

Editorial April 2013

For one of us April marks a significant milestone in life, a birthday and this year it was a 'big' one, so its downhill all the way to retirement to now. However, there is still much that needs to change in HE and this issue sees a focus on, in the broadest sense, inclusion.

Inclusion is important in HE, gaining entry to HE is but the first stage of joining the 'club', all students need to learn the ways and means of the discipline they are studying before they can gain entry in to that discipline. Equally, for the majority of students the studying experience is one that we hope is inclusive of all; be it in terms of gender, race, sexual orientation or any of the other protected characteristics (under the UK Equality Act). This issue has a broad linking theme 'inclusion'.

The first paper by Sheila Cunningham was presented at a conference in 2012 (see http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/events/detail/2012/13_Sept_Inclusion_classroom). The conference was part of three year Scottish Funding Council funded project on Embedding Equality and Diversity in the Curriculum, EEDC project. In her paper Sheila presents a tool for self-reflection on how our perceptions of WP impact on our pedagogic approaches. The tool is linked to the UK Professional Standards framework and so is of great help for those preparing a case a fellowship.

The second paper is by Ann Baxter (again presented at the Inclusivity in the Classroom conference last year). Whilst the day to day practice in an FE college (where the author works) is somewhat different from the HE environment there are useful ideas for all presented in this report n work in progress. The use of the VLE and 'talking heads' is something that the EEDC has picked up and are developing for inclusion in the Capacity Building Resources Directory part of project web site, see http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/inclusion/capacity_building_resources_directory and will feature both staff and students talking their experience of equality and diversity issues in the classroom, so thanks Ann for idea.

The third paper is by Brendan Gray and colleagues in New Zealand, and looks at collaborative learning in a marketing strategy module context. It strikes us that the issues raised in paper apply to collaborative learning in general. Issues of the mix of students, in terms of age, background, race etc. are the same as in the workplace after leaving University, as is reported by the one student in the paper *'it encourages people to be creative and by changing our thinking ways, in the way of putting us out of our comfort zone which makes us even think and see more'*. That is same philosophy that can be used to deal with equality and diversity issues in the HE learning environment.

The final paper is by Murtagh, Morris and Thorpe looks at induction into HE, through the lens of Bourdieu's notion of habitus. What underpins the paper for us is the notion of respecting the diversity of the students entering a programme and then devising means by which we can level the playing for all so that everybody is at the same level at the

start of their programme, another example of equality and diversity in the curriculum in practice.

So thank you to all our contributors in this issue. To those of you reading, we would urge you to get writing and submit a paper to us. And for one us, belated happy birthday, and we hope you enjoy using the bus pass!

Bob Matthew, Jane Mackenzie , and Jane Pritchard

Editors PESTLHE