

Title: **Inspirational teaching: does the person transcend the method?**

Presenter: **Alan Mortiboys**

Abstract:

Session Learning Outcomes

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

Explore attributes, such as loving your audience and mindfulness, which can contribute to excellent, inspirational teaching

Debate the relative importance of the teacher as a person and the teacher's methods in face-to-face teaching

Consider to what extent, and in what ways, personal attributes can be developed in courses for new teachers in higher education (e.g. a 'PGCert') and/or in continuing professional development programmes

Session Outline

Key issues to be addressed are:

This session focusses on what makes for inspirational teaching in the conventional setting of the classroom or lecture theatre. There is much evidence to guide teachers on what strategies the teacher should adopt to develop deep approaches to learning and students who can be effective, independent learners. For example, John Hattie's research on hundreds of meta-analyses provides clear guidelines on where teachers can devote their energies to maximise their effect on students' learning. Ken Bain's study provides valuable detail about what the most successful teachers do differently.

However, the effective use of such strategies may not be enough to result in inspirational face-to-face teaching. The personal accounts of inspirational teachers in *Inspiring Academics: Learning with the World's Great University Teachers* refer to less tangible 'strategies' such as 'loving your audience' and 'mindfulness'. In John Hattie's own work, he refers to the crucial component of 'passion' but acknowledges that it is relatively under researched.

What are the attributes that sit alongside the teacher's pedagogical expertise which are needed for inspirational teaching? If they are indeed attributes, can they be learnt and developed? And what are the implications of this for teacher development in higher education?

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

A brief review of what is excellent, inspirational teaching; a brief introduction to teacher attributes which can promote inspirational teaching.

20 minutes

An activity which invites participants to explore what these attributes mean in practice. This activity is in two stages and is supported by handouts. Firstly, participants are asked to appraise their readiness to use a given attribute. In the second stage, they exchange the outcomes of their enquiry with others in the group who have been focusing on different attribute.

20 minutes

Review as a whole group the outcomes of this activity.

15 minutes

A second activity in which participants are asked to consider to what extent and in what ways the development of these attributes might be incorporated into courses for new teachers in higher education and/or continuing professional development programmes

20 minutes

Whole group reviews the outcomes of this activity; summary.

15 minutes

References

Bain, K. (2004) *What the Best College Teachers Do* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press

Hattie, J. (2012) *Visible Learning for Teachers* Abingdon: Routledge

Hay, I. (ed.) (2011) *Inspiring Academics: Learning with the World's Great University Teachers* Maidenhead: Open University Press