENTS' AGENCY IN MAINSTREAMING GENDER EQUALITY POLICIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN KAZAKHSTAN

Zumrad Kataeva, Naureen Durrani, Aliya Olzhayeva, Aray Rakhimzhanova

Nazarbayev University, Astana, Kazakhstan

Research Domains

Higher Education policy (HEP)

Abstract

This study explores the ways the Government of Kazakhstan's policy of mainstreaming gender in higher education institutions (HEIs) is enacted on the ground and to what effect by examining the perspectives of students' who have been exposed to gender-focused curriculum in Kazakhstan. The paper draws on 13 focus group discussions with 59 higher education students in nine universities across Kazakhstan to explore students' understanding of gender and gender equality. The collected data is currently being analyzed, and and as the analysis progresses, differences in students' views will be explored; however, preliminary findings suggest that students acknowledge the existence of unequal gender relations and prescribed gender norms in society and are able to challenge and alter these gender norms and behaviors; nonetheless, there are instances where the university curriculum and teachers entrench prevalent gender stereotypes, leaving little spaces for students to defy the reproduction of unequal gender relationships.

333 Has the 2014 Quality Reform in Higher Education in Peru Benefited the Development of Women in Academia?

Nelly Calderón de Amat, Andrea Nuñez Rodas, Monica Bonifaz

Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, Lima, Peru

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

This study analyzes the presence of women in the highest categories of the academic career in two prestigious universities in Peru, the Universidad Nacional Mayor de Marcos and the Pontificia Universidad Catolica del Perú. The objective is to investigate the potential effects of the 2014 Quality Policy reform in Higher Education on gender segregation during two specific periods, 2010 and 2019. For this, the following research question was posed: how has the new university policy of 2014 in Peru influenced the progression of women to the highest academic category? The study analyzes the cases of these two universities based on data from the last University Census of 2010 and the Faculty Payroll Reports of the Superintendencia de Educación Universitaria of 2019. Although it is observed through the regression analysis that segregation persists, evidence of odds ratios shows that the probability of promotion of women to the highest category increases.

Parallel Session 2:7

16:00 - 17:30 Wednesday, 6th December, 2023
Conference Room 1c
Chair Ella Taylor-Smith

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281 The impact of symbolic violence on the perceived choices of female trainee primary school teachers: A poetic perspective

Laura Manison Shore

University of the West of England, Bristol, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Postgraduate scholarship and practice (PGSP)

Abstract

This presentation builds on another in the stream, that of Professor Richard Waller who discusses the forthcoming book Critical Perspectives on Educational Policies and Professional Identities: Lessons from doctoral studies and is from the perspective of an ECR, lead-author of one of the chapters in that edited collection.

This presentation looks at how symbolic violence impacts the perceived choices of young women training to be primary school teachers: a central aspect of the lead author's doctoral research. It discusses how the study's participants 'chose' primary school teaching based on the embedded notion that they are 'good with children'. Alongside the substantive content of the presentation is an examination of how the ECR and their co-author navigated the authorial journey together using autoethnography and poetry as ways to explore the concept of symbolic violence in the own lives as well as the lives of the research participants.

357 What are we backgrounding? Exploring emerging aspects of technology in teacher training programmes

Katrine Ellemose Lindvig[1], Liv Nøhr[1], Maria Hvid Stenalt[2]

[1]University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen, Denmark. [2]Aalborg University, Aalborg, Denmark

Research Domains

Digital University and new learning technologies (DU)

Abstract

This paper reports on an ongoing project that explores how critical aspects of technology in teaching are backgrounded in teacher training programmes, meanwhile effective ways of using technology are foregrounded. The paper draws on findings from two participatory design workshops with groups of Danish academics and academic developers.

In the project, the concepts of foreground and background are employed as verbs, where something is actively foregrounded, while other issues are pushed to the background. Whereas the project is a work-in-progress that will be completed by the end of 2023, the results of the workshops already provide valuable insight into a range of micro, meso, and macro level issues affecting higher education staff's use of digital technologies.

Following a brief presentation of the project, we open the floor for a discussion of possible and alternative ways to address the hidden and backgrounded issues of digital technologies in teacher training.

188 The Visual Design of Mouse Icons for Digital Literacy and Inclusion

Jonathan Mortimer, Debbie Meharg

Edinburgh Napier University, Edinburgh, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Student Access and Experience (SAE)

Abstract

Flórez-Aristizábal (2018) describes how the growth in technology is changing the way society communicates, specifically within education. They highlight both the scope of adaptation possible with technology within education, and the lack of frameworks to guide developers & designers in the development of technological tools aimed at the Deaf community. This paper raises awareness of the challenges faced by Deaf students for (PC) computer based demonstrations, and presents a work-in-progress study that examines the use of digital computer mouse icons (DCMI) as graphic representations for conveying meaning and information to members of the Deaf community. Qualitative focus groups and task-based observations were used to gather user perceptions and experiences regarding the use of DCMI in enhancing the delivery of digital literacy skills available to students from the Deaf/ Hard of Hearing (HoH) communities. The project aims to enhance access of software and technology to Deaf users.

Parallel Session 3:1

09:00 - 10:30 Thursday, 7th December, 2023
Room 139
Chair Jacqueline Stevenson

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184 Female academic leaders in processes of transition: results from a small study from Germany and the USA

Susan Harris-Huemmert[1], Leslie Zenk[2]

[1]Ludwigsburg University of Education, Ludwigsburg, Germany. [2]University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, USA

Research Domains

Management, leadership, governance and quality (MLGQ)

Abstract

Processes of transition into top academic leadership positions are not well researched, and even less is known about how female leaders move into top academic roles. In our qualitative study, in which interviews were conducted with recently elected female presidents/rectors, and chancellors in Germany and the USA, we explore how females experience these transitions. Transitions usually involve a change in assumption about oneself and the world, which therefore leads to a corresponding change in behaviour (Schlossberg, 1984). Accordingly, we can identify predictable, linear stages accompanied by more fragmented, personally complex assumptions and issues. Processes of transition have already been reviewed in the literature, more recently by Manderscheid & Ardichvilli (2008). In our study we take Manderscheid & Ardichvilli's transition model as a starting point for developing further our understanding of how female academic leaders experience such transitions, looking in particular and comparatively at support structures and their overall navigation of change.

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350 Gender Equality Policy in the Neoliberal University: a Relational Analysis utilising Bourdieu's Field and Capital

Maria Ash

Cardiff Metropolitan University, Cardiff, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Management, leadership, governance and quality (MLGQ)

Abstract

This paper reports on fieldwork exploring gender equality (GE) policy within UK universities arising from the UK Equality Act 2010, utilizing Bourdieu's notion of field and capital. The research offers theoretical and practical

insights on both the application of Bourdieu's theoretical constructs to organizational studies and the institutional-wide implementation of GE policy within universities.

The findings highlight the importance and centrality of HR and senior management afforded symbolic capital as the 'owners' of GE policy within UK universities, and the movement away from social justice rationales to legal compliance and strategic 'wins' serving to dilute, neutralise and depoliticize the equality agenda.

Hence the fieldwork reveals an integrationist model of GM predicated upon the neoliberal agenda. This reduces the likelihood of an alternative, transformative strategy being articulated and serves to constrain the beneficial outcomes of GE policy for women academics as well as overall policy on equality and inclusion.

Parallel Session 3:2

09:00 - 10:30 Thursday, 7th December, 2023
Conference Room 1a
Chair Colin McCaig

86 Climbing the ivory tower: educational and career pathways of care-experienced academics in higher education

Neil Harrison, Simon Benham-Clarke

University of Exeter, Exeter, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

There has been increasing interest in understanding the higher education experiences of students who spent time 'in care' as children. Members of this group tend to have to overcome strong barriers to educational success, including social disruption, trauma, stigmatisation and low expectations from professionals. Nevertheless, care-experienced students often thrive in higher education, although little is known about those who choose to build on this success to pursue an academic career.

Our presentation seeks to explore the educational trajectories and working lives of care-experienced academics in the United Kingdom. An online survey was used to map the size and nature of the population; 31 valid responses were received. The survey was also used to identify potential interview participants, leading to 21 semi-structured online interviews. We use thematic analysis to represent their diverse journeys into higher education careers, including the challenges, precarities and enabling factors encountered.

318 Facing the 'cliff edge': Care-experienced graduates' transitions into and through taught postgraduate study

Zoe Baker

University of York, York, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Student Access and Experience (SAE)

Abstract

Care-experienced (CE) people are one of the most under-represented groups in HE (Ellis and Johnston, 2019; Harrison, 2017). Despite the growth in research attention paid to CE peoples' access to HE at the undergraduate level, there are currently no qualitative insights into their transition experiences into and through taught postgraduate study. To better understand these experiences, this paper presents findings from a British Academy-funded project which qualitatively and longitudinally explores CE graduates' transitions out of HE in England and Scotland (Baker, 2022). The project identified several constraints faced by CE graduates when accessing and progressing through taught postgraduate degrees. These arose from a support 'cliff edge', with various forms of support from participants' HE institutions and local authorities abruptly ending upon undergraduate graduation. This resulted in taught postgraduate degrees being unfeasible for some. For others, this led to significant financial and academic hardship resulting in withdrawal from their postgraduate studies.

Parallel Session 3:3 - Symposium

09:00 - 10:30 Thursday, 7th December, 2023
Conference Room 1b

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13 Grant-funding and the careers of women academics: what, where and when

Research Domain

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Rationale

In this symposium, presenters engage with ways in which gender issues interconnect with the search for research funding that is taking over large parts of academic life. How these pressures play out depends on many considerations, including subject field, gender, departmental cultures and national context (Deem & Lucas, 2007; Nokkala & Diogo, 2020).

Participants in this symposium are among contributors to *The social production of research: perspectives on funding and gender*, edited by Sandra Acker, Oili-Helena Ylijoki and Michelle K. McGinn, to be published by SRHE/Routledge. Papers from three countries – Canada, Finland and the UK – illustrate the impact of both national and local contexts. Taking a broadly sociological and feminist approach, and drawing on a varied set of qualitative methods, participants elaborate on the subtle and not so subtle factors that shape academic women's grant-related opportunities and thus their careers.

Many of the recent sources that bring together gender and funding are quantitative, bibliometric explorations of large data sets that consider the relationship of gender to application behaviour, funding success, citations and/or productivity (e.g., Ceci et al., 2023; Kozlowski et al., 2022). While these approaches are useful in identifying broad trends, we prioritise questions of how funding works and the everyday gendered and racialised practices that sustain and often mask inequalities (e.g., Acker & Wagner, 2019; Morley, 2018; Rollock, 2021; Sato et al., 2021; Steinþórsdóttir et al., 2020).

Paper 1, by Sandra Acker and Michelle K. McGinn, introduces the symposium by identifying themes in the higher education literature on gender and research funding, adding illustrative quotations from a Canadian project based on semi-structured interviews with academics, mostly women, who hold strong funding records on social justice topics. Paper 2, by Oili-Helena Ylijoki, analyses two 'career stories' of women academics in Finland. In these cases, acquiring external research funding is not a problem but a solution that enables surviving in academia. Paper 3, by Lisa Lucas and Barbara Read, illuminates the changing research landscape in the UK, using interviews and media analysis to explore implications of the Research Excellence Framework and the COVID-19 pandemic for women academics' research and careers. These three papers demonstrate how a variety of qualitative methods can be applied to a particular topic, as well as allowing a comparison of country-specific research policies. Overall, the symposium connects to two of the suggested themes: firstly, structural inequalities and social justice in higher education and secondly, staff mental health.

Chair

Kate Carruthers Thomas

Birmingham City University, Birmingham, United Kingdom

140 Research funding and gender: insights from the literature and a Canadian project

Sandra Acker[1], Michelle K. McGinn[2]

[1]University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada. [2]Brock University, St. Catharines, Canada

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

In this paper, we explore the interrelations of research funding and gender as represented in the higher education literature. We uncovered three major themes, roughly corresponding to micro, meso and macro level analyses, which we identify as *individual effects* for grant-seekers, *institutional structures* that shape experiences, and influences from *government actions and funding agency practices*. Using a theoretical approach of academic sensemaking, we articulate how these themes from the literature were also evident in a set of interviews conducted with 27 academics in seven contrasting Canadian universities. Participants, most of whom are women, many racialised, are drawn from the fields of education, geography, social work and sociology and selected for their records of success in securing external funding for social-justice themed research. We find that gender, understood intersectionally, has both obvious and subtle impacts within each theme. Institutions and funding agencies must be considered along with individual needs.

107 Research funding, gender and academic career building: two stories from Finland

Oili-Helena Ylijoki

Tampere university, Tampere, Finland

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

In the current higher education context, attracting external research funding has become a key requirement for academic career building. Success in securing research funds has turned into an indicator of research excellence as competition per se is believed to ensure that the best get selected, an ideology which Naidoo (2018) calls competition fetish. In the literature, the imperative of grant-funding success is typically seen to work to women's disadvantage and impede their career progress. In this paper, I offer a more nuanced view using two career stories drawn from interviews with women academics working in the field of health technology in Finland. In these stories, acquiring external research funding is not so much a problem but a solution that enables surviving financially, socially and emotionally under particularly strained local working conditions. The paper shows the complexity and multi-layeredness of the relationships among research funding, gender and academic career building.

176 Gender and precarity amidst the changing research landscape in the UK

Lisa Lucas[1], Barbara Read[2]

[1]University of Bristol, Bristol, United Kingdom. [2]University of Glasgow, Glasgow, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

In this paper, we draw on two projects featuring gender and research policy in the United Kingdom (UK). Data for Project 1 come from two sets of interviews with academics about their experiences of the Research Assessment Exercise in 2001 and the Research Excellence Framework in 2014, considering the extent to which these interventions have enhanced or curtailed career opportunities for women academics over the years. Project 2 is a feminist intersectional analysis of discourses found in articles about the COVID-19 pandemic in the UK's leading higher education publication, the Times Higher Education, from January 2020 to June 2021. Together, the two projects expand notions of precarity as introduced by Judith Butler and enable some conclusions about connections and continuations of the gendered impact of UK research and evaluation policies on women researchers amidst the complexities of the research landscape over time.

Parallel Session 3:4

09:00 - 10:30 Thursday, 7th December, 2023
Room 141
Chair Clare Loughlin-Chow

223 The German "Disadvantage Compensation" as an Instrument of Inclusion in Higher Education

Pascal Angerhausen, David Langguth, Shweta Mishra

University of Kassel, Kassel, Germany

Research Domains

Student Access and Experience (SAE)

Abstract

Inclusive higher education in Germany relies on the *Disadvantage Compensation* (Nachteilsausgleich) as a form of institutionalised individual accommodation to support students with disabilities and/or chronic illnesses. Based on medical certificates, the examinations can get modified, or the students can be allowed to use auxiliary aids. Answering the question, in how far the German *Disadvantage Compensation* is experienced as an instrument of inclusion by students themselves, this inquiry reconstructs the study experience of students with chronical illnesses and/or disabilities who were granted *Disadvantage Compensation* at the University of Kassel in Hesse, Germany. The analysis draws on more than 30 narrative interviews that were conducted in 2022 and 2023. The interviews are evaluated following the Grounded Theory methodology. The inquiry aims on adding up to existing knowledge about the study experience of students with chronic illness and/or disability with implications for higher education teaching and learning.

16 On beyond Sheldon Cooper: what do we know about neurodiverse PhD students?

Inger Mewburn[1,2], Nigel Palmer[1]

[1]The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia. [2]

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

One of the most popular autistic characters on television is the clearly autistic academic Dr Sheldon Cooper from the Big Bang Theory. At the same time that there is no systematic study of the lived experiences of real neurodiverse PhD students to challenge these kinds of stereotypes. This silence around neurodiversity is curious. The PhD is a small, but notoriously difficult area of education. Over the last thirty years academics have produced a broad literature about policy, curriculum, pedagogy, mental health and employability. Without a deep understanding of how neurodiverse people experience the PhD, we are stuck in a deficit model that assumes that 'accomodations' are the only answer, ignoring the radical potentials of (re)designing the PhD around the concept of difference. This paper reviews what we know already and maps out future research directions using concepts from the universal design movement.

346 Teaching and Learning Practice and the Retention of Disabled Students in Scottish Higher Education

Patricia E. Castellano

University of the West of Scotland, Paisley, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Learning, teaching and assessment (LTA)

Abstract

Many Higher Education Institutions face low student retention rates amongst the whole body of students. Although disabled students seem to be at higher risk of leaving Higher Education (HE) before graduating, limited literature is

available about the factors that impact these particularly low rates. Considering this, a PhD research study was designed to explore how teaching and learning practice - crucial to the student experience - shapes the intentions to persist of disabled students in Scottish HE. Preliminary findings, resulting from thematic and critical discourse analyses of semi-structured interviews, show a complex landscape where, although the flexibility brought by the pandemic benefited disabled students, online delivery seemed to be linked to isolation and low student engagement, which harmed their experience. In the future, participants would like accessibility and flexibility to be maintained in Scottish HE alongside high-quality educational practices that promote student engagement and a sense of belonging, which could enhance retention.

Parallel Session 3:5

09:00 - 10:30 Thursday, 7th December, 2023
Conference Room 1c
Chair Richard Davies

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185 Teaching-based job roles in a research-inensive environment: Driving change or nowhere to go

Camille Kandiko Howson, Martyn Kingsbury

Imperial College London, London, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

This research explores the role of teaching-based staff in educational enhancement as part of a wider research and evaluation exercise of strategic reform at a UK-based research-intensive institution. This research, in the context of large-scale policy and institutional change, highlights perceptions of the role of prestige in relation to research and teaching, sense of empowerment towards change, hiring and promotion policies and disciplinary and professional factors on academic identities and motivation. The role of local culture influences the agency individuals feel in relation to educational change. This research identifies staff members' perception of their ability to drive change; perception and prestige of teaching and other educational activities; and the impact of new teaching-based job roles. The research highlights the challenges and successes of teaching-based staff in gaining credibility in their local departments, the negotiation of multiple identities across areas of work and disciplinary cultures, and the institutional-specific nature of roles.

163 The in/visibility of the 'teacher' role in a STEMMB-focused institution: Competing and complementary identities across career trajectories

Jessica Wren Butler, Kate Ippolito, Jo Horsburgh

Imperial College London, London, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

Higher education staff with teaching responsibilities are some of the most visible institutional employees to students and key avenues through which they form a relationship to their place of study. Those in teaching positions play multiple roles – as educators, sources of pastoral support, representatives of the institution, examples of the vocation (as teachers and/or as practitioners of what they teach), models of subject specialists, and embodiments of wider social categories and identities. However, it is widely perceived that in HE the activity of teaching is considered less professionally esteemed and rewarded than that of research (Bagilhole, 2016; Murray, 2022). This presentation summarises some indicative themes and presents interview data from a single-site research project that aims to better understand the experiences, identities, and self-conceptions of staff with teaching responsibilities at a UK STEMMB-focused institution, illuminating the complex relationships between academic identity hierarchies, social identity inequalities, and the 'teacher' role.

255 Who do you think we are? Social representations of academics among academics and other professional groups

Louise S Delicato[1], Mark J Ewing[1], Farah Abdulrahman[2], Reece Docherty[1], Lauren M Potter[1], Mioara Cristea[1]

[1]Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh, United Kingdom. [2]Heriot-Watt University, Dubai, UAE

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

We investigated how different social groups perceive academics using an established mixed methods approach to identify *if* and *where* there are misconceptions. Participants (n = 408) completed an online Free Association Task where they provided five words or expressions that came to mind when presented with the word 'academic' or a priming vignette where the implied ethnicity or gender of the protagonist was manipulated. We used Social Representation Theory to identify the central, stable elements of the perception of academics that vary by professional group (*e.g.,* Student, Other Profession) or prime (gender / ethnicity manipulation). Results show that for all professional groups *Research* is central, however, *Teaching* is absent from the central core for Academics and Students. We also find the association of *Societal Contribution* varies according to professional group or priming condition. We discuss the implications of these findings on the profession of Academics and Higher Education more broadly.

Parallel Session 3:6

09:00 - 10:30 Thursday, 7th December, 2023
Room 145
Chair Dina Belluigi

89 International Research Collaborations in the Post-Brexit Era: Implications for the scientific connectivity between the UK, EU and MENA Science

Yusuf Ikbal Oldac

Lingnan University, Hong Kong, Hong Kong

Research Domains

International contexts and perspectives (ICP)

Abstract

The UK is a productive science system internationally in terms of both scientific publication numbers and citation recognition. However, UK's productive science system has not been an individual endeavour, as it used to be strongly embedded into the European scientific infrastructure. Brexit has the potential to shape UK science and its international research collaborations (IRC) with other systems globally. This study uses bibliometric data to examine whether Brexit had an effect on the IRC between (1) the UK and the EU science system and (2) the UK and the Middle East and North African science, (UK's closest neighbouring region beyond Europe) and (3) the world overall. The findings indicate that there is a slowdown in UK's IRC with the EU and the world overall after Brexit. On the contrary, UK's IRC with MENA countries gained momentum post-Brexit, with a 2% uptick in the rate of increase.

375 Refocusing Embedded Agency: Internationalisation Strategies of Taiwanese Higher Education Institutions under Current Policies

Yi-Hsuan Irene Huang

University of Bristol, Bristol, United Kingdom

Research Domains

International contexts and perspectives (ICP)

Abstract

Internationalisation has become a focus of Taiwan's higher education policies since the 2000s. While there are numerous policy reviews, the internationalisation practices in universities remain under-investigated. Therefore, this study conducts case studies at a top public university and a private university of technology in Taiwan. With a maximum variance sampling design, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of higher education internationalisation in non-Western contexts and the theorisation of the relationship between organisational status and internationalisation strategies.

Empirical data on institutional internationalisation strategies are collected through semi-structured interviews and documentation and interpreted with an institutional logics approach. Preliminary findings from a reflexive thematic analysis suggest that both cases are not solely following government policies. Instead, they demonstrate commitments to different logics in their internationalisation strategies depending on their statuses and conditions. Furthermore, a tendency towards widening structural inequalities under current policies is also revealed.

Parallel Session 3:7 - Symposium

09:00 - 10:30 Thursday, 7th December, 2023
Room 144

7 Disrupting Coloniality in Global Higher Education: Perspectives from the Margins.

Research Domain

International contexts and perspectives (ICP)

Rationale

Disrupting Coloniality in Global Higher Education: Perspectives from the Margins

The symposium aims to critically examine and challenge the pervasive colonial structures within higher education systems. By bringing together scholars working on decolonial theories and critical approaches to global higher education, this symposium seeks to foster dialogue and generate transformative ideas that can reshape the landscape of higher education to promote global social justice.

Historically, higher education has been rooted in colonial ideologies, perpetuating unequal power dynamics and marginalising diverse voices. Recognising the urgency of dismantling these structures, the symposium provides a space to think critically about global higher education from the margins. A key question to be explored is: which/whose knowledges are most valued and validated in the context of higher education, and which/whose are denigrated, invisibilised and erased?

The four papers address different aspects of higher education and intersect in their critique of dominant narratives and frameworks. The first paper highlights the absence of Black-centred research and the limited use of Black Studies, arguing that this perpetuates the marginalisation of Black people and their experiences in understanding global higher education, with a focus on Sino-African relations. The second paper explores the decolonisation of the curriculum in postcolonial India, particularly the English Literature curriculum. It analyses how internal divisions based on ethnicity, caste, class, religion and gender influence the inclusion/exclusion of voices in the 'decolonised' curriculum. It raises concerns about decolonisation in India's diverse and hierarchical postcolonial context. The third paper shifts the focus to Latin America, examining the power dynamics in defining and enacting internationalisation in higher education. It reflects on how Latin American institutions often adhere to colonial and hegemonic narratives, but also highlights emerging critical voices that challenge these dominant narratives. The fourth paper takes a conceptual approach, challenging the nation-state ontology that shapes global higher education policy and practice. It suggests exploring alternative frameworks, such as inter-being and the promotion of planetary consciousness, which broaden the scope beyond trans/national issues in higher education.

Collectively, these papers shed light on the limitations and power dynamics within global higher education and advocate for more inclusive and critical approaches that centre marginalised perspectives, challenge dominant narratives and promote alternative frameworks for understanding and transforming higher education systems to promote social justice.

Chair

Carolina Guzmán-Valenzuela

Universidad de Tarapaca, Arica, Chile

Riyad Shahjahan

Michigan State UNiversity, Michigan, USA

Discussants

Tristan McCowan

UCL-IOE, London, United Kingdom

41 Challenging Dominant Paradigms: Towards a Decolonised Approach to Internationalisation in Latin America

Carolina Guzmán-Valenzuela

Universidad de Tarapaca, Arica, Chile

Research Domains

International contexts and perspectives (ICP)

Abstract

This paper explores the complexities of internationalisation in Latin American higher education, focusing on the power dynamics that shape this phenomenon. While contemporary universities are under increasing pressure to embrace internationalisation for global competitiveness, dominant narratives often reflect Western perspectives and ignore the specificities of postcolonial contexts. This essay explores the evolving concept of internationalisation, highlighting the need for a more inclusive and decolonised approach that takes into account shifting global dynamics and lingering colonial legacies. Critical voices from Latin America emerge, critically examining internationalisation as a new form of colonialism and advocating for the recognition and inclusion of indigenous knowledge and practices. However, these critical perspectives struggle to gain traction and influence policy. The conclusion highlights the challenges faced by Latin American institutions in managing internationalisation and calls for grassroots approaches that empower those directly affected by the process.

125 Can we transcend the nation-state ontology in global higher education?

Riyad Shahjahan

Michigan State University, East Lansing, USA

Research Domains

International contexts and perspectives (ICP)

Abstract

This conceptual essay provides a metaphysical critique of the inherent logic of "internationalization" by unpacking the nation-state ontology pervading global higher education (HE) policy and practices. "Internationalization" signifies the "in-between" of multiple nation-states and continues to perpetuate an anthropocentric 'worldsense' marked by national containers. It begins with a genealogy of the word "international," its inherent assumptions, and why it's important to interrogate the role of "nation-state" worldsense in the global HE field. It next unpacks the ways in which the nation-state as a category (and an entity) comes to being and informs globally facing HE policies ("internationalization" policies) and practices (i.e. engaging with "international" students). The paper argues that the nation-state worldview provides the onto-epistemic grammar in global HE to demarcate boundaries between what is internal and external to an entity, to help make sense of particular objects (e.g. groups, institutions, entitles) and processes, and impacts *ways of being*.

305 "The Challenges of Curriculum Decolonization within the Postcolonial Indian Context: a case study" under the symposium,

"Disrupting Coloniality in Global Higher Education: Perspectives from the Borders"

Mousumi Mukherjee

O.P. Jindal Global University, Sonipat, India. University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia

Research Domains

International contexts and perspectives (ICP)

Abstract

Even in the postcolonial contexts of the Global South, Universities as sites of knowledge production and dissemination had reinforced only colonial knowledge systems which involved a systemic exclusion of alternative epistemologies of categories like Indigenous people, gender, race, and sexuality. This is probably because decolonization has not been an easy process. This paper highlights the challenges of curriculum decolonization within the postcolonial Indian context with the English literature curriculum as a case. Citing the controversial removal of renowned Bengali author and activist, Mahasweta Devi and two Dalit authors' texts from the undergraduate English syllabus at Delhi University, this paper discusses how the internal ethnic, caste, class, religious, and gender-based divisions determine the voices that get incorporated within the "decolonized" curriculum versus the voices, that get excluded within the postcolonial Indian society. Thereby, this paper problematizes the act of curriculum decolonization within the internally diverse and hierarchical postcolonial context of India.

Parallel Session 3:8

09:00 - 10:30 Thursday, 7th December, 2023
Room 122
Chair Ibrar Bhatt

392 Challenges and Positive Practices for Supervisors of Part-Time and Distance Learning Doctoral Candidates

Gina Wisker

University of Bath, Bath, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Postgraduate scholarship and practice (PGSP)

Abstract

The wellbeing and success of doctoral students is the subject of many current, recent and historical research projects, however, not all doctoral students can equally benefit from some strategies known to support their full-time, on site peers. For supervisors working with remote and part-time doctoral students there are many challenges in supervising the doctoral learning journey, encouraging intellectual engagement, working successfully with remote research and writing while being mindful of and supporting doctoral students and their wellbeing. Ongoing research

and experience shared here from UK and international projects conducted (2022, 2020, 2021) and supervision experience, brings research on support for the doctoral journey , the wellbeing of doctoral students, together with work on the supervision of those studying remotely and /or part-time, either for personal development or professional development reasons, or both to identify strategies for positive supervisory practices to support doctoral student success and wellbeing.

164 Navigating the Role of Replacement Lead Supervisor: An Autoethnographic perspective

Nicola Palmer[1,2], Richard Tresidder[2]

[1]University of York, York, United Kingdom. [2]Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

In this paper we build on Wisker and Robinson's (2012) work on supervisors and doctoral 'orphans' to reflect on our autoethnographic experiences of what has been referred to as 'picking up the pieces'. We believe it is especially timely to re-explore losses and gains involved in changes in supervisory arrangements against a backdrop of reports of academics leaving the profession (voluntarily or through compulsory redundancy schemes), associated supervisory capacity challenges, and disputes over academic pay, work-loading and the significance of particular academic activities. By adopting an autoethnographic approach, we acknowledge and value the relationships that research supervisors have with others and look beyond discourses that underplay our positionality as academics, administrators, leaders and managers, and colleagues. A reflexive approach enables us to explicate the practice of 'taking on' additional supervisees mid-registration or 'stepping in' to ameliorate risks of non-completion that threaten doctoral candidate success (and institutional metrics and reputation).

13 Doctoral rhythms within an EdD: the case of group supervision

Tony Armstrong, Juia Everitt

BCU, Birmingham, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Postgraduate scholarship and practice (PGSP)

Abstract

This paper explores the application of group supervision as a pedagogical strategy during the module stage of a Professional Doctorate in Education (EdD) at a teaching intensive university. The study uses an elicitation approach to explore the marks, traces, and murmurs of group supervision on the EdD, through six open-ended provocations with ten candidates who were advanced practitioners including several who were university staff. Rhythmanalysis is applied to explore the candidates' experiences of group supervision at the early stages of their research careers. The findings highlight how group supervision is important for containing anxiety, developing identities, grappling with theories and methodologies, peer learning and highlighting the benefit of cohortness. Group supervision could also be described as a meta-supervision approach as the supervisor needs to articulate and justify the learning experience as it develops for the advanced practitioners involved.

Parallel Session 4:1

11:00 - 12:30 Thursday, 7th December, 2023
Room 144
Chair Camille Kandiko-Howson

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367 Exploring 'readiness': Women academics and the demonstrative mangle of promotions practices in the performative university

Carol A. Taylor[1], Sally Hewlett[1], Christina Hughes[2]

[1]University of Bath, Bath, United Kingdom. [2]women-space.co.uk, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

Promotions practices work as gatekeepers for women academics, filtering who gets through, who is deemed to meet the grade, who is successful. This presentation zones in on the work that promotions criteria and promotions practices do in regulating academic women's promotion. Based on insights from a UKRI/University of Bath funded project entitled WomenCAN: Breaking Promotion Barriers, Changing University Cultures, the paper discusses women academics' often bruising experiences of promotion, and that institutionally gendered micro-practices continue to ensure that 'merit sticks to men' (Woodhams et al., 2022). Insights from the project – a survey with Heads of Department, narrative interviews with senior women academics, and a bespoke coaching course – challenge the view that promotions criteria are neutral, objective descriptors of standard tasks and levels which can/are 'applied equally' to individual cases across all contexts. In fact, promotions practices are shaped by gendered perceptions of career paths, readiness and deservingness.

31 Maternity leave experiences and implications in the neoliberal academy

Karen Jones

University of Reading, Reading, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

This paper is based on a study that involved secondary analysis of a mixed method online survey dataset with a sample of 450 women academics (82% UK and 18% international). The study explored the women's experiences of maternity leave in academia and their perceptions of the implications of maternity leave for their career. Finding that 69% of the sample continued to undertake core academic duties while on maternity leave, their motives for doing so were examined through thematic analysis of qualitative data. Four orientations adopted by the women were identified.

Each orientation characterises unique aspects of neoliberal subjectivity. Foucauldian governmentality is used as an analytical tool to examine hidden mechanisms that undermine equality, diversity and inclusion policies and women's rights by effectively driving women to relinquish their maternity rights by undertaking academic work during maternity leave. Implications for research, policy and practice are discussed.

Parallel Session 4:2

11:00 - 12:30 Thursday, 7th December, 2023
Room 141
Chair Labake Fakunle

60 The Knowledge, Action and Identity Project: Empirically modelling 'Professionalism' in Undergraduate Students

Didi M.E. Griffioen

Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences; Research Dept. Higher Education, Research & Innovation, Amsterdam, Netherlands

Research Domains

Technical, Professional and Vocational Higher Education (TPV)

Abstract

Students in higher professional education are prepared for high level professional practice. To be able to fulfil their future roles, their educational programs aid them in developing their professionalism. This paper presents the conceptual and empirical search for a measurement model on professionalism. Professionalism is a multifaceted construct which is at best vaguely described in previous research. It is here conceptualized through the conceptual model by Griffioen (2019) as a personal integration of professional identity, professional knowledge and professional action that transforms over time through accommodation and assimilation practices. These practices imply the development of the (future) professional. Additionally, initial findings of the development of professionalism in students during their 4 year undergraduate degree are discussed.

337 Working While Studying: an exploration of the drivers leading university students to seek employment over the course of their degree

Fabio Arico, Laura Harvey, Ritchie Woodard

University of East Anglia, Norwich, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Student Access and Experience (SAE)

Abstract

We consider the increasing trend in the number of university students seeking part-time employment whilst studying in the UK. Building on a case-study situated at a mid-sized British university, we survey the undergraduate population to investigate the relative importance of three drivers for working while studying: (i) necessities, (ii) wants, and (iii) for future employment. Questionnaire responses are linked to university records, providing demographic information, as well as attainment and engagement indicators, to inform the characterisation of typologies. A third dataset address affective dimensions, such as physical/mental wellbeing, to be correlated with university outcomes. We also conduct follow-up interviews to enrich quantitative findings. Grounding on such detailed instruments, our results enable us to advance recommendations for intervention at institutional level, as well as pathways for further exploration at education policy level.

Parallel Session 4:3 - Symposium

11:00 - 12:30 Thursday, 7th December, 2023
Room 145

3 Reimagining Transitions into, through and beyond Higher Education: Empirical and theoretical considerations

Research Domain

Student Access and Experience (SAE)

Rationale

The Symposium's goal is threefold; first, to document how transitions to Higher Education (HE) are experienced and narrated by students from under-represented groups; second, to reframe transitions with the valuable aid of Bourdieu's and Archer's theoretical tools; thirdly; to reimagine the role of University and its moral and civic duties, beyond the neoliberal orthodoxy, as enabling space for forging solidarities across raced, social classed, gendered and citizenship divides.

Both Bourdieu and Archer provide theoretical tools that unpack the interplay between structure and agency. Archer's work places greater weight on individual agency (as a reflexive practice) than Bourdieu's account of individuals whose agency is framed by their status and positioning within fields. The symposium offers an opportunity to discuss the unique struggles and complex relationships these under-represented students experience as they navigate the higher education field.

The Symposium will share findings and implications of four empirical studies that mapped the phenomenon of transitions to HE. The four papers develop different but related accounts of what transitions might mean in the context of HE. Hordósy's work explores the personal life-changing experiences of students as they acclimatise and adapt throughout their university careers to produce a graduate identity they are comfortable to occupy. By contrast Myers's paper focuses on universities in which ethnic minority students find their prior experiences of racism are reconstituted by institutional practice that shapes their identities to accept inequalities. Katartzi's work with refugees explores how new unprecedented migratory flows create challenges for new groups of students seeking to access and participate in HE. Finally, Madriaga will discuss the potential for an inclusive, anti-racist university and how white widening access practitioners have grasped this 'potential'.

In light of the studies' findings, and building upon the Bourdieusian/Archerian theorisation, transitions are conceptualised as mediated by two factors; first, the differential access to manifold resources possessed and mobilised by social agents and secondly, transitions are further compounded by epistemic injustices and the interplay of the latter with exclusionary pedagogical regimes that marginalise under-represented students' diverse knowledges.

The Symposium contributors will be arguing for the need of a reimagining at systemic and organisational levels in HE. Firstly, by widening access, namely through enabling the participation by students who face intersecting oppressions. Secondly, by putting in place decolonised curricula and inclusive pedagogies that will meaningfully empower multiple disadvantaged students to successfully complete their studies.

Chair

Rita Hordosy

University of Nottingham, Nottingham, United Kingdom

Discussants

Kalwant Bhopal

University of Birmingham, Birmingham, United Kingdom

232 Enabling transformative university transitions: becoming a student and a graduate

Rita Hordosy

University of Nottingham, Nottingham, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Student Access and Experience (SAE)

Abstract

Drawing on a longitudinal research project that followed the undergraduate entrants of 2013 into, and through their university time, this paper provides a novel conceptualisation of transformative transitions via looking at the four dimensions of non-linearity, multiplicity, diversity and structure. The paper builds on Archer's relational realist approach and work on reflexivity to show how students select and merge a diverse set of personal concerns to arrive at a modus vivendi. This four-year tracking study collected interview data from a diverse group of 40 students on a yearly basis at an English northern red brick university. The paper explores the changing focus of student experiences, from the social aspects of acclimatisation, to learning to be academic, and finally, becoming a graduate. The results presented here point to the structural enablements and constraints that higher education institutions and policymakers should mitigate in responding to the inequalities of access and experience.

14 The scyborg work towards an anti-racist English university

Manny Madriaga

University of Nottingham, Nottingham, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Student Access and Experience (SAE)

Abstract

The journey of achieving race equity in English higher education appears to be an arduous task given the evidence of racial inequalities whether for staff and students. This gives cause for pessimism for people of colour working and studying in higher education, which highlights universities as racialised organisations (Ray 2019). It is also an indicator of how hope for anti-racist institutional change is racially structured, reflecting on Bourdieu's idea of 'subjective hopes and objective chances'. The paper presentation examines how race is accounted for in higher education widening access policy and practice through interviews with sixteen university outreach practitioners in the English context. With race at the centre of study, the findings suggest that practitioners invest in an idea of people from marginalised backgrounds transitioning into an inclusive university, where hope resides, structured by a racially organised academy.

271 Routes through higher education: Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) students and the development of a 'specialisation of consciousness' in UK universities

Martin Myers

University of Nottingham, Nottingham, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Student Access and Experience (SAE)

Abstract

UK higher education policy designed to improve social mobility has been a staple of successive New Labour, Coalition and Conservative governments. Such policy is framed within neoliberal narratives conflating increased marketisation and 'choice' with the potential for improving problems of diversity and equity. However, structural inequalities of class and ethnicity affecting university admissions and transitions into the labour market persist. Using Bourdieu, this paper explores the experiences of final year, BME undergraduates. It argues ethnic minority students preparing to enter the labour market display a 'specialisation of consciousness': a set of practices framed by prior background and experience, choice of university, institutional support and expectations of continuing familial support. This represents an adaptation of individual consciousness to a 'white' institutional and societal framework with corresponding psychic harms. Despite expressing optimism for the future, many students acknowledged their opportunities were shaped by a range of inequalities including those of universities.

313 Refugee transitions to English Higher Education (HE): Towards an intersectional social justice framework (PART OF THE SYMPOSIUM Reimagining Transitions in and out of Higher Education: Empirical and theoretical considerations)

Eugenia Katartzi

University of Nottingham, Nottingham, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Student Access and Experience (SAE)

Abstract

In the global context of unprecedented migratory flows, the refugee education is gaining increased research and policy attention. The paper sheds light on the under-researched topic of refugees' access to HE. It is based on a wider ongoing project that comparatively examines HE refugee governance in England and Germany, focussing on

student refugee voices, on HE institutional structures and cultures of support (or lack thereof) and on discourses and management of diversity. The methodology includes in-depth interviews with key institutional actors and refugee students, along with Qualitative Content Analysis of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion documents, seeking to unearth the 'more tacit, culture and system-level assumptions' that may lead to unintended exclusions (Hartley et al 2023; Stevenson and Baker, 2018). Drawing upon the lived experiences of refugee students as they transition to two English HEIs, the paper's goal is to identify the barriers and enablers to their access and participation.

Parallel Session 4:4

11:00 - 12:30 Thursday, 7th December, 2023
Conference Room 1c
Chair Gina Wisker

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134 UK universities' responsiveness to local migrants and ethnic minorities? Exploring the hidden curriculum of evasion and race unconsciousness in the Northern Irish academy

Dina Zoe Belluigi

Queen's University Belfast, Belfast, United Kingdom. Nelson Mandela University, Gqeberha, South Africa

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

Significant changes to the local demographics of Northern Ireland have been under-studied within that contexts' research-intensive universities. This paper explores how the academics who have undertaken such marginalised research have experienced negotiating the socio-cultural influences, enablements and constraints of that local research ecology. It is informed by a mixed method study of published research outputs and interviews with academic authors, members of a non-academic partner organisation and research developers. A hidden curriculum of evasion of controversial local topics, groups and dynamics emerged; not unlike insider-research phenomena observed during the height of the contexts' conflict period. Questions are raised about the conditions of race unconsciousness and coloniality shaping academic citizenry within in that context.

216 A conceptual exploration of universities as migration intermediaries

Thomas Brotherhood

Rikkyo University, Tokyo, Japan. Hiroshima University, Hiroshima, Japan

Research Domains

International contexts and perspectives (ICP)

Abstract

Migration intermediaries are individuals, groups, and institutions that connect international migrants with their destination country. Research on intermediaries typically focuses on recruitment agencies, migration brokers, network and community groups, employers, and travel agents, among others. Together, migration intermediaries are a powerful force in guiding and sustaining international migration flows. Recently, scholars have begun to examine universities as intermediaries. Universities host a growing and diversifying international community, and frequently act as the legal sponsor for the visas of students, faculty and dependents from overseas. In some contexts, universities are drivers of migration flows, powerful attractors of migrant communities. Simultaneously, universities may be deputised by the state and, as a consequence, become institutions of migration control. This paper expands discussion of universities' intermediary roles in international migration by situating universities within a broader web of intermediaries, and interrogating their contradictory contributions to enabling and controlling migrant flows.

349 Perspectives from the South: a transgressive schema for knowledge-making in Higher Education

Corinne Knowles[1], Linda Mensah[2]

[1]Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa. [2]Strathclyde, Glasgow, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

The schema for knowledge-making presented here is a synthesis of collaborations culminating in two concurrent events that took place during the COVID-19 pandemic. One was an online course on African Feminist research Methodology offered to Scottish and African PhD students for a week in 2021; the other was an online research project undertaken with South African students during 2020/2021. Both events grappled with the question of what counts as legitimate, inclusive, relevant knowledge, and how can we work with each other over ontological, geographical, and epistemological differences to find common purpose? Framing, activating, seeing, creating, and imagining, are the aspects and actions of the schema, which have emerged from these two events as a template for future pedagogic and research processes. Using African and Black feminist theory and principles, we explored meaningful knowledge-making together and practised radical care at a time of isolation and anxiety brought on by the pandemic.

Parallel Session 4:5

11:00 - 12:30 Thursday, 7th December, 2023
Room 122
Chair Martin Gough

324 Academics of working-class heritage talking: a participatory storytelling project with academics working in UK-based elite institutions

Charlie Davis

University of Nottingham, Nottingham, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

This paper discusses the outcomes of an SRHE-funded participatory storytelling study with eight UK-based academics of working-class heritage (AWCH). Using story circle approaches, lived experiences became sites of critique and analysis to reflect on what it means to become an AWCH. Working with narrative contributions form the story circles, the participants created three composite stories representing aspects of their collective transitions into and through academia. These stories were transformed into interactive comics alongside an illustrator/coder. Key findings from the study highlight the generative possibilities of composite storytelling approaches and comic-research to create reflexive opportunities to (re)imagine what it means to become an AWCH. However, the study demonstrated the need for participants, and the researcher, to be ethically vigilant to ensure the inquiry space does not become an oppressive space where participants feel silenced, owing to some stories being more valued as authentic representations of working-class experience than others.

101 'I work 9 to 5, Monday to Friday, and I often think those kind of academics are invisible': Communicating ideal academic identity and complicity with cultures of overwork in English higher education

Jessica Wren Butler

Imperial College London, London, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

Academics' working conditions are a hot topic in UK higher education, where ongoing industrial action foregrounds not just pay and pensions but broader sectoral norms, notably cultures of overwork (Bergfeld, 2018; Universities and Colleges Union, 2023). This presentation answers Sang et al's (2015) call to further scrutinise the persistence of academic overwork – drawing on data from semi-structured interviews with academic staff I argue that excessive working is not just a norm of practice but a method of externally communicating ideal academic identity by making it visible. Furthermore, overwork is not straightforwardly extractive or exploitative in a context where achievements are highly individualised. I conclude that academics are complicit in perpetuating cultures of overwork, and also that despite fantasies of a 'golden age' (Tight, 2010) and a tendency to blame 'neoliberalism' for a perceived contemporary decline in academic experience there is little to indicate that such cultures are recent inventions.

Parallel Session 4:6

11:00 - 12:30 Thursday, 7th December, 2023
Conference Room 1b
Chair Rob Cuthbert

352 Creating a community through Discord: The use of innovative technology in distance education

Mel Green

The Open University, Milton Keynes, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Student Access and Experience (SAE)

Abstract

This study examined the role of Discord in fostering community and enhancing the learning experience in a distance-learning tutor group, employing student focus groups, a lecturer interview, and reflexive researcher journaling. Students preferred Discord's informality over traditional forums on the university's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), resulting in greater engagement, improved module study, and increased motivation. Discord also facilitated stronger communication as well as more meaningful and realistic relationships between students and associate lecturers, aiding in achieving study goals. However, drawbacks were identified, such as the additional workload for lecturers. The findings suggest Discord's potential in promoting community and enriching distance learning, warranting further exploration for designing effective online education.

110 The 'RED': A Liminal Space for New Chinese Academics

Alex (Yanglu) Wang

Queen's University Belfast, Belfast, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Postgraduate scholarship and practice (PGSP)

Abstract

The paper explores how 'RED', a social media platform in China, serves as a liminal space for Chinese students undertaking doctoral degrees in the UK. As a liminal space, RED is used to search for and disseminate information, provide support, and foster and maintain relationships in a way that is far removed from campus-based sites and formal processes of doctoral study. The early phase data reported consists of 'dialogic-reflective' interviews with RED users alongside logs of their interactions and posts. This study explores how RED serves as a resource for Chinese international students, helping them navigate their academic migration and build a sense of community. The study underscores the significance of social media platforms in supporting the needs of international students and highlights the importance of developing more tailored support structures for such student groups whose motivations, goals and preferred strategies are sometimes not fully appreciated by their institutions.

312 An agency approach to path creation by academics in technology research - lessons from semiconductor research in India.

Debananda Misra[1,2,3], Kalyani Tidke[1]

[1]Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, New Delhi, India. [2]University College London, London, United Kingdom. [3]CIRCLE, Lund University, Lund, Sweden

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

We examine the role of agency in how academics explore and create paths in emerging fields of technology research. Relying on structuration theory, we examine the mechanism and conditions that enable academics to explore new areas of research and develop those areas. Further, we analyze the effects of exploration and path creation on the productivity and identity of academics. Empirically, our study is situated in the context of semiconductor research carried out by academics in India. We employ a mixed methods approach that includes a bibliometric analysis of semiconductor research from 2007-2022 and semi-structured interviews with ten academics engaged in semiconductor research in various universities in India.

Parallel Session 4:7 -Symposim

11:00 - 12:30 Thursday, 7th December, 2023
Room 139

16 Accessing difficult-to-reach voices using diary method in higher education research

Research Domain

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Rationale

Diary method is still relatively under-explored in higher education (HE) research, though recent years have seen a consolidation of this approach (Cao & Henderson, 2021). Solicited diary method, where participants complete a diary designed by the researcher for the purposes of a specific study (Bartlett & Milligan, 2020), enables researchers to enter the everyday lives, working and learning experiences of participants in a range of HE settings. Diaries enable researchers to access contexts that are otherwise inaccessible and facilitate research on sensitive topics (Sabharwal et al., 2021). In HE research, diaries have been used to explore, for example, students' identity and learning development (Ewijk, Fabriz, and Buttner 2015), or for employment management experiences (Cao, 2021). Within HE institutions, while these are increasingly recognising the importance of inclusivity and diversity, certain voices within these contexts may remain unheard or marginalised. Exploring these nuances and challenges is essential for fostering an inclusive HE environment and amplifying underrepresented perspectives. However, accessing difficult-to-reach voices in higher education research poses specific nuances and challenges, which are addressed in this symposium.

Expanding the use of the diary method to capture what we are terming 'difficult-to-reach voices' is framed by four key understandings of 'difficult-to-reach', each of which poses different methodological challenges, which are explored in this symposium. Firstly, individuals may be difficult to reach because they are 'busy', which calls for particular methodological strategies, due to the time and responsibility constraints that normally characterise those individuals. Understanding how the diary method effectively captures their voices is crucial. Secondly, particular contexts or situations mean that participants are difficult to reach, such as displacement. Conducting research on displaced HE professionals or students raises complex ethical considerations, as this group remains underexplored and marginalised within academic discourse, and their sensitive experiences may be difficult to articulate through conventional qualitative research methods. Lastly, the topic around the engagement of international students and HE professionals with varying conditions around them, particularly in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic, has been extensively researched via traditional qualitative methods, capturing momentary snapshots of their dynamic experiences. It is time to consider diary method as a reflective, creative and therapeutic research tool that is particularly suited to, and could make sense of, HE environments that are in constant change and flux. There is a

need for a longitudinal exploration of their self-reflection over the dynamic nature of their own experiences via diary as a flexible method.

Chair

Ahmad Akkad

University of Oxford, Oxford, United Kingdom

299 Using diary method to access the voices of 'busy' academics: methodological insights from three diary studies

Emily Henderson[1,2], Ahmad Akkad[3,1]

[1]University of Warwick, Coventry, United Kingdom. [2]National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi, India. [3]University of Oxford, Oxford, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

Diary method is infrequently used in research studies where academics are participants, although the method has been used to research various other 'busy' professionals such as nurses and NGO workers. This paper discusses methodological considerations related to researching with 'busy' academics, illustrated with three research studies of different groups of academics: academics with caring responsibilities, displaced academics and doctoral supervisors. The paper introduces the three projects, and sets out three assumptions of 'busy' professionals as derived from a literature review of diary studies of workplaces: that academics are too busy to complete a diary, that academics are slippery and likely to drop out, and that academics may struggle to take in information. The three assumptions are evaluated in relation to diary design and execution in the three studies.

300 Capturing the Difficult-to-Reach Voices of Displaced Academics: Methodological Benefits of Solicited Diary as a 'Participant-Centred' Method

Ahmad Akkad

University of Oxford, Oxford, United Kingdom. University of Warwick, Coventry, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

Displaced academics (DAs) face unique challenges and barriers that render their voices difficult to reach through traditional research methods. Drawing on a study on the lived experiences of 20 displaced Syrian academics (DSAs) and their potential role in reconstruction in conflict-affected countries, this paper explores the significance of solicited diary method in understanding the multifaceted dimensions of displacement, amplifying the voices of DAs, and advancing knowledge on reconstruction from the perspectives of DAs, as a marginalised and under-explored group.

The paper underscores the usefulness of solicited diary method in i) capturing longitudinal data, ii) exploring dynamic and shifting experiences as a mobile method, iii) illuminating silent narratives, and iv) functioning as an epistemic and ethical tool. The paper concludes that researchers can overcome access obstacles and gain valuable insights into the lived experiences and perspectives of DAs via solicited diary, while keeping participants at the heart of concern.

301 Sharing experiences in flux: Using audio diaries to access international scholars' lived experiences during the pandemic

Dangeni Dangeni[1], Dayana Balgabekova[2], Natthaphon Tripornchaisak[2], Emily-Marie Pacheco[2], Rui He[3], Dely Elliot[2]

[1]Newcastle University, Newcastle, United Kingdom. [2]University of Glasgow, Glasgow, United Kingdom. [3]University of Manchester, Manchester, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

The unforeseen arrival of the COVID-19 virus has transformed the way people around the world live and work since 2020. In the higher educational settings, it radically shifted how scholars research, teach, learn and socialise. The transition online was deemed the best alternative enabling pursuit of various modes of engagement. Equally, it has served to foster and strengthen new routines, particularly among international scholars who were forced to stay in host countries during the lockdown. This study sought an in-depth understanding of international scholars' nuanced experiences in flux, e.g., successes, challenges and continuous endeavour to 'survive' during the initial phase of lockdown. Using an autoethnographic approach comprising six-week audio diaries and written reflections, this paper aims to discuss the suitability and effectiveness of the diary method to understand international scholars' lived experiences and hearing the less known impact of the pandemic on them within and beyond academia.

304 Audio diary: Embracing the complexity of student's experience through 'hearing' their voices

- Dangeni

Newcastle University, Newcastle, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

The burgeoning internationalisation of higher education and the growing number of international students have become visible components and characteristics in research and practice, at the same time, posing certain methodological challenges when approaching, understanding and ultimately supporting international students. Yet, most of the existing literature focuses on using 'traditional' research methods and tends to take a narrow view of their experiences, mostly identifying challenges and barriers, it is necessary and timely to think critically and creatively about the suitable methodological approaches to research and understand international students. This paper reflects on employing the audio diary method to explore international students' complex and dynamic experiences in UK master's programmes. Through detailing the methodological and practical issues, this paper intends to highlight this researcher/researched-friendly method to better inform and enhance future research practices given its flexibility, operability and 'restrained freedom' to generate rich descriptions with international students in HE settings.

Parallel Session 4:8

11:00 - 12:30 Thursday, 7th December, 2023
Conference Room 1a
Chair Pauline Kneale

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25 Walk, talk, and connect: Exploring the potential of informal walking groups for enhancing learning communities

Andrea Cameron, Jennifer Padaruth, Fiona Stirling

Abertay University, Dundee, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Student Access and Experience (SAE)

Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic disrupted students' ability to connect with each other, impacted personal wellbeing and as a consequence, learning communities evolved. In the wake of the pandemic universities have looked for opportunities to facilitate social connectedness among student cohorts. This qualitative study investigated choice to participate in, and experiences of, a walking-based intervention for part-time mature postgraduate students at a time when classroom activities remained restricted by Covid-19 mitigation measures. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was used to explore the interview data of the n= 8 subjects. Analysis is still in progress, but concepts related to movement, flow, being in nature, being with others, and being attuned to the surroundings are evident in the transcripts. It is hoped that the findings will be of interest to those who want to explore nature- or activity-based pedagogies to foster and/or enhance higher education learning communities.

117 Exploring the Homeification of Post-Pandemic Learning: Pedagogic Relations, Student Experiences and Questions of Equity

Emily Danvers[1], Abigail Wells[2]

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Research Domains

Learning, teaching and assessment (LTA)

Abstract

Hybridity, flexibility, and digitisation remain features of the post-pandemic university. This decoupling of learning from physical campuses enables students to spend more time studying outside the university – with homes emerging an important pedagogic 'space'. Yet, 'home' is not static or neutral backdrop but shapes the possibilities of learning and learners. Drawing on research in progress, including qualitative interviews with 20 undergraduate students from a UK university and photos from a creative workshop involving university decision-makers, this paper interrogates what 'home' represents, produces, and excludes. It first explores how students engage with learning at home and the

resources, relations, materials and pedagogies required. Secondly, it asks who thrives when learning is 'homeified' and how the complex constellation of students' identities and equity characteristics shape these possibilities. Finally, it considers the relations between learners and their 'homes' and imagines the current and future ways home/campus spaces might coexist and interact.

199 Students' perceptions and experiences of online and hybrid education during and after the pandemic: Lessons for HE Pedagogy and Policy

Venetia Evergeti[1], Brenda Bastos Campos[2]

[1]University of Surrey, Guildford, United Kingdom. [2]UCL, London, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Learning, teaching and assessment (LTA)

Abstract

As a response to the pandemic, Universities worldwide had to adopt online methods of teaching to fulfil specific safety criteria. This included initially an exclusively online provision and later, a hybrid or blended style of teaching. There is now a plethora of relevant studies that have shown how this abrupt change not only impacted scholars, and their way of teaching, but also students' learning experiences and their ability to grasp the content that was delivered online (Ali, 2020; Ferris-Mucci et al 2021).

Extending current research on this topic (Dommett et al, 2019; Fatoni et al, 2020; Chan et ak, 2023) this paper investigates student perceptions and experiences of hybrid and online learning . Based on data collected through a student-staff partnership project, this study focuses on the students' perspectives and provides a critical sociological appraisal of some aspects of online education whilst exploring lessons learnt for future HE policy and practice.

Parallel Session 5:1

13:30 - 15:00 Thursday, 7th December, 2023
Room 139
Chair Jill Dickinson

23 Spaces to write: temporal, physical, digital. What can we learn from the experiences of female academics attending writing groups and retreats during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic?

Kate Carruthers Thomas

Birmingham City University, Birmingham, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

This paper reports on ongoing research into the experiences of female academics participating in academic writing groups and retreats, online and in-person, between 2020 and 2023. It considers how these interventions addressed challenges participants faced in writing for publication during the pandemic. Findings to date show that writing groups and retreats, whether online or in-person, create not only temporal, physical and digital spaces for academic writing, but importantly intellectual and professional space to expand and strengthen academic identities. The creation of spaces to write continues to matter 'post-pandemic'. Not only are participants trying to catch up on writing goals disrupted by COVID-19, but the pressure to publish ('or perish') continues in the face of academic workloads dominated by teaching, student pastoral care and administration. The paper argues that research findings demonstrate both need and potential for post-pandemic institutional policy to create space, in the broadest sense, for academic writing.

143 Ecologies of Research Writing in Chinese Universities

Xiajing Chen, Ibrar Bhatt

Queen's University Belfast, Belfast, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

This research investigates the ecologies of research writing in Chinese universities through a study of writing practices of early-career scholars. Focusing on humanities and social sciences, we study the effects of state and institutional productivity policies, including performance assessment and reward systems, which cause a specific set of writing-related tensions and uncertainties for new Chinese academics. Data were collected through interviews with twenty-four academics and extensive multimodal diary entries from four participants who detailed reflections upon their research writing as it was being undertaken. Findings underscore unique practices regarding how academics in China structure their writing environments and schedules, how they disrupt and renegotiate established spatial, temporal, professional, personal, and emotional boundaries in a managerialism-controlled setting. We argue that these practices constitute emergent, shifting and precarious assemblages which have implications for understanding academic work, in China and beyond.

100 The Complex Impact of Space on Academic Identity and Sense of Community

Lauren Clark

University College London, London, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

Even before the pandemic, space within universities was changing, evolving to respond to different ways of teaching, learning, and working within the university sector. Post-pandemic, this change is more visible as many staff and students have become more competent users of different forms of technology enabling academics and students to

work remotely more comfortably. Even though research is one of the primary functions of universities, when reconfiguring university spaces the students' learning experience is often placed at the forefront, neglecting the needs of academics. This paper acts as a discussion piece, exploring difficult questions about what it means to work in the university post-pandemic, and how this new way of working will impact the development of academic identities and communities, by drawing on my experience of significant, on-going renovations to the physical space of my university.

Parallel Session 5:2

13:30 - 15:00 Thursday, 7th December, 2023
Room 141
Chair Sandra Acker

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113 Third-space research: Influencing higher education policy?

Natalia Veles[1], Carroll Graham[2]

[1]James Cook University, Queensland, Australia. [2]University of Technology Sydney, Sydney, Australia

Research Domains

Higher Education policy (HEP)

Abstract

The first two decades of this century have witnessed unprecedented global societal changes. Likewise, the higher education sector has undergone colossal changes, socially, technologically, economically, environmentally and politically. Concurrently, Whitchurch observed that a third space has developed where staff and activities occupy a boundary zone between the traditional binary divide of academic and professional services. A recent systematic literature review (SLR) revealed that the third space has increased over this time; however, the industrial relations structures that govern official staff structures and institutional reporting to governments (conspicuously in Australia) remain based on a binary divide that has outlived its usefulness. This paper analyses potential changes in work practices and interactions in the context of this SLR and the current Australian Universities Accord (a comprehensive review of Australia's higher education system). Similarities with and implications for other higher education contexts are explored.

224 Interrogating the representation efficacy of low socioeconomic status as an equity category in Australian higher education

Matthew Bunn

University of Newcastle, Callaghan, Australia

Research Domains

Higher Education policy (HEP)

Abstract

Connected to an ongoing discursive analysis, this paper explores how the reification of the formal equity group of low socioeconomic status is connected to the persistence of higher educational inequity. It explores how the 'field of equity' has been established in Australia that requires researchers, practitioners and administrators to presuppose the representational efficacy of low-socioeconomic status for understanding inequity and stratification. The concept of low-ses becomes decoupled from its use as a quantitative measurement and is subsequently produced as a political discourse that hegemonically fixes the possible interpretations, relevant questions and salient characteristics as they pertain to the problem of equity. This displaces the possibility of alternative, pluralistic or antagonistic accounts of inequality and stratification. The paper provides a theoretical provocation on how the lack of interrogation of the representation efficacy of the equity group of 'low-ses' contributes to maintaining entrenched inequities in Australian higher education.

239 Looking back at the funding and development of higher education systems in France, UK, USA and Canada: prospects and challenges

Vincent Carpentier

IOE, UCL's Faculty of Education, University College London, London, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Higher Education policy (HEP)

Abstract

Key concerns are expressed regarding the capacity of the current level and structure of HE funding to drive a sustainable and fair system. This paper explores this question by examining the historical connections and tensions between the funding, student enrolment and staff recruitment of HE systems in France, the UK, the USA and Canada since the 1920s. The study shows that as a result of public underfunding, the four systems are all (differently) challenged by tensions between their meritocratic ideal, lacks in effective social mobility and differentials in resources between institutions. A countercyclical revival of public funding is necessary to reverse the process of public private/substitution and ensure that a reduction of inequalities within HE systems and a rebalancing of the rationales driving them in order to contribute to wider socio-economic transformations necessary in hard times.

Parallel Session 5:3 - Symposium

13:30 - 15:00 Thursday, 7th December, 2023
Conference Room 1b

4 Personal Approaches to Resilience and Community – supporting student success

Research Domain

Student Access and Experience (SAE)

Rationale

Having a positive transition experience to university is associated with better student outcomes including student wellbeing, performance, and overall retention (Hughes & Spanner, 2019). Widening access to university education while enriching and enabling can result in a student population with varied prior learning experiences and consequent

support systems, who may have divergent needs if facilitating them to navigate their higher education experience successfully (Thomas, 2020). Therefore, a standardised approach to managing their initial studies, particularly in a generation who may have had a pandemic-disrupted education, may not address individual requirements.

The PARC (Personal Approaches to Resilience and Community) QAA Scotland-sponsored collaborative cluster project focuses on developing activities that support successful transition into and through university. The application of 'diagnostic' tools has been an area of attention and builds on work that previously featured in the HEFCE/OfS Learning Gain initiative. Each of the project partners has adopted a different approach based on the specific needs of their cohorts (e.g. analysing generic study and wellbeing skills for first year entrants or remote learners, reviewing writing for English Academic Purposes skills for international students, preparing for professional practice Masters study). However, all of the tools are administered either pre-arrival or on arrival to the university and explore preparedness and expectations of a higher education university experience and the students' personal perceptions of their academic skills, numeracy, wellbeing, digital competence and approach to career planning (or subsets derived from this list). On completion of the 'diagnostic' the student, administering staff, and programme leaders (if desired) receive a unique report outlining areas of strength but also areas of development. The student is signposted to additional learning resources and support that is accessible within the host university or in the case of one of the partners, microcredit modules designed to enhance their academic and personal skills. Staff are also cognisant of cohort needs and can look to embed bespoke content within programme-specific resources.

This 'diagnostic' approach is designed to personalise the learner journey matched to student need, but in the process build resilience while also signposting the wider university support systems and consequently, embed students in their academic community. This symposium will draw on the work of three of the partners providing oversight of their adopted approach, its implementation, outcomes, and future directions.

Chair

Andrea Cameron

Abertay University, Dundee, United Kingdom

Discussants

Luke Millard

Abertay University, Dundee, United Kingdom

Holly Heshmati

Warwick University, Warwick, United Kingdom

Heather Fotheringham

University of the Highlands and Islands, Inverness, United Kingdom

Colin Milligan

Glasgow Caledonian University, Glasgow, United Kingdom

Maggie Gibson

Birmingham City University, Birmingham, United Kingdom

Melanie Jarman

University of Worcester, Worcester, United Kingdom

Jack Hogan

Abertay University, Dundee, United Kingdom

34 Building Academic and Social Success: Abertay Discovery Tool

Luke Millard[1], Jack Hogan[2], Andrea Cameron[2]

[1]Abertay University, Dundee, United Kingdom. [2]Abertay Uni, Dundee, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Student Access and Experience (SAE)

Abstract

In September 2020, Abertay University launched a suite of microcredentials aimed at preparing students academically and socially for success. All first-year students completed a credit bearing, core microcredential upon enrolment to the university. This microcredential was called ABE101 Being Successful at Abertay and had embedded within it a diagnostic test (Abertay Discovery Tool). The University had taken the strategic decision to implement this approach to supporting student transition and success as these new students were entering the University with an interrupted, pandemic influenced, education. ABE101 had the core purpose of setting student expectations, signalling successful student behaviours and informing microcredential choices as the institution sought to build successful academic and social foundations with our students. This session will report on outcomes and discuss possible developments to enhance student success.

384 Personal Approaches to Resilience and Community –Supporting Student Success on Postgraduate Professional Courses

Holly Heshmati

Centre for Teacher Education, University of Warwick, University of Warwick, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Student Access and Experience (SAE)

Abstract

This paper reports on a project aimed at developing a diagnostic tool to support student teachers academically and professionally. Relationships between teacher resilience and teacher retention have been well established; however, less is known about practical strategies which can strengthen teacher resilience. This project was conducted in two phases in which the first phase focused on designing a diagnostic instrument focused on strategies for building teacher resilience and phase two focused on engaging participants with the diagnostic tool and the relevant supporting resources offered to each participant based on their responses to the diagnostic questions. The findings reveal that more participants at the end of the project attributed their experience of resilience building to their engagement with the diagnostic tool and the supporting resources. This case study, therefore, highlights the crucial role of approaches to resilience and community, supporting PG students on professional courses.

388 Diagnostics to support student success: A case study

Heather Fotheringham

University of the Highlands and Islands, City Inverness, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Student Access and Experience (SAE)

Abstract

This case study describes an intervention at the University of the Highlands and Islands to support student retention and success at a widening access institution.

A diagnostic tool was used to gauge student ability and confidence in a range of areas such as maths, wellbeing and digital literacy.

The case study describes the local an institutional impact of this intervention, and the further developments that have arisen as a result.

Parallel Session 5:4

13:30 - 15:00 Thursday, 7th December, 2023
Conference Room 1a
Chair Pauline Kneale

46 Connecting conceptual and practical dimensions of employability

Omolabake Fakunle[1], Helen Higson[2]

[1]University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, United Kingdom. [2]Aston University, Birmingham

Research Domains

Employability, enterprise and graduate careers (EE)

Abstract

This paper draws on existing literature and research to contribute towards addressing a key challenge and long-time debate regarding the relationship between higher education and employability. This paper expounds a tri-dimensional conceptual framework that captures the opportunities, complexities, and challenges in making connections between higher education and employability. Three dimensions of employability are put forward: outcomes, process, and conceptual approaches. The presenters will discuss the connections and distinctions between the three approaches, contributing to scholarly debates and discourses on what conceptional employability is. Crucially, empirical research and theoretical constructs will be drawn upon to support the categorisation of employability into three distinct, though interrelated dimensions, proposed by the presenter in their co-authored article recognised in 2023 as a top cited paper in the Higher Education Quarterly journal. The presenters will discuss the practical implications of adopting the conceptual framework for research-policy engagement on a major higher education agenda.

146 Too complex for policy? Identity work in students' paths through and out of university

Eva Lykkegaard[1], Lars Ulriksen[2]

[1]University of Southern Denmark, Odense, Denmark. [2]University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen, Denmark

Research Domains

Employability, enterprise and graduate careers (EE)

Abstract

Fifteen students were followed from 18 months before high-school graduation until three years after graduation to study their considerations concerning choice of study after high school. This paper presents the results from interviews with the fifteen students made ten year after high school graduation. The paper presents their study paths through higher education and into the labour market. While the paths at the surface appears more continuous and less volatile than their choice process following high school, several students also talk about having doubts and about social relations to other students as important for their completion of the study. In the choice of higher-education programme, students emphasised whether the study matched their sense of identity. In the recent interviews, the concerns about family and where to settle affected their choice of career. The paper discusses the implications of this for policy initiatives to make students follow particular study paths.

159 International experience – not a must have in the labour market: Why? Where? And for whom?

Emilia Kmiotek-Meier

University of Cologne, Cologne, Germany

Research Domains

Employability, enterprise and graduate careers (EE)

Abstract

There is a mixed evidence regarding job related assets of European student mobility. We use employers and employees' perspective (N = 26) from a study on soft and hard skills in the graduate labour markets in Germany. The Q-Methodology carried out as part of narrative interviews show relatively low relevance of an international stay for career outcomes in comparison to other skills. The participants underlined that a stay abroad per see is not crucial; it must be made explicit which skills you learn during an international experience to show why it is an asset. Although the study showed that an international stay is not necessarily a career booster, some differences in ratings occurred. This result shows that some aspects such as different study level, type of mobility, country of origin or country of the job, may lead to different labour markets outcomes of an international stay.

Parallel Session 5:5

13:30 - 15:00 Thursday, 7th December, 2023

Conference Room 1c
Chair Colin McCaig

145 Narratives of higher education and the university in UK general election manifestos: 1945 to 2019

Adam Matthews, Debbie McVitty

University of Birmingham, Birmingham, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Higher Education policy (HEP)

Abstract

In the UK since 1945 there have been 21 general elections, producing a corpus of 63 manifesto texts written by Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat parties. These 21 elections present a corpus of 63 texts making up 651,696 words for analysis. Here we draw upon diachronic corpus-assisted discourse analysis and narrative policy frameworks to analyse how political priorities for universities and higher education have changed. Diachronic discourse analysis is used to track change over 74 years and the narrative policy frameworks are employed to analyse context, the actors involved and how parties position universities and higher education within their visions for governing.

 The findings of this paper and the broader project will produce a grounded theory to understand political priorities for higher education, which will advance understanding of policy and potentially influence future manifestos.

111 "You have to play the game". Discomfort and compromise in third sector organisations' strategic decision making to influence widening participation policy.

Ruth Squire

Leeds Trinity University, Leeds, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Higher Education policy (HEP)

Abstract

In a climate of 'evidence-based policy' in education, researchers have debated at length the moral and practical dilemmas of engaging with education policy. However, academic researchers are not the only 'experts' called upon in the policy process and, in the field of widening participation in the UK, third sector organisations are increasingly regular contributors to public and private policy discussions. Publicly, many of these organisations conform to dominant narratives about the policy problem, its solutions and how we know 'what works?' but, in less public fora, they acknowledge a discomfort and disconnect between the positive image of TSOs as experts and moral authorities and the challenges actually faced by charities in pursuing their social missions. Based on interviews with those working in charities and policy experts, this paper explores what it means to 'play the game' as an organisation trying to influence widening participation policy.

177 Widening Access to University in England: Understanding Access Agreements

Laura Harvey

University of East Anglia, Norwich, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Higher Education policy (HEP)

Abstract

This paper explores the impact of university access agreements on widening access and success in Higher Education. The policy which represents a substantial cost to institutions saw circa 25% of additional fee income allocated to access activities and financial support for students. This was regulated by the Office for Fair Access (OFFA), which was able to impose penalties where there was non-compliance. This paper directly compares how accountable universities are to their access agreements, encompassing both their targets and performance. Through matching administrative data on students in England to their access plans and looking at the key outcomes for those from underrepresented backgrounds, such as completion, good honours and graduate employment. A second branch of this research focuses on the contents of the agreements to understand institution behaviour and responses to policy changes. We can comment on whether this represents an effective and desirable policy to improve HE access.

Parallel Session 5:6

13:30 - 15:00 Thursday, 7th December, 2023
Room 145
Chair Richard Davies

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361 Education research in UK higher education: connected research, policy and practice?

Thomas Perry, Rebecca Morris, Emma Smith, Jess Pilgrim-Brown

University of Warwick, Coventry, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Higher Education policy (HEP)

Abstract

In May 2023, the British Educational Research Association (BERA) released a major report based on a survey of 1,623 education researchers working in higher education across the UK. This was the largest survey of its kind and presents a comprehensive and wide-ranging picture of education research and researchers. A prominent theme was the complex and changing relationship between research, policy and practice. In this paper we examine what the BERA survey reveals about the research-policy-practice nexus in education. We present original analyses, including survey statistics, multivariate quantitative analysis and thematic analysis of the extensive survey data. Our results

explore the nature of education research and how specialisms within the field foster and inhibit knowledge exchange; education research as a contested space for organisations rooted variously in higher education, policy and practice; and the purposes, values and topics pursued by education researchers and their connection to policy and practice.

102 All that glitters is not gold: The depoliticization of social inequality in European education policy on 'microcredentials'

Marita Ljungqvist, Anders Sonesson

Lund University, Lund, Sweden

Research Domains

Higher Education policy (HEP)

Abstract

In a time of crises threatening the neoliberal hegemony, it is important to scrutinize in what ways tensions between intensifying demands for sustainability and social inclusion on the one hand, and objectives adhering to the competitive order on the other, are managed within education policy. In this presentation, we discuss results from a critical discourse analysis of a recent EU council recommendation on 'microcredentials' – credits for short courses primarily oriented towards skills-development. We demonstrate how the policy appropriates and recontextualizes discourses of social inclusion to advance a market-oriented agenda. The concept 'bling' is used as an explanatory metaphor for this discursive depoliticization, making *in*visible an underlying neoliberal rationality and *hyper*visible an apolitical and consensus-oriented surface. This prevents disagreements over aspects of education that are fundamentally political and paves the way for an educational market that utilizes microcredentials as tokens of exchange-value to further subjugate institutions and students to capital interests.

282 Opportunity pluralism, widening participation and the implications of higher education regulatory environment.

Richard Davies

UCLan, Preston, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Higher Education policy (HEP)

Abstract

Education is a positional good, and higher education is an increasingly significant positional good. Not only is a higher education qualification a gateway to 'graduate jobs' but also a necessary path to many traditionally non-graduate occupations. This paper argues that UK higher education regulations are decreasing rather than improving the opportunities for disadvantage young people. Core to the argument is Fishkin's modelling of the ways society constructs its opportunity structure and the need for 'opportunity pluralism'. Fishkin identifies a range of social bottlenecks, moments, tests or requirements which provide gates into jobs and other opportunities for which passing through that gate is an imposed rather than necessary precondition. For Fishkin, in general, liberal democratic state ought to reduce such bottlenecks, diversify the ways in which people conceive of the flourishing life, and provide a variety of pathways by which individuals can pursue their conception of the flourishing life.

Parallel Session 5:7

13:30 - 15:00 Thursday, 7th December, 2023
Room 122
Chair Dina Belluigi

381 The challenges of academic freedom of expression in the Scandinavian universities – and how they are handled

Øyunn Høydal, Agnete Vabø

OsloMet, Oslo, Norway

Research Domains

Higher Education policy (HEP)

Abstract

Academic autonomy- and freedom of expression is central for democracy as well as scientific progress. This principle is under threat due to a range of developments; managerial governance, external funding and commercialization of research, populist movements, woke, and research collaboration with autocratic regimes. This paper is based on an empirical investigation of recent cases and public debates related to the academic freedom of expression in Sweden, Denmark, and Norway. It provides an overview of how these are handled by the central authorities and institutions to safeguard academic autonomy and freedom of expression, in legislation, funding, organization, governance and management.

314 Re-inventing research-based teaching in a time of performance governance: Examining the premises for linking research and teaching in Danish higher education since the 1990s

Marie Ryberg

University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen, Denmark

Research Domains

Higher Education policy (HEP)

Abstract

Over the last three decades, a concern with invigorating the links between research and teaching has re-emerged in scholarly and political debates about the university. This happened during a period when policies of higher education were characterized by new modes of governing by measuring performance. This paper explores how policies, research and practices concerned with linking research and teaching have been affected by this introduction of performance governance policies in Danish higher education.

Examining the *problematisations* in discourses and practices on linking research and teaching in Danish higher education, the paper shows how concerns with linking research and teaching since the 1990s in various ways have been affected by policies of performance governance. It calls for a broader approach to the issues of linking research and teaching that takes such policy contexts into account and discuss their implications.

95 Balancing Life Times and Term Times: Study Rhythms and the Long History of Temporal Synchronization in Swedish Higher Education Policy

Hampus Östh Gustafsson[1,2], Lars Geschwind[1]

[1]KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, Sweden. [2]Uppsala University, Uppsala, Sweden

Research Domains

Higher Education policy (HEP)

Abstract

Struggles of how to introduce new temporal standards, and synchronizing them with existing practices, appear as a structural challenge in modern university policy. Attempts to speed up and homogenize study rhythms, for instance, come across as highly controversial, as reflected in the recent emergence of the slow academia movement. By employing the theoretical concept of "temporal synchronization", this paper examines active efforts that have been made in order to bring the multitude, and sometimes incompatible, temporal rhythms of the complex university organization into harmony. This is conducted through a historical case study, focused on the Swedish 1960s that saw salient attempts of introducing "normal" term times and reforming study routes. Departing from this case, we argue that current policy needs to pay more attention to the long history of temporal renegotiations both within academia and in connection to society, as this would enable a more nuanced understanding of current predicaments.

Parallel Session 5:8

13:30 - 15:00 Thursday, 7th December, 2023
Room 144
Chair Rita Hordosy

266 Gatekeepers and producers of global sociological knowledge: exploring the stated aims, editorial boards and author networks of disciplinary journals

Rita Hordosy, Elizabeth Brown, Gabriel Lee, Maria Antonieta Vega Castillo

University of Nottingham, Nottingham, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

This paper aims to analyse leading international sociology journals regarding the interplay of the centre-periphery relations as observed within their aims, editorial boards and author networks. As such, it explores the geographies of knowledge in the context of sociology as a discipline (Calma & Davies, 2017). First, it analyses the aims of journals as outlined via their respective websites, focusing on whether and how any global or international focus appears. Second, it explores the current country affiliation of their editorial boards and their different roles. Third, it looks at the network of these gatekeepers, exploring the degree of editorial board interlocking (Goyanes et al., 2022). Fourth, bibliometric analysis is used to explore author networks over time regarding institutional and national affiliation. The four approaches show that despite the discursively positioning journals as global, both editorial boards and author networks remain highly skewed towards the centre.

154 What and where to publish? Tensions of publishing choices for individual researchers in Finland

Melina Aarnikoivu[1], Charles Mathies[2,1], Nelli Piattoeva[3]

[1]University of Jyväskylä, Jyväskylä, Finland. [2]Old Dominion University, Norfolk, USA. [3]Tampere University, Tampere, Finland

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

A great deal is known about academics' publishing patterns. But what kinds of individual choices are there behind those patterns? This study examines how different factors affect academics' choices of research topics and publishing outlets. The studied context is Finland, a non-Anglophone country with one of the most performance-based research evaluation systems in Europe. The data for this mixed-methods study is being generated with an online survey (N = >277) from academics representing different fields and career stages. The preliminary results indicate that although there is pressure to study "strategic" topics and publish in high-impact journals, researchers' primary motivation of choosing research topics stems from personal interests. Furthermore, researchers want to publish in outlets whose scope is suitable rather than in outlets owned by big publishing houses. These results suggest a high-level of academic freedom and that Finland-based academics are resilient when it comes to the pressures of neoliberal academia.

191 Research Culture as Instituent Practice: the possibilities of thinking differently?

Sian Vaughan

Birmingham City University, Birmingham, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

This exploratory paper draws from curatorial and art theory to speculate on the possibilities of conceptualising research culture as instituent practice (Raunig 2009). Research culture is increasingly being problematised and contested (Moore et al 2017, Moran et al 2020) with contemporary challenges for researchers including academic precarity (Mulligan & Danaher 2021) and its impact on the persistence of 'publish or perish' and competitiveness, to

increased expectations through growing emphasis on impact literacy (Bayley 2023), interdisciplinarity, and collaboration. In the United Kingdom expectations for researcher support are set out by funders and bodies such as Vitae and the Royal Society, and research environments are assessed through the Research Excellence Framework and resulting league tables. How might thinking through instituent practice help us to reimagine research culture? What are the possibilities of instituent practice as critical self-reflection, as recognition of research culture as political practice, and as openness to continual transformation?

Panel Session: Landscapes of Learning for Unknown Futures: Prospects for Space in Higher Education

15:00 - 16:00 Thursday, 7th December, 2023
Conference Room 1a

with Prof Sam Elkington and Dr Jill Dickinson.

This presentation unpacks the principal findings that emerged from an SRHE-hosted Symposia Series that brought together sector stakeholders to consider new thinking in decision-making, policy, and practice and reflect on the promise of future landscapes of learning in HE through the prism of three thematic lenses: networks, assemblages, and flexibilities. Each of these lenses formed the conceptual focus for a symposium event with the aim of providing designated space and scope for interrogating a range of theoretical and applied interpretations and perspectives, and generating collaborative, reflexive discussions, and debate. The presentation draws together key learning and emergent themes to emphasise a more holistic understanding of the synergies and possibilities for learning spaces and the networks, assemblages, and flexibilities that characterise them according to the level of complexity and depth that they exhibit and the neoteric topologies of connection, social meaning, and practice that they promote.

Panel Discussion: Higher Education Policy

15:00 - 16:00 Thursday, 7th December, 2023
Conference Room 1b

Chaired by Prof Colin McCaig (co-convenor of the HEP network).

The session will be an open forum for discussion on UK HE policy in the medium term, led by Colin McCaig, and feature a stimulus talk by Smita Jamdar who will consider ways in which the HE sector might change/develop following the upcoming general election.

Panel Session: Use and Misuse of Generative Artificial Intelligence Large Language Models in Student Undergraduate and Postgraduate Research

15:00 - 16:00 Thursday, 7th December, 2023
Conference Room 1c
Chair Christine O'Dea

Speakers: Professor Tony Wall, Dr Christine O'Dea, Dr Ruth Stoker, and Dr Mike O'Dea.

This session will provide an opportunity for educators to explore possible opportunities in using GenAI tools to support students to conduct academic research in an ethical manner, share good practices and make recommendations for university key stakeholders and policy makers.

Parallel Session 6:1

16:30 - 18:00 Thursday, 7th December, 2023
Room 122
Chair Christine O'Dea

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57 The other side of knowledge transfer - science officers in local governments

Michael Hoelscher[1], Editha Marquardt[2]

[1]German University of Administrative Sciences, Speyer, Germany. [2]University of Heidelberg, Heidelberg, Germany

Research Domains

International contexts and perspectives (ICP)

Abstract

Universities and science more generally play an increasingly important role for cities' wellbeing in the knowledge society. While much research exists on the interplay between research institutions and different partners, e.g. the local economy ("clusters"), especially in the context of transfer and third mission, the role of city administrations has not yet been sufficiently investigated, at least not in the German context.

In our project "Town & Gown" we therefore conducted the first survey on what we call "science officers": people within city administrations responsible to organize a structured exchange between cities and their local research institutions. The survey was supplemented by case studies and in-depth expert interviews in a smaller number of cities.

Our results show a dense and growing network between city administrations and their HEI's as well as some hindering and fostering factors for a successful partnership.

284 Narratives of research impact and knowledge exchange: a regional perspective

Adam Matthews[1], Vanessa Cui[2]

[1]University of Birmingham, Birmingham, United Kingdom. [2]Birmingham City University, Birmingham, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Higher Education policy (HEP)

Abstract

Universities in the broadest public policy sense have three missions: research, teaching and a contribution to wider society. The third mission (TM) of universities in the form of a contribution to society is less well defined and nebulous than the missions of research and teaching. TM captures an array of activities and concepts such as the entrepreneurial university, the civic university, development of science and society through various forms of communication and social engagement, and knowledge transfer and exchange by universities to and with society and organisations. In this research paper, we report on a work in progress that looks at national policies in the UK which assesses excellence in research (REF) and knowledge exchange (KEF) from a regional and place-based perspective by looking at institutional responses to both REF and TEF exercises and future plans to extend the project to inform both policy and practice of TM.

Parallel Session 6:2

16:30 - 18:00 Thursday, 7th December, 2023
Room 139
Chair Dina Belluigi

179 Between a rock and a hard place: the effect of regionalised global university rankings in Chile

Stephen Darwin[1], Malba Barahona[2]

[1]Universidad Alberto Hurtado, Santiago, Chile. [2]Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Santiago, Chile

Research Domains

International contexts and perspectives (ICP)

Abstract

This paper reports on an investigation of the responses of Chilean higher education to the emergence of regionalised global university rankings in Latin America. Using interviews with educational leaders across 18 institutions, the research sought to understand the effect of these global rankings on conceptions of quality, local academic work, and social perceptions of institutional value. Using the conceptual framing of a glonacal heuristic (Marginson & Rhoades, 2002), a series of tensions generated by the escalating social significance of regionalised forms of global rankings were identified. These tensions included the value of global comparison versus sustaining a local mission, institutional recognition versus structural inequality in Chilean higher education and the potential and danger of the influence of global North epistemologies and language in shaping future local higher education. The implications are considered through the lenses of how quality is defined, and institutional value understood, in the global South.

59 Cultural Studies and University Rankings

Riyad Shahjahan[1], Naseeb Bhangal[2]

[1]Michigan State University, East Lansing, USA. [2]Michugan State University, East Lansing, USA

Research Domains

International contexts and perspectives (ICP)

Abstract

We offer a Cultural Studies approach—a transdisciplinary field of study critically examining contemporary culture—to illuminate the roles of cultural producers and consumers in mediating the meaning of university rankings amidst a global media landscape. Using the case study of Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) and drawing on the concepts of a) meaning-making, b) cultural texts, and c) audiencing, we illuminate how QS, as a commercial ranker, aims to 'fix' meanings about quality and excellence in global higher education (HE) through its various outreach efforts. Based on a multi-method analysis of QS' digital texts, specifically a YouTube video and a press release, we demonstrate how interactions between cultural producers and consumers complicate a ranker's efforts to fix and diffuse meanings about HE. We argue that a Cultural Studies approach helps us probe the meaning-making process underlying university rankings amid a digital media culture.

371 The Hegemonic and Disciplinary Power of International University Ranking Programmes: Chinese Prestigious Universities under Embroilment

Jinxi Xu[1], Yue YIN[2]

[1]University of Cambridge, Cambridge, United Kingdom. [2]School of Marxism, Sun Yat-Sen University, China

Research Domains

Higher Education policy (HEP)

Abstract

This study explains the power technique of international university ranking programmes (e.g. QS Rankings, US News Rankings) that are issued by companies in countries other than China but have realised their influence on Chinese prestigious universities. Combining Foucault's theory of discipline (1975) with Gramsci's theory of hegemony (1947), this study proposes a political concept 'to embroil / embroilment' to refer to a post-modernist form of power technique that influences the affairs of modern institutions, that is, in this case, the higher education affairs of modern universities with academic autonomy as one of their principles of modernity. Based on a critical dialogue analysis on policy documents from universities selected as cases, this study shows these universities' administrative reactions to these international rankings and further reflects the power relationship between universities and their external economic subjects in the context of China mainland.

Parallel Session 6:3 - Symposium

16:30 - 18:00 Thursday, 7th December, 2023
Conference Room 1c

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14 Contextual complexities of interdisciplinary collaboration to demystify academic discourses

Research Domain

Learning, teaching and assessment (LTA)

Rationale

In this symposium we will discuss the challenges and successes of interdisciplinary collaborations that demystify academic discourses and practices for students from diverse backgrounds. These students include widening participation students, students who navigate between 'posh' and 'slang' language practices (Preece, 2009), and international students who come with diverse educational and linguistic backgrounds. In order to succeed in higher education, students need to be able to acquire the discourses of their chosen discipline(s) which vary according to the preferred epistemologies of those discipline(s) (Hyland, 2004). However, the process of learning the discourses and genres of a particular discipline in higher education has been described as a "pedagogy of osmosis" (Turner, 2011, p.21) that is embedded within the "institutional practice of mystery" (Lillis, 2001, p.58). Lecturers who have acquired their discoursal preferences via those practices may not always be able to describe or explain them as a result. Collaboration between subject experts and language and literacy experts has been long recommended but rarely systematically implemented (Li, 2020). Benefits of collaboration include both the unpacking of disciplinary discourses, which bypasses the need for osmosis and makes disciplinary skills more accessible for students (Hampton et al, 2003), and the development of staff expertise and institutional capacity (Thies, 2016).

However, collaboration is challenging to both instigate and sustain. Shifting national and institutional priorities, regular changes in personnel at all levels, and the ubiquitous challenge of workload, time and timing require constant consideration and adaptation. A further hindrance in making lecturers' expectations explicit to today's diverse student body is the reductionist view of language which oversimplifies the linguistic and cognitive demands of academic discourses. Following the Office for Students' (2021) study of a small number of universities, media and minister reports about levels of spelling, punctuation and grammar demonstrated perfectly this reductionist view. Following their consultation process, the Office for Students (2022) introduced a requirement for explicit assessment of "technical proficiency in English" (p.49). However, this "technical proficiency" is not defined, and it hides the complexity and variability of disciplinary discourses that students are expected to master.

Internationally, policies and practices for demystifying academic expectations differ, including compulsory courses and post-entry, discipline-specific diagnostic assessments. In the UK, practice is largely small-scale and sometimes difficult to locate (Wingate, 2015). In this symposium, we present and critique a range of approaches to interdisciplinary collaboration between language and subject experts from four diverse higher education institutions.

Chair

Karen Nicholls

Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield, United Kingdom

Discussants

Susie Cowley-Haselden

University of Warwick, Warwick, United Kingdom

Jeni Driscoll

University of Liverpool, Liverpool, United Kingdom

Steve Kirk

University of Durham, Durham, United Kingdom

Karen Nicholls

Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield, United Kingdom

370 The complexity of interdisciplinary collaboration: what LCT's Autonomy can tell us about success and failure

Susie Cowley-Haselden

University of Warwick, Coventry, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Learning, teaching and assessment (LTA)

Abstract

Sustainable collaboration between academic language and literacies experts and experts from university students' target disciplines is highly valorised in the field of English for Academic Purposes (EAP), yet fraught with challenges (Murray & Nallaya, 2016; Sloan & Porter, 2010). At her current institution, this author has experienced a range of success and failures in attempts to collaborate with target discipline experts in the development of students' academic literacies. This paper presents the analysis of focus group data where participants discussed the need for academic writing and literacies support for their students. This data has been analysed using the dimension of Autonomy from Legitimation Code Theory (LCT). The analysis illuminates the relations between disciplinary and EAP practices and where they are positioned on, and move across, the autonomy plane, offers great insight into why approaches to collaboration are likely to succeed or fail.

320 Alternative approaches to interdisciplinary collaboration: navigating new challenges, alignments and alliances

Jeni Driscoll

University of Liverpool, Liverpool, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Learning, teaching and assessment (LTA)

Abstract

Developing students' academic literacies within their disciplines has become an increasingly important part of Higher Education, contributing to subject-specific knowledge and graduate attributes. As this often involves input from various university departments, collaboration is central to this endeavour (Wingate, 2018). Effective collaboration is regarded as a key part of the practitioner's role, frequently cited within job descriptions and role requirements. However, within EAP (English for Academic Purposes) there is little explicit attention to this aspect of teacher training (Campion 2016) and tutor induction offers insufficient opportunities to explore methods and skills for collaboration (Driscoll, 2019). In this presentation, I report on two recent examples of interdisciplinary collaboration and explore alternative approaches proposed by the disciplines, considering the reconfiguration of professional roles this has led to. I suggest that greater collaboration across institutions and knowledge-sharing can serve to address some of the complexities of interdisciplinary collaboration to demystify academic discourses.

198 Challenges in developing a systematic approach to interdisciplinary collaboration to embed academic language and literacies into the curriculum: a case study

Karen Nicholls

Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Learning, teaching and assessment (LTA)

Abstract

In the UK, there have been few reported cases of systematic approaches to the development of students' academic literacies (Wingate, 2018). One exception was the Thinking Writing work developed at Queen Mary, University of London (Mitchell & Evison, 2006). In a review of the approaches developed in that project, including the successes and challenges experienced, Mitchell (2010) employs the contrastive metaphors of a "cottage industry" versus "industrialised approaches" with a warning of what can be lost through the process of 'industrialisation'. In this presentation, I explore and critique a multi-stranded approach to interdisciplinary collaborations between language and subject experts from conception through to practice, evaluation, and research publication. I suggest that it is the latter, the creation of an evidence base, which may be the critical factor in navigating the demand to scale up (Nicholls, 2020) without losing the specificity of local (discipline-specific) discourses and practices.

Parallel Session 6:4

16:30 - 18:00 Thursday, 7th December, 2023
Room 145
Chair Katy Jordan

156 State of Play: An Historic Review of Playful Learning Approaches in Higher Education

Nicola Whitton

Durham University, Durham, United Kingdom. Northumbria University, Newcastle, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Abstract

Play is an integral part of childhood education for centuries, however, in an increasingly instrumental Higher Education environment, the relationship between play and learning becomes more distant as the focus moves from intrinsic interest to learning for assessments.

Over the past fifty years there has been a movement in the use of playful approaches in Higher Education, showing increased use of gameful techniques and a gradually increasing acceptance of play. This article describes the trends over this time, based on a narrative literature review of the use of games, play, and playful techniques in the context of learning in Higher Education.

An analysis of 1090 journal articles dating from 1973 to 2022 enabled an exploration of the trends of research in play and learning in universities, focusing on role play, business simulation games, traditional play, digital play, game making, gamification, and post-digital play.

228 Learning by design in Living Labs: understanding the complexities

Linda van Ooijen-van der Linden, Didi M. E. Griffioen

Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, Amsterdam, Netherlands

Research Domains

Abstract

Living Labs in higher education have the intention to synergize learning and innovation through integration of education, research and innovation. However, the literature does not seem to provide an evidence-base for student learning in these complex settings, balancing professional, pedagogical and accountability discourses. An educational-design study aims to help develop this knowledge-base: three social learning settings in Labs in the Social Professions Faculty of a single university are analyzed and redesigned in collaborations with teachers, students, and professional partners. Afterward, their experiences are collected through semi-structured interviews. A grounded approach of the analysis of the interviews and fieldnotes will contribute to the understanding of the complexities of balancing professional, pedagogical and accountability discourses in learning and its scaffolding in Labs. The conceptual framework and initial methodological findings will be presented and discussed. It is expected that preliminary findings in the first co-design project and interviews will also be shared.

378 The generative power of co-creation: lessons from a blended learning co-creation project

Ivana Lessner Listiakova, Jo Trowsdale

University of Suffolk, Ipswich, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Abstract

Higher education is being shaped by the increasing demand of the labour market for transversal skills of graduates, while the massification of Higher Education results in changing student populations and their needs. Co-creation seeks to improve student engagement, empower students as active learners and establish a partnership between students and lecturers. The University of Suffolk has embraced block and blend format learning and teaching with strengths in immersive learning and challenges in disconnect between skills. As a response, the Learning Hubs as spaces for individual development of skills were piloted. To increase engagement with these resources a co-creative consortium of students, professional and academic staff was established. The community created an exemplar of the practice of co-creation in higher education that can be adopted across the university and inform the sector.

Parallel Session 6:5

16:30 - 18:00 Thursday, 7th December, 2023
Conference Room 1b
Chair Jacqueline Stevenson

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183 Making connections between research and ancillary staff experiences in Higher Education: a literature review.

Lucie Wheeler, Marie-Pierre Moreau

Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

The proposed paper outlines the literature review conducted as part of a SRHE-funded project exploring the experiences of ancillary staff (e.g. catering, security and cleaning staff) in UK Higher Education Institutions. An in-depth literature search was carried out using EBSCO host, and similar databases. The review captures the experiences of a group which has been given limited consideration in research and policy debates around HE. Initial findings highlight that, overall, the literature tends to focus on the benefits of having a clean, well looked after environment to work in, but lacks acknowledgement of the individuals who make it so (Amstutz, 2008; Campbell & Bigger, 2008). Where research explores the experiences of ancillary staff, it shows that this group experiences feelings of invisibility and non-belonging, as well as battling long working shifts and lacking social interaction in the workplace (Caridad Rabelo & Mahalingham, 2019; Du Toit, 2015).

137 Doing the dirty work of academia? Ancillary staff in UK Higher Education

marie-pierre moreau, Lucie Wheeler

Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

Ancillary staff (defined as staff working in catering, cleaning and security roles) are typically involved in 'reproductive work' and, as such, fulfill a crucial role. In Higher Education, their work contributes to maintaining and enhancing the social and physical environment where academics, professional staff, and students operate.

Borrowing from Nancy Fraser's (1997) and Kathleen Lynch's (2010) multi-level theories of social justice, the SRHE-funded research project underpinning this paper involved a literature review, on-campus observations, an online survey of UK HE stakeholders and 20 online interviews with ancillary staff.

Focusing on interviews with ancillary staff, we explore how this group experiences distributive, cultural, representational and affective in/justices in HE contexts, while also considering how these dimensions of social justice are compounded by the politics of gender, class and race (Acker, 1994; Lynch, 2010). Ultimately, the project calls for the recognition of ancillary work in HE research and policies.

283 Doing the heavy lifting: The experiences of working class professional services and administrative staff in Russell Group universities

Jess Pilgrim-Brown

University of Bristol, Bristol, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Higher Education policy (HEP)

Abstract

At present, research which seeks to understand social class based experiences of universities has focused predominantly on the experiences of working class academics and working class students. There is currently a large gap in research which has not yet addressed the experiences of working class professional services and administrative staff. In fact, professional services voices in themselves rarely feature in academic literature regardless of social class background. This paper outlines findings of an EdD thesis. Using semi-structured interviews and narrative inquiry, the experiences of 13 working class professional services employees at Russell Group universities were collected. This paper both addresses the complexities of defining social class in the 21st century and looks at the experiences of those working in professional services. It hopes to contribute to knowledge by investigating the complexities of organizational culture through the experiences that professional services staff have working day to day in Russell Group universities.

Parallel Session 6:6

16:30 - 18:00 Thursday, 7th December, 2023
Room 144
Chair Neil Harrison

268 Reprioritising personal tutoring through the lens of under-represented student experiences

Rachael O'Connor

University of Leeds, Leeds, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Student Access and Experience (SAE)

Abstract

Amplifying voices of students and staff captured through multi-modal data collection including interviews, reflective logs and group discussions, this presentation critically explores a unique intervention to enhance personal tutoring institutionally, sharing findings from my project: 'Exploring academic personal tutoring in partnership with under-represented students'. The presentation focuses on a student co-designed staff/student reverse mentoring project, spanning 20 disciplines within a Russell Group university. The project involves: (i) students mentoring staff on their lived experiences as students who self-identify as under-represented; and (ii) those staff and students collaborating to propose developments to personal tutoring. Personal tutoring, this presentation argues, is rarely done well and rarely involves student voices in design/policy, let along under-represented students. This project seeks to change that and inspire sectoral through sharing the impact of this project on staff and students. Critical higher education issues will be explored, including community, belonging, identity, emotional labour and empowerment.

342 Tutoring Forcibly Displaced Students: Understanding the Barriers and Unlocking the Potential of Tutoring Systems for Displaced Students at UK Universities

Nick Gill[1], Isabelle Schafer[1], Lisa Lucas[2], Katharina Lenner[3], Sin Yi Cheung[4]

[1]University of Exeter, Exeter, United Kingdom. [2]University of Bristol, Bristol, United Kingdom. [3]University of Bath, Bath, United Kingdom. [4]University of Cardiff, Cardiff, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Student Access and Experience (SAE)

Abstract

British universities have a long history of personal tutoring and the establishment of the Office for Students and the Teaching Excellence Framework have incentivised them to provide a personalised student experience that ensures student wellbeing (Lochtie et al 2018). It might be expected, then, that they are well-positioned to offer exactly the sort of 'warm support' that forcibly displaced students (FDSs) need (Baker et al, 2018). This paper critically interrogates this assertion however, drawing on ongoing research into FDSs experiences of personal tutoring at four British universities. We use evidence from focus groups with FDSs and staff to provide a typology of the potential of personal tutoring systems, alongside insights into the obstacles and complexities that prevent FDSs from tapping into them effectively. In so doing, we present research findings that can inform good practice around personal tutoring within the increasingly complex systems of support for students at UK Universities.

27 Considering a pedagogy of vulnerability in higher education

Fiona Stirling

Abertay University, Dundee, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

The central premise of a pedagogy of vulnerability is defined by Kelly and Kelly (2020, p177) as 'purposeful and selective acts of self-disclosure by teachers [to] help build the conditions of trust and care needed for dialogue around emotionally and politically challenging topics'. Using the frame of my own teaching practice this presentation draws upon three pieces of research, one completed and two currently in progress, to explore the various potentials and challenges of vulnerability in Higher education.

Parallel Session 6:7

16:30 - 18:00 Thursday, 7th December, 2023
Conference Room 1a
Chair Andrea Cameron

213 Beyond employability? A new conceptual framing for 'real world learning' to better situate institutional endeavours in this space

Deanna Meth

Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia

Research Domains

Learning, teaching and assessment (LTA)

Abstract

'Real world learning' is an overtly stated aspiration of many universities, though readers are often left to interpret its meaning. Most frequently, the term is seen used as synonymous with experiential, authentic and applied learning, directly linked to skills and knowledge for employability and students' careers. There are also examples of more 'radical' real world learning approaches, that encompass areas including civic engagement, sustainability, and citizenship.

Responding to calls for greater rigour in this area, this paper uses a modified Clark triangle conceptual framework to situate real world learning within a spectrum, where endpoints are 'instrumentalist', with strong market/state pulls and 'social constructivist', with broader societal pulls. This provides a theoretical space within which to place the myriad definitions observed, also bringing clarity to their ideological underpinnings. The work offers an important foundation on which further research might build, and a way to differentiate curricula and appropriate enabling pedagogies.

237 Which future skills and entrepreneurial skills are teachable at universities and what are the currently applied teaching methods?

Eszter Szendrei-Pál

Budapest Business School, Budapest, Hungary

Research Domains

Learning, teaching and assessment (LTA)

Abstract

The future is uncertain as well as the skills which students should have after their university studies. Independently from that universities must be prepared for both present and future requirements at the same time. This paper compares teachable entrepreneurial and future skills, and also investigates the relating teaching methods. It is based on partial result of a literature review related to an in-progress dissertation research. The goal is to present the first results and first impressions related to the differences and similarities between these two groups of skills and between their teaching methods. The results are useful for higher education institutions, who are eager to investigate to what extent their programs include teachable future skills, and which methods can they apply to provide effective entrepreneurial and future skills development to their students.

157 From "group work" to "teamwork": students' perception and lecturer's reflections.

Atisha Ghosh[1], Kamilya Suleymenova[2]

[1]University of Warwick, Coventry, United Kingdom. [2]University of Birmingham, Birmingham, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Learning, teaching and assessment (LTA)

Abstract

The aim of our study is to understand students' perceptions of the transferable skills in group assessment. The quantitative results of a survey of over 60 student responses in an optional final year economics module indicate that, overall, students benefitted from the assessment in terms of learning from other group members and developing interpersonal skills; while differences in work ethics within the group was reported as the most significant challenge by a quarter of the respondents. The free text comments analysis shows that free-riding and communications issues are the most frustrating concerns. In line with the literature, e.g. Johnson & Johnson (2009), we conclude that the experience is beneficial for most students, but may leave some others behind. We suggest that providing specific resources for efficient group work and focusing on "teamwork" as a term will help students to better acknowledge and reflect on the transferable skills they gain.

Parallel Session 6:8

16:30 - 18:00 Thursday, 7th December, 2023
Room 141
Chair Michael O'Dea

22 Students' gendered experiences of male-dominated Computing and Engineering courses

Ella Taylor-Smith, Sally Smith, Khristin Fabian

Edinburgh Napier University, Edinburgh, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Student Access and Experience (SAE)

Abstract

How does it feel to be in a gender minority on a STEM programme? Does it have an impact on individual students? Via an online survey (n=255), undergraduate students on Computing and Engineering programmes were asked whether they felt that gender had an impact on their experience of their course, inviting them to 'tell us a little more'. While most students said that their gender did not have an impact, there was a significant difference between the experience of male and female students, and examples of impact were provided in response to the open question. Tackling gender imbalance in STEM is a focus of evolving government equality policies, including encouraging girls to consider careers in Computing and Engineering and supporting women STEM students. Universities need to explore how to support potentially isolated women students who may feel encouraged by their peers to discount any perception that their experience is gendered.

45 Addressing gender imbalance in STEM graduate apprenticeships.

Maria Cecil, Ella Taylor-Smith

Edinburgh Napier University, Edinburgh, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Technical, Professional and Vocational Higher Education (TPV)

Abstract

There is currently significant gender imbalance within Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) graduate apprenticeship (GA) programmes in Scotland. This is a considerable, ongoing issue for both higher education institutions and the labour market as there is a shortfall in skilled, qualified employees within these sectors which will have a significant impact on Scotland's economy and productivity. The problem of gender imbalance in STEM is also a wider social issue, as women are more likely to be unemployed (Scottish Government, 2022), or working in low paid, unskilled jobs than men, which results in them being left behind in a rapidly growing post pandemic digital world. This paper will outline an ongoing research study which explores some of the reasons and factors which may cause or contribute to the problem of gender imbalance in STEM GA programmes and investigates the role that Scottish government policy can play in mitigating these.

Parallel Session 7:1

09:00 - 10:30 Friday, 8th December, 2023
Room 141
Chair Katy Jordan

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286 Narrative CVs – evaluative storytelling and the construction of academic value(s)

Justyna Bandola-Gill

University of Birmingham, Birmingham, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

In recent years, narrative CVs have gained prominence in the UK and internationally. This format aims to replace the traditional list-like CV and asks researchers for a descriptive story of their contributions to the field, leadership potential and wider societal impact. The key motivation behind introducing this format was to capture a wider variety of experiences and achievements beyond a narrow understanding of academic excellence. But do narrative CVs realise this promise? This paper starts to explore this question by focusing on the evaluative processes involved in the assessment of narrative CVs (as opposed to traditional ones). Employing an innovative methodology of vignette-based interviews, this study identifies different evaluative lenses mobilised in the assessment of narrative CVs, including story-listening (as opposed to story-telling) and veiled quantification. The paper offers key insights into the conceptual stretching of 'excellence' by exploring it as a process of addition rather than an extension.

340 Uncovering the interplay between academic competence and knowledge exchange

Keira O'Kane

Ulster University Business School, Belfast, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

This paper employs the social learning concepts of Communities of Practice (CoPs) and legitimate peripheral participation to explore the influence of social definitions of competence and legitimacy upon academic engagement within knowledge exchange (KE) and motivations to participate in future boundary working (BW) activities. Adopting a case-study approach, it draws on 29 semi-structured interviews conducted across 6 UK universities to focus specifically on KE between the academic discipline of earthquake science and the third sector. By mapping the inward learning trajectory of the earthquake science CoP it finds competence to be displayed through engagement

within and contribution to the community's practice. The analysis uncovers a perception that KE is often not conducive to gaining or maintaining competence and is perhaps detrimental to progression along an academic career pathway. As such, ambition to progress was found to discourage BW with motivations varying according to one's position within the community.

Parallel Session 7:2

09:00 - 10:30 Friday, 8th December, 2023
Room 139
Chair Andrea Cameron

364 Mature Student Motivation and Drop Out: Age-related patterns in experience.

Charlie Sutton

Loughborough University, Loughborough, United Kingdom. University of Leicester, Leicester, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Student Access and Experience (SAE)

Abstract

How do the motivations of mature students interact with the factors which are associated with their increased chances of dropping out of undergraduate courses in Higher Education (HE)?

Whilst mature students may have common reasons for enrolling in HE, these motivations can change as they progress through the different stages of an undergraduate degree. Motivation may be heavily dependent on a students' context and their individual circumstances, perhaps even more so for students who are older than the traditional university ages. Age-related difference can, therefore, be a key factor effecting both initial and continuing motivations during HE study. This paper uses the findings from a longitudinal mixed-methods study to consider how differences in motivation can impact on mature undergraduate students decisions to drop out or persist with their studies.

365 Complexities in reflective pedagogical practices among adult learners

Ruphina Obare

University of Sunderland, London, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Student Access and Experience (SAE)

Abstract

This paper is part of wider research study from the experiences of mature adult university students from Black Asian and Ethnic Minority background in the UK. 63% of these learners were Black African, mainly female with an average age of between 45-54. The study is drawn from Dewey's (1910/1933) strategies on reflective thinking skills to promote reflective practice and improve their future lifelong learning goals following gaps in their learning. Data has been drawn from a mixed methods action research study. Despite years of experience, the project unearths complexities in the learners' backgrounds which has not been actively addressed in most studies. The students view this promotion of reflective practice and the pedagogical practices introduced, as an opportunity for personal growth where there is a growing sense of empowerment due to objects of knowledge acquired in the praxis.

KEY WORDS: Reflective practice; Lifelong Learning; Experiences

175 A longitudinal exploration of the impact of COVID-19 on Disabled and Neurodivergent students

Jodie Enderby

Coventry University, Coventry, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Student Access and Experience (SAE)

Abstract

Teaching practices adopted in Higher Education (HE) during COVID-19 had mixed impacts on equity for the learning of disabled and neurodivergent students (DaNS; Disabled Students' commission, 2021).

This project implemented multi-method real-time longitudinal research to explore the experiences of DaNS during and post-pandemic. This presentation focuses on survey data administered to a sample of DaNS and nondisabled students, across three time points, across differing COVID restrictions.

Multifactor repeated measure ANOVAS found a statistically significant difference in wellbeing, loneliness, institutional support received, feeling forgotten, sense of community and belonging, and self-advocating for needs between the DaNS and comparison group across the three time points, with DaNS consistently scoring worse than their peers on these factors.

This research provides an evidence-based overview of the longitudinal impact of the pandemic on important factors for practice and policy regarding DaNS within HE, and provides recommendations to support learning equity based on this.

Parallel Session 7:3 - Symposium

09:00 - 10:30 Friday, 8th December, 2023
Room 144

8 Addressing Structural Inequalities in Graduate Employability

Research Domain

Employability, enterprise and graduate careers (EE)

Rationale

Graduates in contemporary labour markets experience prolonged periods of transition from education into 'stable' jobs (with reliable incomes, career opportunities and social protection) and sustainable careers (where they are happy, healthy and productive over the course of their career development). Contrary to policy ambitions of a meritocratic society, expansion of higher education in the UK may have further reinforced social inequalities (Okay-Somerville, Allison, Luchinskaya & Scholarios, 2022). There are simply not enough high skilled entry-level jobs to absorb all university leavers. Within this context, there are systematic differences in access to career development opportunities and employment, at least at the start of graduate careers, based on demographic characteristics, including – but not limited to - gender, social and educational background, ethnicity, disability and domicile. The aim of this symposium is to draw conceptual and policy-related agendas for addressing structural inequalities that are in play for university graduates' experience of Higher Education and their employability.

Structural inequalities in graduate employability have implications at the individual (e.g., hampering young people's knowledge, skills, abilities, and relationships development; lowering wellbeing; slowing career development, resulting in underemployment and reduced lifetime earnings), organisational (e.g., underutilisation of potential and reduced productivity) and at societal levels (e.g., social mobility) (Baldry, 2015; Green & Henseke, 2016; McQuaid, 2017). The proposed symposium brings together a multi-disciplinary group of presenters (from psychology, sociology, economics and education) each of whom offer a unique conceptual lens to studying and addressing structural inequalities. The collection of papers each focus on different aspects of inequality in graduate employability, including the role of social disadvantage, gender, financial insecurities and employability of international students. The symposium is therefore highly relevant for questioning the efficacy of widening participation and marketisation agendas associated with expansion of higher education in the UK. Moving beyond the human capital-based approaches to graduate employability, the symposium aims to draw attention to social returns to education.

Chair

Belgin Okay-Somerville

University of Glasgow, Glasgow, United Kingdom

Discussants

Daria Luchinskaya

University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, United Kingdom

180 Is work experience during higher education gendered?: Access and outcomes in the UK

Charikleia Tzanakou[1], Daria Luchinskaya[2]

[1]Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, United Kingdom. [2]University of Strathyclyde, Glasgow, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Employability, enterprise and graduate careers (EE)

Abstract

In this article, we compare the early career outcomes of women and men after completing their first HE qualification in the UK. We problematise the individualised concept of career and employability as dependent only on individuals' efforts and decisions ignoring structural constraints on their choices, and the role of employer demand in labour market outcomes. We use longitudinal graduate tracking survey data from the UK (Futuretrack) to investigate graduates' transitions into the labour market. Using regression analysis, we investigate how the opportunity to access work experience activities during undergraduate education varies by gender. We then look at the labour market outcomes (getting a job, wages and perceived skills match) associated with different work experience activities. We find that access to and outcomes of work experience are gendered in the UK, shedding light on the gendered organisation of HE and labour market transition.

259 Graduating in a pandemic without safety nets: The role of career competencies for sustainable start to careers

Belgin Okay-Somerville[1], Daria Luchinskaya[2], Dora Scholarios[2], Pauline Anderson[2], Scott Hurrell[1]

[1]University of Glasgow, Glasgow, United Kingdom. [2]University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Employability, enterprise and graduate careers (EE)

Abstract

This research examines the role of career competencies (as crucial career resources relevant for career self-regulation) for sustainable (i.e., happy, healthy and productive) start to graduate careers. Of particular interest is the efficacy of career competencies for university leavers who may not have financial and psychological resources / safety nets at the height of the pandemic, in 2020. The analyses are informed by a longitudinal study of 2020 UK university leavers (N=181). Findings show (i) how self-regulation of careers operates differently depending on one's psychological and financial safety nets; (ii) career self-regulation may work best under 'average' psychological and financial conditions; and (iii) career competencies may be best understood in relation to psychological and financial costs. Building on a significant career shock that was the COVID-19 for most university leavers of 2020, the findings highlight the interplay between an individual's career resources and their psychological environment.

264 The role of the university services in international student employability: A systematic literature review

Lindsay Nygren

University of Glasgow, Glasgow, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Employability, enterprise and graduate careers (EE)

Abstract

This paper examines the role of the university services in international student employability. While there has been focus on the wage and employment outcomes of international students following their graduation, the development of employability through engagement with university services requires further attention. A systematic literature review of

47 research papers was conducted. Findings show that international students do indeed experience unique challenges, e.g., accessing labour markets, especially in host country. Nevertheless, amongst the papers reviewed, only six research articles specifically focused on the role of the university services on the transition experience. Discussion in these papers centred around (i) the broader role of the universities and (ii) career service support. This literature review suggests that there are tensions between neoliberal and transitional approaches to international student employability. Employability development needs of international students lies very much on the intersection of degree-related skills and knowledge, and their personal and professional relationships.

Parallel Session 7:4

09:00 - 10:30 Friday, 8th December, 2023
Conference Room 3
Chair Pauline Kneale

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62 'It made university possible:' exploring the opportunities created through online learning for commuter students to engage in higher education study

Rebecca Turner, Oliver Webb, Christie Pritchard

University of Plymouth, Plymouth, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Student Access and Experience (SAE)

Abstract

Commuter students represent approximately 25% UK university students. They often have caring responsibilities; work part time; and / come from lower-socio-economic backgrounds. Consequently, commuter students are potentially an important group for universities to focus on with respect to access and participation. Here we used first year students' residential status (i.e., whether they had relocated or were commuting to university) to capture data regarding students' attitudes toward online learning and academic engagement. Provisional analyses indicate differing behaviours in terms of study habits, peer collaboration and engagement with course-related activities according to residential status. They also indicate commuter students as holding positive dispositions toward online learning. These data may have implications for support that is provided to different student groups to create a sense of belonging and inclusion. We will consider this, as well as the role of online learning, in promoting the engagement of commuter students in this paper.

105 Unpacking the connections and complexities of UK commuter students' HE experiences.

Emma Maslin

Durham University, Durham, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Student Access and Experience (SAE)

Abstract

In the UK around a quarter of undergraduate students are considered 'commuters', yet little is still known about this group (Donnelly & Gamsu, 2018). Existing research has focused on what unites these students; their shared challenges and experiences across the student lifecycle. Nevertheless, this approach ignores the heterogeneity of this student group; their demographic characteristics, access barriers and HE experiences. This paper unpacks these complexities, exploring what connects and divides these students in their experiences in the context of empirical multi-sited ethnographic research across three universities in the North East & Yorkshire regions of the UK. Combined with a theoretical approach of Actor-network theory (ANT) to highlight the connections between and across institutions, this paper provides an innovative approach for exploring this topic and consequently problematises and unpacks the connections and complexities of UK commuter students' HE experiences in order to provide a richer understanding of this group.

351 When Life and Learning Are Separated: The Experience of International Students Taking Online Master Courses

Daian Huang

Research Domains

Student Access and Experience (SAE)

Abstract

The number of international students who take online degree courses provided by UK Higher Education Institutions is increasing, and universities are currently developing and shaping the related policies and provisions. As students' voices are important for universities to develop their policies and provisions, this paper unpacks the learning experience of 23 international students who took postgraduate taught courses online. It was found that the students tended to separate their learning from their daily life, they did not successfully build global connections, and their learning was restricted by the technologies to a certain extent. It is recommended that universities should better understand the needs of their students, provide opportunities for students to extend their learning to their daily life, create space for students to have deeper communication with each other and build connections beyond their studies, and carefully choose the use of technology to minimise students' difficulties and barriers.

Parallel Session 7:5

09:00 - 10:30 Friday, 8th December, 2023
Room 145
Chair Camille Kandiko-Howson

138 Are we answering the question that has been set? Exploring the gap between examinations research and practice in higher education

Alex Buckley

Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Learning, teaching and assessment (LTA)

Abstract

Despite a large amount of critical research literature, traditional examinations continue to be widely used in higher education. In this talk I will explore the role that methodology plays in the gap between research on exams and the way that exams are used. Drawing on Viviane Robinson's 'problem-based methodology' – which focuses on the need for researchers to engage with the priorities of practitioners – I will discuss the extent to which literature on exams published between 2016 and 2021 focuses on real-world assessment challenges. I will conclude that there is an absence of evidence about how practitioners make their decisions about assessments, which hinders the ability of assessment researchers to appropriately connect their work with practical assessment challenges. To make a difference, assessment research needs to live in the real world; a world which, at least as far as practitioners' assessment decisions are concerned, we do not yet sufficiently understand.

265 Research trends in the higher education feedback literature since the 'new paradigm' shift to learner-centred feedback practices

Kieran Balloo

University of Southern Queensland, Springfield, Australia. University of Surrey, Guildford, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Learning, teaching and assessment (LTA)

Abstract

The last decade has seen a shift in the feedback literature from a transmission-focused perspective to a 'new paradigm' of learner-centred feedback approaches. To understand research trends and 'hotspots' in the literature since this shift, bibliographic analysis was used to perform a science mapping of feedback literature within a higher education context. Web of Science's Social Sciences Citation Index was searched for literature on this topic since the new paradigm was first proposed in 2015. A keyword co-occurrence analysis was performed on 933 studies, and the following subtopics were identified: Student agency; self-regulation; online learning; student engagement; peer activities; student-supervisor dialogue; technology-enhanced feedback; assessment outcomes; e-feedback; and feedback information delivery modes. Research on peers as a source of feedback appears to dominate the field, so it might be beneficial to explore this hotspot further to determine whether the outcomes can inform and enrich future research in the other subtopics.

332 Shared language, shared values? An exploration of the embedding of policy discourses on learning & teaching and the illusion of 'best practice'.

Sarah Horrod

University of Nottingham, Nottingham, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Higher Education policy (HEP)

Abstract

University research seeks to have an impact on policy but there are valid questions around the types of policy ideas that universities themselves choose to adopt and embed within their own policies and practices. In this paper, I refer specifically to policies around 'learning & teaching'; that is, the field which addresses 'good practice' in teaching. To what extent do such policy ideas have a firm evidence base and are they really best practice? Or are they mainly responding to government agendas and a reflection of the socio-political context? Through analysis of policy texts and the way that ideas are 'recontextualised' into institutional guidelines and practices, I discuss discourses around 'policy embedding' and the notion of 'shared language' leading to 'shared values'. I address the issue of who defines what good practice is and consider whether policy discourses around learning & teaching simply create an 'illusion' of best practice.

Parallel Session 7:6

09:00 - 10:30 Friday, 8th December, 2023
Room 122
Chair Christine O'Dea

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356 Higher Education Attainment: Comparing education achievement between A-Level and non-A-Level students

Linda-Marie Nakibuuka

University of East Anglia, Norwich, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Student Access and Experience (SAE)

Abstract

This study examines the attainment disparities between A-Level only and Non-A-Level students in an attempt to understand to what extent students' prior qualifications predict educational progress and degree outcome. Using a mixed methods design, the study combines quantitative analysis and qualitative exploration of students' experiences. Preliminary results indicate significant performance differences between A-Level and non-A-Level students throughout their academic journey, with A-Level students consistently achieving higher grades. The performance gap narrows over time but remains significant, suggesting that purely academic pathways may provide better university preparation than vocational pathways. Further qualitative analysis will provide insight into students' experiences and their perceived preparedness. The findings will help to understand the factors contributing to attainment gaps in higher education and inform strategies to support students with different university entry qualifications.

296 Ethical Consumers: students' potential to reimagine the 'student as consumer' model of higher education

Martin Myers[1], Kalwant Bhopal[2]

[1]University of Nottingham, Nottingham, United Kingdom. [2]University of Birmingham, Birmingham, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Student Access and Experience (SAE)

Abstract

The ethos underpinning the marketisation of HE assumes students become discerning consumers empowered to exercise choice about the 'university offer' in an educational marketplace and this is one means of addressing inequalities in HE. We argue the 'student as consumer' model has reproduced inequalities of class and race that previously characterized HE. However, drawing on 53 interviews with students during Covid-19 lockdowns, an unforeseen potential for students acting as 'ethical consumers' emerged. Students demonstrated characteristics associated with being effective consumers investing time exploring options, contextualizing within prior experiences of education and planning their futures. They identified structural flaws in their schooling mirrored in universities; and, of being confronted by morally corrupt rather than economically free education markets. Ironically the neoliberal lens of 'choice' emerged as ethical rather market-led choices. Students identified patterns of inequality in higher education, specifically around race/racism and class, that dissuaded them from attending some universities.

108 The shifting goalposts of Digital Technology Skills in Scotland

Debbie Meharg, Tatiana Tungli

Edinburgh Napier University, Edinburgh, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Higher Education policy (HEP)

Abstract

Digital technologies and skills are critical to economic growth and embedded in everyday life[1]. This paper presents a work-in-progress study that examines the effect of education policy on digital skills within Scotland. Through literature analysis, exploring education policy over the last 10 years, this policy study found that despite numerous attempts and frameworks in place by the Scottish government, the digital technologies skills gap remains a challenge[2]. Although the pandemic is seen as a catalyst behind the fast adoption of digital technologies across institutions and the population, it also slowed down the progress of Scotland's digitalisation and implementation of the Government's frameworks[3] due to delayed infrastructure developments during this time. Over the last 10 years, the criteria and key areas included under the digital skills banner have altered significantly making progress difficult to track in an important area of policy development.

Parallel Session 7:7

09:00 - 10:30 Friday, 8th December, 2023
Room 140
Chair Michael O'Dea

124 Investing in degree apprenticeships: Analysing experiences through Conservation of Resources Theory

Ella Taylor-Smith, Sally Smith, Andrew Bratton

Edinburgh Napier University, Edinburgh, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Technical, Professional and Vocational Higher Education (TPV)

Abstract

Degree apprentices have reported finding work-life-study balance challenging. This study uses the Theory of Conservation of Resources (COR) to investigate the resources invested and gained by apprentices in the achievement of their goal of a degree while working. Interviews with final year apprentices (n=27) reveal the potential for apprentices to gain from their investment, even before they complete their degrees. COR Theory guides a Framework Method analysis. The findings indicate where more efficient involvement and investment, for example by workplace mentors, is rewarded with resource gain. Employers also gain resources, such as project outputs with the potential to save time and money. This situated perspective provides a new context in which to consider recent policy developments around graduate apprenticeships in Scotland, such as embedding Fair Work First principals. Our findings raise concerns for degree apprenticeship policy developments in England, such as reducing the minimum level of required off-the-job training.

391 A comparative exploration of capabilities and wellbeing among legal apprentices and law students

Caroline Casey[1], Anna Mountford-Zimdars[2], Sally Hancock[1]

[1]University of York, York, United Kingdom. [2]University of Exeter, Exeter, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Employability, enterprise and graduate careers (EE)

Abstract

This paper examines the impact of the new degree apprenticeship (DA) pathway on the development of wellbeing and capabilities among aspiring solicitors. Does greater security around career prospects in the DA pathway enhance the wellbeing of aspiring solicitors compared to undertaking the traditional university pathway? What happens when instead of loans, debt and insecurity, law students have a salary, no debt, and secure job prospects? We adopted a capabilities approach intersected with an inequalities lens to analyse interviews with 23 aspiring solicitors on both the university and the DA pathways. The interviews explored access to and experiences of both pathways, including how participants were able to develop and convert their social and cultural resources into key capabilities. This provided a meaningful way to make sense of participants' experiences. The findings across both pathways demonstrate an emphasis on valuing agency and developing all capabilities.

363 Chinese international students' silence in multicultural group work at a UK university: the fluid-construct nature

Yilan Guo

University of Manchester, Manchester, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Learning, teaching and assessment (LTA)

Abstract

Chinese international students' (CISs') prevailing silence in multicultural group work in UK higher education has been widely reported, and problematised, as academic deficits. Taking an inclusive stance of silence, this research re-evaluated the dichotomy between talk and silence and acknowledged their equal potential contribution to knowledge generation. Employing the Actor-Network Theory as the theoretical framework, this research conducted narrative interviews on 16 CISs at a UK university. The result showed that silence is not equal to soundlessness but could be verbalising behaviours, minimal talk, and regretting talking /messages sent during group communication and thus could sometimes be a way of engagement. Embodying the fluid-construct nature of CISs' silence, the research extended the dominant narrow understanding of CISs' silence from cultural and linguistic explanation and pointed out the necessity of a contextual-oriented investigation.

Parallel Session 8:1

11:00 - 12:30 Friday, 8th December, 2023
Room 139
Chair Daria Luchinskaya

150 TCoNTC – To Care or Not to Care Paper Series

Priscilla Omonedo, Uche Ogwude, Helen Higson

Aston University, Birmingham, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Learning, teaching and assessment (LTA)

Abstract

This paper discusses a series of cross-disciplinary pedagogic research-pieces on the role of the concept of care in Higher Education and its perception by staff and students. It seeks to outline a series of research papers which are being developed, with the aim of contributing to the body of research on students' perception of care, the attitude of faculties towards the subject of care, the impact of care on students' learning, and how insights into the phenomenon of care can be used to achieve better outcomes for students.

The paper builds on previous research on the dimensions of care, students' perceptions of care, the relationship between care-oriented practices and identified learning differences, and the care-needs of particular groups of students as informed by those identified learning differences.

The authors will provide an overview of the whole research paper series, its key themes, the methodologies being adopted, and some initial findings.

231 Care-Full Evaluation: navigating ethical challenges in policy and program evaluation with an ethics of care

Matt Lumb, Rhyall Gordon

University of Newcastle, Newcastle, Australia

Research Domains

Higher Education policy (HEP)

Abstract

The evaluation of policies and programs within and across higher education institutions in Australia and the UK is a field of applied research increasingly guided by toolkits, frameworks, organisations, and government policies and statements designed to support increased evaluation practice. This constellation of forces typically presents key tools of evaluation – such as credible evidence, rigour, expertise, accountability - as technical, uncontested, "value-free" terms with a clear, singular meaning and purpose. Work in the scholarship of evaluation has attempted to reclaim these tools as "value-full", politically charged and requiring decisions regarding their deployment. Recently, the notion of ethical conduct has appeared more prominently in these frameworks. In this paper, we illustrate how the four dimensions of an ethics of care (attentiveness, responsibility, competence and responsiveness) provide entry points for constructing shared participatory evaluation spaces and can also guide critical reflection and learning with regard to evidence, rigour and accountability.

92 The 10 wellness spheres to support student and staff health and wellbeing in a modern post 1992 university

Michelle Morgan

University of East London, London, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

Wellness spheres are an established concept and used in business, industry, health and education designed to improve the wellbeing of the individual and society. The number can range from anything from five to ten. 'Poverty' can occur in each of them and happens when someone does not have the personal attributes and capabilities that help or sustain one in adverse circumstances which include knowledge, skills and experience.

Poverty can be reduced and mental health and wellbeing improved Through the provision of relevant and timely advice, support and guidance.

This paper will provide a rationale for why the specific 10 wellness spheres were adopted at UEL; how they map to the study life cycle and the University Mental Health Charter; and the practical and interactive 'one stop shop' versions for students and for staff that have been created to help them access information, advice and support that is in one place.

Parallel Session 8:2

11:00 - 12:30 Friday, 8th December, 2023
Conference Room 3
Chair Richard Race

329 Conceptualizing, Strategizing and Advertising: Student Perceptions of Accessing Higher Education Institutions in the UK

Elizabeth Brown

University of Nottingham, Nottingham, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Student Access and Experience (SAE)

Abstract

Despite British admissions systems adjusting to dynamic social contexts, socioeconomic/cultural configurations and academic access are inextricably linked. Further, widening participation initiatives often intervene too late to yield any equalizing results. The aim of this study is to understand how students of diverse backgrounds conceptualise the ideal university applicant, perform as this ideal applicant and the information sources that underpin these actions. The intersecting elements of the British university application process are used in the design of this research with participants producing an outline/personal statement and participating in a mock interview to replicate the application process. These methods offer insight into the social foundations that underpin a students' understandings of how to advertise themselves during the admissions process. Bourdieu's concepts of capital, habitus and field are used to interpret participants' constructions of ideals, performance as these ideals and recognition of reputable information sources.

35 Revisiting the Robbins Report at 60: education for citizenship versus education for consumerism?

Josh Patel

Edge Foundation, London, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Higher Education policy (HEP)

Abstract

The Robbins Report (1963) remains revered as a symbol of state-funded 'social democratic' HE expansion, when HE was understood as a social good to prepare students for citizenship. At the same time the report is apparently contradictorily held by others as heralding the 'marketised' or 'neoliberal' funding regime oriented towards meeting national economic needs.

This paper demonstrates how in the Robbins Report education for citizenship and education for consumerism were intertwined. It argued that students' freedom to choose and to expect a return on investment in their education should be central to the size of HE. But students also needed a broad interdisciplinary education to best deploy their specialisms in the good, free society of liberal capitalism, a society under threat in the shadow of the Cold War. Robbins' holistic assessment of the value of HE points to one way to combat narrow economic assessments of the value of HE.

152 Student Activism, Plural Citizenships, and the Political Purpose of the University

James Harrison

Durham University, Durham, United Kingdom

Research Domains

Student Access and Experience (SAE)

Abstract

Citizenship, as a political and educational rather than legal concept, is rarely discussed in the UK higher education sector. This paper explores the troubled relationship between higher education and the concepts of citizenship and citizenship education, and the complications presented to this relationship by the persistent phenomenon of student activism. Informed by a holistic conception of plural and multiplex citizenship, as well as by the work of Jürgen Habermas on higher education, this paper sets out the conceptual underpinnings of a doctoral research project in which the disruptive potential of student activism provides a lens through which to consider the question of the political purpose of the university, as well as diverse forms of citizenship in HE, as they are experienced and practised by students. The paper concludes by outlining the methodology of a substantive piece of ethnographic fieldwork designed to investigate the questions posed in this paper.

Parallel Session 8:3 - Symposium

11:00 - 12:30 Friday, 8th December, 2023
Room 144

15 Doctoral admissions research in UK higher education: Foregrounding complex processes, cultures and inequalities

Research Domain

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Rationale

Within UK higher education, stakeholders have identified intersectional inequalities in access to postgraduate research. Barriers are faced by Black, Asian and minority ethnic students, gender minorities, and those with disabilities, amongst others, and there is a desire to shift these disparities (Department for Business, 2018; Lindner, 2020; Institute for Community Studies, 2022; NEON, 2022). Admissions processes have been identified as a site of investigation and intervention to transform inequalities in doctoral education (Milkman et al., 2018; Spencer-Oatey, 2020). There is a particular need to understand where inequalities surface in application rates, university offer gaps, funding status, and student offer acceptance.

Global knowledge production about inequalities in doctoral admissions is dominated by US-based research (e.g. Posselt, 2016). While these studies offer valuable critical analyses (e.g. of gatekeeping, ideas of merit and diversity), the US doctoral admissions system has important differences when compared to the UK. For example, while US scholars of doctoral admissions examine the use and abuse of Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) tests, holistic admissions, and the decision-making practices of admissions committees (Squire, 2020), these processes may be less relevant to the UK doctoral education system which involves different kinds of programmes, admissions criteria, and evaluation procedures. Equally, the histories and discursive constructions of social inclusion/exclusion also differ between contexts, as do the legal requirements which shape how institutions (e.g. universities, funding bodies) might intervene.

There are several arguments for increasing the profile of UK doctoral admissions research which are threaded through the papers in this symposium. First, there is a need for research that examines the taken-for-granted practices of doctoral admissions. While national statistics offer insights into who is and who is not accessing doctoral education (Office for Students, 2020), there is a need to examine doctoral admissions processes as an ordinary part of university life. The second argument relates to the first: examining the minutiae of doctoral admissions allows researchers to address questions that are difficult to answer from afar, such as who makes decisions that influence graduate admissions, how decisions are made, and what values (articulated or otherwise) shape this decision-making. Third, there is a need to deepen understandings of which communities may be disadvantaged through current doctoral admissions practices, advice cultures, and what the mechanisms of exclusion may be.

This UK-based symposium showcases current research on inequalities in doctoral admissions from a variety of perspectives and methodological orientations.

Chair

James Burford

Warwick University, Coventry, United Kingdom

Discussants

Emily Henderson

Warwick University, Coventry, United Kingdom

131 The role of doctoral programme directors and professional services staff in managing pre-application doctoral communications (PADC): Enablers and gatekeepers in doctoral recruitment?

James Burford[1], Sophia Kier-Byfield[1], Dangeni Dangeni[2], Emily Henderson[1], Ahmad Akkad[3]

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Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

Before submitting formal applications to study, prospective doctoral students often contact university staff to seek information and feedback. Despite such communication being commonplace in many disciplines, this stage of the admissions process remains informal and largely unregulated. Previous research on formal admissions revealed concerns about inequalities and exclusions that routinely occur. We argue it is necessary to extend consideration to inequalities that may occur at the pre-application stage. This paper reports on a multi-method institutional case study investigating the perspectives of supervisors, doctoral programme directors (DPGRs) and programme officers (POs). In this paper, we contextualise pre-application communications within wider admissions literature, share key findings about the role of DPGRs and POs in pre-application communications, and draw out key implications. The paper argues that pre-application communications are an important consideration in terms of inclusivity, and that a fuller understanding of all of those involved in screening and gatekeeping processes is needed.

132 '5 secrets they won't tell you': Analysing YouTube Advice Videos on Contacting a Potential Doctoral Supervisor

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Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

Aspiring doctoral researchers seeking guidance about locating and contacting a potential supervisor can access a range of advice, including institutional webpages, independent blogs, advice books and social media. Much guidance can also be found freely available on the internet, where videos are presented by 'insiders' including current/past students, academics and institutions. This paper analyses advice videos about initial supervisor contact found on YouTube. Situating the videos as texts in the doctoral advice genre, it analyses a sample to gain insight into their style, types of advice, contextual positionality and how they utilise notions of authority to communicate expertise. The paper demonstrates that whilst there is a wealth of doctoral admissions advice on YouTube that might be helpful, particularly for those without existing knowledge or the privilege of networks, these videos contribute to a complex advice market that requires critical scrutiny in terms of motivation and message.

195 'Knowledge or Skills': the implications of different conceptualisations of the purpose of the doctorate for admissions

Kelsey Inouye[1], James Robson[1], Paulina Rodriguez Anaiz[1], Sara Baker[2], Mona Jebril[2], Sonia Ilie[3]

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Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

Research demonstrates that there are notable differences in approaches to doctoral admissions and the criteria employed to select doctoral candidates across various disciplines (Mowbray & Halse, 2010; Mantai & Marrone, 2022). This paper examines how approaches to admissions are rooted in fundamental conceptions of the purpose of the PhD. Drawing upon 44 interviews conducted with academic staff at the University of Oxford, the findings focus on two disciplinary clusters distinguished by their core epistemological and ontological assumptions. We highlight how these assumptions, in turn, shape the fundamental understandings of the purpose of doctoral studies (knowledge production or human capital production) and influence the criteria and processes utilized in admissions procedures.

197 Factors shaping inequalities in the doctoral admissions process

James Robson[1], Kelsey Inouye[1], Paulina Rodriguez Anaiz[1], Sara Baker[2], Mona Jebril[2], Sonia Ilie[2]

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Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

This paper reports findings from a study examining how decisions to offer doctoral places are made and the factors that shape unequal doctoral admissions outcomes. As part of a wider project to develop fairer doctoral admissions at Oxford and Cambridge Universities, we undertook case studies of sixteen departments and two doctoral training centres across both universities. These focused on mapping the formal and informal doctoral admissions processes and practices that shape admissions outcomes. Data included semi-structured interviews with stakeholders involved in doctoral admissions and analysis of key admissions documents. We identify six key factors that shape selection decisions. However, findings also illustrate disciplinary variations and that selection decisions are embedded in highly complex social and institutional systems. Therefore, inequalities in doctoral admissions cannot be attributed to a single root cause, but are located in complex dynamics embedded in organizational culture, norms and behaviours. Approaches to disrupt these must be holistic.

Parallel Session 8:4

11:00 - 12:30 Friday, 8th December, 2023
Room 140
Chair Ella Taylor-Smith

187 Creative Lives: A Qualitative Study of Students' Creative Biographies

Jane Jensen

University of Kentucky, Lexington, USA

Research Domains

Learning, teaching and assessment (LTA)

Abstract

Creativity is often included as a buzzword of 21st century curricular goals alongside innovation and entrepreneurship. How do we teach it? How do students perceive it? This presentation shares the results of a phenomenological study exploring college students' creative life stories. How do they define creativity, the arts, and their own aesthetics relative to their past experiences, current field of study/major, and future plans? The research design included modified biographic narrative interviews with 25 undergraduates. This research provides insights on the ways that personal arts and creativity narratives inform students' understanding of critical thinking, personal freedoms, and their membership (or not) in creative communities. Implications include a discussion of the democratic potential of the explicit inclusion of creativity in the curriculum.

200 Conceptualising the sustainability agenda in higher education

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Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

Sustainability and sustainable development have become ever-present ideas in higher education. Universities around the world now commonly build principles of sustainability into their mission statements, strategic planning, curricula and organisational structures. Yet the increase in action and debate hides a lack of clarity as regards what sustainable development is, and how, if at all, universities might support its realisation. This paper presents a theoretical exploration of these questions, putting forward a conceptual frame for understanding the range of ways in which the sustainability agenda can be realised. It distinguishes between three forms of engagement: projective – the fostering of sustainability in the outside society through teaching, research and community engagement; expressive – integration of sustainability principles into the functioning of the institution; and constructive – critical engagement with the concept of sustainable development itself. Implications of this framework are drawn out for practice in higher education institutions in the contemporary era.

390 University identity: statutes and architectures

Michelangela Verardi

Institution Accademia del Lusso, Milan, Italy

Research Domains

Management, leadership, governance and quality (MLGQ)

Abstract

Drawing on Baudrillard's work on simulacra, this study aims to contribute to the OI literature by examining the statements and symbols of university identities. In a competitive environment, isomorphic processes challenge autonomy and standardise cultural processes. The well-established OI literature reflects a growing interest in organisational dynamics and is mainly limited to entrepreneurial organisations. While logos and slogans have been studied, statutes and architectures have been less explored. This research focuses on two Italian private universities. The results show that university identity is embodied in core values shared by the community. University culture is expressed through identity statements in the statutes, thus revealing the cultural matrix. The representation of identity through buildings, symbolic artefacts and location leaves impressions on stakeholders. Finally, statutes and architecture function as signs when they are not so far from the core values due to isomorphism. A new model of identity tools is proposed.

Parallel Session 8:5

11:00 - 12:30 Friday, 8th December, 2023
Room 141
Chair Tony Armstrong

252 International students and everyday multiculturalism: Rethinking 'connection' through evaluating the mundane

Jenna Mittelmeier

University of Manchester, Manchester, United Kingdom

Abstract

Research about international students has long considered their social network compositions, often assuming that friendship with home students equals a positive transition. Critiques are often made, both in scholarship and practice, of the tendency for international students to form friendship networks with fellow international students. Such friendships are often assumed to mean limited engagement with local communities or host cultures. This research counters these deficit narratives using the sociological framework of "everyday multiculturalism", which considers interactions with multiculturalism in small, mundane ways in daily life. Through a photo-elicitation narrative interview approach, data from 41 students are used to conceptualise how everyday living creates a sense of cultural learning and belonging. The implications provide considerations for the ways that grand gestures like friendship may miss the meaningful intercultural encounters that students experience in everyday life, while offering suggestions for how institutions can better facilitate positive social learning experiences within local communities.

244 Reflections on the complexities of using participatory methods for higher education research in South Africa

Mikateko Mathebula, Faith Mkwananzi

University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa

Abstract

In participatory research projects, gatekeepers play a key role in facilitating access to potential participants and research sites. However, the relationship built between researchers and gate keepers can be fraught with tensions that disrupt the quality of research. In this paper, we reflect on the challenges we faced in building a cooperative relationship with a community-based organisation. Our reflections are based on a project where photovoice was used to explore the pursuit of higher education for youth from an informal settlement in South Africa. In these reflections, we highlight the importance of enabling the development of narrative capabilities through photovoice (Walker and Mathebula, 2020) and argue that narrative capabilities should be foregrounded in the normative descriptions of applying photovoice in higher education research (Mathebula and Martinez-Vargas, 2021) particularly in the South African context.

196 The Research Landscape and the Development of Research Assessment Framework in Vietnam

Alastair Morrison[1], Raymond Lee[2], Thuy Thi Ngoc Bui[3], Milena Bobeva[1], Nga Nguyen[4], Dinh Tien Bui[5]

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Abstract

Excellence in research is vital to the socio-economic development in Vietnam. The purpose of this study is to understand the current research environment in Vietnamese universities and to seek the views of academic leaders about an assessment framework which will promote research development. Sixty-six academic leaders responded to a questionnaire designed for this study. It is shown that the financial investment of research is very limited in universities. The research environment may be hampered by the small number of PhD students. There are also often no post-doc appointments who constitute a major engine driving research. Academic leaders believe that outputs, research environment and socioeconomic impacts should be assessed, although the use of impact factors should be discouraged. Moreover, it is suggested that emphasis should be placed on assessing and developing the research environment to support long-term growth.

Parallel Session 8:6

11:00 - 12:30 Friday, 8th December, 2023
Room 122
Chair Fadia Dakka

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118 Employability as Learning Outcomes in Master's Degree Programmes: Cases in Education and Engineering Fields

Jisun Jung

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Research Domains

Employability, enterprise and graduate careers (EE)

Abstract

What are the learning outcomes of master's degrees in the Education and Engineering field? How do the learning outcomes at the master's level incorporate employability? Based on the qualitative document analysis, the learning aims and outcomes across all master's programmes in Education (n=81) and Engineering (n=95) in Hong Kong were reviewed. Keyword and thematic analysis were used to describe employability as learning outcomes at the master's level. The results showed that master's programmes in two fields emphasize an interdisciplinary approach as the essential employability. They focus on applying disciplinary knowledge to other disciplines and professions. In addition, most programmes highlight the recognition of programmes from the professional association and promote the license or qualification students can obtain upon degree completion. For the skills, they tend to emphasize the transferable skills in the learning outcomes; the curriculum content heavily relies on the technical skills.

248 Reflexive Narratives in the Third Space: A Morphogenetic Approach to Understanding the International Student Transition to the Labour Market

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Research Domains

Employability, enterprise and graduate careers (EE)

Abstract

This paper uses critical realism and postcolonial theories to investigate underlying socio-cultural mechanisms driving international students in their decisions and actions when transitioning from university to employment. For international students coming from the Global South (Asia, Africa, and Latin America), studying in a university in the Global North (US/UK/Germany) requires multiple steps of action involving a lot of money, effort, and time. Also, it places them in a consistent state of uncertainty and identity struggle from systemic racism, insecurity, and structural integration. This research utilises Homi Bhabha's (2004) concept of 'hybridity', and Roy Bhaskar's (1989) critical realist 'stratified ontology' to rethink international students' employability and provide an alternative perspective to understand the realities of the international student path to employment. The findings present the conditions that have enabled students to transition to the workplace and the underlying narratives behind the complex structure-agency interplays in their transition.

217 Assessing the Role of Teamwork Skills in Cybersecurity Graduates' Perceived Work Readiness

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Research Domains

Employability, enterprise and graduate careers (EE)

Abstract

The rapid growth of the cyber security field has led to increased demand for cyber security graduates from higher education institutions. However, industry criticism regarding graduates' perceived skill deficits has sparked a debate on the types of skills that higher education should prioritise: 21st century skills or technical cyber skills. To explore this, a survey was conducted with 95 cyber security undergraduates in Australia, investigating the role of teamwork skills – a key component of 21st century skills - in shaping graduates' perceived work competence and social intelligence. Using structural equation modelling, the study identified significant associations between students' perceived teamwork skills, and their work competence, and social intelligence, explaining 48% and 57% of the respective relationships. These findings underscore the necessity of incorporating teamwork skills within cybersecurity curricula across higher education programs, to holistically prepare students for the multifaceted challenges of the modern workforce.

Parallel Session 8:7

11:00 - 12:30 Friday, 8th December, 2023
Room 145
Chair Richard Davies

353 Academic inbreeding and faculty research capabilities: exploring tenure track rules and mechanisms in four traditional universities in Peru, Chile and Colombia

Monica Bonifaz

Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, Lima, Peru

Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

The relationship between academic inbreeding and scientific productivity show that the results may be considered inconclusive, however this is not a minor phenomenon and deserves greater attention from alternative perspectives. This study analyzes how endogamous practices emerge and formalize within tenure track systems, shaping the research capabilities of their academic communities. To do so, a comparative case study of the tenure track systems of four traditional universities in Peru, Chile, and Colombia was conducted. Our analysis reveals that unclear or misaligned signaling to institutional goals, low institutional representativeness in the composition of evaluation committees, the absence of external peers, and weak incentives or control mechanisms throughout the academic career trajectory are conducive conditions for academic inbreeding. In these cases, the formation of academic communities with low research capabilities and the development of elites were observed, to the detriment of the development of critical masses of professors with robust research capabilities.

327 The collaborations you do not get by pressing a button: hierarchical tensions in large collaborative research clusters in the social sciences and humanities

Lautaro Vilches

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Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

The collaborative turn in STEM and particularly in Big Sciences is well-consolidated and more recently it has also reached the SSH (Olechnicka et al., 2019) as the collaborative model based on large research clusters has been translated – if not imposed – onto the SSH alongside excellence agendas (Borlaug & Langfeldt, 2020). This qualitative study deploys grounded theory approaches and includes 30 informants belonging to all academic ranks. Preliminary findings reveal the ubiquitous presence of hierarchical tensions, but what are they properties? Where can they be found? What does it mean for collaborations? I suggest to approach these tensions across spaces and places (Livingstone, 2003; Massey, 1994), in formal collaborative settings or informal spaces; delving into the access to the research cluster; and comparing experiences beyond the research cluster. Hence, this paper also sheds lights on the impacts excellence agendas have on the collaborative practice in the SSH.

149 Academics' Understanding and Experiences of Leadership in Omani Higher Education

Salim Al Maqbali

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Research Domains

Management, leadership, governance and quality (MLGQ)

Abstract

This qualitative research explores how academics at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS) in Oman understand and experience leadership. Semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and analysis of secondary documents were used to collect data.

The findings indicate that senior academics (deans and assistant deans), predominantly identify themselves as "leaders" framed within a wider discourse of leadership. In contrast, faculty staff at lower levels of the organisational hierarchy tend to view senior academics as 'managers'. By contrast, thematic analysis reveals that the experiences and descriptions of organisational work practices by both groups are strongly influenced by bureaucratic-administrative processes and personal networks. As such, the study highlights the complex and contradictory nature of organisational life practices, characterised by the coexistence of personal networks within a largely buried bureaucratic model under the weight of a leadership discourse embraced by senior academics and a contrasting management discourse perceived by other academics.