

Professional Learning and Development in Schools  
and Higher Education 11

Prudence C. Layne  
Peter Lake *Editors*

# Global Innovation of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

Transgressing Boundaries

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# **Professional Learning and Development in Schools and Higher Education**

Volume 11

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Editors

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ISBN 978-3-319-10481-2                      ISBN 978-3-319-10482-9 (eBook)  
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-10482-9  
Springer Cham Heidelberg New York Dordrecht London

Library of Congress Control Number: 2014955251

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Printed on acid-free paper

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## Foreword by James Wisdom

### *Global Innovation of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education: Transgressing Boundaries*

This is an ambitious book, for reasons which signal the ways that Higher Education is moving.

Firstly, it reveals the complexity of the process of reforming higher education. Across the world higher education is seen as a modern success story, but there are many in the global academy who would rather not put that success at risk by significantly reshaping its processes. However, there are countervailing forces. The comparative statistics generated through the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development sometimes encourage national governments—concerned for prestige and income—to press for reform. Within universities, the international and national competitive rankings—no matter how flimsy their foundations—can push university leaders into rapid reform campaigns. More important (I hope) than either of these are the outcomes of the steady growth in the scholarship of teaching and learning, and focussed enquiry into ensuring that students have a rich and rewarding experience when they engage with the academy to learn.

From the simple impulse of wanting to do the best for and with our students, we have developed the range of responses we may need to deploy, as is shown through the structure of this book. Central to this work are the assumptions behind our current practices and being able to work successfully either in challenging them or incorporating them into enhanced teaching and learning. It is commonplace that within educational institutions, good quality research into practice does not of itself lead to change. We have to engage at the same time in making shifts in the cultural context. This is why there is so much to learn from the experience of the practitioners whose work is reported here. Their challenges may be particular, but the challenge is generic.

The second reason is to note just how rapidly the promotion of the scholarship of learning and teaching has moved from a personal interest in the first place, through to its establishment within the local institution, then into a national discourse, and from that to opportunities to learn from experience across the world. This is an international book, offering learning from many different places—countries of course, but also from institutions and disciplines. What binds it together are

students—learners whose experience is at the core of each change, each transformation. To take a scholarly approach to educational practice is to honour the student, to hear, to listen and to appreciate the texture of the lives of those who try to learn.

The third direction of movement lies with the authors of this book. The growth of interest in the scholarship of learning and teaching has been as much amongst higher education teachers as amongst the educational professionals. The desire for innovation and improvement, and the capacity to design and research it, is now widespread throughout all those individuals and groups who support students' learning. We succeed when we rely on a strong values base, a rigorous approach to scholarship and the full engagement of our students in the work of developing higher education—for all our citizens, at all stages of their lives.

*James Wisdom is Visiting Professor in Educational Development at Middlesex University, UK and President, the International Consortium for Educational Development*

March 2014



# Preface

This book examines current trends in higher education and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. It introduces readers to pedagogical strategies that instructors worldwide are using to overcome some of the challenges they face in higher education. To maximize their students' learning, this book argues that institutions are compelled to innovate their policies and instructors must be collaborative and creative in their practices in response to students' growing demands and needs, challenges to their learning, and the shifting terrain of a rapidly globalizing world. The text explores the idiosyncrasies and challenges that drive innovation across particular cultures, disciplines and institutions. It suggests that the responses to these drivers offer some universal and compatible lessons that not only optimize teaching and learning, but also transgress institutional, cultural, and disciplinary boundaries in higher education.

The contributors to this collection work in the United States, the United Kingdom, Africa, Asia, Australia, Scandinavia and the Middle East. They represent a broad range of disciplines, fields and institutional types. They teach in varied contexts, durations, delivery modes, and formats, including online, study abroad, blended, accelerated, condensed, intensive and mortar-and-brick settings. Their higher education students are equally as diverse, in age, cultural backgrounds and needs, but willingly lend their voices and experiences to their instructors' study of teaching and learning in their particular contexts. This book harnesses the rich diversities and range our contributors represent and shares the results of their expertise, research, and assessments of some of the most creative and effective ways to improve student learning in the face of stagnant practices, limited resources, and other challenges that educators and students face in higher education.

## About the Book's Organization

We designed this book for higher educational instructors and professions around the globe, who are interested in contesting the challenges that impede their ability to innovate and create new and expanded forms of teaching and learning. We begin

by examining some of the fundamental elements of higher education and teaching and learning that demand change. We make the assertion that teaching and learning in twenty-first century higher education have reached a crossroads, poised to transition to new and refurbished ways of serving our students' educational needs. We locate this assertion in historical and current, student-focused contexts in the section, "Transforming the 'Traditional' in Higher Education." The chapters in this section examine and challenge, among other things, centuries-old adherence to and privileging of organizational systems and structures based on the agrarian academic calendar, the higher education institution, the discipline, lecture-style pedagogies, unidirectional hierarchical knowledge and assessment.

As we attempt to expand readers' traditional ways of regarding these large, aforementioned concepts, the second section of this work, "Global Innovations in Teaching and Learning," makes it clear that these universal concerns must occur across diverse contexts. The chapters in this section introduce readers to some of the global innovations and approaches of our contributors. Their theory and practice-based approaches and case studies reveal their research-oriented, student-driven experimentations that privilege student voices. In this section in particular, we explore the growing dimensions of what it means to teach and learn locally and globally. In this section, contributors tackle ways to help students become more active and engaged citizens in their communities and the rest of the world and to gain intercultural competency not simply by travelling the world, but by bringing the world to them.

Technology represents the most widely used mechanism transforming higher education and our approaches to teaching and learning. The chapters of Sect. 3, "Transgressing Boundaries Using Technology," demonstrate the range of possibilities available to transform teaching and learning in higher education. Not only are our students more globally diverse, their lives are more distinctly virtual, with the majority of their interactions occurring online. Our authors in this section demonstrate the use of technology that adapts teaching to meet the realities of students' lives<sup>3</sup> and like the to refashion ideas about the course and to transform traditional practices such as student note-taking, pedagogies and formats such as online teaching and disciplines such as Composition. Their discussions lead to the final section of the book, "Restructuring Delivery, Formats & Modes." In these final chapters, our contributors provide educators with research-based strategies for restructuring students' and educators' ways of comtemparizing their thinking about traditional concepts addressed in Section 1 in historical terms. These pedagogically-focused chapters examine students' cognitive, performative and affective behaviours.

Finally, in our concluding statements, we suggest that whether institutions, instructors, disciplines/fields stand at the crossroads of change, the decisions we make to stand still or move forward will have tremendous consequences for our students. We must never let fear and boundaries limit our innovations to engage our students more effectively in higher education.

# Acknowledgements

We offer our sincere thanks to Elon University's Center for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning, which made this project possible through its generous funding, time and resources. Special thanks for sharing their expertise are extended to Drs. Peter Felten, Deandra Little and Katie King and to Laura St. Cyr. We are grateful also to Mr. James Wisdom, who issued the Call for Papers to the SEDA list, which inevitably brought Peter and I together as collaborators of the project and the thirty-three contributors from around the world who answered the call and whose energies make this collection possible. Special thanks as well to Sheffield Hallam University for its support of our work. Finally, and most importantly, we are so grateful for the love and support of Mr. Eric Lake, who gleefully volunteered to edit hundreds of pages of this manuscript, Julia, Peter's wife and Mavis, Prudence's mom, both of whom, by default of living with us, unselfishly endured scores of Skype conferences and all-day writing marathons as Peter and I worked long hours writing, editing, and bringing this work to publication.

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