Changing the Culture of the Campus: Towards an Inclusive Higher Education - Ten Years on

Papers from the 18th Annual Conference of the
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The European Access Network

The European Access Network encourages wider access to higher education for those who are currently under-represented, whether for reasons of gender, ethnic origin, nationality, age, disability, socio-economic status, family background, vocational training, geographic location, or earlier educational disadvantage. The EAN is the only European-wide, non-governmental organisation for widening participation in higher education. It is organised for educational purposes and operates under English Law. Membership is international and is open to all those with an interest in access, equity, diversity and inclusion. The EAN's objectives are:

- to promote effective policies and negotiate resources for wider participation in higher education
- to undertake collaborative research and development programmes on access issues
- to share information on, and provide mutual support for, access developments
- to co-operate with other international and national bodies to promote wider participation
- to analyse access philosophy within and between member states
- to share pedagogical strategies and multi-cultural curriculum approaches
- to explore professional and political issues which promote wider participation
- to encourage international exchanges among access students and staff

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Changing the Culture of the Campus: Towards an Inclusive Higher Education – Ten Years on.
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The EAN annual conference in York in 2009 revisited a topic which lies at the heart of facilitating participation in higher education for underrepresented groups: the necessity of changing the culture of the campus to meet the requirements of an increasingly diverse student population. In the ten years that have passed since EAN last addressed this issue much has changed, but as this conference clearly demonstrated, there is still a long way to go. Not only is it a matter of adjusting the culture of the campus to meet the incoming students but there is also a need to take the issue of employability into consideration. Educating students to unemployment is not viable.

The tone of the conference was set by the opening keynote speaker, Professor Robert Cuthbert of the University of the West of England, who considered the social purposes of higher education and demonstrated that the purported choice between access and quality is an anti-academic, anti-educational, and anti-intellectual argument. He maintained that we need to re-examine some of the boundaries we take for granted and move beyond the idea of barriers to access and participation.

Dr Barbara Ischinger of the OECD directorate for education reviewed the current and future context for higher education and highlighted some of the OECD international initiatives designed to help countries to value diversity, promote equity and ensure quality.

In his plenary address, Professor Stuart Billingham of York St. John University argued that we need to link the agenda of widening participation to the broader goals of higher education, in particular the transformative potential of a higher educational experience.

Marion Coy, President of the Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology in Ireland asked how those of us working in higher education access the ‘worlds’ in which the students live. When we discuss ‘access’ and ‘inclusiveness’ are we simply considering ‘targets’ for participation or are we examining issues of engagement, she wondered. She argued that access is a matter of culture, values and engagement and higher education institutions must pay more attention to the ‘real world’ of students. The final plenary speaker, Tricia Jenkins of Liverpool University, gave a lively overview of how the University had achieved recognition nationally and internationally for its work in widening participation and had been singled out in a British Government White Paper as a socially inclusive research-elite university.

If we should attempt to summarise the plenary sessions, three key words contingent on each other would seem to emerge: opportunity – physical, economic but primarily mental;
engagement – on all levels from all sides; and communication. Opportunity requires engagement, which depends on communication.

The individual papers and workshops addressed and illustrated these issues from many different angles and in a large variety of contexts, thus giving the conference attendees an excellent overview of what has been achieved and what the directions for continued work in the field might be.

The papers presented in this selection provided a good cross-section of the contributions. The use of theatre courses to assist students with mental health problems and the social challenges such students face are discussed by Rowe. The increasing discrepancy between the numbers of males and females attending higher education is a major topic of concern and Speirs describes a research-informed program to address male academic under-achievement in low participation districts. Dell and Wood examine an enquiry-based approach to global learning through a community of enquiry process in the classroom. Two interrelated papers (Greek and Jonsmoen, and Hedemann) present various features of a project at Oslo University College to develop “successful educational practices promoting a diverse learning environment” with one particular aspect concentrating on the lack of language proficiency in non-native nursing students, language and social interactions skills being of vital importance for success. The paper by Klumpp and Carlitz examines the question of access and inclusion for persons outside the signatory countries of the Bologna Process in European higher education. They underline the need to devise instruments for evaluating and recognising qualifications and provide some German examples. A different perspective is presented by Gwosć in an empirical analysis of cost-sharing for higher education between the public and private sides in six European countries. Finally, in a paper by Vidaček-Hainš et al. the need to meet the specific needs of individual students while ensuring the acquisition of the prescribed competences is discussed, with examples of the most common problems faced by students.

I hope that you will find these papers of interest and that they will provide a stimulus for the discussion and implementation of further measures to meet the requirements of all groups as regards higher education.

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Bridging the Divide: Supporting people who use mental health services to enter higher education

Nick Rowe

Abstract

People with mental health problems can find it difficult to access good quality educational opportunities. The stigma that surrounds mental health and the social challenges that face a new student can seem daunting. As a means of creating a bridge into education that is both supportive and of good quality, the Faculty of Arts at York St John University offer theatre courses for users of mental health services. These courses are taught by tutors and third year students.

The project is a collaboration between the university and local mental health service providers. It is an innovation in line with current agendas with regard to widening participation and lifelong learning in the Higher Education sector and to social inclusion in the mental health field. It offers valuable ways for students to develop the attitudes and insights needed to work with people who use mental health services and it inevitably challenges the cultural attitudes that surround mental illness.

This paper discusses the development of the project and identifies the lessons learned so far based on participant and student evaluations.
There is no reason for thinking
That, if you give a chance for people to think and live,
The arts of thought or life will suffer and become rougher,
And not return more than you could ever give.
(Louis MacNeice, The Autumn Journal)

...research shows that active involvement in the arts – whether by volunteering, taking a painting class or joining a music group – can have a profoundly positive effect on patients’ wellbeing, particularly patients suffering from mental illness, or at risk of developing mental health problems.
(Alan Johnson, Health Secretary, September 2008)

BACKGROUND

People with mental health problems can find it difficult to access good quality educational opportunities. The stigma that surrounds mental health and the social challenges that face a new student can seem daunting. The stress of starting in Higher Education (HE) for people who have experienced mental health problems has been clearly documented by Jacklin, Robinson et al (2007). The transition into HE, the social pressures, the fear and possibility of relapse and the pressures of assignments and exams can make it difficult for students to sustain a full-time three-year degree. When people have had long histories of mental health problems or have had acute episodes that are sensitive to stress and changes, these difficulties are compounded and can seem insurmountable.

This paper will describe and analyse a project developed at York St John University that aims to provide a bridge into education that is both supportive and of good quality. It offers a model that we suggest can provide a means through which people who have used mental health services can access higher education experience that is flexible, supportive and of good quality. The model can be described as follows:

To offer good quality educational opportunities to people who use mental health services. These will be taught by tutors and full-time students. As far as possible these courses will be aligned with undergraduate and postgraduate modules (e.g. modules in applied theatre and in community dance). In the future we hope that students on these courses will have the option to accumulate credits.

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1 Aligned modules: in the first developments (in theatre, dance and perhaps music) our students will fulfil their module requirements on these courses. Student and service-user educational opportunities are, to some extent, aligned in this model.
The project is a collaboration between the university and local mental health service providers. It is an innovation in line with current agendas with regard to widening participation and lifelong learning in the Higher Education sector and to social inclusion in the mental health field. It offers valuable ways for full-time students to develop the attitudes and insights needed to work with people who use mental health services and it inevitably challenges the cultural attitudes that surround mental illness.

Perhaps the most valuable characteristic of this model is that it aligns the teaching of full-time students with educational opportunities for people who use mental health services. The full-time students learn a great deal about working alongside people who use mental health services. They are able to discuss issues related to participation and inclusion as they come up in the work and they learn how to adapt theatre for others. We would suggest that this model be extended to other academic disciplines within the university. We are offering a dance course this semester run by third year dance students on a community module and we have plans to develop similar work in music and, perhaps, fine art in the coming year.

Recognition of the potential and value of this model has persuaded the general manager of the mental health recovery services in the local NHS Trust to create a new post. The Education Support Worker will work between the mental health service and the university to develop new educational opportunities for people who use mental health services. He or she will work with our full-time students and staff to make this possible.

Issues of identity, labelling and stigma are ubiquitous in the experience of people who have used mental health services. These issues are always present in nomenclature: what is the least derogatory and un-stigmatising term to use for people who have used mental health services? In our work at the university we cannot escape these difficult decisions. In this project and in this article we will use the term ‘student’ to denote those who are participating in the course and ‘full-time students’ for those who are on the full-time BA Theatre degree.

**BEGINNINGS**

In January 2007 some tutors and full-time students on the BA Theatre degree offered *An Introduction to Theatre* course for local people who use mental health services. The course was advertised among mental health professionals and introductory meetings were held for those interested. Somewhat unusually, in our experience of working with people who use mental health services, the course recruited very well – in fact we had to close it to new applicants and, perhaps even more unusually, the drop-out rate was very low. The course included an introduction to lighting and staging, devising, working with character, text, street performing, theatre visit and performance. The course was taught by tutors and third year full-time theatre students.
We were very clear that we wanted to advertise and deliver the course within an ‘educational frame’. We were very wary of using any language that might suggest some sort of therapy or group-work experience. We considered that this would be inappropriate in a university environment and more importantly it would be unattractive to potential students. The educational model also conforms to the ambition of mental health professionals to provide educational and day services in valued and ‘normal’ community settings. Accordingly, we settled on the following aims:

1. To offer a valued and high quality educational opportunity for people who have used mental health services in the York area.
2. To challenge the dynamics of social exclusion that make it difficult for people who have used mental health services to access good quality educational opportunities.
3. To provide an opportunity for students to discuss how they might further their interest in theatre either through enrolling on courses at York St John University or through local theatre groups.
4. To provide an opportunity for full-time students on the BA theatre degree to work alongside people who use mental health services.

The success of the course led us to develop the model and at the time of writing we offer two sequential courses: An Introduction to Theatre and Working toward Performance, which culminated in a performance at the Faculty of Arts Festival in May 2009. 32 people who use mental health services have participated in these courses and 10 full-time theatre students have been involved in the teaching. Some of those who have completed the two courses have now formed a theatre company: Out of Character.

Many of the students on the courses are entering university premises for the first time or are returning to study after a long period of illness. The project is providing a supportive opportunity to build up confidence and to consider possible futures in higher education. For this to happen, there needs to be support and flexibility of provision. We are working closely with the university disability unit to achieve the former and are developing an accredited flexible pathway of study to ensure the latter.

**PEN PICTURES**

We offer some pen pictures here of students who have been involved in the projects. Pseudonyms are used and we have changed some of the details to maintain anonymity.

Ben is 26 years of age. He is a remarkably talented actor; in fact one of the best we have come across. He went to university but due to mental health problems was unable to complete. He began our second introductory course in October 2008. Now he is a very
enthusiastic member of *Out of Character*. “All I want to do is perform”. He is very keen to do our BA Theatre course. The problem is that he has already done 2 years of a degree and so would need to fund this himself. It is a problem that our disability service is trying to resolve.

Lawrence is in his early 30s. He has a long and damaging experience of obsessive compulsive disorder. He has attended our courses for 18 months and is now the designer for *Out of Character* producing detailed and unusual work for the company.

Michael told me that when he was in the midst of a disturbing psychotic illness he wrote pages upon pages of imaginary, sparkling, outlandish, stream of consciousness poetry and prose. It was his way of keeping some sense of control of his thoughts; it provided a way of channelling his psychic energy. Now in recovery and having attended our theatre courses, on and off, for 18 months, he has written for *Out of Character*. Last summer we set *The Thirty Second Challenge*, a writing project that invited students to write a play, no more than 30 seconds in length, which would be performed by the company. Michael has written a piece which is now part of the company’s repertoire.

Amy is a full-time theatre student. She has worked with me on the project throughout her third year. One of the students, referring to Amy said, ‘I made friends with one of them, she’s from Birmingham and I’m from Birmingham and I love her to bits.’ Amy is now doing the MA in Applied Theatre.

**WIDENING PARTICIPATION, SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND MENTAL HEALTH**

For York St John University the term widening participation describes:

The objective of, and processes for, continuous and sustainable enhancement of the accessibility of the University to all those individuals, groups and communities for whom such engagement has not been typical but who have the potential to benefit from it.

People whose mental health problems have excluded them from higher education or led to them leaving before the conclusion of their studies may benefit substantially from widening participation initiatives. In the case of this group the social, cultural and historical forces that have been at work to exclude them from HE are deeply ingrained and require ‘continuous and sustainable enhancement’.

The Government’s *Social Exclusion Unit* suggests that there are a number of building blocks needed to promote social inclusion, two of which are particularly relevant to our project:
1. **Inclusive communities:** a reduction of stigma and discrimination within the local community to support reintegration and the acceptance of people with mental health problems as equal citizens. (SEU 2004)

2. **Promoting broader social participation:** education, training or volunteering, particularly in mainstream settings, can increase employment prospects as well as being valuable in their own right. They can help build self-confidence and social networks, as can sports and arts activities. (SEU 2004)

It is the intention of this project to promote inclusion and social participation by inviting mental health service users into the university and, in many very important respects, this work has been popular and successful. There is, however, a risk that we will create another *stigmatised enclave* within the university, which only full-time students and staff involved in the project will enter. Michael White recognises this concern when he writes of arts projects that have tended to:

... *demonstrate more of a bonding than a bridging (my emphasis) form of social capital, i.e. they create supportive links between people in the target group but may be less successful in linking the group into the wider community. Overcoming barriers to integration should therefore be a key aim of arts and mental health projects.*
(White 2003)

This is a major challenge to the project as it grows and progresses. There are some promising signs we will discuss later but there are also exclusionary dynamics that need constant monitoring. In the next section I will discuss how the project has sought to create an inclusive community of learners and promote broader social participation. The contradictions and tensions that have become evident when a university is engaged in this work will be discussed.

**LESSONS LEARNED**

**Being in a university: the transformative power of space**

From the outset of this project it was very important that this work took place in a university. Universities are still places of privilege and status and they confer a role on those who enter them as students very different from that of a psychiatric service.

Space contextualizes an activity and gives it meaning. It shapes – and is shaped by - those who enter it. It is, as Lefebvre tells us, ‘social morphology’ (Lefebvre 1991 p.95). Space shapes expectation and, to a considerable extent, it shapes roles. What has been very interesting in our experience of this course is that people rarely talk to us about their mental health problems. They rightly see themselves as students and behave as such. The use of a good quality performance space, the black box studio and the lighting all shape expectations and, to some
extent, the identities within it. The space suggests a particular relationship to self, to the body and to each other that challenges the labels that surround mental health.

As one of the students said about the visit to the space before the course began:

*I loved the rehearsal room and its ambience. When I walked in on the first day and saw the lights and the blackout curtains, I knew this was going to be good.*

Another said:

*And I always wanted to know what this college looked like inside, 'cos I thought, you know, it'd have been lovely to have worked in a college like this, rather than a dumpy college in the east end of London where they didn't have much finance.*

**Being in a university: the transformative power of education**

It is our intention to maintain the focus on theatre-making, not on the problems and issues that may be part of students’ experience. This does not mean that we discourage conversation and work about mental health experience but it does mean that we do not foreground it.

*Take this example:*

On the first session of the course we use an exercise in which we ask a volunteer to come onto the stage, sit on a chair, with the strict instructions not to ‘act’ in any way. Before we do this, the students are introduced to Peter Brook’s opening line in his book *The Empty Space*:

*I can take an empty space and call it a bare stage. A man (or woman) walks across this empty space while someone else is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged.*

(Brook 1972 p.1)

The audience is asked to look at the ‘actor’ and decide what is happening. The aim of the exercise is to demonstrate and explore how little is needed for theatre to take place and to emphasise the crucial role of the audience. The focus is one concerned with theatre-making and the discussion revolves around these issues. But, of course, the exercise inevitably raises personal issues: being seen, watched by others, being exposed alone on stage. I am very aware that people often - with a great deal of courage - challenge themselves to go onto the stage but we do not talk about this in any detail, except in acknowledging the risk they have taken in taking the stage.

One of the students spoke to us about this exercise:
...by the end of it, I was actually sitting on the stage bit, just sitting there, so that people could imagine a story behind me, and that was the first time I was here and I thought ‘my god, I’ve done that and that was my first time here’....I really did surprise myself, and from then on, each session I’ve become more confident and we started doing little scripts and little plays and er, yeah, it really brought me out of myself.

We are not a mental health service provider. If we became one, then the expectations and disciplines of university life would be lost. In our view it is the educational task – in this case the theatre one – that is transformative.

**Taking a light touch with mental health experiences**

Issues of identity have been central to the history and experience of people who have used mental health services. The impact of labelling, over-definite or premature diagnosis (particularly of schizophrenia and personality disorder) and the stigma attached to these have often been more of a problem for people who use mental health services than the actual ‘mental health problem’ itself. John Tew writes:

> The basis of a holistic approach in mental health must be to move beyond a practice that is inherently stigmatizing, one that imposes or reinforces splits between ‘normal’ people and those suffering distress, or tends to define the totality of a person in terms of their ‘pathology’ (2002).

Some of the most interesting discussions we have had with students on the course have concerned whether or not they create theatre that directly addresses mental health issues. We recently invited students to complete a questionnaire in which they were asked: do you want to create work about mental health issues? The choices were: ‘never’, ‘sometimes’, ‘most of the time’ and ‘always’. All who completed the questionnaire chose ‘sometimes’. There is not surprisingly a reluctance to focus on mental health issues (‘I want to forget about all that’; ‘I am interested in much more than that’) and a determination not to deny an important aspect of their lives (‘we can’t deny it’; ‘it is a pool of material for making theatre that we all share’). For each person there seems to be a balance to be struck between over-identification with what is, after all, only one part of their lives and, at the same time, a refusal to hide the reality of the experience

These issues of identity have perhaps caused me more anxiety and sleepless nights than any other aspect of this work. My worries can be summarised thus:
a) Because the course is designed for people who use mental health services does it reinforce that identity or does the creation of an educational opportunity in a university environment give people the space to transcend it?

b) As the work develops it starts to attract funding and as this happens, there is a perverse incentive to keep people on the courses so that we can provide evidence of the numbers of people involved.

c) Where are my, and the full-time students’, boundaries in relation to students? The nature of drama and theatre is, as Mike White says, to push ‘against barriers, boundaries and pre-conceptions’ (2003). We find ourselves shifting identities. Must the tutor remain apart? Yes, often he or she must. If only to hold the frame intact so we all know where we are.

d) How do we respond to non-attendance? How much encouragement do we give people to attend? The reality is that we give far more than we do to our regular undergraduate students.

Support, Mutual support and invisible mentoring

It is important to offer support, particularly in the early stages of a person’s involvement in the project. It is crucial to know where to draw the boundaries: we are not a mental health service provider and it is not our role to provide counselling or support of students who attend the courses. Nevertheless, there are three sources from which new students can gain support:

a) From staff and university students. We have learned that it is best to focus that support on the issues that make it difficult for a participant to engage in theatre and learning. In that sense we act rather like the personal tutor in a university setting who tends to confine support to issues that relate to the student experience.

b) In our experience, support is also available from other students on the course who may well know people and who are often very sensitive to the problems people are facing in doing the course. Last year we experimented with a mentoring system in which we invited more people who had already done the course to attend in the role of mentor. One person asked to do this coined the term ‘invisible mentoring’ by which he meant offering support without making that explicit.

c) The university disability service is able to offer support to students who wish to make use of it. This can be particularly helpful when a student expresses an interest in formalising their study at the university.

Taking ‘time out’

We have learned that is important to be flexible to allow people to take time out from the courses. There are times when students feel less able to come and need a break. This needs to
be recognised and accepted; however we do say very clearly that we want students to attend all sessions and let us know if they are unable to attend. One of the students spoke about this need for support to have ‘time out’.

...because all of us have been through difficulties in our life, as a group we’re very supportive of each other and we don’t pry. (…) but if they are ill at the time or they have some problems, then we will be supportive to them and ask them how they are, but not pry into what’s going on. And I think that’s lovely...

**From twilight to daylight: involving the university**

At first we began this work in the early evenings. In some senses it was a ‘twilight course’ invisible to all except those who took part in it. This is a central feature of the long history of the invisibility of mental health. It is only in the last quarter of a century that the experience and circumstances of those labelled with mental health problems have become more visible. It is not surprising then that our course should begin in the twilight hours. Gradually, however, this has changed. The performance of *Out of Character* at the Faculty of Arts *Create ’09* Festival, the support of the university and the creation of the Education Support Worker post have made the project more visible to the university.

**CONCERNS AND PROMISING SIGNS**

Not surprisingly perhaps, as the work of this project becomes more visible in the university, negative as well as positive reactions are to be expected. A university after all reflects the attitudes of the wider culture with respect to mental health issues. The following details evidence of this and offers some concerns and promising signs:

a) Early on one of the students was turned away from the Students’ Union when he went for a drink after the course.

b) One of the students was stopped by University security guards on his way to the course.

c) A student was asked to leave the dining room because the staff thought he was a ‘vagrant’.

d) Five students came to performances at the *Create ’09* university arts festival.

e) Four students came to the final third year student farewell party after being invited by full-time students.

f) The students can get associate student membership of the Students’ Union.

g) *Out of Character* performed at the *Create ’09* university arts festival.

h) *Out of Character* has been asked to perform at the launch of the second year occupational therapy mental health modules.

i) One student has joined a theatre group made up of current full-time students.
CONCLUSION

In this article I have detailed the development of a project which I think offers a valuable model for the inclusion of people with enduring mental health problems in higher education. This is early days and, as I have discussed, there are significant issues and contradictions for us to grapple with that reflect the long history of stigma related to this group. Nevertheless with the employment of an education support worker, whose role will be to coordinate, develop and widen the model beyond theatre, we anticipate that the presence of people who use mental health services in the university will be more visible and the invisible barriers that lie between a mental health hospital and a university can be challenged.

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Males and Higher Education: Can the Olympic Charter help?

Neil Speirs

Abstract

The academic under-achievement of males has proved controversial with many authors reluctant to acknowledge it. As a result, the explanation for this under-achievement has itself been open to controversy with little flexibility shown by either side of the argument. Deeper analysis of the subject reveals that it is socio-economic status that is the real predictor for under-achievement with males particularly at risk. Quick fix programs have proved popular but not necessarily wise. This paper presents on a research-informed novel widening participation program that aims to address male academic under-achievement in low participation neighbourhoods.

INTRODUCTION

For a number of years data have continually suggested that males are underachieving academically. The initial line of enquiry must be ‘compared with what?’ or indeed ‘compared to whom?’ The answer appears rather simple in that current males have underachieved in comparison to their male peers of the past and indeed their female peers of the present. The increasing academic achievement of females must, of course, be celebrated yet it is the curiosity of the prevailing academic under-achievement of males that appears to demand explanation.

Politics and the Media

David Blunkett MP was not the first to comment (The Observer, 2000) on the issue when in 2000 he said;

We face a genuine problem of under-achievement among boys, particularly those from working class families. This under-achievement is linked to a laddish culture which in many areas has grown out of deprivation and a lack of both self-confidence and opportunity.
Editorials in the popular press and television specials have been happy to raise, discuss and sometimes mislead on this issue (Panorama 1994, The Guardian 1998, The Times Educational Supplement 1998) while government has also, understandably, commented on it. Scottish Office documents such as ‘Raising Standards-Setting Targets’ and ‘Targeting Excellence – Modernising Scotland’s Schools’, were published in the late 1990’s. These publications directly refer to the gender differences in attainment. More recently in 2007 the U.K. government stated that ‘we are increasingly concerned about male participation’ in HE (DFES 2007).

The language used to describe these underachieving males has also been of interest. In 1998 Stephen Byers MP (The Guardian 1998) argued, perhaps less sympathetically than Blunkett would two years later, that boys’ so called laddish attitudes were impeding their progress at school. The use of the term lad or laddish (Willis 1977) was first suggested by Willis in the 1970’s in order to describe a group of white working class, anti-school boys. Regardless of the nomenclature employed, this group of boys are surely not realising their potential.

Differences in Behaviour

It is clear that thus far there is no unified theorem to explain why boys are underachieving when compared with their female peers. Indeed, it would be rather naïve to assume that such an outcome could be realised. Authors have instead focused on gathering the variables that appear to influence this observed under-achievement.

The disregard for authority, academic work and formal achievement that boys display, is proposed to be part of a macho gender regime. (Harris et al 1993; Rudduck et al 1996) However, the lengths that boys will go to in order to conceal any interest in or involvement with class work is incredibly sophisticated. These extenuated efforts are made in order to preserve the individual’s status within their peer group. (Younger et al 1996, Warrington et al 1999) Boys, in order to be accepted by other boys and avoid social exclusion, act in line with peer group norms and these norms are very often in direct conflict with the ethos of participating constructively in the classroom environment. (Skelton 2001; Martino & Pallotta-Chiarolli 2003; Tinklin 2003). Indeed, it has been argued that the blunt reality is that educational success is viewed as sissy and non masculine. (Francis 1999)

Girls, on the other hand, are noted to behave somewhat differently in the classroom. Teachers often see girls as less challenging to deal with (Younger et al 1996; Warrington et al 1999; Tinklin 2003). This is proposed to be a reflection of girls’ increased maturity and more effective learning strategies. Girls are also perceived as better organised with more sophisticated communication skills, more articulate, more confident and far better at learning independently. (Warrington et al 2000; Boaler 1997; Gipps 1996). This has, of course, been clarified by some authors as a result of class work which benefits from the systematic and cumulative approach
favoured by girls (Younger et al 1996, Warrington et al 1999). What we are observing is quite a shift in opinion from the 1980’s when it was girls that were marginalised by teachers (Younger et al 1996, Warrington et al 1999). The notion of differential gender interactions between pupils and teachers in the classroom was documented by Younger et al in 1999. Yet, is it not correct that every boy and girl should expect their teacher to divorce the gender of the pupils in their class from the quality and frequency of interaction they have with their pupils? Understandably, differential interactions exist in the classroom; the differential, when executed subtly, can be part of a strong teaching strategy - a teacher using their expertise to get the very best out of every boy and girl. Yet the classroom experience of teachers clearly seems to be that in general girls are more respectful and cooperative while boys appear to fulfil the laddish definition of Willis. In fact, one author noted that some teachers felt that the gender gap in attainment was not a cause for concern as boys tend to catch up. (Tinklin 2001.)

**Socio-economic Status**

While gender differences in performance unite classrooms throughout the world (Sutherland 1999) if one digs deeper into the issue, a hugely significant variable becomes visible. Socio-economic status outweighs gender (Tinkling 2001) considerably as a predictor for academic success. One author (Francis 1999) wryly noted that only since the achievements of middle and upper class boys have been overtaken by those of middle and upper class girls has the discourse on under-achievement begun. The power that social background has over academic attainment has been well documented (Burnhill et al 1990; Paterson 1991; Sammons 1995). Indicators such as residing in council or rented accommodation (Biggart 2000) or a father with a low social-class occupation (Biggart et al 2005) all show increased chance of poor academic achievement. In response to transposing the gender issue and socio-economic status, Collins et al, (2000) formed a ‘which boys, which girls’ approach to under-achievement. The authors note that poverty is the primary indicator for attainment for both male and female; the effect is however greater for males. The Higher Education Policy Institute (2009) added weight to the debate by noting that socio-economic status was the main predictor for participation in HE. The report interestingly shows that within socio-economic classes 4-7 females have a participation rate 5.8 percent greater than males. However, comparing this group of males with those from classes 1-3 the difference is 19.5 percent and for the corresponding females 21.5 percent. The argument is clear, while there is a gender issue; the socio-economic issue is of greater intensity. The so called ‘which boys, which girls’ approach seems entirely appropriate.

**Higher Education**

The Scottish funding council reported in 2006 (SFC, 2006) that women were 25 percent more likely than men to enter higher education. The report went on to note that school attainment
was the most important factor in deciding whether applications to higher education institutes are accepted. With girls outperforming boys at all levels of attainment one can easily note how the phenomenon feeds itself. The feminisation theory (Gilder 2005, Griffiths 2006) of higher education, which some authors subscribe to, often refers to the idea that an academic culture that values emotional literacy and people skills has in fact begun to dumb down and will produce feminised students. Indeed some authors (Hayes 2005) treat the issue in a rather tabloid fashion referring to the march of emotionalism through the lecture theatres of the U.K.. Others (Furedi 2003) refer to the development of a therapy society within our universities. One cannot help but be rather confused (Leathwood et al 2009) and disappointed by the childish misogyny and feminist absolutism that exists on both sides of the debate. It would appear that some authors are entrenched on one side or the other of the debate and that the name-calling of the playground thrown back and forward by girls and boys is ripe in adulthood. However, one cannot but be aware of the attributional bias that Cohen referred to (Cohen 1998) when he noted that when boys and men do well it reflects their inherent ability, when they do badly it is a result of external factors such as a feminised education system, whereas girls and women’s achievements are explained as having nothing to do with an intrinsic ability. While women are 25 percent more likely to go into higher education in Scotland, it is interesting to consider figures published by UNESCO (UNESCO 2008 & 2009). The data in table 1 and 2 are drawn from these reports and shows the general pattern of women students outnumbering male peers across the world except for parts of Asia and Africa. It is also worthy to note the type of subjects that women across the world choose to read at university. As one might anecdotally expect, women remain in the minority when considering the sciences, engineering and agriculture.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Mean percentage of women students (2005)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arab States</td>
<td>52.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central &amp; Eastern Europe</td>
<td>56.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Asia</td>
<td>50.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Asia &amp; Pacific</td>
<td>48.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America &amp; Caribbean</td>
<td>62.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North American &amp; Western Europe</td>
<td>56.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South &amp; West Asia</td>
<td>43.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub Saharan Africa</td>
<td>41.76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from UNESCO EFA 2008.
Table 2 Population of Female Students by Subject Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Area</th>
<th>Percentage of women students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities &amp; Arts</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences, Business &amp; Law</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering, Manufacture &amp; Construction</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health &amp; Welfare</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from UNESCO EFA 2008.

A Thought Experiment

It is possible to take the notion of the feminisation of the curriculum as the cause of the under-achievement of males and test the hypothesis through a thought experiment.

The curriculum of any degree program is delivered through teaching and learning. This curriculum delivers the graduate attributes (Barrie 2006) that the student leaves with. A simple model would note that graduate attributes, GA\(_n\), are therefore a function of the curriculum \(n\), C\(_n\).

\[ GA_n = f(C_n). \]

As the curriculum changes, so to do the attributes the graduate departs with, a simple example being the graduate of an English Literature degree program versus a Chemical Physics program. That is not to say that there is an absence of overlap in the attributes the graduates depart with, but merely noting there is also specificity to each curriculum. The quality of the teaching and learning experience is vital. A poor experience can impede the relationship between curriculum and graduate attributes. Figure 1 is a simple model showing the relationship between curriculum, teaching and learning, graduate attributes and how they ‘fit into’ society. As a result the teaching and learning ‘step’ can be considered the rate-determining step. Efficient teaching and learning allows for appropriate transfer of the curriculum, resulting in graduate attributes being properly delivered. If the curriculum has truly been feminised and graduate attributes are a function of the curriculum, then graduate attributes as a result have been feminised. If these attributes that the graduate departs with are then employed in society, does this mean that society has been feminised?
The Equality and Humans Rights Commission (2009) recently reported that regardless of socio-economic background, the top three jobs girls believed they would be working in were teaching, childcare and beauty. The same Commission (2008) published on women in positions of power and influence. The data in Table 3 seem to suggest that the idea of the feminised curriculum, graduate attributes and society is misplaced. Male dominance in these positions of power and influence is overwhelming with little improvement from year to year. However, in order to take the thought experiment to its natural conclusion, one might suggest that the harvest of the proposed feminised curriculum, graduate attributes and society are yet to be reaped. Those individuals that would benefit are as yet junior in position and in 5-10 years time re-assessment will find them in these positions of power and influence. The likelihood of such a thesis proving to be correct will only be told in time, however assuming current growth rates (EHRC 2008) it will take 200 years for women to be equally represented in parliament. Surely all can agree that educational and employment opportunities should be blind to gender or socio-economic status.

**Table 3 Women in Positions of Power and Influence**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007/8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of U.K.</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliament</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of EU</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>25.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliament</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive &amp; Non-</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Directors in FTSE 100 Companies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Vice -</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chancellors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from The Equality and Humans Rights Commission, 2008
COGNITION & LITERACY

Cognition

It is well established (Astur et al 1998; Kimura 1999; Ullman et al 2008; Collins et al 1997; Dalla et al 2009, Sommer et al 2004; Linn et al 1985) that men and women perform differently in some types of learning tasks, but the reasons for those differences are not well understood. One can consider how males outperform females in tasks that require the manipulation of complex spatial information as an example. These differences in learning are influenced by environmental and social factors but also by genes, hormones and gender differences in the structure of the brain (Stark et al 2006; Cahill 2006; Cosgrove et al 2007; Roof et al 1992; Zhang et al 2008). However, many of these reported gender differences are relatively small in magnitude, indeed gender differences in cognition are difficult to observe and once they are, even more difficult to interpret (Hausmann et al 2008). An interesting caveat would be that these gender differences may not directly represent gender differences in learning, but rather differences in strategies (McCarthy et al 2005).

Given the interest in male under-achievement and the drive to understand the phenomena as it grows, one cannot but question the relative lack of serious co-operation between social scientists and cognitive neuroscientists and psychologists. A sharing of expertise and insight is vital to fully understand a phenomenon that is clearly a complex function of many variables. As Dalla et al noted, despite the potential difficulties and controversies, resultant data may be of huge educational value.

It is, however, the case that there are authors who will subscribe to one of two extreme positions on the matter, the biological determinists and social constructionists (Kimmel et al 2007; Smith et al 2002). Yet there is little support for such determinism (Biddulph 1994; Gurian 2002) from geneticists or others in the biological sciences. In addition, the apparent absolutism of the social constructionists (West et al 1991; Pollack 1999) seems to sit contrary to the evidence provided by cognitive neuroscience.

Literacy

The academic under-achievement of males can be seen to run from primary school (Croxford 1999) through secondary school and onto undergraduate level. It is perhaps wise to look at the initial stages of this under-achievement, in a sense its early development. In order to do this one can consider the literacy rates for 5-14 year olds in publicly funded schools in Scotland between 1998 and 2004 (Scottish Executive). To place the data in Tables 4 and 5 in context, it is important to consider the national guidelines (1991) for pupil attainment in Scotland:
• Level A should be attainable in the course of P1-P3 by almost all pupils.
• Level B should be attainable by some pupils in P3 or even earlier, but certainly by most in P4.
• Level C should be attainable in the course of P4-P6 by most pupils.
• Level D should be attainable by some pupils in P5-P6 or even earlier, but certainly by most in P7.
• Level E should be attainable by some pupils in P7/S1, but certainly by most in S2.

Table 4 shows the percentage of Primary 3-7 that obtain the relevant level of their stage in reading, writing and mathematics from 98/99 to 03/04. The magnitude of the difference in attainment for males and females shows that males are closer to their female peers in mathematical skills while the largest difference in attainment can be found in writing skills. These outcomes sit well with the anecdotal ideas of males preferring mathematics and sciences with the often expressive nature of writing proving a turn off. Similarly, Table 5 is concerned with those pupils in secondary level 2 that have reached their appropriate stage in reading, writing and mathematics. It is curious to note that the same pattern still persists; males are closer to their female peers in mathematical skills attainment than in reading skills while females completely outperform males in writing skills attainment.

It is also worthy to note the apparent consistency in the difference between males and females between 5 and 14 years of age. For example in Table 4, writing skills attainment shows a mean difference of 12.3 percent with variation around the mean of +/- 0.3 percent. In Table 5, reading skills attainment presents a mean difference of 11.9 percent with a variation around the mean ranging from 11.6 percent to 12.8 percent. The data also show that from 99-98 to 03-04 males have not succeeded in closing the gap in their achievement levels. One can, of course, not fail to note that despite a growing body of literature documenting this problem there is little or no improvement in male literacy. Other authors (Alloway 1997) would argue that boys are in actual fact highly literate in other forms of socially valued literate practice such as that related to information technology. However, does this have a tangible value in the school curriculum and if not, should it? Despite this discussion on other literate practice, the fact remains that without satisfactory skills in reading, writing and mathematics we can surely be judged to have failed the pupil.

A final comment on the data would note the gradual increase in both male and female pupils who have reached the appropriate level of attainment that corresponds with their stage. For example, Table 5 shows male writing skills attainment rising from 30.3 percent to 43.2 percent and female reading attainment rising from 50.7 percent to 70.4 percent. While this obvious sign of improving standards is welcomed, one cannot but ask of the fate of the still large number of pupils, male and female, who do not reach appropriate levels in reading, writing and
mathematics. To counter this reasoning it is proposed that (White 2007; Chiu et al 2006; Hogrebe et al 1985) gender is not an important variable to consider when considering reading achievement. The debate goes on, but with a consistency of varying data sets, some suggesting gender does matter while others provide sets that would argue to the contrary. One matter that appears once again to be agreed on by most authors is that a deeper analysis of literacy figures reveals that those from a low socio-economic group, especially boys, are at greater risk of literacy failure (Luke et al 2000, Alloway 1997)

Table 4 The Percentage of Primary 3-7 Combined that Obtained the Relevant Level of Their Stage in Reading, Writing and Mathematics from 98/99 to 03/04.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Male ( percent)</th>
<th>Female ( percent)</th>
<th>Difference (M-F)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98/99</td>
<td>69.5</td>
<td>77.6</td>
<td>-8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99/00</td>
<td>73.8</td>
<td>81.5</td>
<td>-7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00/01</td>
<td>77.3</td>
<td>84.3</td>
<td>-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/02</td>
<td>78.6</td>
<td>85.3</td>
<td>-6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/03</td>
<td>78.1</td>
<td>84.8</td>
<td>-6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/04</td>
<td>78.0</td>
<td>84.9</td>
<td>-6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98/99</td>
<td>53.9</td>
<td>66.3</td>
<td>-12.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99/00</td>
<td>61.0</td>
<td>73.6</td>
<td>-12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00/01</td>
<td>65.0</td>
<td>77.4</td>
<td>-12.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/02</td>
<td>67.2</td>
<td>79.3</td>
<td>-12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/03</td>
<td>67.6</td>
<td>79.8</td>
<td>-12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/04</td>
<td>67.6</td>
<td>79.6</td>
<td>-12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98/99</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>78.2</td>
<td>-3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99/00</td>
<td>76.3</td>
<td>79.4</td>
<td>-3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00/01</td>
<td>79.1</td>
<td>82.2</td>
<td>-3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/02</td>
<td>79.7</td>
<td>82.6</td>
<td>-2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/03</td>
<td>78.9</td>
<td>81.3</td>
<td>-2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/04</td>
<td>80.7</td>
<td>83.0</td>
<td>-2.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Scottish Executive National Statistics 2004.

If one is to acknowledge that boys have poorer literacy levels that their female peers then the next question to be posed would of course by ‘Why?’ Boys are diagnosed more often than girls (Flannery et al 2000) with a variety of neuro-developmental disorders such as learning difficulties, reading disabilities and speech and language disorders (Ackerman et al 1993). Male vulnerability to disorders relating to neuro-development can be controversial, in fact it is argued that boys are often over-diagnosed (Mirkin 1992; Vogel 1990). Shaywitz et al, 1990, discussed the over referral of boys and linked it to the behaviour of the child. Poorly behaving boys are over-referred for help when compared to well-behaved girls (Nichols et al 1981).
However, authors still argue that male vulnerability is a very real occurrence (Liederman et al 2005) and the very suggestion (White 2007) that investigation into matters concerning male literacy and general academic under-achievement from the perspective of the cognitive neuroscientist is of little relevance is somewhat misleading.

AN OLYMPIC SOLUTION

Symptoms and the Root Cause

While the debate concerning underachieving males or referral bias for learning disabilities continues, it is often the case that a warning is posted against quick-fix solutions for these issues that are overly simplistic (White 2007) or indeed initiatives that are based on essentialist notions (Anderson et al 2002) of what it means to be a boy. It is indeed correct to warn against such initiatives or schemes that could do more harm than good. However, one must also consider the individual pupils, who are not necessarily interested in academic debate or indeed conjecture, but may require some form of inspiration and guidance so as they can reach their full potential in life. Martino et al (2007) comment that rather than treating symptoms it is the root cause of the problem that must be addressed; this is indeed the correct approach. However, across the literature it would appear that there is no solid consensus as to what the root cause actually is. Frances et al (2005) were correct when they noted simply that what boys need to do is read more, listen to teachers attentively and work harder. The obvious question is ‘How do we do this?’.

The message of widening participation delivered in our secondary schools is one of raising aspirations, a belief that if you work hard, you can achieve your potential, whatever that may be, regardless of your background. This message is, however, lost to a large number of boys due to that lack of respect for the classroom and indeed the teacher. The aim is then to identify a place of respect or a temple of solace that the boys have chosen themselves. If the same widening participation message was delivered in this new environment, might the boys engage with it more effectively and follow the advice of Frances et al?
Table 5 The Percentage of Pupils in Secondary Level 2 That Have Reached Their Appropriate Stage (Level E Or Above) in Reading, Writing and Mathematics from 98/99 To 03/04.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Male (percent)</th>
<th>Female (percent)</th>
<th>Difference (M-F)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98/99</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>50.7</td>
<td>-12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99/00</td>
<td>46.8</td>
<td>59.6</td>
<td>-12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00/01</td>
<td>50.4</td>
<td>62.6</td>
<td>-12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/02</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>64.8</td>
<td>-11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/03</td>
<td>55.4</td>
<td>66.2</td>
<td>-10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/04</td>
<td>58.8</td>
<td>70.4</td>
<td>-11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98/99</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>-15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99/00</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>51.7</td>
<td>-16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00/01</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>54.8</td>
<td>-17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/02</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>58.4</td>
<td>-16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/03</td>
<td>42.8</td>
<td>60.4</td>
<td>-17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/04</td>
<td>43.2</td>
<td>61.4</td>
<td>-18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mathematics</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98/99</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>44.1</td>
<td>-4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99/00</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>-4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00/01</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>53.6</td>
<td>-4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/02</td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td>55.7</td>
<td>-4.1</td>
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<td>-4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/04</td>
<td>57.7</td>
<td>61.3</td>
<td>-3.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Scottish Executive National Statistics 2004.

Olympism and FIFA

The Olympic charter (2007) notes that;

_Olympism is a philosophy of life, exalting and combining in a balanced whole the qualities of body, will and mind. Blending sport with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy of effort, the educational value of good example and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles._

There are very few would disagree with the ideals set down by the charter. Perhaps the most relevant section of the text is the notion of ‘Blending sport with culture and education’. Ivo Belet MEP referred (2007) to the importance of education through sport and the potential of football to help get socially vulnerable youngsters back on track. The report from The Culture and Education Committee very much agreed with the ideology of the Olympic movement and concluded by asking member states, national associations, leagues and clubs to exchange best practices in this regard. Indeed it has been the case that Europe’s governing body for football (UEFA) and the world governing body (FIFA) have been active in using football as the driving
force behind social and human development programs. These projects have touched on areas such as children's rights & education, health promotion, anti-discrimination & social integration and the environment. Given that 1 in 25 people across the world play football (FIFA 2000) in some capacity, from professionals to kids in their local park, this sport can be seen as a force to bring people together rather than the usual imagery of opposition fans divided by team colours. FIFA’s actions and achievements in these areas have recently been acknowledged through an invitation to join the Clinton Global Initiative. Senes Erzik, the chair of UEFA’s Committee for Fair Play and Social Responsibility, noted that:

*Our mission is to help educate young people, starting at the grassroots level. It is vital that we, as football’s governing body, take the initiative in teaching those of a young age about the importance of respect.*

The idea that football can be used to engage people of all ages, gender, social and ethnic background is, of course, not new. Projects in the U.K. that use football and indeed footballers to act as role models to bring young males to read or do their homework (Duggan 2006) are not unusual. Do these initiatives however reinforce stereotypic ideas of masculinity (Martino et al 2007)?

**Educated Pass**

Educated Pass is a collaborative project that aims to promote participation in the class and on the pitch. By delivering the typical widening participation message bathed in football and sporting metaphor to local boys’ football teams, the project harnesses the boys’ commitment to their athleticism. The same skills and dedication that these boys apply to their athletic endeavours are shown to be the same skill set that they can apply to be able to fulfil their educational potential. The message is delivered in the sanctuary of the club house, the new classroom, with the support of the coach, the new teacher. Immediately the message has relevance and credibility. The message of participation, albeit told with examples drawn from the world of sport, is the same message that is delivered in secondary schools but lost by the boys. Far from reinforcing stereotypical ideas of masculinity by cutting holes in the curriculum and artificially patching them up with so called subjects of interest to boys, this initiative is delivered in an environment that the boys have chosen themselves. Each boy has chosen to be part of their local football team and is more than savvy enough to detect and reject anything that appears to involve jumping on a bandwagon. The clubs chosen to partake are those that are based in low socio-economic areas, parts of the community with little progression to higher or further education. These clubs are noted to develop not just young athletes but also young men that sense they have a purpose in their local community and beyond. The real sense of community spirit in these volunteer sector clubs is exemplified by mothers and fathers acting as coaches and fund raisers.
The program lasts a year and a half for each squad of boys, a total of 8 sessions, guiding them and their parents through the transition of choosing and beginning Standard Grade courses. The initial sessions are aimed squarely at the parents and coaches of the teams. Once the ‘buy in’ has been achieved, the genuinely enthusiastic support from the coaches and parents of the program brings added value. Without the support of coaches and parents the initiative would simply not be able to function. This re-invigorated belief in the potential of the future spreads throughout the community. As a result the sessions for the boys are well attended by coaches and parents as well. Once the relationship is developed the classes move from the safety of the club house to the university and college campus. Normalising the campus effect and re-enforcing what they can achieve through student role models and well know professional athletes that have also succeeded in the classroom. The boys come to understand and accept the limited opportunity to become a professional footballer. However, the realisation that education can afford them the opportunity to work in the world of professional sport, or indeed any other field that may be of interest, is a powerful driver. The boys now see the relevance of each subject; using the sporting analogy, this can be the graduate who read French and now works for UEFA in Switzerland or the architectural graduate who designs stadia.

The boys who participate in the program complete an attitudinal questionnaire prior to engagement and at the completion of their involvement. The aim being to note a movement towards a greater desire to partake in class along with raised aspirations and understanding of the value of their education. The cohort of boys, for example, from season 08-09 displayed a substantial increase in belief of their own ability to succeed in HE or FE. Prior to their engagement 37 percent of the boys felt they had the skills and ability necessary, following their engagement this number rose to 88 percent. This suggests that the positive on campus experience coupled with the exploration of what is required to succeed at college and university strengthened the boys’ belief in their own abilities. This must be seen in the context that 53 percent of the boys indicated that neither their mother nor father had any FE or HE experience. The initiative is, however, careful not to create unrealistic expectations for the boys. As a result, post-secondary education is exemplified from entering FE colleges with SQA Standard Grade qualifications to those who will enter HE institutions with three to five SQA Highers. The potential for tracking the participants of Educated Pass is currently being investigated. As the initiative is in contact with the boys directly and not through their school, unique for a widening participation program, it is possible to contact these individuals when they come to school-leaving age and indeed beyond in order to assess their progression through school and the qualifications they have gained.

Educated Pass has created a pro-participation environment within local communities, communities that had previously believed that nobody was interested in the needs and interests of their children and as a result their future. The delivery of the widening
participation message in such a novel manner has managed to convince young males to begin
to take participation in the class room seriously, just as they take their athleticism seriously.
The success of Educated Pass has interested other Russell Group institutions in the U.K. The
initiative has been written in such a manner as to be a model of good practice that could be
rolled out and delivered in similar local communities across Europe.

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Developing Students as Critical Thinkers through Global Learning, Using Enquiry-Based Learning (EBL) Pedagogical Principles

Chrissie Dell and Margaret Wood

Abstract

An enquiry-based approach to global learning is examined, through a community of enquiry process in the classroom. Drawing on the Society for Advancing Philosophical Enquiry and Reflection in Education (SAPERE) work on Philosophy for Children and Philosophy for Communities (P4C) we apply this process to encourage the development of the critical thinking skills higher education students require. Global learning is an important part of the higher education curriculum to prepare students for active citizenship in an interdependent world, able to think critically about the complexities of our interconnectedness with others. The ‘community of enquiry’ concept is transferable to groups of people in different settings, who are ‘respectful of different experiences and open to other ways of thinking, but determined to think for themselves...’ (Sutcliffe, 2007:2). Valuing and involving others in shared learning, it mirrors the principles of inclusivity and is underpinned by our commitment to active, collaborative student-centred practices.

BACKGROUND

In this article we examine the principles and practices which underpin our aspiration to achieve inclusive practice in teaching and learning with a particular focus on global learning in the higher education curriculum, drawing on a collaborative, enquiry-based approach. Our starting point is an explanation of the context and background looking at York St John University and developments in learning and teaching which we are seeking to take forward.

A brief glance at York St John University’s corporate policies will confirm that, not dissimilar to other higher education institutions, we have a core set of values which help to define what is at the heart of the University as a community. These include a commitment to inclusive approaches and practice and to provision which is ‘transformative, enabling and empowering for individuals’. There is a commitment here to developing enquiry-led practices in learning and funding has been made available to encourage staff to develop this. A focus within this has
been on collaborative enquiry, whether collaboration across faculties, between students or between staff and students but all with the aim of exerting a positive influence on learning.

This is all by way of explanation of our motivation in this article to examine enquiry-based learning (EBL) as a pedagogic approach by applying the principles of EBL to the curriculum, and specifically to global learning. In a previous presentation we made to the British Education Studies Association (BESA) conference in 2008 we examined what we understand by the term ‘the global dimension’ and related this to the concept of ‘internationalisation’ of the higher education curriculum. York St John is developing its Internationalisation Strategy over the period 2007-2012 and an important part of this is the intention to ‘promote an international perspective among students and staff’. The Internationalisation Strategy is multi-faceted and one strand relevant to this article is the aim to internationalise the curriculum and the teaching and learning process. In our BESA presentation and forthcoming article developed from this, we recognized the multiplicity of possible meanings and interpretations of what ‘internationalisation’ is and acknowledged that there can be a tendency sometimes to use the term interchangeably with ‘globalisation’. Making this point, we said that:

>The term ‘internationalisation’ can be rather ‘slippery’ and one that is therefore hard to pin down and there is scope for a range of interpretations and understandings. This view is shared by Edwards et al (2003:184) who see curriculum internationalisation as an ill-defined concept which lacks clarity. It is even more important therefore that we are clear how we have interpreted and understood the term.

Dell & Wood, 2009

We clarified our approach to ‘internationalisation’ of the higher education curriculum as involving ‘examination of and reflection on shared human experiences across contexts to engage learners in critical thinking about a range of perspectives’. We recognised the potential to be changed and transformed through this, by sometimes causing us to question and rethink some of our current assumptions and ideas. In terms of ourselves as educators, internationalisation of the curriculum has caused us to reflect on how far we have travelled towards our goal of developing inclusive practice.

ENQUIRY-BASED LEARNING AND INCLUSIVE PRACTICE

Enquiry-based learning could be individuals engaging in individual projects or it could be working collaboratively with others in groups. Our own concern is with the cooperative process of enquiring together with others as part of a ‘community of enquiry’ approach. While there are many definitions and interpretations of EBL, most seem to see it as an approach which
encourages active learning through questioning, finding out and the learner taking charge of the learning process:

EBL is a kind of self-directed learning whereby the student takes hold of the learning process, and takes an active role in knowledge acquisition. ...

EBL can take many shapes and forms in different disciplines; however, the principles of EBL remain the same. EBL involves taking control of your learning and trying things out for yourself rather than being spoon-fed through lectures and reading lists.
Whowell, 2006, p5

This can be a powerful way of motivating students and we argue that it is an approach to learning that is highly appropriate as a means of engaging students in thinking critically about complex issues from different perspectives:

... Enquiry-Based Learning is ideally positioned to foster a deep level of engagement with problems that are multi-faceted and complex. The exploratory nature of enquiry allows students to grapple with different ways of looking at ideas and issues, and to think creatively about problems that do not possess simple (or perhaps even any) answers. ... Enquiry-based learning is highly appropriate for issues whose complexity is such that they straddle traditional academic disciplines. Interdisciplinary or cross-disciplinary topics inevitably oblige students to think imaginatively and to search for knowledge in unfamiliar areas.

The community of enquiry is based on inclusive principles. These are that all within the community have a right to speak and be listened to and will be treated fairly and as an equal member of the community. We believe that the community of enquiry works through the learning relationships which develop and which promote the learning of others in the community.

GLOBAL LEARNING

As our thinking develops we are moving from using the term ‘the global dimension’ to a preference instead for ‘global learning’. Hicks (2003) noted that there are many definitions of the global dimension and that terms such as ‘global education’ ‘global dimension’ and ‘global citizenship’ exist and that these are sometimes used interchangeably. We acknowledge the potential here for confusion of terminology and possible misunderstanding too perhaps with the concept of ‘global learners’, a term sometimes used to refer to a specific learning
orientation which is characterised by a particular preference for the way information is processed in learning. For clarification in our own minds we have tried to define the different terminologies as follows:

- **Global Education** is a pedagogy with a distinct style of delivery through active participation. It supports the whole curriculum broadening student knowledge and understanding of the world.

- **The Global Dimension** is made up of eight key concepts: human rights, sustainable development, values and perceptions, conflict resolution, diversity, interdependence, social justice and global citizenship. These concepts permeate the whole curriculum and support the ethos of the learning environment.

- **Global Learning** is developing the appropriate understanding, knowledge and skills that enable students to take a global perspective of their chosen subject and in their wider lives (Hicks, 2005).

Therefore, by ‘global learning’ we refer to the outcomes of participation in a curriculum that is rooted in social justice and that promotes the knowledge, understanding, values and skills the learner requires as a global citizen acting both locally and globally. We prefer this term to the ‘global dimension’ because this refers specifically to areas of education as denoted by the eight key concepts of the global dimension (DfES, 2000). Bourn (2008) noted that the usage of the term ‘Global Learning’ is increasing and he traces the development of this terminology back to the influence of Scheunpflug (2008):

> To her social justice is key to global learning within the context of the challenge of globalization and to develop a vision for a ‘humanely formed world society’ (Scheunpflug, 2008; Hertmeyer, 2008). Similar approaches have recently been taken by some NGOs in the U.K., notably the West Midlands based network, TIDE in terms of seeing global learning as ‘responding to contemporary events and education visions of the 21st century’. These visions were seen to value participation, a learner based curriculum, the idea that the next generation will make a difference.

In our view, global learning is best seen not as an ‘added extra’ but as an important contribution to learning across the higher education curriculum. This is one of the principles on which we construct our planning framework for global learning. This framework has five strands although the fifth, inclusion, is perhaps best conceptualized as permeating all aspects of our approach rather than as a separate element. Clearly all are inter-related:
GLOBAL LEARNING IN THE CURRICULUM: FRAMEWORK OF PRINCIPLES

Connections - connecting self and the wider world, the local and the global, examining our interconnectedness with others.

Values - a values-driven approach based on a commitment to human rights, social justice, respect, responsibility and active citizenship.

Embedded - not an ‘added extra’ or a tokenistic approach, but to be developed through the eight key interconnected concepts as an integral part of curriculum planning.

Community of Enquiry - learning together through enquiry rather than through knowledge transmission. Learning from and with one another to develop the skills and capacity for critical reflection.

Inclusion - of different perspectives and experiences. Collaborative learning within an inclusive community of enquiry, involving all learners. This theme, while listed separately here, pervades all aspects of our approach.

It may be useful for the reader to know that approximately 45 percent of our students at York St John University are mature students and approximately five percent are from minority ethnic groups. The University has a widening participation strategy seen, for example, through flexible learning opportunities, the development of e-learning, off-site, evening and weekend provision, and courses such as Foundation degrees which attract students among whom a number may be considered ‘non-traditional’ entrants to higher education. The University Access Agreement which sets out our policies on fair access and support, makes explicit our commitment to providing ‘widely accessible opportunities for lifelong learning’ and confirms that, when assessed against the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) Performance Indicators in HE in the U.K., we perform to a high level within the sector.

THE CONCEPT OF COMMUNITY AND GLOBAL LEARNING

The practices which we investigate in relation to EBL through this article relate to the development of a ‘community of enquiry’ pedagogy. We will explore the principles upon which this pedagogy is constructed and its relationship to inclusive practice, making links to global learning.

Burns and Lamont (1993, p xiv) see the central principle of community as interdependence and define community in these terms:
Genuine community is open and inclusive, valuing and involving all the individuals and groups within it and creating a door to the wider world.

Global learning is concerned with making connections between ourselves and the wider interconnected world to which we all belong. Through global learning, students will be able to make informed choices in their lives and the workplace. We argue that the development of the skills and knowledge to be active global citizens of the future is important for graduates and therefore should be a feature of the higher education curriculum.

GLOBAL LEARNING AND THE EIGHT KEY CONCEPTS

Our approach to global learning is through fostering a learning community within the classroom, based on open and inclusive practice and respect for diversity. Our Framework of Principles for Global Learning in the Curriculum informs our approach to planning. Eight inter-related key concepts (DfES 2005) provide a useful planning tool for global learning. Together they provide a foundation or common starting point that ensures a mutual understanding of global education and global learning.

Students should be given the opportunity to develop their knowledge and understanding of the global dimensions of the curriculum and relate these to their discipline and practice. For example, how are the eight concepts relevant to sports psychology? Do students recognise diversity or social justice locally and globally within this field?

Enquiry and critical thinking

In our thinking and the development of our ideas we have been influenced by the work of Andreotti et al (2008) and their writing about ‘critical literacy’. Through global learning we aim to develop critical thinking skills and our approach to this has been informed by Andreotti et al’s Open Spaces for Dialogue and Enquiry (OSDE) principles and methodology. OSDE is described as an educational initiative which:

... promotes a methodology for the introduction of global issues and perspectives in educational contexts, such as teacher, adult, higher and secondary education.
Andreotti et al, 2008, p 4

We perceive an important part of their approach to be the development of critical thinking as reflected in their proposed principles and procedures for enquiry. This aligns well to our ‘community of enquiry’ approach to global learning. The OSDE project and the Through Other Eyes (TOE) project develop this enquiry method. The OSDE methodology is concerned with:
Community of Enquiry

**Values** - a values-driven approach based on a commitment to human rights social justice, respect, responsibility, active citizenship

**Inclusion** - of different perspectives and experiences. Collaborative learning within an inclusive Community of Enquiry, involving all learners, pervades all aspects of our approach

**Connections** – connecting self and the wider world, the local and the global, examining our interconnectedness with others

**Embedded** - not an ‘added extra’ or a tokenistic approach. This is developed through the eight key interconnected concepts as an integral part of curriculum planning

Global Education

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Global Learning

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STUDENT

Global Dimensions – 8 key concepts

Social Justice

Human Rights

Global Citizenship

Conflict Resolution

Sustainable Development

Values & Perceptions

Diversity

Inter-dependence
...structuring safe spaces for dialogue and enquiry where participants feel comfortable to express themselves and ask any question without feeling embarrassed or unintelligent.
Andreotti et al, 2008, p 4

The tone and ethos of this space for enquiry is set by the principles implied in this statement and which are as follows:

Every individual brings to the space valid and legitimate knowledge constructed in their own contexts
All knowledge is partial and incomplete
All knowledge can be questioned.
Andreotti et al, 2008, p 4

This helps to develop our initial examination of the concept of ‘community’ further by relating it here more directly to enquiry. This ‘safe space’ is the ethos we strive to create through our Framework of Principles for Global Learning in the Curriculum in order to allow learners within a community of enquiry to enquire and learn together. We see this as underpinned by inclusion - one of the elements which permeates our Framework of Principles which we have set out above. All learners have different perspectives and experiences to offer to the community of enquiry and these are there to be questioned, explored and challenged within the boundaries of agreed protocols. Andreotti et al (2008:5) envisage the ‘safe space’ for enquiry to be about ‘experimenting with different/new ways of thinking and relating to one another’. The activities to which we now turn provide practical examples for global learning with the aim of developing critical thinking and questioning skills inherent in our enquiry-based approach to learning. We want our students to not only be aware of issues of injustice and unfairness but also to take a critical approach by posing challenging questions related for example to issues of power, poverty, interdependency and inequalities. While the community of enquiry is a collaborative and inclusive space for learning, it is also a challenging place where difficult questions can sometimes be asked, assumptions questioned and ideas reappraised. In the community of enquiry, the role of its members is to critique ideas leading to a deeper level of engagement with learning.

The Centre for Global Education York (CGE) works closely with the Faculty of Education & Theology by providing a Resource Centre that can be accessed by staff and students and inputs onto both graduate and undergraduate courses. CGE offers advice and training on the use of resources and methodologies to both tutors and students. For example, during the Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) course, a Global Day: Every Child Matters Everywhere takes place and includes a keynote lecture followed by workshops related to the eight concepts, from which students can attend three. Students find this a very useful and practical
day that closely links to their practice. An example of CGE support for tutors is a practical workshop entitled ‘The community of enquiry approach to critical thinking’ which was provided as part of their staff CPD program. The framework and thinking behind this methodology was explained to tutors to enable them to develop their knowledge and understanding of the approach. This was followed by their active participation in the experience of an enquiry and then plenary discussion and reflection on opportunities to integrate the community of enquiry approach into the student experience. Tutor feedback comments affirming that community of enquiry approaches are now being included in some of their sessions as a direct result of attending the workshop, provide evidence of the impact on the development of practice.

Developing an enquiry

When we engage in an enquiry, we use a framework based on the community of enquiry method set out by the Society for the Advancement of Philosophical Enquiry and Reflection in Education (SAPERE, 2007):

1. **Preparation** – the room should be arranged with space for a circle of chairs. The group then decide on ground rules to ensure that the ethos of the environment is respectful, caring and collaborative. Before beginning the enquiry it may be appropriate to have a warm-up activity, though as students become more familiar with the approach this may not be necessary

2. **Presentation** – the facilitator provides a stimulus which could be a picture, music, a poem or an extract from a book, in fact anything that will stimulate thoughts or questions

3. **Reflection** – a time for participants to think about the stimulus, how it made them feel, ideas that it generated. If appropriate, participants may wish to jot down a few notes or draw images arising from the stimulus

4. **Conversation** – the students are invited to share their thoughts with a partner or in small groups

5. **Formulating the questions** – in small groups the students develop a question that they would like to propose for the enquiry and write this up on a flipchart.

6. **Airing the questions** – each group is invited to explain or clarify their question. If it appears that some questions are very similar, the facilitator may invite the students to group questions together according to shared concepts or links.

7. **Selection** - in order to choose one question for the enquiry there is a voting process. While there are many forms of voting, it is recommended that an omni-voting process should be used, where students have several votes which they can use to either give multiple votes to one question or vote for several. This allows all contributions to be considered fairly and that everyone feels included in the decision making.
8. **First words** – the group whose question is chosen is invited to open the enquiry by sharing their initial thoughts and ideas.

9. **Building** – all students are now invited to contribute to the discussion. The facilitator should only contribute to aid the process and if necessary to remind students to listen to others, be respectful and consider other people’s points of view.

10. **Final words** – at the end of the enquiry, the facilitator will invite the students to reflect on the enquiry before then allowing each the opportunity to share their final thoughts.

A community of enquiry provides students with an open space to formulate and share ideas in an environment that is non-judgmental and inclusive. This enables students to grow in confidence, develop a sense of belonging and to reflect on themselves, appreciate others and begin to understand their place in the world.

> *For all the challenges it is most uplifting when you can observe individuals becoming more aware, more fair and open in their thinking, clearer in expressing their thoughts and feeling through dialogue. There is also great pleasure when people observe in themselves an increase in the range and richness of connections they make through enquiry, and in the relationships they have with each other in the group and beyond.*

Lewis, 2007, p 44

**Global Learning: Starting points for enquiry and facilitation skills**

Using the model outlined above, the enquiry starts with a stimulus of some kind. One example could be to begin with a reading. Students might be asked to read part of a text such as for example Naomi Klein’s ‘No Logo’, which offers a critique of multi-nationals, and ‘branding’. This could be read together with Philippe Legrain’s ‘Open World: the truth about Globalisation’ which can be seen to present a challenge to some of Klein’s ideas, suggesting instead that it is up to us to make choices which will shape globalisation to build collective benefits for all. Having read these before the enquiry session, the students are individually, or in pairs or groups, asked to identify some questions which arise in their minds from these two readings. The class then decides, for example by voting, which question they wish to choose for the enquiry. Another way into the enquiry might be to ask students to ‘mind map’ the ideas and issues from the two readings as a way of identifying the arguments from each differing perspective. This cognitive mapping is a tool used to visualise thinking and to synthesise key ideas. Having collected a list of questions and, prior to voting for the one to be used for the enquiry, it is helpful to ask each individual, pair or group that formulated each question, to explain the thinking behind it. These explanations can help to clarify and extend the thinking further.
The skills of the person facilitating the enquiry are very important, for example how those in the circle are drawn in, and how ideas are built on so that learning is cumulative. For example, if each contributor were to open up a new line of thought with each new contribution, then the enquiry would become disconnected and might therefore encourage surface rather than deeper learning. The facilitator has a key role to play specifically in summarising contributions, probing, extending and challenging the thinking, clarifying, inviting contributions, keeping the key concept/issue inherent in the question in focus, and restating the agreed ground rules if this becomes necessary during the enquiry. We suggest, therefore, that the tutor will need to model these skills by acting as the facilitator in the first instance, before students are invited to take on this role. For example, the enquiry outlined above might be facilitated by the tutor and students asked to feedback afterwards on the facilitation skills and what they have learnt from observing the facilitator. During their feedback they might note the sorts of inputs the facilitator makes such as the use and purposes of phrases like ‘Who would like to build on that idea?’ (Drawing people into the enquiry, developing and extending thinking) ‘So are you saying then that…’ (seeking clarification, probing) ‘So perhaps you are opening up a new line of thought here…’ (maintaining the focus and clarity of purpose/direction of the enquiry) ‘Correct me if I’m wrong but I think what you are saying is…’ (restating/summarising and checking for accurate understanding).

Kotter (2006) believes that fables have the potential to promote reflection and to prompt questions suggested by the story in the mind of the reader. He suggests that after reading and reflecting on a story such as his penguin fable, the reader might discuss the story with others and thereby explore and understand difficult topics better together. Kotter’s fable concerns the process of change and the importance of thoughts and feelings in this. The use of a reading as a stimulus can promote reflective thought and an opportunity to share thoughts and feelings in the community of enquiry about citizenship in a global society and the eight key concepts of the global dimension. Kotter suggests that part of the power of the story or fable is its role in stimulating thought and the learning from this which we can apply to real life issues and situations.

In introducing global education, the CGE uses the analogy of the traditional Indian story, *The Six Blind Men and the Elephant*. In the story, the six men explore the physical features of an elephant through touch. Each man perceives the elephant differently and an argument ensues. An observer tells them that they are all wrong in their assumptions. Later they discover that in part they are each right, the problem being that they have been unable to put the parts together to make a whole. This same story can be used as a stimulus for an enquiry as it has potential for the development of many open-ended questions. The questioning could lead to enquiries into how we learn, how we build concepts, values and perceptions, interdependence, conflict resolution, social justice and other global dimensions.
The following questions are examples which were formulated from this Indian fable as the stimulus of an enquiry:

Why were the blind men so sure about their views based on first impression?
What is the difference between ‘perception’ and ‘reality’?
Who can be the eyes to see the common ground?

The thinking behind the formulation of each question was then explained by each of the three groups in turn. Each question has the potential to lead into an interesting enquiry and to contribute to global learning by developing an understanding of some of the eight key concepts of the global dimension. An example would be the obvious potential links into ‘Values and perceptions’ as well as other aspects of the global dimension.

The community of enquiry can be used as a tool to help students to reflect on their own research ideas as part of their enquiry-based learning. The community of enquiry can operate in this way as a forum for critiquing draft ideas and so having an important contribution to make to peer formative assessment. A student planning a study into aspects of educational leadership and management might present their initial project proposal to the group as the stimulus for an enquiry. For example, having read the draft proposal, the group might initially suggest questions prompted in their minds by the proposal, from which one could be selected for the enquiry:

What makes effective leadership?
How do leaders create successful teams?
How can you manage change when the future is unpredictable?

Garrison & Neiman (2003, p28) remind us that in the philosophy of John Dewey:

Growth through freedom, creativity, and dialogue is … the all inclusive ideal, the greatest good.

The principles of the community of enquiry seem to resonate with these ideas as the freedom to design and drive the enquiry belongs to the community group and this creative process is based on dialogue. The ‘all inclusive ideal’ is, we have argued, at the heart of the community of enquiry. Furthermore, Dewey believed that:

…an education that emphasizes community, communication, intelligent inquiry, and a reconstructive attitude can best serve the citizens of an ever-evolving world.

Garrison and Neiman, 2003, p 29

In this way the community of enquiry acts as a critical friendship group and, through ‘intelligent enquiry’, perhaps helping their peer in this instance to think more deeply about issues inherent
in the underpinning ideas, to question some of the assumptions on which the project is built and attaining greater clarity. At the same time, issues related to the global dimension can be raised as relevant to their project, thus helping to embed global issues within the learning. For example, members of the community of enquiry might probe issues to do with the literature on which the study will draw:

_A large part of the accumulated body of literature in educational management and leadership has been generated by a culturally homogeneous cadre of scholars from English-speaking backgrounds. These scholars represent societies that constitute no more than eight percent of the world’s population yet they claim to speak for the vast majority. In many instances they fail to de-limit the geo-cultural boundaries within which their models, theories, ideas, findings and conclusions apply. On other occasions, they advocate the transfer and adoption of policies and practices from one society to another with relative impunity and naivety._


This might prompt the enquirers to consider issues of cross-cultural research in this field and the possibility of cultural assumptions and bias being inherent in management policies and practices.

**CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

This article has examined an enquiry-based approach to global learning through the use of the ‘community of enquiry’ with higher education students in the classroom. We have argued that the community of enquiry can promote deep learning through the critical thinking which is developed during an enquiry. We have also noted that for maximum learning benefits from the enquiry, the skills of the facilitator are centrally important and may need to be modelled by the tutor and discussed and practised with the students first, before they take on the facilitation role. The community of enquiry seems to us to be a good vehicle to embed global issues in the learning process either through enquiries with a direct focus on global issues or through drawing out the global issues inherent in the topic under discussion.

Drawing on the work of Andreotti et al (2008) and the OSDE methodology in particular, we have argued that the community approach to enquiry is inherently inclusive, based on inclusive principles and reflects the idea of Burns and Lamont (1993) that community is about valuing and involving others. Burns and Lamont see this as ‘creating a door to the wider world’, which seems to us to make the link to global learning and to ensuring global perspectives are included in the curriculum. We have argued that global learning has an immensely important role in the higher education curriculum if our students are to be prepared for active global citizenship. Developing this through the community of enquiry approach is a powerfully engaging tool.
because it gives autonomy and freedom to the students to drive the design of the enquiry and the learning process.

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Development Projects as a Method for Changing the Pedagogical Practice Towards a More Inclusive Higher Education

Marit Greek and Kari Mari Jonsmoen

INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades and in line with national priorities and strategies, Oslo University College (OUC) has worked with issues of multiculturalism and internationalization in higher education both as a topic for research and academic interest, and as a challenge for our own institutional policies and practices.

For the current strategy period, the leadership of OUC has highlighted multiculturalism and internationalization of higher education as their main strategic priority, organized as a project called Intercult. Half of all OUC’s strategic funds have been invested, and all employees and students encouraged to take part in developing OUC into a modern pluralist higher education institution.

With years of experience working on issues of multiculturalism and internationalization in higher education in Norway, OUC has positioned itself as a university with competence and experience on the above issues. Observations reveal, however, a discrepancy between what is preached and what is practiced. After a long and well-intended effort to change the students to fit better into the established system and practices, the question has now been reversed to how the institution can change policies and practices to better fit our students. This requires new ways of thinking, designing, delivering and reviewing our practices.

Student success depends on an inclusive environment. This requires both intercultural and language competences as well as willingness to participate in a multicultural context. It concerns the whole environment, the institutional frames, curricula, pedagogical practices, the staff and the students. Consequently, one has to concentrate on both students and the staff, on the majority and the minority at the same time.

The aim of the development project *Successful educational practices promoting a diverse learning environment* is to contribute to heightening the quality of teaching and learning in a diverse environment.
A PREPARATORY COURSE – THE STARTING POINT

The starting point was a preparatory program for applicants to some of the bachelor programs at OUC.

Communication skills are crucial to learning outcomes, especially when the focus is on collaborative learning activities. According to a longitudinal panel study carried out at Norwegian higher educational institutions, 2000 to 2003, students identify the social climate of the institution as one of the most important factors for learning. This means feeling comfortable and able to participate and to listen to each other on equal terms, regardless of gender, social, ethnic or linguistic background (Aamodt 2005).

With these insights in mind, OUC has since 2004 offered a preparatory study course to all applicants. The aim is to support applicants and future students of OUC, preparing them for collaboration in diverse cultural and language groups and thereby succeeding as students at OUC. We also aim to assist students to develop a belief in themselves and their own resources and encourage them to persist even when the challenges might seem overwhelming.

The preparatory course is designed for applicants who wish to study at OUC but are uncertain of what to expect and what will be required of them as students. The topics and the way in which the program is constructed are meant to give the participants practical study experience. Co-operation within linguistic and cultural diversity is emphasized. In developing and implementing the preparatory course we are mindful that in order to accumulate positive experiences the students need to feel secure, be relaxed and have fun. We are also mindful of the need to offer topics that would appeal to both linguistic majorities and minorities. In order to reflect the student population at OUC and the surrounding society, the program aims for a culturally diverse group of participants.

The specific topics in the preparatory course are:

- What to expect as a student - demands and challenges in higher education
- Educational activities – methods of teaching and learning
- Learning styles and learning strategies
- Academic writing
- Co-operation in professional projects
- Venturing to participate actively – making oneself visible by taking part in the discussions and making personal views and opinions known to fellow students and negotiating in the process of reaching consensus
Opportunity is provided for questioning, seeking, doubting, explaining and arguing – orally and in writing, and it is legitimate to make mistakes and to take the time to try again. The aim is to make participants conscious of the need to verify what they currently hold to be true and to be aware of the different modes of verification in different kinds of discourses. In the preparatory course, the participants are given support and guidance in the process and thus gain positive experiences from working in a diverse learning community. By emphasising a questioning attitude instead of searching for the ‘right’ perspective in completing practical tasks, the participants are encouraged to appreciate and take advantage of the wide range of perspectives.

Outcomes of the preparatory course

Over the three-year period, 2004 to 2008, approximately 250 individuals participated in the preparatory course, 40 to 50 percent of them second language speakers. The average age was 31 and the ages of the participants ranged from 18 to 52 years. We experienced that all the participants, independent of linguistic skills in Norwegian, dared to take the risk to express themselves, to fail and to try again. We also found that the participants embraced the challenges of intercultural communication and really attempted to seek the meaning behind the spoken words.

Student evaluations of the course were consistent and mainly positive. Some admitted: ‘The course has made me think differently.’ When interviewed in their final year, most of the students who had participated had a positive attitude to co-operating in different projects and considered it to have had a positive impact on their learning. Participating in the course had reduced their fears about being a student and helped them to be active participants in higher education.

Our experience demonstrates that it is possible to create an inclusive learning environment that is optimal for all students, in which diversity is valued and makes a positive contribution to learning. But then, how should we implement this knowledge and the pedagogical approaches in the different faculties at OUC? This has been our great challenge at the Centre for Educational Research and Development. We cannot suppose that people will change their attitudes and pedagogical approaches simply by being told to. In one way or another, the teachers at OUC have to experience the situation themselves.

The diversity among students regarding differing experiences and preparedness render instruction and guidance more difficult. There is no doubt that language and cultural frames are barriers, even obstacles, to cooperation and learning. The easy part is to make a survey of the challenges language minorities come up against. The difficult part is to be influenced by our knowledge, to be willing to let this knowledge have an impact on institutional frames, our
personal, cultural frames and our pedagogical practices. If the linguistic minority students are to succeed, we must succeed as well. But diversity is at the same time exciting, because we are challenged into varying our forms of instruction and guidance, rethinking old habits with a constructive critical look at ourselves.

Taking diversity into account does not imply a lowering of standards or educating less qualified professionals. It is about reaching the same goals in different ways. Institutional frameworks need to be flexible to accommodate students from many different social, cultural and educational backgrounds. Our challenge is to render this visible and contribute to positive experiences among the teachers.

Therefore, the Centre for Educational Research and Development, together with the Faculty of Nursing, has initiated the project *Successful educational practices promoting a diverse learning environment.*

**SUCCESSFUL EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES PROMOTING A DIVERSE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

The project is being carried out at the Faculty of Nursing at Oslo University College (OUC) and Akershus University College (AUC) together with the Police Academy in Oslo (PHS). The overall aim is to develop good pedagogical practices, methods which are suitable for teaching and learning in a diverse environment independent of specific faculties. The pedagogical principles and approaches are meant to be useful in any faculty; however, the concrete subject matter will of course differ depending on the specific faculty and discipline.

The project embraces the several faculties within and outside OUC, and consists of different parts: a preparatory course, student support, communication and language course for linguistic minorities and seminars for the academic staff.

Empirical evidence was gathered through continuous, systematic data collection, using methods such as observation, interviews and informal conversations with both students and academic staff over a period from 2004 to 2007. In line with the Bologna Process, reform was implemented in Norwegian higher education in 2003. This was meant to increase the quality of higher education and thus the learning outcomes. In higher education in Norway today, there is a common belief in interactive teaching, the relationship between students’ cooperation in professional issues and the quality of education and learning. In accordance with this belief, the Quality Reform has resulted in major pedagogical changes which aim to increase the students’ active participation in the learning environment. Hence, collaborative learning activities are emphasized together with an increased demand for assignments written by the students in collaboration. However, studies at OUC have shown that working in small learning communities
in cooperation with fellow students for whom Norwegian is the mother tongue, linguistic minorities often fall short. Findings indicate that without the guidance of professional coaches when it comes to the production of written assignments in collaboration, interactive learning method tends to lead to the exclusion of the students who only master the Norwegian language at a basic level. Consequently, extensive use of writing does not necessarily promote language proficiency nor does it promote proficiency when it comes to subject matter.

A crucial element in the students’ success and learning outcomes is tutoring and coaching - what is emphasized and how it is communicated. It is important to highlight the teachers’ approaches towards the students rather than the shortcomings of the students. Instructional as well as tutorial methods must be varied and flexible to meet a diverse student body and to ensure every student has the possibility of succeeding. Therefore, the following points are emphasized:

- Take the linguistic minority students’ individual experiences and communicative skills into account in all learning and teaching methods.
- Take advantage of cooperation and interaction between the students to develop intercultural communication skills.
- Guidance in cooperation and communication must be treated as seriously as the concrete subject matters.
- Ensure the participation of all students
- Focus on the content of the students’ contribution rather than the writing itself when guiding the students.

In addition, there are three other main goals:

1. Identify successful pedagogical approaches at the faculty, approaches which promote a culture of collaboration in the learning environment, including both traditional and non-traditional students and give them an opportunity to improve their communication skills.

Apart from the challenge regarding the students’ communication skills, we have the institution itself – the framework, the curriculum and the collaboration on jointly written assignments. This indicates a need to:

2. Increase awareness and competence in the subject “diversity management” among the academic staff in the faculty and stimulate interest in these issues.

We know that a number of non-native speakers at OUC need to improve their communication skills – using the Norwegian language in a new context as a tool in their learning process as well as in professional practice. Adequate communication skills are essential for them to show
themselves as resourceful students, equal to their fellow majority students as well as to evaluate students’ individual and differing contributions. We therefore wish to

3. Establish a permanent and continuous support to students in risk of reduced learning outcome and failure because of insufficient language skills.

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<th>Table 1 Preliminary Proposal for Some of the Modules</th>
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<td><strong>Norwegian language – oral and written</strong></td>
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Organization of the project

In order to succeed and attain the goals, the project is organized in the following manner:

**Figure 1 An Overall Picture of Initiatives of the Project Successful Educational Practices Promoting a Diverse Learning Environment**

- **Reference group**
  - students
  - representatives from different work placements

- **Project group**
  - 2 projectleaders 50%,
  - 4 tutors 20%
  - 1 tutor 10% until autumn 2011

- **Successful educational practices**
  - different opinions and objections
  - The management of the faculties
  - ownership
  - responsibility
  - implementation
  - ongoing communication

- **Workshops and seminars**
  - to share ideas and experiences
  - continuous discussion
  - contribute to increased interest and knowledge

- **Workshops and seminars**
  - ownership and personal interest
  - relevance
  - competence
Network for a diverse learning environment

The network is a resource centre, a colloquium where the members participate in a focused discussion and contribute with their experiences and knowledge. Participants from different university colleges in Norway, different faculties and with different roles in the institution make sure that various perspectives are taken into consideration. There has been a missing link between Adult Education for Immigrants and higher education as well as between Upper Secondary school and higher education. Representatives from these institutions are also participants in the network. Hopefully this cooperation will show results.

Managing diversity in a learning environment based on a socio-cultural approach to learning and teaching

This study focuses on the intercultural communication taking place in small learning communities, between students and between students and the lecturer. More specifically:

- What characterizes communication that contributes to the integration and participation of all students in the learning community, creating a dynamic arena for intercultural communication - between students with different ethnic, cultural, social and linguistic background?
- How is the social practice established, status acquired and language valued in this process?

Both students and lecturers have to relate to each other to establish confidence, a feeling of solidarity and fellowship. As representative of the institution, the lecturer’s voice will have great impact on the students in creating frames and norms which provide opportunities and limitations for the students and their participation. Through guiding and tutoring, the lecturer expresses the institution’s requirements concerning language skills, relevant and acceptable knowledge and meaning and, consequently, who is to be regarded as valuable.

We believe it is necessary to shed light on specific and local practice to contribute to change. Therefore, four learning communities, each consisting of 7-9 students and 1 lecturer, were observed throughout the first year of the bachelor program. In addition, the lecturers who were responsible for the actual communities and Greek met every third week to discuss and to reflect upon the observations made, the lecturers’ pedagogical approaches and their opinions of the students’ collaboration and intercultural communication skills. Data were collected through observation, formal interviews and informal dialogues with both students and lecturers and are now being analyzed. What we can see so far is that guidance in cooperation; jointly produced assignments and cross-cultural communication do not seem to be emphasized.
The most important result so far is that in the wake of organizing the project, there has been an increased interest in this topic (see figure 2). Lecturers from different faculties at OUC have contacted us and indicated that they wish to develop individual projects and link them to our project.

**Figure 2 An Overall Picture of the Initiatives Taken in the Wake of the Project**

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**Language norm(s) in the Faculty of Nursing**

The students and teachers internalized, individual language norms are today challenged in a greater degree by the fact that:

- OUC has defined multicultural and international learning environments as two main areas of activity
• OUC is workings systematically and actively to increase the number of students with minority background
• an increasing number of students have Norwegian as their second language
• we live in a multicultural society and consequently the profession’s target groups are more linguistically heterogeneous than previously

This part of the project aims to reveal the Faculty of Nursing’s implicit and explicit, formal and informal requirements for linguistic competence in Norwegian. The requirements for productive and receptive linguistic skills in the Study Programs (through curriculum and pedagogical practices) are analysed and discussed in the light of the professional nurses’ everyday life.

Important questions are:

• what formal and informal requirements does the Faculty of Nursing have for linguistic skills
• do these requirements promote a diverse learning environment
• are these requirements relevant to the aims and contents in the Study Program
• are these requirements relevant to the professional field

The project provides essential knowledge on how OUC relates to linguistic diversity and it contributes to the debate on what it takes to develop a multicultural and international learning environment.

**How to promote intercultural communication and collaboration within small learning communities at the Faculty of Health Sciences**

At OUC, the educational activities are mainly based on collaboration and jointly produced written assignments. Collaboration is, in itself, challenging and both students and lecturers struggle and often fail in their attempts. It is difficult to think together, to reason together and to produce together. The challenge increases in a diverse learning environment with a great degree of linguistic variety. Being successful in creating a multicultural university college, promoting the success of non-traditional students entails managing this variety. However the academic staff do not have the knowledge and experience necessary to contribute to bridging the divide between diverse groups of students and fostering social ties and relationships in a diverse environment. They experience shortcomings when it comes to pedagogical approaches to promote a culture of collaboration in a learning environment which includes both traditional and non-traditional students. Students who differ from the so-called normal students – or traditional students, for example linguistic minorities, are to a great extent given the role of non-participants in the environment. They are outsiders in the learning environment, feeling
apart from the student community and, according to the Faculty of Health Science, a significant number of students drop out in their first year of study.

The faculty has therefore joined the project in order to gain competence. Representatives from the faculty participate in the project network. In addition, Greek and Jonsmoen are observing one of the lecturers in her weekly work with two student-groups in autumn 2009. The observations are followed up with regular meeting with the whole staff, discussing and reflecting upon the observations, the lecturers’ experiences and alternative pedagogical approaches.

The Intercult Project PLUS

To succeed in the cooperative learning activities demanded in Higher Education today, as we mentioned earlier, implies mastering the Norwegian language. Without this proficiency, it is hard to achieve the most basic skills that underlie every assignment, as well as to cooperate with fellow students who have Norwegian as their native language. A consequence of this is that the linguistic minorities often fall short. There is a gap between these students’ previous knowledge and what is required. Consequently, extensive use of writing does not necessarily promote language proficiency nor does it promote proficiency when it comes to subject matter.

A crucial element in the students’ success and learning outcomes is the need to establish a supportive environment, a learning environment which promotes the progress of language learning and contributes to more opportunities for the students to practice both spoken and written language. PLUS is an interdisciplinary project involving cooperation between the administrative staff at OUC, the learning centre and the Centre for Educational Development and Research.

The learning centre has the potential to become a dynamic arena for intercultural communication, a meeting point where students with different ethnic, cultural, social and linguistic background feel able to discuss disciplinary matters in the way that they cannot express in their assignments or in front of the tutor. It is also an area with space for mutuality and dialogue, for sharing personal and professional knowledge and experience, for testing diverse meanings and being influenced by other perspectives.

PLUS offers the opportunity to get started on peer cooperation through drop-in support at the learning centre; it also offers specific support to disabled students, in addition to the possibility to obtain help from writing mentors. PLUS also offers different courses, all free of charge, for example:
• how to use the computer for study
• written academic assignments
• cooperative writing
• study techniques

Collaboration on multiple levels

The Centre for Educational Development and Research has the main responsibility for progress in the project. Collaborators in the project are four members of the academic staff at the Faculty of Nursing at OUC and AUC and one member from PHS. They are involved in the project part-time and are, at the same time, a member of the academic staff in the faculty. This facilitates the flow of knowledge and experiences both ways. By participating in developing the course, the collaborators will gain competence and, hopefully, the ideas and pedagogical approaches, slowly but surely, will be implemented in the faculty, in the ordinary program.

As mentioned earlier, the overall aim is to develop pedagogical methods which are suitable for teaching and learning in a diverse environment, independent of specific faculties. To ensure this, cooperation with other faculties, professionals, students is essential. This is dealt with by the reference group. For the developmental project to be successful, it is essential the ideas are implemented in the management of the faculty and that the management has an interest in and a sense of responsibility for the work that is being carried out. Continuous communication and the sharing of knowledge and findings with the management through meetings and written information throughout the process are therefore important.

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Higher Education Inclusion for Migrants

Matthias Klumpp and Cordelia F.D. Carlitz

Abstract

The Bologna Process in European higher education brings standardization advantages for all 46 signatory states but does not yet address questions of access and inclusion for persons from outside these countries as for example migrants. Though these people usually provide for a huge potential in terms of knowledge and workforce contribution - as seen in the US - internal harmonization with a three-cycle structure will not address this problem adequately. Therefore further instruments for qualification evaluation and recognition have to be developed and implemented – in a best case also standardized for as many Bologna countries as possible. This article provides some German examples such as academic testing, legal action as well as competence measurement with the new concept of Berufswertigkeit.

BOLOGNA AND MIGRANTS

The European higher education integration process, called the ‘Bologna Process’, can be seen as a success story. Now 46 signatory states are taking part in the integration into an European Higher Education Area (EHEA) including Non-EU-States as e.g. Turkey and Russia (see Figure 1).

But problems arise if the analytical framework used focuses on people and not on states: As people move for a multitude of reasons, states harbour a significant group of persons with a migrant history or parental migrant background. In the case of Germany this group amounts to 19 per cent of the total population, or 15.3 million people.

Though the Bologna Process is trying to attract people from outside the EHEA and to foster mobility in higher education, there are specific groups not addressed by these measures. Older migrants already inside the EHEA and potential migrants from outside the EHEA do not fit into the three-cycle system proposed by the Bologna process, as their personal education biographies do not entail such standardized formal degree structures.
The Bologna Process has various and benevolent objectives with the aim of improving peoples’ education and level of knowledge and therefore their individual and also the overall, economic competitiveness of the European Union. These objectives are:

- Adoption of a system of clear and comparable European degrees, each with a Diploma Supplement to accompany transcripts and provide institutions and prospective employers with detailed information on foreign coursework.
- Adoption of a system based on three cycles: bachelor’s, master’s (attainable in five years of full-time study) doctoral program.
- Establishment of the European Credit Transfer System, providing a common method for transferring credit for academic work completed in a foreign institution, to promote student mobility.
- Promotion of mobility by overcoming obstacles to the effective exercise of free movement, such as onerous visa requirements.
- Promotion of European cooperation in quality assurance.
- Promotion of common European patterns in higher education.
But, as described above, these objectives are not realized for specific groups of individuals such as migrants from Non-Bologna Countries and older migrants with degrees dated before the start of the Bologna Process.

As a result it can be established that the political objectives of attracting and integrating migrants from abroad as well as using the workforce potential of resident migrants are not fully met by the Bologna structures. There are still specific access problems (example of Germany):

- Limited recognition of secondary degrees
- Bologna degrees not applicable to countries outside EHEA
- Bologna degrees not feasible for older migrants.

This leads to a specific necessity for

- Evaluation of secondary (access) and tertiary education
- Reliable evaluation instruments.

In order to provide some first ideas along these lines, the following describes the development and current situation of migrant education in integration in Europe and Germany.

**HISTORY AND CURRENT SITUATION**

In the 20th century, starting from the 1950’s European migration policy was aimed at attracting low education level migrants in order to fill job blanks in mines, factories and basic service industries. Today the European rate of highly qualified migrant workers is still at a low 1.7 percent - whereas e.g. Australia has 9.9 percent, Canada 7.3 percent, Switzerland 5.3 percent and the US 3.2 percent (cp. European Union 2008).

This trend is perpetuated in the 2nd and 3rd generation of former migrants. This leads to a very different picture on both sides of the Atlantic: Whereas in Europe migrants face high unemployment rates and also a high risk of dependency on social welfare, migrants in the US envisage higher workforce participation than US citizens themselves (US Government 2009).

For Germany it can be seen that with increasing education level, the participation rate of foreign citizens decreases: Whereas in secondary education there are about 8.8 percent of all pupils with a migration background, in vocational training this decreases to 4.2 percent and in higher education still to 3.3 percent.

Of all 248.000 foreign students in Germany in 2006 (about 12.5 percent of all students) there were three fourth so called ‘Bildungsausländer’ (foreign secondary degree) and one fourth so called ‘Bildungseinländer’ (German secondary degree ‘Abitur’) (cp. German Government 2007, p.
The specific situation for higher education in numbers can be described as follows: A higher education degree among 25-34 year-olds is given for 16.5 percent of the German non-migrant – whereas only for 11.9 percent of the German migrant population.

These numbers show the political and economical pressure or imperative to change the situation of migrants. The following sections will provide information about legal and education initiatives on European as well as German level.

**EU CONCEPTS**

**EU Directives**

The background and motivation for EU legislation on the topic is the fact that there is a serious shortage of high-skilled workers and researchers. By 2010 the EU will need 700,000 researchers in order to achieve the Lisbon Agenda objectives (cp. European Commission 2002, European University Association 2007). One element in the solution of this problem is an improved access of third-country nationals for the purpose of education and research. Therefore two directives
have been established by the EU, directive 2004/114/EC for students and directive 2005/71/EC for researchers.

These directives are intended to regulate the immigration procedure and therefore to facilitate the immigration and integration of foreign national students and researchers to the EU. A key requirement is the acceptance of these rules and foreign degrees by higher education and research institutions. But there are problems which are not addressed by the directives: the recognition of foreign high school diplomas as well as the recognition of foreign university diplomas. This has to be solved individually at the level of the EU member countries or even at the level of individual higher education and research institutions.

**European Qualification Framework (EQF)**

The general objectives of the European Qualification Framework (EQF) in the European Union and beyond are:

- Standardization of education degrees in Europe and in the EU for formal recognition, also by employers and individuals in order to support mobility regarding education.
- Integration of different areas or “pillars” such as academic and vocational training (but also informal training).

Figure 3 describes the inter-linkage of European and national EQF levels.

So far several problem areas have been identified for the implementation of EQF from a rational point of view: The operationalisation of proposed descriptors is very tricky and a current problem in the generation of national qualification frameworks. Second, the concept foresees a parallel development of (EU) Sectoral Qualification Frameworks (SQF) for different industry sectors – which has to date not been suggested anywhere in detail.

But in general the two main aspects in the development of EQF meet with current education trends and requirements: The EQF contents and related concepts should focus on outcomes (and not inputs into education, such as a curriculum). Further, the objective is to describe real competences not just provide pure information and knowledge without an implementation context (which is also part of the employability requirement).
GERMAN CONCEPTS

National Integration Plan

Germany has recently enacted a national integration plan in order to coordinate different tracks of integration policy and practice. Important objectives of the integration plan are for example:

- Improving the readability and recognition of HE degrees and other education certificates as well as the standardization of examination requirements.
- Recognition of education certificates and foreign degrees, transparent recognition procedures based on comparable standards.
- Improvement in German language training.
These points should in general facilitate the successful integration of migrants into the German society.

**Academic Document Verification Procedure**

In the context and aftermath of the national integration plan for academic studies and integration, a testing office structure has been established in Germany: for China in 2001, for Mongolia in 2006 and for Vietnam in 2007. The competent institution is the academic verification office at the German embassies.

The background and purpose of the testing office was the political aim of increasing the number of incoming students from these countries and the verification of foreign school and higher education certificates. The content is a 30 minutes interview to verify certificates.

In 2009 this system was replaced by the TESTAS (Test for Academic Studies) system for Chinese bachelor students not yet in the 7th semester or in the final year applying for bachelor studies in Germany. The institution carrying out this testing system is now a private licensed company with 106 test centres worldwide. Each test costs 100 EUR for the participant. The purpose is the assessment of the academic capabilities of applicants formally qualified for higher education and is conducted in English or German. The test itself contains three parts:

1. an online language test (GER or EN)
2. a general test,
3. a study-specific test.

Most German universities include the TESTAS-result in their decision to admit foreign students. Figure 4 gives an example of an economic studies admission test in English.
In addition to the state-sponsored and legal actions described, there has also been an important development in the aftermath of the EQF implementation: Output-oriented education testing is established as a viable scientific research and discussion area; Germany, however, is especially interested in the comparison of vocational and academic education as both parts play a significant role in German employees’ education. The concept of *Berufswertigkeit* was developed especially for this purpose in order to allow for an objective
output comparison of these educational sectors (see Klumpp and Schaumann 2007, Diart et al. 2008, Klumpp et al. 2008). The basic idea is that the general educational objective is to prepare people for workplace situations (‘Beruf’) according to the objective of ‘employability’ (cp. Klumpp and Zelewski 2009). And in order to compare different educational traits, their individual value in one person has to be evaluated (‘Wertigkeit’).

The following data represent the first empirical analysis based on this concept for the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia in 2008. Altogether 800 leading management staff in companies in this state were interviewed and evaluated according to the Berufswertigkeit concept. In order to compare different degree paths and groups, academic and vocational formal degrees are differentiated, providing for four different groups, as indicated in figure 5. Later, mainly the grey marked groups of purely academic individuals (216) or purely vocationally trained individuals (279) are compared.

All individuals in these groups with a completed set of all 36 descriptors for the Berufswertigkeit index were analyzed, resulting in the following comparison chart. This shows that according to the Berufswertigkeit requirements the general qualification level is not significantly different between individuals with academic or vocational training – as the general form of the below in figure 6 depicted graphs is highly similar placed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Studies / Degree</th>
<th>Further Vocational Degree</th>
<th>No Further Vocational Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>107 (13.3 percent)</td>
<td>Only Academic Studies 216 (26.9 percent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Academic Studies / Degree</td>
<td>Only Vocational Training 279 (34.7 percent)</td>
<td>202 (25.1 percent)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A further interesting result from this study is the comparison of different groups according to the level of work experience and therefore also age. As is shown in figure 7, individuals from vocational training start off in younger years with higher Berufswertigkeit index values but increasingly lose qualification levels with increasing age. Whereas academically trained individuals are able to increase their competence level according to the Berufswertigkeit index although they have a poor start compared to the vocational trained.

Therefore the concept of Berufswertigkeit can also be seen as a potential tool for evaluating immigrants and testing them in comparison with residents from vocational and academic training thus providing support for an output oriented testing instrument according to the EQF principles.
CONCLUSIONS

As we have shown, the Bologna Process is leading to improved higher education systems in terms of standardization and therefore enhancing the mobility of students and graduates in the 46 signatory states in Europe. But significant groups of individuals, such as older migrants from European states as well as migrants from countries outside the EHEA and the US face difficulties in having their higher education qualifications and degrees recognized.

Therefore new standardized testing and recognition models have to be developed, with significant hints provided by the presented German concepts of a testing office abroad, legal action for recognizing practical experience based on prior education and knowledge as well as the concept Berufswertigkeit with specific qualification testing rooted in the requirements of operational business practice.

Therefore it can be assumed that a future “Bologna entry system” should be composed of three essential elements:

I. An established outcome measurement system according to the EQF such as the German concept Berufswertigkeit.
II. An organizational backbone providing testing facilities abroad in order to inform interested migrants already in their home countries about their recognition status.

III. A recognition framework within a legal regulation such as the German residence act, combining formal qualification recognition with permission to reside and work in order to foster integration.

If a common European system for such a testing and recognition scheme could be established, the overall benefits for individuals (such as successful migrants) as well as for society regarding migrant-workforce integration could be huge. Higher education institutions might also gain new groups and more migrants as students, which would further improve migrant societal and workforce integration.

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How Social is Your System? Exploring Social Aspects of Public Funding Systems for Higher Education

Christoph Gwosć

Abstract

This article features an empirical analysis of the cost-sharing for higher education between the public and the private side for six European countries. On the macroeconomic level, there are considerable differences between the countries concerning the overall share of public support in teaching-related expenditure and its composition. On the microeconomic level, it was stated that within each country the amount of the student’s total income does not vary much by social background, while its composition differs quite a lot. In general, there is a tendency for public support to decrease with the increasing socio-economic status of the students; however, the differences between the social groups are often not very marked. Furthermore, for countries using mixed funding systems with different types of public support it has proved that some of the support types are contradictory and – at least partially – countervailing each other, failing to achieve a clear steering effect in terms of social equity.

INTRODUCTION

In the field of higher education, both high private returns and public benefits are expected from human capital investment. Therefore, since both sides are benefitting from higher education, the rationale is that both should take their share of the costs of higher education (Johnstone, 1986).

The universal acceptance of the cost-sharing rationale has, however, not prevented national policy-solutions to public-private cost-sharing for higher education funding from developing in directions that are quite diametrically opposite. The incompatibility of various national systems became particularly evident when issues of the portability of student support systems were discussed for the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) during the BFUG-Seminar in Noordwijk, 2005. This incompatibility could be seen as an obstacle to shaping the EHEA.
The reason for this diversity is that every society tries to ‘square the circle’ between the antagonistic aims of excellence and equity (Bradley/Whitehead, 2003). Until now, the political and scientific debate has delivered no clear evidence on the effectiveness of the different social models of cost-sharing in the EHEA. The uncertainty has become more evident as a severe deficit since the ‘social dimension’ has been accepted as a policy field within the Bologna process and criteria for social minimum standards or for cross-border portability are being discussed (Bergen Communiqué, May 2005).

The EU-funded project ‘Public/private funding of higher education: a social balance’ - carried out in 2007/08 - which this article refers to has thus aimed to supply some facts for this discussion. On the macroeconomic level, the project explored the financial settings of sharing the costs of higher education between the public and the private side with a special emphasis on the structure of public expenditure. The characteristic feature of the underlying study is that all quantifiable items of public support (also the ‘hidden’ public support items) that are granted to students and their parents were taken into consideration, provided they are made available because the student attends higher education. On the microeconomic level, the shares of private and public costs were attributed to groups of students with different socio-economic backgrounds to give a better insight into the scope of public assistance and to allow reflection on social disparity and social exclusion. In this respect, the study outruns comparable studies (for instance, European Commission, 1999; OECD, 2009 and Eurostat, 2009). This information was provided for six countries from different regions of Europe.

As earlier research has shown, for instance in the Eurostudent project, social systems for student support vary from country to country: Some focus more on contributions via institutions (e.g. subsidies for meals and accommodation) and some on support to individuals. Concerning the latter, some systems take students to be family-dependent in financial terms, others consider them to be independent (Eurostudent Report, 2008). Regarding these different approaches, one can establish distinct scenarios for certain groups of countries. Therefore, countries representing these different groups have been chosen for participation in the project: England was selected to represent the U.K., Norway was selected for the Nordic countries, Spain for the Southern European countries, the Czech Republic for Central Eastern Europe, and Germany and the Netherlands for Western Europe. The reference year for the underlying study was 2004.

This article is structured as follows: In the second section, some results of the macroeconomic analysis are presented. The focus is on the comparison of cost-sharing approaches to teaching-related expenditure for higher education of the public and the private side between the countries; the structure of public support (i.e. support to higher education institutions and to private households and its composition) is also looked at.
The third section contains the findings of the microeconomic analysis: It concentrates on comparing cost-sharing scenarios according to a student’s social background (student prototypes). For each prototype, the student’s income was established, and the share of public support in this was calculated. To ensure that differences based on the student’s housing situation do not distort the picture, calculations were always made for the two sub-cases of the student living i) with his/her parents and ii) away from them. Here, only the results for the latter group are presented, as this form of accommodation is the normal case (except for Spain). The results obtained and conclusions derived from a comparison between all countries are then covered in the fourth section.

PUBLIC/PRIVATE COST SHARING FOR HIGHER EDUCATION: A MACRO ANALYSIS

Shares of the public and private sides

At the highest level of aggregation, there are considerable differences between the six countries studied in the cost-sharing between the public and the private side (see Figure 1). On average, the state’s share in teaching-related expenditure on higher education is about 50 percent. In England (36 percent) and Spain (40 percent) the public share is markedly smaller in relation to the other four countries where this share ranges between 52 and 59 percent.

Figure 1 Overall shares of public and private teaching-related funding of higher education (%)

Source: Own calculations (cf. Schwarzenberger 2008)

Intuition might suggest that a higher public share indicates a stronger state activity against social disparities among the student body. However, the proportion as such gives no hint which
social groups profit from public expenditure; it only provides information on the extent to which funds are allocated via the public sector. From public sector economics, it is known that there is no such thing as an *optimum optimorum* for the size of the public budget (Samuelson, 1955; Mackscheidt, 1973); therefore, one cannot simply judge the countries’ different shares for public and private funding as too high or too low. Nonetheless, drawing on international comparisons gives a first insight into the different concepts of state activity. It may also help policy-makers to reflect upon whether the degree of overall public support is deemed appropriate.

**Share of teaching allocations and support to private households in overall public support**

Figure 2 shows a breakdown of all public expenditure into teaching allocations as opposed to all items of support for students and their parents. On average, the share of allocations to institutions is around 78 percent, but in Spain, this share is particularly high at 91 percent and in Germany, it is remarkably low at just 58 percent. In turn, this means that the share of support to private households is very low in Spain (9 percent) and extraordinarily high in Germany (42 percent).

![Figure 2 Share of allocations to institutions and support to private households in public teaching-related expenditure (%)](chart)

Source: Own calculations (cf. Schwarzenberger 2008)
Although figure 2 gives no information on the total amounts spent, the high share of household support in Germany indicates plenty of funds that could be used to set funding priorities, e.g. to level out social disparities between groups of students with different social background. In fact, in Germany there are dozens of study-related support items made available to students and their parents, and the study revealed that the number of support items is extraordinarily high compared to other countries. For Spain the possibilities for setting such funding priorities seem to be rather limited due to the low share of public support to households.

**Types of public support to households**

The shares allocated as support to private households are not the same in all countries neither are the types of support. The study differentiated between direct support (geared to the students) and indirect support (aimed at the students’ parents). Furthermore, a distinction was made between cash support (increasing student’s disposable income, e.g. scholarships) and non-cash support (reducing student’s expenditure, e.g. discounted health insurance for students).

Figure 3 shows that there are three different approaches: In Spain and Norway, direct cash support is (almost) the only form of support available (in Norway direct non-cash support amounts only to 3 percent). In England and the Netherlands, direct cash support is by far the most important form of support, although non-cash support to students also plays a role (23 percent respectively 29 percent) and indirect support is rather negligible in the Netherlands (3 percent). In Germany and the Czech Republic, indirect support is used, too and amounts to 18 percent in the Czech Republic and a striking 44 percent in Germany. Given the high percentage of overall support to private households in Germany (42 percent) indirect support translates into quite considerable sums. By contrast, direct cash support plays only a relatively small role in these two countries (31 percent in the Czech Republic and 19 percent in Germany, where this is actually the least important form of support to private households as regards its size).
The use of indirect support in Germany and the Czech Republic is linked to the picture of a student as being financially dependent on his/her parents rather than being financially independent, which is the basic idea in Norway, the Netherlands and England. Indirect support may cause a problem in terms of the effectiveness of public support if parents do not pass it on to their student children. In fact, one of the assumptions for the micro analysis has been that what the parents receive in student-related state support (whether in actual payments or in the form of tax relief) is completely passed on to their student children; however, this is not always the case in real life.

From the German Social Surveys, for instance, it is known that of the unmarried, non-resident, first degree course students (i.e. the so-called normal students) about 10 percent do not receive any parental support (Isserstedt et al., 2007). Nonetheless, if some of those parents should receive public support due to their child’s student status, this would be a misappropriated use of public means endangering the target achievement of the state’s funding priorities. This raises the question whether the support would not reach students better if the type of support was changed and aimed more directly at the students themselves. However, subsequent legal issues, such as of alimony rights, social security and taxation, are based upon the principle of public support to students’ parents. So even if there was the political willingness, changing the system of support would be very difficult. But even if the
concept of support to the students’ parents is kept, one may well ask whether the extent to which the state supports students via their parents is really appropriate, especially in Germany, where this is the most important type of support to households as regards its size.

PUBLIC/PRIVATE COST SHARING FOR HIGHER EDUCATION: A MICRO ANALYSIS

Students’ income and its composition

Table 1 illustrates the income figures for students not living with parents (in all of the countries in the study except for Spain, not living with parents is by far the most common case). The data are presented in index form. For each country, the overall student income including grants and public loans, own earnings, family contributions in cash and in kind, other sources of income and direct non-cash support (i.e. transfers in kind) which a student with a low socio-economic background receives is set at 100, and the values for all other socio-economic status (SES) groups are compared to this. Of course, this means that an immediate comparison between the index values for different countries is not possible here, although differences in the order of magnitude may well be compared.

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<th>Country</th>
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<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>101</td>
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</table>

Source: Own calculations (cf. Schwarzenberger 2008)

It is striking that the level of income is quite similar between SES groups within the countries. Especially for England, Germany and the Netherlands there are only marginal income differences between the SES groups. This may imply that in each country, there is a certain amount that is indispensable for a student’s costs of living and studying, that is not much influenced by a student’s socio-economic background, and beyond which students do not usually receive any further income.

But while the overall income is not so much influenced by SES, the composition of student income, i.e. the various sources and their share in total income differ considerably by SES. This is shown for the example of students not living with their parents (i.e. the normal case) in figure 4.
In all countries there is a tendency that students with a higher socio-economic background receive more family support than those with a lower socio-economic background and it would not be unusual for a student with very well-off parents to receive twice – or even three times – as much support from them than a student with the lowest SES. From this perspective, it might be expected that, in terms of equity, the public support items be targeted at compensating for such differences. In the Czech Republic, Germany and especially in Spain, family contributions are clearly the most important source of student income (the only exception is the low SES group in Spain). This is tied to the picture of students being regarded as financially dependent on their parents, although in Spain there is no public support for student’s parents to compensate for this.

As regards grants, the general tendency is that the higher the socio-economic background, the lower the amount of the grant. There are only two partial exceptions from this general tendency: In the Czech Republic, there is no clear upward or downward tendency observable.
for students not living with parents, and for Norwegian students living with parents (not shown in the graph) even data contradicting the general tendency were found: there, the share of grants in total income is increasing, the higher the SES. As figure 4 shows, the differences in the share of grants in total student income by socio-economic background are very marked in Germany (lowest SES group: 17 percent, highest SES group: 3 percent) and also in Spain (14 percent vs. 3 percent) but smaller in the other countries.

As far as public loans are concerned, the question is whether they are means-tested. Where this is the case, as in Germany, the clearest pattern is that the higher the SES, the lower the public loan. This is still a trend, but not as pronounced in England and the Netherlands. For Norway the opposite is true; the higher the students’ SES, the higher the amount of the loan – independent of the students’ housing situation. In Norway the students are totally free to decide whether or not they want to take out a public loan (as opposed to Germany, where public grants and loans are automatically combined with one another) and they can also decide on its amount. Therefore, those students with a higher socio-economic background may (dare to) take out the higher amounts. In the Czech Republic public loans are negligible and in Spain they are not available for students.

So regarding grants and public loans, the countries have obviously found different answers to the question to which extent the state should make up for differences by SES and thus strive for greater social equity. Generally, there seems to be consensus that students with a lower socio-economic background should profit more from grants and loans, and one certainly cannot say that there is the one solution that would be appropriate for all countries. Yet each country should review and then decide for itself whether the extent to which socio-economic differences are countered by state support is deemed appropriate.

In the countries observed, work-related income is the most important private source of student income, sometimes second only to family contributions. Taking the students’ socio-economic background into account, one might expect that the higher the SES, the lower the share of their own earnings in a student’s income. Indeed, a straight trend like this can be found in Norway and England. In Spain, a very sharp decrease in the share of own earnings between the low SES groups (from 44 percent to 3 percent) is followed by a remarkable increase for the high SES groups (to 21 percent and 24 percent). In the Netherlands, the general tendency of a decreasing share of own earnings by increasing SES is still visible but not very pronounced, and in Germany there are hardly any differences between the SES groups. Finally, in the Czech Republic a contradicting tendency can be found; starting off from the lowest SES group, the share of own earnings steadily increases (from 16 percent to 22 percent) and then slightly decreases (19 percent) for the highest SES group.
By comparing the shares just for the lowest and the highest SES groups in each country, it is noteworthy that there are two countries – Spain and Norway – where the differences are really marked (44 percent vs. 24 percent and 44 percent vs. 33 percent). This is important because when students with a low SES have to earn and therefore work more to support themselves, they have less time left for studying than their peers with a higher SES, which would put them at a disadvantage; and this could be seen as a call for more public support to students from a low socio-economic background. In most of the other countries, the differences between lowest and highest SES group amount only to 2 or 3 percentage points, and in the Czech Republic the share of own earnings for the highest SES group (19 percent) is even higher than for the lowest SES group (16 percent).

The basic types of student funding systems can be described as in figure 5: In those countries that take students to be financially independent adults, i.e. England, the Netherlands and Norway, students’ income is mainly based on own earnings, public loans and grants. In contrast, those countries where students are treated as financially dependent on their parents, i.e. the Czech Republic, Spain and Germany, family contributions are the most important source of students’ income, combined mainly with own earnings and grants.

Figure 5 Basic Typology of Student Funding Systems

Source: cf. Schwarzenberger 2008
Overall public support and the composition of public support

The amount of public support a student receives varies by his/her socio-economic background. This is illustrated by data presented in index form in table 2 for students not living with parents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
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<td>Norway</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>18</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own calculations, cf. Schwarzenberger 2008

In England, the Netherlands and Spain a fairly clear trend can be found that the higher the SES, the lower the sum of public support. The differences between what students from the respective lowest and highest socio-economic background group may receive vary greatly between those countries: In Spain, a student from the highest socio-economic background receives only 18 percent of the amount that a student from a low socio-economic background would get; but in the Netherlands, this relationship is quite different with 78 percent vs. 100 percent. In the Czech Republic, Germany and Norway, the picture is not so clear and the differences between the lowest and highest group are quite small. At least for Germany and the Czech Republic, this is because the public support in these countries is composed of various types of support (and indeed a number of support items) which may work in ways that mutually contradict and counteract each other. Therefore, it is worth looking at how the total amount of public support is composed...

The composition of public support by various types of support types distinguished by socio-economic background is illustrated in figure 6.

Clearly, direct cash support (e.g. grants) is the most “visible” form, and indeed the only one in Norway and Spain. The share of direct cash support to students increases by SES in the Czech Republic, while it decreases by SES in Germany, England and the Netherlands. Students in the Czech Republic, England, Germany and the Netherlands are also supported in non-cash form, i.e. in the form of “object-related support” such as subsidies for transport, facilities and health care. This type of support does not differ by SES – or only marginally. In the Czech Republic, Germany and the Netherlands, indirect support geared to the students’ parents also plays a role. The share of indirect support is remarkably high in the Czech Republic and even more so in Germany, both countries seeing students as financially dependent children of their parents. For
German students living away from their parents the indirect support takes on an increasingly big share by SES (33% - 55%) while this share decreases by SES in the Czech Republic (43% - 34%).

Figure 6 Public Subsidy Types for Students Not Living with Parents by Country and Socio-economic Background

The basic differentiation of the three support types shows that they may work in different ways, namely as i) flat-rate support that dose not differentiate by SES, such as subsidies for health insurance) or ii) as targeted support. The latter can be used to counter differences in SES, as is done with grants, but also to accentuate these differences, which is the case for tax relief from which the parents of students with the highest SES usually profit most, while those with the lowest SES hardly benefit at all.

In most countries, each of these support modes plays at least a small role, though Norway relies entirely on flat-rate support and Spain only on targeted support aimed at outweighing differences by SES (for details on this, cf. Schwarzenberger 2008). In countries using mixed
models, such as in Germany, the effects of one mode of support (e.g. a means-tested grant) may be counterbalanced by another support mode that works in a different way (e.g. tax exemptions favouring parents of high SES students).

In such cases where many different support items are in use, policy-makers should therefore carefully review whether the scope of each support item is genuinely intended, also as regards its potential effect of nullifying other support items, and if the overall outcome mirrors the country’s policy intentions with regard to social equity.

In turn, countries relying on just one type and mode of support should also test whether the outcome of this support - which, owing to its singular position, becomes all the more important – really does reflect what was politically intended.

**Share of public support in student’s income**

When public support is measured against a student’s income (including direct non-cash support, such as “hidden income” in the form of subsidies for facilities, transport and health insurance) it can be seen that the level of support is high in Germany, medium in the Czech Republic, the Netherlands and Norway, and low in England and Spain. Table 3 presents these differences by country and socio-economic background.

In all countries, the general tendency is that students with a lower SES usually profit to a higher degree from public support than their peers with a high SES. From this perspective, one may argue that the ground for equity in higher education funding has been laid. However, in many cases, the observed differences in the share of public support between the social groups are not considerable, especially for students not living with parents (an exception is Spain, but only when comparing the lowest and highest group). As seen before, the ‘indispensable’ amount a prototype student has to raise for financing higher education is very similar for all social groups. So when the share of public support in a student’s income is nearly the same for all social groups in most of the countries, the question arises whether the financial burden for the low social groups is too high compared to that for the higher social groups.
Table 3 Public subsidies as share of student income by SES (students not living with parents) (%)

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<td>Spain</td>
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Source: Own calculations (cf. Schwarzenberger 2008)

The reason, why the share of public funding does not differ very much between the social groups can be explained for some of the countries by the design of their support models. As explained before, Germany, the Czech Republic and the Netherlands use all three types of public support. The composition of the respective system, however, works in a way that some types of support counteract each other. This is especially visible in Germany, where direct cash support decreases by SES, while indirect support increases by SES. That means, in terms of social equity, the support system as a whole generates no clear steering effect.

**GENERAL CONCLUSIONS**

Equity in access to and retention in higher education depends upon various factors; a country’s funding system is without doubt one of the most important ones. It has shown that the countries of Europe have found different ways of funding higher education in terms of the overall public share in higher education expenditure, the allocation of funds to institutions and private households, and the composition of public support (direct cash, direct non-cash and indirect support). Furthermore, the overall level of public support for the different social groups, the modes of public support (flat-rate vs. targeted support) the composition of the students’ income by SES, and the share of public subsidies in a student’s income differ by country and also within countries.

So what do the differences observed mean with respect to equity in higher education funding? The overall public share in higher education expenditure does not reveal much about equal chances in access to or retention in higher education. At first, one might think that the higher the public share, the better the chances of creating equity; however, this depends very much on the objectives of public expenditure and the type of public support used. As regards the latter, it has been shown that mixed funding systems using two or even three different types of public support cause some problems. In those countries where all types of public support are at
work (the Czech Republic, Germany and the Netherlands) direct and indirect support contradict
and – at least partially – countervail each other. Particularly with respect to compensating for
social disparities, those public funding systems fail to achieve clear steering effects. Against this
background, it is rather difficult for such countries to successfully achieve funding priorities in
access to and retention in higher education.

Furthermore, a substantial use of indirect support geared to the students’ parents, as is the
case of Germany, might cause the problem that support does not fully reach the students, if the
parents do not pass on the support to their student children, which could cause them financial
problems.

With respect to the students’ housing situation, it was found that all countries involved in the
study provide higher funds for those students who do not live with their parents compared to
their peers who are living with their parents. As students who moved out of their parents’
home have to bear higher costs for rent and food, the higher amounts of public support for
such students would seem appropriate.

In terms of the overall public support for students not living with their parents, it was found
that the support tends to decrease by SES; however, the differences between the socio-
economic groups within a country are not very big for the majority of the countries. Such a
tendency can also be observed if the share of public support in a student’s income is
considered. With a partial exception, there is a clear tendency that the share of public support
decreases by SES for both housing types. The differences between the social groups within each
country are quite small, especially for students living away from home, and one may question
whether this can be considered appropriate.

On the whole, some of the differences observed between countries on the macro level and
between SES groups and countries on the micro level are considerable. These observed
differences are often due to different underlying core concepts, such as the picture of the
student as being financially dependent or independent of his/her parents. As this may tie in
with far-reaching legal aspects such as alimony rights, changing these concepts is far from easy
(though not impossible, as is currently seen in the Czech Republic, where a far-reaching reform
is under way).

Although the picture appears to be quite mixed, all in all it seems that a ground for equity in
higher education funding has been laid in the countries observed; however, with a view to
achieving more social equity, there is still potential left for improvement. With respect to
achieving clear steering effects, the types and modes of the public funding systems need to be
reconsidered and perhaps fundamentally reformed. It will be interesting to see if such changes
of the respective funding systems may become necessary over time, in a situation where Europe aims to achieve a common European model of social policy.

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How to Use Pedagogical Innovations and Equality in Learning Outcomes to Meet the Needs of Norwegian Nursing Students with Norwegian as Their Second Language?

Grete Hedemann

Abstract

This article focuses on the developmental project “Good pedagogical practices” at the Faculty of Nursing, Oslo University College (OUC). The Nursing Theory School is one part of this project.

Experiences from the last 10 years show that many non-native nursing students have difficulties with the complexity of interaction and their language proficiency. Thus the focus in this project is on language and communication skills. I believe that in order to promote learning, alternative pedagogical approaches, which are suitable for this diverse student body, are required. In this article the use of various pedagogical methods is discussed. Examples from the Nursing Theory School as well as empirical evidence are presented. In the future, other methods will be implemented as a result of this ongoing developmental project with the systematic gathering of more empirical evidence.

INTRODUCTION

This article focuses on the developmental project “Good pedagogical practices” at the Faculty of Nursing, Oslo University College (OUC). Experiences from the last 10 years show that many nursing students have difficulties with the complexity of interaction and their language proficiency. This is of special concern to second language students. Research at Oslo University College shows that non-native students tend to take on the role of non-participants.

Attitudes towards knowledge and learning have changed during the last ten years. The focus is now on sharing and building knowledge in groups. Language and communication skills are therefore even more important elements in the learning process than they have been before. Social theories of learning have many elements and strategies we use to promote student activities. The students work in small learning communities which lead them to speak more often and this may help to ensure they understand what other participants have said.

Although the students are qualified to study at the OUC, formally and their experience and their qualifications in Norwegian are satisfactory, this is not enough. When their communication and
language skills are not sufficient for studies in Norwegian Higher Education, it will be of no help to teach them what they have been taught before. To promote learning, alternative pedagogical approaches suitable for this diverse student body are required.

**PARTICIPATION PROMOTES LEARNING**

My central thesis is that learning is enhanced by participation in the learning environment. An enabling environment provides an opportunity for all students, regardless of gender, social, ethnic or linguistic background, to learn, develop and succeed as students and future professionals. Student collaboration on professional issues in multicultural groups is regarded as a crucial part of the education process. Creating meeting points with the potential of becoming dynamic arenas for intercultural communication between students with different cultural, social and linguistic background is essential. Socialisation into the existing professional culture is crucial to successful learning outcomes. In this project the focus is on language and communication skills in different contexts. The students must learn the professional language of nursing as well as being able to use everyday language when communicating with their colleagues and the patients. Understanding theory as well as scientific papers requires proficiency in professional language.

There is consensus that the construction of meaning and communication are highly interdependent. The communication of professional concepts and knowledge, both oral and written, between fellow students is essential. Research shows that those who communicate, practise and have courage to use what they have learnt are the non-native students who have succeeded in learning language and communication skills, are (Gulden, 2009).

**PROGRAM AIM AND PRINCIPLES FOR LEARNING**

This program will aim to promote

1. Student progression and a successful student career.

Research has shown that many second language students are at risk of dropping out. It is of importance that the non-native students succeed. Our aim is to develop an educational program that enables second language students to successfully complete their education.

2. Student satisfaction.

A safe environment with plenty of humour is important, especially when one is working with the students' own texts. Basically, these students are vulnerable because they "know" that they lack sufficient competence in Norwegian to be functional students in the faculty. Students will gain a lot of specific praise, and guidance is based on their individual level. The students must be confident of their strengths to move forward to gain new language and
communication skills. The principle to be followed is to let each student give an account of some situation where they have been successful. The students need to experience a sense of achievement. The environment should encourage students to ask whenever they need to. Their opinion is appreciated. The supervisor should be a model.

The following principles will be used in the program

Use of several senses and various pedagogical methods may be essential to facilitate learning for second language students. Students learn in different ways and using many different methods, one will ensure learning outcomes. Non-native students, in particular have problems with language and communication skills, and methods which only focus on oral and written production may inhibit their learning process.

Traditionally, pedagogical approaches in education focus on writing, reading and listening. The use of various pedagogical methods which stimulate more senses promotes learning in different ways. Music, art, colours, dance and activities, narratives and fairy tales can support the learning process. In the nursing literature, the art of nursing is fully accepted, but there is a discrepancy between theory and practice (Nåden, 1999).

Creative methods promote different intelligences. Stimulating fantasy makes students engage in the issues in different ways. Data from observations, interviews and informal conversation with students and academic staff show that students become more involved in the topics when different creative methods are used. The methods which involve student activities give them energy in the learning process. In our multi-ethnic groups the use of various pedagogical approaches may satisfy the students individual learning styles. With various pedagogical approaches the non-native students may collaborate and use language and communication skills in different and extended ways.

The creative aspect allows for understanding. The methods are universal; everyone can express and receive through creative processes. Because there are different learning styles, the use of different and multiple senses is of value in communication and learning. Bjørnebo, one of the pioneers in this field in Norway, quotes the poet William Blake in the preface to Aesthetic Guide “The five senses find their maximum expression in the various art disciplines” (Ødegaard and Meyer Demotte 2008:13). Another way of understanding the creative methods is to facilitate the use of different intelligences.

One example of this is storytelling in the “Nursing Theory School”, a method which promotes creation of mental images. Another method is to download audio files. The theoretical introduction to the “Nursing Theory School” is available on audio files and has also been filmed. This enables the students to practice the language whenever they want. The students can listen
to the soundtrack anytime and anywhere. Research challenges the existing learning theories about language acquisition. One thesis is that listening to a new language involves the formation of new structures in the brain that are needed to learn the new words. The best way to learn the language is to be subjected to its sounds, without necessarily understanding the meaning. Our ability to learn new words is directly related to how often we have been exposed to the special sounds that make them.

Non-native students have experienced their limited vocabulary and the need to study Norwegian language and communication skills to achieve extended language proficiency. Nursing theorist Martinsen highlights the importance of everyday language (1996). It is highly important in the nursing profession to communicate with the patients and therefore the non-native students need also to focus on these language and communication skills.

The creative aspect allows for understanding in a different way. The use of creative methods is a contribution that will stimulate linguistic minority students to apply language in a different and open way. An example here might be the use of narrative tradition in the "theory school". This method helps to stimulate the student’s imagination.

Art and expression pedagogy is based on the art and expression of therapeutic understanding and theory. The methodology is in accordance with educational goals. The various languages of music, art, colour, textiles/fabrics, dance and movement, drama, poetry, stories and fairy tales can be applied. Making use of these forms of expression is a means of taking seriously the fact that man is creative and has many senses that can be useful in the learning process. Non-native students have difficulty understanding and expressing themselves, and through art and expression pedagogy they can learn.

Interaction between the teacher and students and within the student body is another central principle. Creating an environment characterized by trust between participants and between participants and the academic staff is essential for making the non-native students feel sufficiently secure to talk and write in their individual manner. A good and safe environment with plenty of humour is important as these students are vulnerable because they "know" that they lack necessary competence in Norwegian to be functional. They must succeed up to a certain level in the tasks given in the project. Mastering is essential in all learning activities and promotes further learning. Thus guidance and praise must be based on the students’ individual level.
THE PILOT STUDY “NURSING THEORY SCHOOL”

The “Nursing Theory School” will contribute to an understanding of the terms used in applied science as they appear in lectures and in the literature. The module will strengthen the student in working with the theory and give them strategies in relation to theory acquisition.

Theory is highly important in the nursing faculty. It is the justification of our profession and helps practitioners focus on nursing and may assist the nurses in ensuring appropriate nursing. Theories are created both in practical fields and in the Faculty of Nursing. Nothing is as practical as a good theory. Theory guides us in nursing and justifies what we do.

The content and structure of the session include the words to be practiced and an explanation of the concepts. The use of relevant examples may help the students develop their own insights and thereby reinforce learning. Students will learn how to read and understand the theory. The module will encourage students to read and work with theory.

The lectures are based on a special structure to promote the understanding of the meaning of professional concepts. Florence Nightingale and Kari Martinsen, a famous Norwegian nurse from the present, have been used as examples. The lecture starts with music from the actual period.

A large photo of the person is presented. Then a 10 minutes lecture is given. The lecturer uses the forms “I am …. I believe” and so on and applies the following structure in the lecture: a presentation of the personal life of the nurse theorist followed by the time and historical events she lived in. (Who am I? Where do/did I and my family live? What are the characteristics of the actual time in which I live (d)?). This is followed by questions such as: What is my nursing theory? What do the concepts include? What are the similarities and disparities with other nursing theories and how can I implement my theory today? The conceptual content is highlighted to make students aware of how to work in order to gain an understanding of the concepts. The concepts can accommodate individual understanding and cultural experience.

Research at OUC shows that many non-native students do not participate in the classroom. They ask questions or comment in informal situations and often when they are alone with the lecturer. These requests are of common interest. It is crucial to create an environment which enables all students to feel sufficiently safe and secure to participate. Some routines can be established to promote this learning strategy. One example would be five minutes small talk relevant to the issues as a form of “warming up” Then follows a free “language corner” for fifteen minutes in which a linguistic phenomenon is discussed. Each student indicates how they feel in this situation and they are invited to share reflections on the recent issues.
Immediately after the lecture, the students are presented with some questions and open ended sentences to make them study the topic and work with their writing skills. The questionnaires are collected by the lecturer. Individual study is followed by peer learning. They discuss in small groups of 2 or 3, and then the results are shared with the whole group. A discussion follows. Focus is on both oral and written skills and made relevant to the actual topic.

The session closes with a summary of what the learning outcome is and an evaluation.

**Evaluation**

The teaching strategy has been evaluated by students, assistant professors and the lecturer. Students were asked to evaluate the lecture and their learning outcome by filling out a questionnaire. The responses showed that the oral answers were deemed relevant to the topic and that most of the students had understood the content and were also able to use concepts correctly.

The written text, however, was difficult to comprehend. When answering what had promoted their learning outcome, the students mentioned the discussion and the photo as important. The conclusion is that learning increases due to the various pedagogical approaches.

The results of interviews with two assistant professors attending the lecture indicated that they felt the topic came alive with the use of photos and the relevant use of voice. The students were engaged. They also felt that concretising the subject matters was important as the literature is vague and consists of concepts that are difficult to separate from each other. “I believe in this!” one assistant professor exclaimed. The students paid attention. They all got involved in the discussion. Peer learning gave them a feeling of security and a willingness to share their knowledge with the group.

The lecturer also thought that the students were engaged. Everybody listened, wrote and communicated with fellow students and within the group. The answers showed a relevant understanding of the topic. Many students mentioned topics and professional concepts they associated the material with and thereby proved their ability to connect new knowledge to old. This is an example of building concepts. The lecture was a good match to the paper they were preparing simultaneously at the faculty.

The different pedagogical methods helped the students engage in oral and writing skills. The progression from individual participation to peer learning gave them enough confidence to state their opinion in plenum. Experiences so far demonstrate that the non-native students will gain from participating in programs using diverse pedagogical methods.
The conclusions are based on observations, questions, and self-reflection, which in themselves are methods in developmental projects. The project the “Nursing Theory School” will implement various methods and gather more empirical evidence. Close dialogue with the faculty’s academic staff throughout the process will hopefully ensure a change in the faculty’s teaching and learning culture.

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