Title: **Diagrams to discourse and discourse to diagrams: uses of visual representation in qualitative research to support staff development of digital literacies**

Presenters: **Sarra Saffron Powell and Tünde Varga-Atkins**
University of Liverpool

Session Learning Outcomes

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

- Critically evaluate the use of visual representation as a tool to elicit, explore and communicate qualitative research data in pedagogical contexts;
- Consider the merits of visual approaches and evaluate their potential applicability to explore self-perception and practices in their own digital and disciplinary contexts.

Session Outline

Key issues to be addressed are:

Improving the digital fluencies of academic staff is an ever-increasing aspect of staff development as ubiquitous digital technologies proliferate in all areas of contemporary life including learning, pedagogical and research contexts, as well as professional, social and personal spheres (Bawden 2001; JISC 2010). These present specific challenges within the field of educational development, particularly in terms of extending and embedding digital literacy in pedagogically sound teaching practice beyond the activities of a universities' core enthusiasts (Beetham et al, 2009;. Gourlay, 2011).

This paper responds to these challenges and will be of value to those with interests in evidence-based approaches to staff development, the development of academic staff's digital capabilities and visual representation in research contexts.

This paper reports on a SEDA Small Grants-study that investigated academic teaching staff's perspectives of and practices in digital literacies within their professional contexts and the ways in which these may shape and be shaped by discipline and institutional provision. It describes the use of visual representation to enrich traditional interview techniques, enhance collaboration and communication processes, and to augment presentation of findings. Charting the use of diagrams at each stage of the research process and exampled with illustrations, the findings of this study are presented as diagrams staff profiles. This paper suggests that visual modalities, unbound by the linearity of text (Land, 2011), are especially suited to explore both self–perception and practices, whilst depicting the multimodal, multi-directional complexities of those practices.

During the session delegates will have an opportunity to discuss findings, explore and reflect on their own digital literacy practices using a visual representation technique. An outcome of this study is a Guidance document that will be made available to delegates.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

8-10 mins	Background and introduction to study
10 mins	Practical activity on digital literacies with participants on the use of visual methods
10 mins	Presenting research findings on digital literacies of staff and on the use of visual methods
10-12 mins	Discussion on the applicability of methods and research findings, including what can the visual methods add to data collection, analysis or reporting and communication processes?
5 mins	Reflections and plenary

References

Bawden D., (2001) Information and Digital Literacies: a review of concepts, *Journal of Documentation*, (57: 2) 218–259

Beetham H, McGill L, and LittleJohn A, (2009) Thriving in the 21st Century: Learning Literacies and the Digital Age (LLiDA project), The Caledonian Academy, Glasgow Caledonian University, http://www.jisc.ac.uk/media/documents/projects/llidareportjune2009.pdf

Gourlay L.J., (2011) New Technologies and holistic development in higher education, *Educational Developments*, The Magazine of the Staff and Educational Development Association (12: 2) 17-21.

JISC, (2010) Supporting Learners in a Digital Age (SLiDA) Synthesis Report, http://www.jisc.ac.uk/media/documents/programmes/elearning/slidasynthesisreport.pdf

Land R., (2011) Speed and the Unsettling of Knowledge in the Digital University, *Digital Difference,* (series Educational Futures Rethinking Theory and Practice) (50) 61-70