Title: **There is light at the end of the tunnel: using metaphorical language to facilitate effective collaboration**

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Session Learning Outcomes

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

1. Reflect on key concepts in educational theory and how they might be articulated using metaphorical language
2. Develop and apply collaborate approaches to learning through the use of metaphorical language in different contexts

Session Outline

'Like any transplant, a metaphor is not a mere add-on; rather, it is often a source of a whole new way of speaking, that is, of a new discourse.' (Sfard, 2015, p.634)

Sfard argues that the use of metaphors in learning can facilitate new ways of seeing and expressing things. By using familiar words and terms in unfamiliar settings allows us to develop new ways of talking about concepts, and indeed construct new conceptual frameworks.

This workshop will explore how metaphorical language can be used to facilitate effective collaboration in higher education. Through a series of exercises participants will have an opportunity to reflect on how metaphorical language has been used to express key concepts in educational theory (such as Deleuze and Guattari's 'Rhizomatic Learning') and enable collaboration through the sharing of individual approaches to learning and development. As Boreus and Bergstrom state 'if one has accepted a particular metaphor, one has also accepted a certain view of a phenomenon' (Boreus and Bergstrom, 2017, p.23)

The workshop will challenge participants to work together to develop their own metaphorical language to articulate learning theories. It will also provide space for participants to reflect on how this technique might be used in professional development of staff across the disciplines, and indeed in higher education teaching more generally.

This session builds on a model of new lecturer workshops used at the Royal College of Art and the University of Gloucestershire. In these workshops, participants were challenged to use metaphors to explore and construct theories of learning, and to reflect on their own philosophical approaches to learning, teaching and assessment. We believe that this approach has considerable potential for enabling course teams to have these conversations in an open, thoughtful and playful manner. It can also be adapted to help students reflect on their approaches to learning, and the expectations that they have of the higher education study.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

This workshop session will introduce the potential of metaphors in facilitating collaborative learning. Participants will experience a short taster of the full workshop, which will involve 1) using objects to articulate and discuss theories of learning 2) collaboratively developing metaphors to explore the relationship between the concepts of learner, teacher and institution 3) reflecting on the role of metaphors in CPD.

- Introduction (5 minutes)
- *What's in the box* exercise (small group activity: 15 minutes)
- Metaphor Challenge (small group activity: 20 minutes)
- Concluding comments (5 minutes)

References

Boréus, K. and Bergström, G., 2017. Content analysis. Analyzing text and discourse: Eight approaches for the social sciences, p.23.
Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F., 1988. A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia. Bloomsbury Publishing.
Sfard, A., 2015. Metaphors for Learning. Encyclopedia of Science Education, p.634.