**SEDA Senior Fellowship annual reflection**

**Introduction:**

Getting round to writing this has taken longer than expected as I had a sudden rush of work from April on that ran right through into August. For me however it is important to do my SEDA reflection (even if it is late) as it causes me to pause and review what I’ve done over the last year and a bit.

**Working on consultancy and workshops**

This year I’ve undertaken lots of consultancy for various UK universities. Some of this has been one off workshops and keynotes, but otherwise I’ve been working with a team of consultants on an assessment project, on a change management project, and helping people gain NTFS, SFHEA and PFHEA in a variety of places.

Working on the assessment project has been both frustrating and engaging, as the other project team members have been good to work with and the outcomes have become quite useful. Working closely with two HEIs engaged with the project has been interesting: one engaged very fully and the other needed a lot of support to complete on time, but in the end they did, so that was satisfying. I am helping to conclude the project by writing up some case studies for them over the summer.

Helping people get to grips with the arcane requirements of the HEA Senior and Principal Fellowships has been interesting too: I am not convinced that the framework is a great one an there are all sorts of anomalies in it, but reading what people write and helping them put in good applications has demonstrated the power of reflection in action on all kinds of levels.

I still love doing workshops, keynotes and consultancy on my main topics of interest. This is actually, alongside giving strategic advice to institutions, my favourite kind of (paid) work. I always read the feedback sheets and try to act on the comments I receive that suggest improvements. I was horrified to read one this year that suggested I was arrogant (I hope not), a name dropper (certainly true) and sexist (certainly not), but I needed to review why someone might see me that was, which made me rethink how I might present data about male and female students’ orientations to learning.

**International activities**

This year my work has taken me to the Netherlands to work with their middle management change agents, to Spain to work with a network of academics interested in formative assessment, to Ireland for workshops and to work on publications. I’ve also done workshops on assessment and other matters in Luxembourg and Chile.

**Writing**

I’ve done a great deal more writing than I expected: my major work has been completing my first ever single authored book. I’ve also completed a number of articles and chapters.

I really enjoy writing and cannot see me stopping doing it in the near future so long as I still feel I have something to say. Indeed the research involved in writing and co-writing I believe helps me retain my currency. Writing with others has always been my preferred mode because that way you get ongoing formative feedback throughout the process.

**Mentoring and support**

Mentoring individuals and groups continues to be an important part of my contribution to the learning community and indeed my own CPD. I have continued to help a European network of academics in getting their work published in English Language journals. I have also been helping someone’s whose book proposal was turned down by Palgrave to better understand how the process works and simultaneously helping her in her last stages towards her own PhD by Publication.

I support a number of individuals at either end of the career trajectory: early career educational developers as well as people applying for (and indeed achieving) PVC posts. Mentoring continues to be my favourite kind of (unpaid) work, but I have had to turn a couple down this year to keep the workload manageable.

**CPD**

**Conferences :** I spoke at two conferences and gave keynotes at several institutions in the UK and abroad. Whenever I keynote at a conference I make a point of attending as many delegate sessions as possible so as to keep myself current and up to date.

I have become an active user of Twitter for academic purposes and find it immensely valuable as a means of sourcing current thinking and developments.

**Next directions**

* Keynoting in March
* I have been offered an Honorary doctorate which I will be delighted to receive in May
* I am writing a chapter for a textbook on Educational Development
* I have a modest 22 or so days of consultancy booked in my diary and no major projects planned

**Learning points and Reflection:**

Last year I started my SEDA reflection by saying:

“When I became an independent consultant a couple of years ago I expected to work around 1 to 2 days a week and enjoy hobbies alongside grand parenting for the rest of the week. This has not worked out in practice as I am currently working rather more than that. I am reasonably happy about the situation but do not intend to work quite as hard in the coming year. I am really enjoying the work I do, some for love, some for money but also want to make more space for personal activities.”

I failed to achieve my aim to cut down a bit on work, since I worked even more days last year than the previous one. Each year at about this time I always say ’There is not much work in my diary for the next academic year’ and then my diary tends to fill up all the same without me really meaning that to happen. It is of course the dilemma of the independent consultant: one tends to accept work fearing that nothing else is going to be on offer and then one finds oneself run off one’s feet (particularly in my case as I do two days a week grandparent duty, which literally runs me off my feet!). My aim continues to be to do consultancy work around 1-2 days a week plus some writing. The question to bear in mind is how long one can keep working without becoming stale and out of date. I reckon I have about another five years left in me (but I think I said that last year too!)