Conference: Beyond teaching and research - inclusive understandings of Academic Practice

St Anne’s College, University of Oxford, 13-15 December 2009

*Third international conference organised by the Centre for Excellence in Preparing for Academic Practice, University of Oxford*

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Sunday 13 December 2009

10.00 am  Registration opens

10.30 am  Walking tour of Oxford, starting from St Anne’s College gates.

12 noon  Briefing for Chairs of seminars, Upper Common Room

12.30 pm  Lunch, Dining Room, St Anne’s College

2.00 pm  Welcome, Mary Ogilvie Lecture Theatre

2.15–3.00 pm  Keynote Address 1, Mary Ogilvie Lecture Theatre

Professor Anna Neumann, Columbia University

“Professing to Learn: Passionate Thought, Scholarly Learning, and Academic Work”

Abstract

College and university faculty, administrators, and students often hold mistaken conceptions of academic work. Some believe that to adhere to standards of objective inquiry, faculty members must separate emotion from research, or that to live the professorial life, they must separate personal from professional interests. Other misconceptions abound - for example, that beginning professors have more to learn about what it means to be a faculty member than do their midcareer colleagues, or that faculty are likely to experience deep, substantive learning in their research while teaching and service are likely to distract them from such learning.

My interview-based study of the learning experiences of 78 early midcareer professors in five American research universities indicates that none of these beliefs are true. First, professors’ scholarly efforts are steeped in emotion; for many, these are pursuits of “passionate thought.” Most present their personal lives as suffused with professional work, and their professional lives, as shaped by personal commitments to pursue their chosen subjects of study. Second, midcareer faculty have as much, if not more, to learn than do their junior colleagues; the content of their learning changes dramatically between early and midcareer. And third,
early midcareer faculty pursue their scholarly learning more avidly in their teaching than in their research; they may also pursue it by way of service.

I will present the results of my study of university professors’ pursuits of passionate thought in their scholarly learning both in midcareer and earlier in their lives. I will discuss the following topics as well: the sites where professors can engage their most meaningful scholarly learning, how they may design worklives that support scholarly learning as the pursuit of passionate thought, and what universities can do to support their efforts.

**Biographical details**


3.15–4.00 pm

**Seminars – Session 1**

**Seminar 1-A: Seminar Room 3**

Alison Shreeve (Research Theme)

“Being in two camps? Relations between aspects of academic life”

**Seminar 1-B: Seminar Room 5**

Alan Floyd (Research Theme)

“Turning points”: the personal and professional circumstances that lead academics to become Heads of Departments”
Seminar 1-C: Seminar Room 6

Claudia Lapping (Research Theme)

“Reconceptualising relations between academics and their practice: psychical relations to texts, concepts, and institutional regulations”

Seminar 1-D: Seminar Room 7

Celeste Rossetto & Jeannette Stirling (Evaluation of Practices Theme)

“Weaving the academic and social: working in Higher Education on rural and remote Australian campuses”

Seminar 1-E: Seminar Room 8

Trevor Welland (Research Theme)

“Does research-led teaching exist at all? Exploring the relationships between research and teaching in Higher Education”

Seminar 1-F: Upper Common Room

Michael Solem & Nick Hopwood (Research Theme)

“Experiencing graduate school: A comparative analysis of students in Geography programmes”

4.00–4.30 pm   Tea, Foyer A, Ruth Deech Building

4.45–6.00 pm   Discussion and Networking Groups (These are four informal, semi-structured sessions, intended to allow for discussion between people with similar professional interests)

Seminar Room 3:

Title: “Academic Careers – International Trajectories”

Facilitator: Dr Jean Rath

As higher education policies have sought to improve student and staff mobility, and the globalisation of academic practice continues, so
academic careers are taking varied international trajectories. The challenge for individuals is how best to develop themselves as effective academics within a global context. This discussion group will provide an opportunity to explore the complex and contradictory nature of international academic careers.

Seminar Room 5:

Title: “Troubling territories: ‘doing criticality’ in an academic development context”

Facilitator: Dr Lesley Gourlay

A growing body of commentary and research has raised fundamental questions regarding concepts which have arguably come to dominate mainstream academic development and PgCert courses. This reflects a move away from generic, cognitive views of learning, and a concomitant turn towards the socially-situated in recent studies. This research has lead to a questioning of the dominant emphases on ‘approaches to learning’ and resultant typologies. Notions such as “deep and surface learning”, “learning outcomes” and “active learning” have also come under increased scrutiny. As a result, more critical, hybridised conceptions of academic development have begun to emerge; conceptions which view higher education as not only a site of ‘teaching and learning’, but also crucially a complex set of situated social and discursive practices, involving complex and nuanced identity work. This session will provide a forum for discussion of:

1) The complexities of responding to these critical positions for academic developers
2) The challenge of balancing criticality and pragmatism in PgCert courses in particular
3) Any related issues felt to be important by participants.

Seminar Room 7:

Title: “The impact of funding on early career researcher development”

Facilitator: Dr Claire Stocks

Developers of early career researchers (primarily graduate students and contract research staff) often work with short-term government funding (the ‘Roberts money’ in the UK) which tends to come with certain terms and stipulations attached (for instance, the training and development of
PIs as line-mangers does not fall under the Roberts remit). This discussion group will offer the opportunity for those who work with early career researchers to consider the impact that such short-term, directed funding has on their work, to think about strategies for dealing with this situation and for sharing experiences and future plans.

Seminar Room 8:

Title: “Peer review: an academic blindspot?”

Facilitator: Dr Nick Hopwood

Peer review is a crucial aspect of academic practice - its outcomes determine the shape and advancement of scholarly fields, and academics spend a great deal of time in reading, passing judgement, and articulating judgement on others' work. When these processes are talked about, particularly among early career academics, it is often with a view to enhancing changes of successfully navigating the process and getting something published. This discussion group will explore these processes in more depth, critically examine peer review as a form of academic practice, and raise questions about how we are prepared, or help others prepare, to undertake the role of anonymous referee. The chair will draw on the work of Graue (2006) to highlight perspectives on peer review processes as a rule-bound social activity of inclusion and exclusion, infused with tensions. It will also consider practical issues, such as the forms of writing which reviewers engage in as distinct practices and products in themselves. It is hoped that participants will be able to contribute from their experience as recipients or writers of peer reviews, and that collectively the group will benefit from explicitly exploring this shadowy aspect of academic work.


6.15–7.00 pm  Drinks reception,  Foyer A, Ruth Deech Building

7.00–9.00 pm  Conference Dinner, Dining Room
Abstract

Doctoral writing is often discussed using the ubiquitous words “writing up”. The term suggests that writing is a transparent process which happens after the real job of researching and thinking has occurred. It is this kind of approach which leads to the production of bookshelves of manuals of tips and techniques for improving writing, as if writing were simply a technical process for which a set of recipes can be developed. The ready market for such texts is testament to the anxiety that doctoral researchers have about writing, but this is not due, I will argue, to deficiencies in techniques. Rather, the textualised anxieties, blocks and stumblings arise from the tangle of identity, dialogic and discursive work that is accomplished through scholarly writing. I will present a three part frame for understanding doctoral writing, using examples of student texts, and then go on to consider what universities might do in order to build cultures and communities of practice that support rather than simply judge and red-pen the texts that doctoral researchers produce.

Biographical details

Pat Thomson, PSM, is Professor of Education in the School of Education, the University of Nottingham, and an editor of the Educational Action Research Journal. A former headteacher, her current research focuses on the arts and creativity in school and community change, headteachers’ work, and doctoral education. Her publications include Helping doctoral students write: pedagogies for supervision (2006, Routledge, with Barbara Kamler), Doing visual research with children and young people (Routledge, 2008) and School leadership- heads on the block? (Routledge, 2009). The Routledge Doctoral Companion for Students in Education and the Social Sciences, and a companion volume for supervisors (both co–edited with Melanie Walker), will be published by Routledge in 2010; she is currently working on a series of books about creative learning.
10.15–11.00 am  **Seminars – Session 2**

*Seminar 2-A: Seminar Room 3*

Jenni Stubb, Kirsi Pyhältö & Kirsti Lonka (Research Theme):

“Balancing between inspiration and exhaustion? Experienced socio-psychological well-being in the Ph.D. path”

*Seminar 2-B: Seminar Room 5*

Angela Brew & David Boud (Research Theme)

“Influences on the formation of academic practice: the academic’s perspective”

*Seminar 2-C: Seminar Room 6*

Paul Blackmore & Camille Kandiko (Research Theme)

“Interdisciplinarity within an academic career”

*Seminar 2-D: Seminar Room 7*

Andrew Read & Donna Hurford (Evaluation of Practices Theme)

“Working collaboratively: reflecting on unexpected outcomes”

*Seminar 2-E: Seminar Room 8*

Barry Stierer & Mary Lea (Research Theme)

“Towards new conceptions of academic practice through analysis of lecturers’ everyday professional writing practices”

*Seminar 2-F: Upper Common Room*

Cheryl Amundsen & Lynn McAlpine (Research Theme)

“New supervisors: working ‘from the other side of the table’”
11.00–11.30 am  Coffee, Foyer A, Ruth Deech Building

11.45–12.30 pm  **Seminars – Session 3**

**Seminar 3-A: Seminar Room 3**
Lesley Gourlay (Research Theme)

“New lecturers as literacy brokers? Academic practice and the development of student writing in practice disciplines”

**Seminar 3-B: Seminar Room 5**
Karim Sadeghi (Research Theme)

“Research evaluation in Iran: an academic practice?”

**Seminar 3-C: Seminar Room 6**
Shrinika Weerakoon & Suki Ekaratne (Research Theme)

“Extending academic practice to support lifelong learning contexts in career development”

**Seminar 3-D: Seminar Room 7**
David Glenister & Tessa Parkes (Evaluation of Practices Theme)

“Process in the life-world or progression through the institution? How academic careers in Nursing weave personal knowledge and discontinuous narratives into conversations of multiple identities”

**Seminar 3-E: Seminar Room 8**
Vicki L. Baker & Meghan J. Pifer (Research Theme)

“If I knew then what I know now: the role of relationships in the transition from doctoral student to independent scholar”
Seminar 3-F:  Upper Common Room

Andy Adcroft & David Taylor (Research Theme)

“Support for new career academics: a conceptual model for research intensive university business and management schools”

12.30–1.45 pm  Lunch, Dining Room

2.00–2.45 pm  Seminars – Session 4

Seminar 4-A:  Seminar Room 3

Cheryl Hunt & William Richardson (Research Theme)

“Hope, doubt and intellectual love: Early career academics’ perspectives on academic practice”

Seminar 4-B:  Seminar Room 5

Sharron King (Research Theme)

“Sustainable scholarship”

Seminar 4-C:  Seminar Room 6

Peter Kahn & Lorraine Walsh (Research Theme)

“Academic practice as collaborative working”

Seminar 4-D: Seminar Room 7

Deborah Chinn (Evaluation of Practices Theme)

“Those who can, do: examining the transition from practitioner to academic through autoethnography”

Seminar 4-E:  Seminar Room 8

Ming Cheng  (Research Theme)

“Quality audit in England: a view from academics”
Seminar 4-F: Upper Common Room

Martin Gough (Research Theme)

“Developing academic practice as fragmentation and the problem of definition”

3.00–3.30 pm   Tea, Foyer A, Ruth Deech Building

3.45–5.00 pm   Meetings with Keynote Speakers (informal discussion sessions for conference participants and the keynote speakers, based mainly on research activities and interests, though other subjects may arise)

   With Anna Neumann: Seminar Room 3
   With Pat Thomson: Seminar Room 5
   With Egbert de Weert: Upper Common Room

5.15–6.30 pm   Reception for Early Career Academics (an informal networking session for doctoral students, postdoctoral researchers, and newly appointed academic staff, focusing on the early stages of academic career development. Facilitated by Andrew Boggs)

To be held in Seminar Room 7

Conference participants to find their own evening meals in Oxford.
Tuesday 15 December 2009

9.15–10.00 am  Seminars – Session 5

Seminar 5-A:  Seminar Room 3
Emma Kingston (Research Theme)
“Assessment feedback and subjectivity”

Seminar 5-B:  Seminar Room 5
Emma Maria Flores (Research Theme)
“A case of apprenticeship learning in doctoral education”

Seminar 5-C: Seminar Room 6
Saranne Weller (Research Theme)
“Reading as academic practice: understanding the experience of academic reading for new lecturers”

Seminar 5-D:  Seminar Room 7
Keijo Räsänen & Kirsi Korpiaha (Evaluation of Practices Theme)
“Resourcing identity projects in doctoral education - a preparatory event and its reception”

Seminar 5-E:  Seminar Room 8
Justine Mercer (Research Theme)
“Rejection and resilience in Higher Education scholarship: beyond empathy”

Seminar 5-F:  Upper Common Room
Corinne Boz (Research Theme)
“Exploring academic practice through academic writer identities”
Mr Egbert de Weert, University of Twente

“The many faces of scholarly life: divergent and convergent career paths”

Abstract

Traditionally academic careers are strongly embedded in the prevailing science system which constitutes the basis for the definition of the major task components of academics. The academic career is mostly organized in disciplinary units, and peers have a decisive influence in the recruitment process and career patterns of academics. Entering the community of scholars is a rather closed and hierarchical system, although there are historical, national and institutional variations. Along with this, this dominion of scholars also claimed the right to participate in the running of their institutions.

Under the influence of various internal and external factors - demography, changing demands, economical and HE policies, international competition - this classical idea of a scholarly life is vanishing, for some a nostalgic reminiscence, for others a blessing to modern times. HE institutions are in a continuous process to overhaul the career paths of academics with regard to:

- appointment, promotion and reward systems, flexible employment conditions;
- exploration of new forms of doctoral training, with less emphasis on pure research training;
- multiple working tasks in teaching, research and beyond and corresponding workload regulations.

Due to these changes the working environment in academia is becoming increasingly diversified and unbounded. The question arises how the academic career model moves towards multiple career paths in the triangle of teaching, research and beyond and whether this does mesh with convergent or inclusive elements of academic practice.

Biographical details

Egbert de Weert is senior researcher at the Center for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS), University of Twente, The Netherlands. After graduation from the University of Groningen (Sociology) he held a teaching position at the University of Western Ontario, London, Canada where he also received a Master’s degree in social sciences.
Subsequently he worked at various policy institutions and advisory bodies on Higher Education in the Netherlands.

At CHEPS his major research fields are higher education and the labour market, staffing policies and human resources in higher education and science organizations, organisational changes in higher education, European reform processes, workplace learning.

He coordinated (with Jürgen Enders) a European project on the International Attractiveness of the Academic Workplace in Europe. His publications include *The Changing Face of Academic Life: Analytical and Comparative Perspectives* (2009, Palgrave Macmillan (edited volume with Jürgen Enders) and *Research at Universities of Applied Sciences in Europe: Conditions, Achievements and Perspectives* (2009 with Maarja Soo, [www.uasnet.eu](http://www.uasnet.eu)).

He is involved in the international project on the Changing Academic Profession, a survey among academics in various countries worldwide.

12.15-1.30 pm Lunch, Dining Room

2.00 pm Conference closes

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