

Title: Professional Development: Reframing the Paradigm

Presenter: Helen King
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Session Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- Describe three related models for the development of expertise in relation to teaching in higher education;
- Illustrate these models with examples from their own and others' practice;
- Explain the concept of professional development in a way that is consistent with professional practices in higher education;
- Adopt or adapt these ideas for use in their context.

Session Outline

For a number of years I have been interested in 'ways of thinking and practising' (WTP) in the disciplines (e.g. McCune & Hounsell, 2005) and, more recently, the WTP in teaching in higher education (HE). This led me to explore the literature on characteristics of expertise (e.g. Ericsson et al, 2006). If we can better understand these WTP and expertise characteristics in HE this may then help inform the enhancement of educational development (Kreber et al, 2005; Saroyan & Trigwell, 2015). A 2018 SEDA Grant enabled me to conduct semi-structured interviews with 9 National Teaching Fellows (NTFs) to explore how they develop their teaching. This exploration was aligned to three models of expertise development: Deliberate Practice (Ericsson et al, 1993), Progressive Problem Solving (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993), and Reflective Practice (Schön, 1982).

Analysis of the interviews and reflection on my practice and experiences has enabled me to develop a model of expertise in teaching in HE involving three interacting elements: Pedagogic Content Knowledge (Shulman, 1986), Artistry of Teaching (Schön, 1982), and Self-Determined & Purposeful Approaches to Learning & Development. This workshop will consider this latter element with illustrations from the interviews, my experiences and those of the participants.

As a conclusion to this research, I have reframed the concept of professional development to focus more on the evidence-informed evolution of practice rather than on informal or formal development activities (King, 2019).

I have used this reframed professional development concept in a variety of very positively-received ways including with new academics on our PGCAPP, in workshops on the Artistry of Teaching, and when supporting nominees and applicants for NTFs and HEA

Fellowships. I will share these approaches with the workshop participants and encourage them to consider how they might adopt or adapt the ideas.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

15 mins: Presentation: introduction to the topic

10 mins: Group activity: how do you describe professional development for HE staff?

Participants will be invited to write their descriptions on individual post-it notes. They will then discuss these in small groups, identify similarities and differences, and feedback keywords to the whole group.

30 mins: Brief presentation followed by group activity: three models for developing expertise in teaching in HE, sharing examples from NTF interviews and from own experiences

I will briefly summarise, generically, the three models (Deliberate Practice, Progressive Problem Solving, Reflective Practice). In small groups (one model per group depending on the number of participants), participants will read very short case studies extracted from the NTF interviews and suggest how these might fit the model(s). They will also be encouraged to share experiences of their own approaches to developing their practice and those of others with whom they work. Each group will then feedback to the whole so that a better shared understanding of the three models can be created.

5 mins: Presentation: a reframing of how I describe professional development

10 mins: Group activity: discuss this description and feedback

Participants will be invited to discuss, critique and feed back on this description (including revisiting the post-it notes from the first activity)

10 mins: Presentation, comments, Q & A: how I've used this approach and its impact

Finally, I will briefly outline how I've used these models and the professional development description in educational development activities with new and experienced staff

(10 minutes spare to allow flexibility to extend discussions and Q&A as required)

References

Summaries of the interview transcriptions are available on my website at

<https://drhelenking.wordpress.com/expertise-workshop-resources/>

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