Introduction To Special Edition: Access and Inclusion in Work and Learning

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Keywords: access, inclusion, work and learning, EDI

In a recent colloquium that took place in June of 2021 (https://www.workandlearningnetwork.org/2021-edi-colloquium) the Work and Learning Network set out to explore and contribute to themes surrounding equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). The aim was to gauge the current practices and the ideas of colleagues in the broad field of Work and Learning. The response from the network made it clear that innovative practice and engagement with inclusive areas of practice were actively being pursued and that these examples could act as models for further inquiry for the network.

Key speakers (Jenny Rodriguez, University of Manchester and Carol Costley, Middlesex University) brought EDI into focus followed by a series of highly illuminating presentations and concluded with a panel discussion that addressed the following questions:

- What does EDI look like in your current programme of studies or curriculum?
- How does this relate to work and learning practice from past decades?
- What does EDI look like in the workplace?
- Are there areas of synergy or dissonance between educational and workplaces?

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This special edition, which examines Access and Inclusion in Work and Learning, starts with the abstracts and extended abstracts of the speakers from the colloquium that bring forward some key points, not least, the opportunities provided by experience of work in almost any form to engage people in learning. The power of these practitioner-led approaches speaks to the benefits that a more inclusive experience can bring, especially when guided by the scaffolding of higher education designed for this purpose.

Paula Nottingham introduced the colloquium with a call to action for change, not only to address the network's passion for social justice, but with the need to listen to new voices to find out how network practitioners could add criticality (after Saini, 2021) to research and practice and how to make greater use of personal narratives (after Santos, 2021) to break down barriers and encourage others to share their stories. The speakers considered both the introduction of new ways of working and the role of practitioner led critique to address issues surrounding inclusion.

In this section, we have speaker contributions from Dr Anastasia Christou, who introduces the use of social justice for framing learning in 'Affordances Of 'Unhoming Pedagogies': Reflecting On Two Decades Of Activating Learning And Teaching For Social Justice In UK Universities'. Dr Glenis Wade presents a 'Focus On The Poetry: Exploring BAME Learner Engagement With New Work-Based Learning Reading' exploring the use of alternative sources to make a real difference in thinking about practice. Mary Makinde and Professor Claire Thurgate demonstrate what making progress looks like with 'Closing Our Gap: How a School of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work is Improving the Experience of Black, Asian, Mixed Heritage and Minority Ethnic students'. Prof Margaret Linehan in her 'Let's Talk Menopause' makes it abundantly clear that more needs to be done to rebalance the consideration of gender equality in our thinking and 'Creating an Age Friendly University' discusses university wide models of change. Dr Iro Konstantinou and Dr Elizabeth Miller discuss the benefits and challenges of working with a more diverse range of students in 'Understanding The Experience Of Mature Students Completing A Degree Apprenticeship'. Finally, Marty Wright considers the complexity of providing international programming for a diverse range of students during the pandemic in 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Is at The Heart of Everything We Do'**.**

The next item from Costley, Nikolou-Walker and Nottingham, gives an overview of some of the key issues especially as they relate to experiential learning as a gateway to access higher education. It is recognised that the concept of EDI (Equality, Diversity, Inclusion) has become an important and often mandatory consideration in Higher Education Institutions. The various initiatives have concluded over the last decade in a number of reports, articles and media programmes debating and often contesting the existing nature and function of these terms in the Universities. However, the prominence of EDI though welcomed by both the professional and educational world, is hardly an unproblematic territory – instead its definition and overall function has been severely questioned by both academics and practitioners. EDI continues meaning different things to different people and while this diversity is generally a healthy trait amongst society it can, in this case, become a 'stumbling block', which at worse can prevent coherence and progress, unless the points of reference are pragmatic and clear.

This briefing paper represents the views of the authors while attempting to decipher these challenging concepts, we have also tried to look with 'fresh eyes' into the intricate and intermingling relationships of practice and education. This also led us to question the exact definitions of 'Equality', 'Diversity' and 'Inclusion', in a number of areas, in both education and practice. We hope that this will be developed further, in order to assist the ongoing and developmental nature of this work find a 'shared' voice amongst the different communities who avail of education and practice. This is followed with a piece that defines the different forms of Work and Learning in higher education that can be included in this overview of access and inclusion in the broader field. As we now engage with new ways of developing work and learning practice, a redefining of practice and terms offers a gateway to new practice solutions and pathways.

We send our thanks to all those who took part in the colloquium and the avenues it opened for the network in terms of new practice. We would like to thank the authors presented in this edition for providing these glimpses of what is yet to come in further research and practice. While working in challenging times during Covid-19, the chance to come together to exchange knowledge and experience was a pleasure as well as a call to action.

Keynote Discussion: The Journey from Equality To Inclusion: Moving From Theoretical To More Practice-Led Understandings Of Inclusiveness

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How The Journey from Equality to Inclusion Relates to Work And Learning In Higher Education

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Keywords: equality, inclusiveness, higher education, practise-led

In this talk, I will discuss and problematise moving from a theoretical understanding of inclusiveness to a practical understanding of inclusiveness. This move could be considered a journey from equality to inclusion. My talk is organised in three parts. First, a discussion about the departure point with is a principled position where we acknowledge and value equality and appreciate its importance. Second, the problematisation of diversity, which I develop in relation to the idea of "the other question" (e.g., who is diverse to me and what does this tell me?). Third, I focus on the question of how we translate that knowledge into practice that results in inclusion on terms that are not unilateral and do not reproduce or perpetuate privilege and disadvantage.

Jenny Rodriguez

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I will respond to Jenny's broader points by relating the points to the academic field or work and learning in higher education. This field represents a number of both curriculum and research areas (see paper on definitions in the WBL e-journal). Jenny has agreed to respond to the points I raise about experiential learning, 3-way partnerships between universities, students and work organisations, subjugated knowledge and the positive points and advantages to many part-time and full-time students of practice-based and practice-led learning. We intend to have a distinctive dialogue and engage with participants following our discussion.

Carol Costley

Commentary on the presentation

Jenny

Jenny started the talk by pointing out how the principle of equality does not generally lead to social action. We need to move from theoretical understanding of inclusiveness to practical action in relation to inclusiveness which can be understood as a journey from equality to inclusion. Ideas around equality tend to lead to opening of opportunities but not ensuring equality outcomes and therefore the way equality is understood should have an experiential base. She made three substantive points to this effect. Firstly, with regard to thinking about equality there needs to be acknowledgment that there is a departure point from the principled stage where we value equality and appreciate its importance (e.g., we believe most people are not intentionally racist or intentionally sexist, and so on). Second, regarding a problematisation of diversity, Jenny posed the question we often ask ourselves: Who is different to me? There is a form of categorisation going on and she suggested that we are in relation to others in situated positionalities. But are we making judgements about others taken from a norm of 'self'? Her third point related to how to translate that knowledge into practice that leads to inclusion so as to not reproduce or perpetuate privilege and disadvantage.

Carol

Carol thanked Jenny for opening with some significant points and said that she recognised Jenny's arguments in relation to the priorities for Access and Inclusion in Work and Learning. In terms of the lived experience of all those involved in situated practice Carol identified the need to recognise students' experiential learning as a positive and successful way of accessing people to the university. It is also a key teaching and learning approach not only to access people but also to empower full time students, giving them confidence that they have proven abilities that relate to the more codified knowledge within the university. These learning and teaching approaches could be used more across the sector but there is not a great deal of uptake.

She went on to voice a concern about the issues we were discussing in relation to 3-way learning partnerships where contracts or agreements are drawn up between student, university and outside organisation and to ensure that there is fairness, quality and agreement for all parties. She emphasised that the three-way arrangements are not without their complexities not least in the matter of power relations. Organisations outside the sector bring their own ethos and mode of practice. This has more recently become noticeable with degree apprenticeships that are employer-led in terms of content.

Jenny

Jenny agreed that in terms of experiential learning there is much value that can be put upon the learning that students bring. We should be asking what students can bring to us that we can value as worthwhile learning and how it can connect to their studies.

Re: partnerships, Jenny pointed out that we need to recognise our own power as lecturers in higher education. Also, she noted that institutions often do the minimum needed to comply to equality requirements and universities are included in this. Again, the worthy principles do not always lead to action.

We need to go beyond diversity to the idea of belonging – people have to feel included she said. There should be structures and arrangements about this kind of systematic thinking. It is a praxis that goes from procedures to equitable systems that recognise the privilege and

disadvantage in systems in our organisations. A form of categorisation that has intersectional aspects because they are situated. Hierarchies of knowledge and power.

Carol

Yes, for example, decisions are made by the university about who we partner with and why, what we will recognise, who is allowed to teach and mentor and coach and importantly what knowledge we will recognise. Often the learning in work situations and assessing that learning may not allow space for unanticipated learning, tacit learning and more humanistic characteristics of learning that contribute to successful work practices. For example, most aspects of curricular have 'teaching and learning specifications' which state what is to be learned in advance with no emergent learning identifiable.

Carol also noted that Education institutions are not necessarily more equitable than Public and Private sector workplaces. Workplaces often value more practice-based knowledge and how people are as much as what they know. Universities may, whilst accepting the concept of applied knowledge and making an exception of the Arts, rate practice-based knowledge as vocational and therefore not worthy of high level recognition. These notions of Knowledge and power lead to a subjugation of some knowledge related to Work.

Practice-oriented approaches facilitate greater opportunities The focus on practice found in curricular and pedagogic practices in work-based and work-integrated learning are more conducive to successful learning and attainment for a diverse group of people. Those in the field have witnessed this yet there is little written about it. Many of the curriculum initiatives taken by higher education in this field could be shared across the higher education range of subject disciplines, and further developed towards a more accessible and inclusive curriculum offer.

**The journey from equality to inclusion:
Moving from theoretical to more practice-led
understandings of inclusiveness**
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Structure of this talk

1. Equality as an (almost) shared principle
2. Diversity as a question of difference
3. Inclusion/inclusiveness/inclusivity as translation
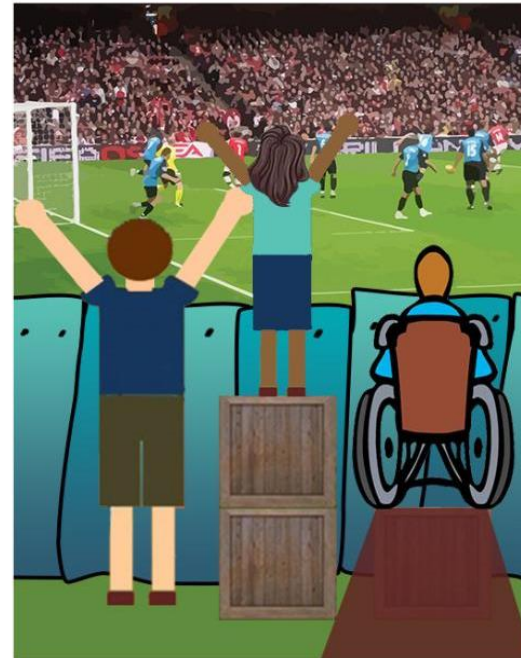4. Some final thoughts

What does equality mean?

- Universalist but also relativist!

- Different levels (e.g. individual, organizational)

- Different orientations (e.g. opportunities, outcomes)

EQUALITY   **EQUITY**   **SOCIAL JUSTICE**

Figure source: https://canadianequality.ca

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Diversity as a question of difference

Acknowledgement in relation to an(Other)

- Who is ~~diverse~~ different (to me)?

- Difference as a paradigmatic outcome – reproduction of stereotypical, deterministic, functionalist hierarchies of knowledge and power about others (e.g. whom they are, what they represent?)

- "Ask the other question" (Matsuda, 1991)

  - "When I see something that looks racist, I ask, "Where is the patriarchy in this?" When I see something that looks sexist, I ask, "Where is the heterosexism in this?" When I see something that looks homophobic, I ask, "Where are the class interests in this?"" (Matsuda, 1991: 1189).

Intersectional diversity

"Each of us in the world sits at the intersection of many categories: She is Latina, woman, short, mother, lesbian, daughter, brown-eyed, long-haired, quick-witted, short-tempered, worker, stubborn. At any one moment in time and in space, some of these categories are central to her being and her ability to act in the world. Others matter not at all. Some categories, such as race, gender, class, and sexual orientation, are important most of the time. Others are rarely important. When something or someone highlights one of her categories and brings it to the fore, she may be a dominant person, an oppressor of others. Other times, even most of the time, she may be oppressed herself. She may take lessons she has learned while in a subordinated status and apply them for good or ill when her dominant categories are highlighted." (Grillo, 1995:17).

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Procedural thinking – having in place

- When we think procedurally, we don't see a real issue because the processes are in place to "guarantee" equal opportunity and most of us have are not intentionally exclusive so we believe that equal access is there by virtue of process.

- Places onus on individuals to take advantage of opportunities and assumes a level-playing field.

Systemic thinking – being in place/belonging

- When we think systemically, we take a step back and think reflexively about how structures and arrangements lead up to the outcomes that we see, despite the processes in place.

- It's not just about the "the way things are" but about its consequences in creating cultures of work that continue to perpetuate and reward similar behaviours and actions.

- **Key questions**: What is the relationship between privilege and disadvantage in this that I see before me? Who does what and to what effect? What is my role in it?

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→ Knowledge and power intrinsically linked – we cannot address what we do not understand, recognise or see.

→ Importance of framing
- Justifications for workplaces being much more "open" or "diverse" than others can make for disempowering conversations – challenging the underlying basic assumption that it's normal for things to be the way they are.

→ Understanding privilege – recognising our own role (passive or active) in perpetuating exclusive work cultures

→ The importance of the collective conversation and action (e.g. allyship, voice)
- Questioning white, masculine, heteronormative, ableist narratives is not challenging white people, men/masculinity, heterosexuals or able-bodied people but recognising the culture of exclusivity that those narratives create.

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Thank you!

Welcome your comments and questions

Affordances Of 'Unhoming Pedagogies': Reflecting on Two Decades of Activating Learning and Teaching For Social Justice In UK Universities

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Abstract

Activating learning and teaching for social justice requires the adoption of pedagogies of discomfort and critical inquiry. Such processes demand emotional and logistical labour in transforming affordances of 'unhoming pedagogies' into transformative spaces of belonging in the classroom and the Academy while embracing socio-cultural accounts of differing intersectional identities of learners, emphasising ethical academic citizenship, a dialogic ethos to democratic debates in classrooms that can become the stage for social change and pathways to promote and accelerate new ideas through knowledge co-production and exchange.

Learning through and towards social justice develops critical thinking, collaboration, respect, care, compassion and self-reflection skills necessary to foster better societies. Learning and teaching for social justice perceives students and lecturers as co-learners of themselves, others, institutions, practices, etc. and enables empowering for all to voice concerns and question unjust situations in their individual and collective lives and the lives of those on a

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regional, national and global scale. In this extended abstract I aim to share key reflections on that two decade journey while pedagogically engaging with cultural politics, intersectional and feminist approaches, decolonial and post-colonial epistemologies, narrative analytics and the critical sociologies of public scholarship, and, while embracing a feminist ethics of care and a social justice for community development activist and anti-racist academic agenda.

Such an agenda requires a difficult plunge into reflexivities that contextualise the public and pedagogic sphere as spaces of what I term 'unhoming' and can yield experiences of displacement through processes of rupture, exclusion, racialisation and by extension as a form of gendered violence which is psychosocially and emotionally saturated in the toxicity of how individuals and groups in pedagogic spaces are othered through everyday sexisms, ageisms and racisms. My critical intervention draws from a threefold theorisation of a *discomforting of politics* (cf. 'politics of discomfort', Chadwick 2021), through bridging *liminal affectivity* (cf. 'affective liminality', Waerniers and Hustinx 2020) while interrogating *radical praxis* of the 'human condition' (Arendt 1958). As a form of feminist affective radical praxis, engaging with discomforting politics in teaching and learning is integral to the development of inclusive, emancipatory and alternative feminist knowledges. Along the line as theorised by Chadwick (2021) in exploring 'discomfort' as 'sweaty concept', transformative as an epistemic and interpretive resource with intensity and resistance, I push for 'discomforting' feminist knowledge politics to engage with an Arendtian political participation in society as the exemplification of action in becoming 'human'. Negotiating feminist ethics also involves immersing reflexively into intersectional affect (Christou and Bloor, 2021) that can become a window to understanding ourselves, others and how the co-creation of knowledge and co-production of learning can shape ethically the journeys of youth and their pedagogic aspirations (Christou and Michail, 2021).

Post-pandemic pedagogies will require a more inclusive shift in re-imagining active learning to more dialogical and relational ways to encourage conversations with ourselves and others. Such conversations can become feminisms of resistance and activism through connected, compassionate and caring mentoring initiatives (Christou, 2016) and through combining solidarity, emotions and championing the gender discourse in academia to include intersectionalities across all aspects of academic employment, curricular and research

practice (Christou and Janta, 2019). As a result, classrooms can continue to be interactive stages for social change and productive pathways to learning, so as to conceptualise new ideas which can be promoted in an accelerated mode to turn theory and practice into societal action. In that vein, critical thinking skills, self-reflective opportunities and collaboration become transferable skills in fostering regeneration contexts to make societies better, delivering more equity, humanity, and justice. Thus, teaching social justice in theory and practice should translate into empowering students to identify and rectify inequalities and injustice, to strive to contribute to an ethical social and environmental citizenship while identifying solutions to world problems.

Including diverse experiences, connected histories, alternative backgrounds and stories of multiple identities can strengthen classroom community through learning variable perspectives that resonate with student experiences. This approach has to also apply to curricular materials to ensure that diverse voices and cultures are visible in the learning that takes place. All these elements allow for educators to foster learning communities of practice, dissent, and inclusion, while enabling thoughtful debates and global discussions to critically engage with any issue. Finally, social justice learning should be transformed into community service and community action, both formative and summative assessments can become the vehicle to enable such practice to materialise. Following the interactive learning and classroom discussions, assignments can connect this learning to their local communities through both short and long-term projects. These can embed activist strategies, including social media campaigns, social enterprise awareness raising activities, internships, and other types of engagement, that link such activities to writing assignments, enabling students to reflect on their positionality, ethics, and actions, invoking societal change and social justice transformation.

Yet, social justice learning cannot be contained in one lesson, one module, one dissertation project, rather, it requires continued institutional commitment of the kind that sees University strategic visions accountable for each programme, department, school, and faculty toward the social justice contributions they make to students and society.

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Focus on the Poetry: Exploring BAME Learner Engagement with New Work-Based Learning Reading

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Keywords: equality, diversity, inclusion, BAME

Abstract

This work around equality, diversity and inclusion is an auto ethnography of own teaching and learning practices especially centred around critical incidents arising from self-generated efforts to improve BAME learner engagement and achievement.

It particularly explores and maps out teaching and learning practices deployed longitudinally and analyses those critical incidents relating to andragogy and decolonisation of the HE curriculum for learners on a business and management related degree apprenticeship.

It discusses BAME student engagement and achievement through the lens of critical race theory, critical management and some reading transaction concepts hailing from Rosenblatt (1994-2018).

The work will also highlight new training and development themes for all academic staff to help with future offers for improving BAME learner engagement and attainment. The work potentially suggests new ways forward for HE staff recruitment and training development tactics as these too might help Higher Education institutions work towards meeting diversity and inclusion aims around BAME staff recruitment and progression. This work uniquely provides insight for improving BAME learner engagement from the perspective of a BAME Senior Lecturer and one who is more comfortable with a black British afro Caribbean identity than one of BAME. The work hopes to reveal some of the more deep-seated obstacles and

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previously unrevealed themes around BAME achievement and attainment barriers as well as highlighting potential opportunities in work-based learning situations for learners. The aim is to open dialogue around the institutional, cultural and pedagogy/ andragogy barriers that either limit or enable BAME student attainment. Interestingly it also links the analysis, conclusion, and recommendations to BAME staff recruitment and progression practices, as these might also be linked. Ultimately it expands the lecturer's toolbox for decolonising the curriculum.

Closing Our Gap: How a School of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work is Improving the Experience of Black, Asian, Mixed Heritage and Minority Ethnic students

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A joint report by the NUS and Universities UK, highlighted a significant disparity between the degree outcomes of White students and Black, Asian, Mixed Heritage and Minority Ethnic students. The reports highlights that White students are more likely to receive a 1st or 2.1 degree than Black, Asian, Mixed Heritage and Minority Ethnic students. The largest gap is seen between Black students and White students. This disparity is also evident at Canterbury Christ Church University and through the university's strategic commitments to closing our gap, work is underway to improve the experiences of our Black, Asian, Mixed Heritage and Minority Ethnic students, tackle racial inequalities and improve student outcomes.

Through consultations with staff and students the University developed a Closing Our Gap strategic framework. The framework is divided in to three strands outlining the university's commitment to developing:

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Curriculum: is diverse and inclusive which is representative and reflective of the staff and student body.

Culture: celebrates diversity in which our core values are reflected.

Community: a friendly, inclusive and professional community that fosters good relationships and a sense of belonging in which everyone is heard and respected.

Black, Asian, Mixed Heritage and Minority Ethnic students account for approximately 32% of the students within the Faculty of Medicine, Health and Social Care and the disparity of degree outcomes between White students and Black, Asian, Mixed Heritage and Minority Ethnic students is a concern. The School of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work, working with our student body, has taken steps to gain a deeper understanding, improve the student experience and reduce the attainment gap including:

Reviewing the Mental Health nursing curriculum with Black, Asian, Mixed Heritage and Minority Ethnic students to ensure an inclusive curriculum;

Validating a Nursing and Social Justice module within our adult nursing programmes;

Implementing a student engagement lead role who is working with our Black, Asian, Mixed Heritage and Minority Ethnic students to enhance their experience;

Implementing a Student Council so that the School understands student issues and facilitates an inclusive culture that hears and respects all.

Alongside university learning our students are either undertaking professionally regulated courses involving placements or they are workers and learners engaging in continuing development. There is a need, therefore, to understand how the implementation of curriculum, culture and community within the workplace impacts on the student experience and their degree classification as many Black, Asian, Mixed Heritage and Minority Ethnic students do not report racism for fear of not being believed (Hackett, 2021). To gain this insight the faculty is supporting two Health Education England projects, in collaboration with our Black, Asian, Mixed Heritage and Minority Ethnic students. These projects want to

understand the impact of the Black, Asian, Mixed Heritage and Minority Ethnic students' practice experience. It is hoped that findings will contribute to a toolkit which will facilitate a curriculum, culture and community within practice/the workplace which is inclusive and respects all.

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Understanding The Experience of Mature Students Completing A Degree Apprenticeship

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Abstract

Even though there is plethora of research into work-based learning, to date there is little research into how mature students navigate work-based learning. With the current government focus on lifelong learning, we need to understand how mature students can balance their studies and work and how they adjust to higher education. This paper discusses the narratives of mature students completing their CMDA (Chartered Management Business Apprenticeship) alongside a BA in Business Management. The paper draws upon data collected through 1-2-1 supervision sessions with Level 5 mature-aged students through narrative analysis. Prominent themes include the struggles of balancing work, studies and childcare; fitting into a higher education culture which tends to be stereotyped as one for younger students; the difficulties of adjusting to rigorous study many years after leaving school or completing another degree; and being seen as a student while having a job role where they are seen (by themselves and others) as accomplished in their careers. Our paper will argue the importance of understanding the academic abilities and individual needs of mature students; being understanding of personal circumstances; and ensuring they have the necessary means to adjust in a higher education setting which might be geared towards catering for younger people.

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Let's Talk Menopause

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Keywords: access, menopause, institutions, inclusion

The menopause refers to the biological stage when periods stop, and the ovaries lose their reproductive function. This usually occurs between the ages of 45 and 55, but in some cases, women may become menopausal in their 30s, or younger. Every woman experiences the menopause differently. Symptoms can last from a few months to several years and up to 80% of women experience physical and/or emotional symptoms during this time. These symptoms can have a significant impact on their health and wellbeing as well as their work and relationships.

Menopausal women are the fastest-growing demographic in the workplace, and the menopause affects women in 'mid-life' when they are often juggling demanding jobs, school-age children, and elderly parents. This can have an impact on emotional wellbeing and lead to excessive levels of stress (Griffiths *et al*, 2009). Menopause often intersects with a critical career stage, as this is also the age bracket during which women are most likely to move into top leadership positions. Since menopause generally lasts between seven and fourteen years, millions of postmenopausal women are coming into management and leadership roles while experiencing mild to severe symptoms, such as depression, anxiety, sleep deprivation, and cognitive impairment.

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For every ten women experiencing menopausal symptoms, six say it has a negative impact on their work (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 2021). Many women will continue to suffer in silence unless the taboo is broken, and employers and employees start talking openly about menopause at work. Menopause is rarely a topic of open discussion in the workplace - even though nearly half of the world's population experiences, or will experience this biological transition, which marks the end of a woman's menstrual cycle and fertility. In the workplace, women have reported great difficulty in managing symptoms (Paul 2003; Reynolds 1999). They may be unable to disclose their menopausal difficulties due to fear of stigmatisation (Hardy *et al.,* 2019). In Northern Ireland, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (2018) found that almost half of responded said that the menopause had been treated as a joke in their workplace and 28% said that the menopause was treated negatively in their workplace. As no two women experience the same level, or combination of symptoms, therefore, it is important to provide support on a case-by-case basis.

Attitudes to the menopause can range from empathetic and understanding to insensitive and jokey, to a complete lack of sympathy for employees who are experiencing this normal life event. Menopause is an equality where work factors have the potential to impact positively or negatively on a woman's experience of the menopause and is part of The Equality Act 2010.

Loretta Dignam, who set up the Menopause Hub, a multidisciplinary medical clinic in Dublin in 2018, after experiencing three years of dreadful menopausal symptoms says, 'the menopause is where mental health was ten years ago' (Dignam, 2021). Dignam concludes that women themselves are not well educated about menopause and employers even less so.

To overcome this lack of education, Munster Technological University (MTU) began awareness-raising of the menopause to normalise the issue, thereby minimising the stigma. In April 2021, a series of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion events were offered over a three-week period to all staff, student, and the public. One of these events was a workshop dealing with the menopause, which was delivered by a wellness professional. Interestingly, this was the event which attracted the largest number of attendees which suggested that the time has come for enabling and starting a conversation on the menopause.

The workshop was also valuable as it acknowledged that this is a normal stage of life, and such conversations can identify support at work that can help women remain fully productive. Feedback from the workshop included putting supports in place and signposting them for all employees, highlighting the menopause is a health and wellbeing concern for staff and needs to be handled sensitively, and educating employees about the menopause and providing practical understanding and solutions.

Following the positive feedback from the initial workshop, a further workshop was organized on World Menopause Day, to emphasize that menopause should not be a taboo subject, and everyone should feel confident to have a conversation in their workplace, particularly when they need guidance and advice. The availability of support is a key feature in managing the menopause, therefore, a document with information on where colleagues can access formal support, when they need some additional help and advice, is available through the Human Resources Department, with a contact point of the Employee Assistance Programme.

A commitment to recognizing the menopause as a serious issue will help to foster an inclusive culture where discrimination against women experiencing symptoms will not be tolerated. Workplace 'banter' and jokes regarding the menopause should be treated just as seriously as if they were about any other protected characteristic, as this is most likely targeted at women and may lead to claims of sexual harassment, gender, and age discrimination.

MTU has taken a proactive stance and will promote a greater understanding of the menopause and seek to eradicate any exclusionary or discriminatory practices. A menopause-friendly organization understands the importance and value of supporting those with menopausal symptoms in the workplace. There is still a lot of mystery and misinformation about the menopause and getting some basic facts from a menopause professional has proven to be a good start. Menopause is a natural part of every woman's life and is not always an easy transition. With the right support, it can be much better. While every woman does not suffer symptoms, supporting those who do will improve their work experience.

In summary, MTU has strived to create an environment to talk about the menopause openly, and without embarrassment, by hosting further menopause awareness sessions, emphasizing this is not just an issue for women, but men should be aware too. MTU is committed to making the workplace a menopause-friendly environment.

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Creating an Age Friendly University

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Munster Technological University (MTU), was designated as an Age-Friendly University, in May 2021. MTU has an extensive regional footprint with six campuses across the south-west region of Ireland and has a student body of more than 18,000. MTU now joins a global and growing network of Age-Friendly Universities. This paper illustrates how MTU is a welcoming and inviting place to people of all ages and will summarize some of the core activities which helped achieve Age-Friendly designation.

Since commencing in 2012, Dublin City University developed Ten Principles of an Age-Friendly University which set out a framework for institutions of higher education to embrace Age-Friendly practices. These principles highlight distinctive contributions that can be made by addressing the needs of older adults. To achieve the designation, the university must demonstrate its commitment to ten principles, relating to older adults. Christine O'Kelly, Coordinator for the Age-Friendly Global Network, in Dublin City University, outlined that interpreting the ten principles is different for every university, and a university does not have to adopt all ten principles.

The concept of an Age-Friendly University has its genesis in the Age-Friendly Cities Programme launched by the World Health Organisation in 2010, with a focus on how institutions of higher education can contribute to the programme. The purpose of an Age-Friendly University is to encourage the participation of older adults in all core activities of the university, including educational and research programmes. These have been adopted by universities in Ireland, the UK, the USA, and Canada which together comprise the Age-friendly Universities network.

 In 2016, the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education, an educational unit of the Gerontology Society of America, announced its endorsement of the ten age-friendly principles which provide a guiding framework for developing, distinguishing, and evaluating

age-friendly programmes and policies. The Age-friendly University views older adults as a particularly important group whose participation in university life is enriching for everybody. The World Health Organisation's first *Global Report on Ageism* (2021), outlined the goals of healthy ageing and strategies to reduce ageist attitudes at all levels of society. One of these strategies involved intergenerational educational programmes. Clearly, universities have an active role to play here by helping to identify and address age-based myths, stereotypes, and prejudices. Ageism has serious and far-reaching consequences for people's health, well-being, and human rights. Age-Friendly Universities have consequences beyond their campuses, particularly, for their local communities, in exploring how they can meet the needs and interests of their aging populations.

The MTU mission is to lead change and, through education, empower people for a successful future in a globalised world. MTU's vision consists of leading transformation through education, while MTU's values incorporate being inclusive, engaging, dynamic and bold. MTU is fostering a culture for success by preserving the warm, welcoming, entrepreneurial, innovative, people-oriented culture and community for which it is known.

In applying for Age-Friendly University designation, MTU highlighted that it is an equal opportunities employer and has many older staff members engaged in all core activities. MTU also has many older adults as part of its student cohort in both educational and research activities. MTU strongly encourages applications from mature candidates and is continually working towards wider entry routes to increase participation of adult learners. MTU's Mature Student Office hosts information sessions, one-to-one meetings with the Mature Student officers, and offers a peer support network for older students.
MTU has identified proficiency in mathematics as a barrier for some older learners and offers a preparatory maths programme for these students.

MTU promotes the personal and career development of its staff. MTU has a comprehensive programme for continuing staff development committed to meeting the changing demands of the workplace in a dynamic, knowledge-based economy and society and the changing roles of the university staff. It is MTU's policy to make provision for staff development for all

categories of staff.   Staff are supported to pursue courses in other Higher Education Institutions at master and doctoral levels.

Two further age-friendly principles which MTU promotes are intergenerational learning and research, together with providing opportunities for 'second careers'. Attracting older adult students can enrich the academic programmes by introducing their life experiences and better prepares the traditional college-age students for the multi-generational workforce they will enter.

In April 2021, as part of MTU's equality, diversity, and inclusion activities, an event celebrating age was held, titled "Age is just a number." The online event offered an insight in generational differences while featuring inspiring talks and experiences of successful MTU professionals. The overall aim was to encourage people to remove the lens of age to view and label individuals, and to shift the focus to their abilities, skills, experience, and knowledge, where it belongs. This event was timely, as it was held during the COVID-19 pandemic, which highlighted the vulnerability of older people, and exposed them to ageism in different stings, for example, discrimination in access to health care, and inadequate protection of older people in care homes. Globally, ageism affects billions of people, with at least one in two people holding ageist attitudes against older adults, with rates much higher in lower-income countries (Officer *et al.,* 2020). In Europe, the only region for which data about ageism are available for all age groups, one in three people have experienced ageism, with rates highest among 15-24-year olds (Abrams *et al.,* 2011).

Finally, and in summary, by working together to promote an inclusive approach to healthy and active ageing and addressing specific issues affecting older adults, ensures that MTU is a university for all ages that welcomes the opportunity to transform lives and societies through education, engagement, research, and innovation.

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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Is At The Heart Of Everything We do

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For a UK based university faculty that delivers a bespoke Work Based suite of under and postgraduate programmes to a major South African client, the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) agenda is important (Wall, 2013, 2017; Ferrández-Berrueco, Kekale, and Devins, 2016). Pre pandemic, EDI was about access to professionally relevant education that resulted in having an internationally recognised qualification where it previously had not existed, and a possible route to promotion. Early into the COVID pandemic, EDI became about continuity and contingency of the whole suite of programmes (Adnan and Anwar, 2020; Rapanata et al, 2020) when suddenly access to computer equipment and Wifi were impacted on by the global message 'STAY AT HOME'.

Our students were not in the workplace to access their work IT kit nor the online or resources part of their education and the lecturers could neither travel to South Africa or within it.

Immediately, the Programme Teams reached out to the continuing students to ascertain the significance and implications of their personal IT challenges. We had a group of students who were on their final module and we knew that we would be able to provide them with additional time to complete their studies but we were less certain on the impact of working from home on students who were on the 3rd module of a 6 module sequence. What we did know was in a Certificate (SCQF7) Level group of 100 students, no one in class (the face to

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face or contact sessions) had a laptop (neither personal or work owned); in a Diploma Level (SCQF8) class of 80 students perhaps 2 or 3 students had laptops in class and in a similarly sized Degree level class perhaps 10 students had laptops with them. By contrast all the honours and masters students have company issue laptops because of the nature of their role.

The response rates and the results of an immediate and quick survey of our certificate, diploma & degree students confirmed only a 1/3rd of the students had access to IT kit and a decision to press pause on their programme was made (losing in effect a trimester of learning) for our continuing students but also delaying our next intake. This pause to permit us to work on solutions that addressed EDI.

Our next intake were students who had already been selected (for May 2020 start) but whose acceptance onto the course was based on them having access to a computer or laptop, but we now had evidence to show for many, probably most, their access was to a communal workplace computer/laptop that could not simply be taken home to permit work & study to continue. EDI had taken on an additional meaning and we had to act quickly to address.

Our action was to develop resources to guide our students on how to use their personal mobile devices to best advantage. To try and keep up the momentum of study & learning (The initial and draft version of article was been written on my mobile phone! Right thumb only!).

These resources are now incorporated into our induction programme which we completely redesigned and delivered in a phased approach over a number of months to slowly and surely ensure our delayed 'new' intake could engage with the Programme materials & gain IT literacy. This also helped the team gain a greater insight into the EDI challenges of a new intake.

Our third measure to address EDI was to adopt a model affectionately referred to as the W(right) & Johnstone (the programme leader at the time) model whereby we purchased two laptops, made arrangements to have mobile Wi-Fi devices & in room facilitators in

country at the normal venue, with the UK based programme team streamed in live to deliver the classes. Travel within South Africa in September 2020 was permitted but we had to account for social distancing, use of masks and a range of other restrictions including limitations on class size which meant double teaching and a start time of 06:00 because of the time difference. All in the name of equality and inclusivity of access and sustainability during adversity.

Finally having emerged from a third wave of the global pandemic, a South African winter, renewed home working measures (1st June - 31st August 2021), followed by a cyberattack on the Company which resulted in Desktops and laptops being wiped clean amidst a continuing need and desire to continue our programme delivery as well as start our September 2021 intake it we repeated our survey to establish equity of IT access.

Our students responded to the following three questions.

Question 1

During any period of third wave restrictions will you have access to a PC, laptop or similar device that will enable you to remain connected with GCULearn AND allow you to submit work including assignments? (Please provide a very short clear statement on this which should simply include "YES" or "NO")

Answer: yes/no

Question 2

If any new and future restrictions resulted in us being unable to deliver via the traditional 2-day Esselenpark contact sessions, would you be able to join a remote on-line 2-day event from your home?

Answer: yes/no

Question 3

If any new and future restrictions resulted in us being unable to deliver via the traditional 2-day Esselenpark contact sessions, would you be able to join a remote on-line 2-day event from your work?

Answer: yes/no

The response rate as much as the responses have both been surprisingly favourable, this is partially because the Company have embraced a realisation that their IT resources and infrastructure needed some attention and that business continuity is partially reliant on IT kit and systems such as VPN to permit home working and if WFH were required to be reintroduced or retained on a large-scale action is required.   The findings of the most recent survey have steered and will continue to steer our next actions. We are now looking at the cost and logistics to install camera systems that will facilitate Hybrid learning from a range of venues in South Africa simultaneously taking care that IT does not take precedence over the pedagogy of work based learning and the interactions between the students which are key to learning are not lost and that gatherings of students remains a key aspect of the programme. We continue to drive our next phase of a heart felt desire to address E, D and I for our South African students and sustain our delivery of true work-based education programmes.

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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion for Work and Learning in Higher Education

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Considering the fields of study and research

How people learn in and through participation in work that is mediated by higher education (h.e.) has been a topic for research and discussion for some time. While this area has supported great strides in social mobility and inclusion, how this h.e. area of practice relates more specifically to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) has taken on renewed focus for many practitioners and policy makers.

When considering work and learning areas of practice that support the introduction of EDI and champion change, we appreciate that it is time for practitioners to once again come together to deliberate and share practice about how change can be implemented within h.e. curriculum and pedagogies. We also draw from workplace learning, organisational studies and other fields but the key issues for this research are work and learning in h.e. and access to h.e from levels 3 to 8.

What do we mean by work and why is that important for EDI

The term 'work' refers to paid and unpaid work and can in many respects be thought of as all positive, productive endeavours, although this may be problematic and in need of further definition depending on the context / situation of the 'work' being discussed.

Within work and learning over the years there have been various definitions in use, but a key point for *work-based* and *work-integrated learning* is to think of the wider connotations of work when:

a) preparing students for their life after higher education or
b) developing people in a lifelong learning sense throughout their lives

People gain their knowledge to undertake work from both their life's experience and also from their studies. However, some work is recognised above other work in different societies, different communities and different contexts. For example, domestic work, community work, vocational and unpaid work are all relevant in the h.e. field, but often are not as valued, at time representing deep societal inequalities and endemic failures to address EDI issues.

This research set out to explore and contribute to themes surrounding equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). Current practitioners in Work and Learning will now need to address the following questions:

- What does EDI look like in your current programme of studies or curriculum?
- How does this relate to work and learning practice from past decades?
- What does EDI look like in the workplace?
- Are there areas of synergy or dissonance between educational and work places?

Learning and teaching and EDI in the work and learning curriculum

There has been research in this field that addresses the potential of access to h.e. for people wishing to enhance their work practice through further study (Major, 2016). There are many

examples of work and learning practice areas that have been developed and delivered with strong foundations in the principles of EDI which has become increasingly important as younger generations enter the global workplace.

In an early study Costley (2000) addresses access and how the practice orientation of curricular are relevant and accessible to diverse communities who have work experience. In relation to apprenticeships and other work-based approaches "*contemporary work-based learning can provide excellent access routes to career progression, success and qualifications for many facing barriers to learning*" (Pedagogies Project, 2017). H.e. apprenticeships where the employer and education provider have a distinct relationship and collaboration towards initial learning have a training guide for EDI (Welsh Government, 2018). Middlesex University's (2021) 'Move on up' project found that two thirds of their apprentices who came from nonprofessional and low HE participation backgrounds accessed professional careers. While many practitioners are working with similar issues in their programming, and have developed expertise in championing with EDI issues, this renewed emphasis on providing wider opportunities has implications for the research now being undertaken and published in work and learning.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

RPL is a key learning activity in work and learning studies and is a means by which successful practitioners have accessed and produced credit for their prior learning that is both certificated and uncertificated. Assessing and reassessing knowledge and experience has always been a critical part of advancement for adult professionals and has been routinely championed within this area of study. RPL and the consideration and transfer of credit have great significance for EDI.

Equally, RPL has been a valuable tool in the field of work and learning assisting for decades how individuals progress to a Higher Education pathway, without the additional anxiety that traditional means of assessment can cause for candidates. Since work and learning concerns holistically, learning that occurs in a *real* work environment, its potential to assist EDI's mission through RPL is enormous: reducing skills' mismatch, RPL helps learners to engage in lifelong learning and social inclusion through assisting learners to augment their existing

knowledge and experience, aiming to acquire qualifications that contribute to their prospects' betterment and thus an increase of their self-esteem.

The context of the claims made require evidence of *how* learners have already worked (and at what level) relating to their area of expertise. The work and learning context is usually including complex and specialised areas of working. The opportunity that the RPL offers is a major cross-referencing between the learner's claim(s) and the evidence that exists to support these claim(s). The absence of recognised qualifications can disadvantage people severely and prevent individuals from getting jobs that are worthy of the level of their intellectual and professional value and capacity.

Employability, mobility and social inclusion, all depend on a fair assessment for a just participation in today's ever intricate labour market. Currently, there is an increasing recognition of the learning that occurs *outside* the formal classroom, especially learning that occurs in an *implicit* manner (through paid/unpaid/voluntary employment), rather than through formal qualifications that remain 'untested' against the demands of the workplace.

Established RPL systems are globally needed to assist EDI's mission. The work and learning curriculum is one of the approaches that demonstrate that continuous professional and lifelong development can further a holistic progression and fairness, within the context of adults' professional advancement in today's competitive labour market.

Practice-oriented approaches facilitate greater opportunities

The focus on practice found in curricular and pedagogic practices in work-based and work-integrated learning are more conducive to successful learning and attainment for a diverse group of people as well as having greater relevance to work situations. There is evidence, for example from students that have gained access to university with BTEC qualifications rather than A levels in the UK that they have better learning experiences if they learn through more practice-based and vocational means. Further, many universities are now developing placement activities and other practice-based activities such as digital certificates for project work simulated work activities and so on, which are evaluated by students as helpful and easier to access. Those undertaking part time studies who are in full

time work, also have high levels of success through basing their learning on their work experience, work role and professional field. Work-based learning studies is a prominent example of this kind of learning, but programming can happen pan-university and within various programmes that focus on graduate and lifelong skills for all ages and within the local. Regional and international communities.

Academics and trainers who have developed these more practice-based approaches have not always noted that as well as progressing a more relevant learning route they have also been contributing to EDI. More explication of how such developments can enhance EDI will help develop EDI in work and learning further.

It is with this in mind that the following themes were raised to addressed as questions:

- How EDI issues are championed within learning and work studies e.g. work-integrated learning (WIL), apprenticeships, placements, internships, continuing education, doctoral studies, staff training, voluntary and community context, coaching, part-time and full-time work-based learning (note that work can be considered as paid or unpaid).
- Power and social justice – looking at EDI activism in today's higher education setting.
- Organisational and partnership imperatives for EDI
- How do we align and reconcile older practices with newer practices in EDI?
- Decolonising the curriculum, what needs to happen?
- Ageism and working with various generations (mature students to apprenticeships).
- Policy and practice, realising social justice goals – case studies that champion change

A more accessible approach to learning is needed

Current learning, teaching and assessment strategies in higher education, can be seen as quite target driven. Whilst the pragmatic culture of work is sometimes more amenable to clear-cut outcomes it is also the case that learning in work situations and assessing that learning may not allow space for unanticipated learning, tacit learning and more humanistic characteristics of learning that contribute to successful work practices. Inclusive education

has long been a goal (Hockings, 2010).This is because most aspects of curricular have 'teaching and learning specifications' which state what is to be learned in advance with no emergent learning identifiable.

Many work and learning programmes and modules (like many aspects of Independent learning studies) recognise experiential learning and develop practice-based learning approaches and assessments have largely accounted for such emergent learning. Employee learning is an important strand of widening participation, and can address learning that is built around smaller awards (Walsh, 2011). These strategies have produced a compelling source of accessibility, confidence raising and understanding of tacit knowledge for students on part or full time work-integrated studies(e.g. degree apprenticeships), dedicated work-based awards or with full-time students on placements. Entry into h.e. and access, with an emphasis on skills, is once again a part of the growing emphasis on lifelong learning policy in a post-Covid era. Government policies are once again support for lifelong learning goals, but these aspirations, while supported, also need to be considered critically (OfS, 2021).

EDI has pervaded the work and learning field and needs more recognition to champion the fundamental principles within this practice

Recognition of the EDI focus for work and learning is now urgent as more and more curriculum add work and learning elements to their flagship university strategies. Many academics in the field of work and learning have developed curricular and pedagogies over the years that are more suitable to learning through a practice-oriented perspective, by developing curricular such as modules and learning strategies for planning, reflective and reflexive learning, work and learning enquiry approaches and work-based projects. With the more recent changes in h.e. to a more practice-based focus (Higgs et al, 2012), universities' 'access and participation plans' now seek to engage students from vocational educational backgrounds in a wider range of active learning opportunities that are practice-based. Innovative pedagogic practices can reduce differences in outcomes related to students' backgrounds and prior attainment which for example narrows the non-continuation and attainment gap between BTEC and A-level students as it is more inclusive of the prior knowledge and skills of students entering. While the new white paper has given impetus to

discussion and change for vocational and technical education (DfE, 2021), the relationship to universities and these new initiatives is still being formed.

Working models to advance EDI in Australia and in the UK have developed impressive approaches in this practice-oriented field.

In Australia the work integrated learning model (example ACEN) have developed learning and assessment approaches for students on placements that focus on the practice-related aspects of the particular subject discipline being studied. In the UK the work-based learning approach that developed in the early 1990s for part-time lifelong learners focussed on the generic and transdisciplinary work-based capabilities developing curricular that is responsive to the needs of work situations that bring academic scholarship to professional practice including experiential, reflective and authentic approaches.

There is much overlap between WIL and WBL which are largely indefinable, overall observations but nevertheless give food for thought on the topic. It remains constructive to consider these attributes/outcomes/ criteria in relation to EDI. In the field of work and learning curriculum areas in h.e. we recognise some threshold concepts for learning through practice, such as: Embodied, Experiential and participative, Co-constructed, Emergent, Situated and Engaged. Around these conceptual developments, practice theory in relation to work and learning in h.e. can take place. Embracing practice as a gateway to learning enables students that have not had a privileged background but learn well through experience and reflection. These approaches point to forms of social and educational participation and explore new challenging ways of confronting epistemic conformism, hierarchical thinking and class, racial and gender privilege.

Stakeholder perspectives

Partnerships are a key dimension in the field of work and learning. They are often identified as three-way tripartite agreements whereby a learning agreement or contract is negotiated between stakeholders usually an HEI, student and employer. These have been at the heart of the newer apprenticeship models. Each party understands and respects their roles, responsibilities and expectations in developing professional practice capabilities that are

underpinned by academic learning). The external organisation is a partner with the HEI and the student in the planning of learning activities. The curriculum is responsive to the needs of the workplace supported by academic knowledge. This, simplistic three-way arrangements is not without its complexities not least in the matter of power relations (Siebert and Costley, 2013).

A working definition of EDI from The University of Edinburgh (2021)

What does equality, diversity, and inclusion mean?

EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) ensures fair treatment and opportunity for all. It aims to eradicate prejudice and discrimination on the basis of an individual or group of individual's protected characteristics.

What is equality?
At its core, equality means fairness: we must ensure that individuals, or groups of individuals, are not treated less favourably because of their protected characteristics.

Equality also means equality of opportunity: we must also ensure that those who may be disadvantaged can get the tools they need to access the same, fair opportunities as their peers.

What is diversity?
Diversity is recognising, respecting and celebrating each other's differences. A diverse environment is one with a wide range of backgrounds and mindsets, which allows for an empowered culture of creativity and innovation.

What is Inclusion?

Inclusion means creating an environment where everyone feels welcome and valued. An inclusive environment can only be created once we are more aware of our unconscious biases, and have learned how to manage them.

What are the protected characteristics?

The following are the legal protected characteristics, under The Equality Act 2010:

Age

Disability

Gender reassignment

Marriage and civil partnership

Pregnancy and maternity

Race

Religion or belief

Sex

Sexual orientation

Discrimination on the grounds of any of these characteristics is illegal.

Discrimination can take many forms including direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, bullying, harassment and victimisation.

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Definitions of different forms of Work and Learning in Higher Education

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Context

There is strong evidence that learning gained in, through and for work, whether it is through employment, voluntary, community, domestic or any other kind of work, helps to equip people with the capabilities that can improve their working lives, their employability and their life skills (Lester and Costley, 2010, Beehives, 2018, WEXHE, 2019). Learning in, through and for practice situations such as work can ease the transition from education to work and also enhance the current knowledge of those already in work, facilitating growth in a professional career. Work-Based Learning (WBL), a common term to define this can be designed for placements or other work experience for students in higher education (h.e.) taking initial awards or it can be for employees undertaking h.e. studies relevant to their work. Although a common term, there are many other terms in the area of work and learning which relate to the same or similar fields (see definitions below). This paper attempts to clarify this whole dynamic area.

As the broad area of Work and Learning has developed, there has been little acknowledgement of the potential for equity, diversity and inclusion. There is great capacity to access people who are backgrounds where they may be the first in their family where university attendance has not been the norm and for providing curricular that is demystifying for those from some ethnicities and working-class backgrounds.

What could be addressed more fully by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) is the finance arrangements, assessment processes, timings for study and assessments, and other university systems and processes all of which often need more flexibility for students learning in, through and for work.

The increasing presence of a 'Capability' approach in h.e. (Lester, 2014, Gervais, 2016) strengthens the cooperation between higher educational institutions (HEIs) and study programmes on the one hand, and professional practice on the other. It has been shown that developing capabilities (sometimes called competencies or skills) is most successful in changing realistic professional situations. Furthermore, the representatives of the world of work argue that h.e. should further develop curricular in work and learning by adjusting their programmes' learning outcomes to be more relevant to the requirements of employers and facilitate the development of lifelong learning.

There are different types of learning from work such as work placements, mentoring, internships, apprenticeships, etc. that have become an indispensable element in many h.e. study programmes. However, the definitions vary according to the Country, the institution and the field of study. 'Work-Based Learning' is a term which is often used interchangeably with other terms such as 'Work Integrated Learning', 'Work-Related Learning' and 'Work Applied Learning'. Nikolou-Walker (2017) posits "Despite the fact that WBL has been defined in several different ways by numerous commentators and authors, generally speaking it is still viewed as a worthwhile attempt at combining the workplace's knowledge with the knowledge gained while in higher education." Talbot (2017) considers that most of the different terms represent various pedagogic practices which have become a global phenomenon and "are an implicit recognition that the curriculum, if it cannot change, must adapt …. all involve some form of direct experiential learning in the workplace."

The fields of work and learning that are mediated through h.e. are part of an HEIs whole quality assurance agenda. As HEIs take on new and developing areas of the curriculum they

incorporate the same structures regarding peer review, current scholarship and appropriate processes and checks within administrative systems.

Quality measures in these fields should include how all stakeholders, such as employers, HEIs and students/trainees, fulfil the roles they take, in the continuity and sustainability of these three-party collaborations. Much of this is already a feature of HEIs through partnership programmes. Most universities have external partnerships but what is referred to here is a three-way partnership between the university, the student and an outside organisation that is usually affirmed by a learning contract or agreement.

Definitions

A complex situation has developed regarding nomenclature in this broad field of work and learning and so this section starts with brief definitions that try and strike the essence of differences for comparative purposes. Fuller definitions and discussion then follow:

Brief definitions of related fields in Work and Learning
Work-based learning: First used in the UK to mean full time workers studying part-time in HEIs and using the learning gained at work to meet h.e. level requirements to gain an award ([The Introduction of Work-Based Learning to Higher Education in the UK)](). However, the term is now widely used to mean a range of learning activities connected with work.
Work integrated Learning: This term is widely used in Australia to mean the placement, internship etc learning activities undertaken by students that are integrated into a subject discipline being studied. Learning outcomes gained through practice are designed to meet the subject requirements.
Workplace Learning: How people learn at work is studied and researched. It is not often connected with college qualifications. An international conference features the research in this field- http://www.rwlconferences.org/

> **Work-related Learning:** "Planned activity that uses the context of work to develop knowledge, skills and understanding useful in work, including learning through the experience of work, learning about work and working practices and learning the skills for work" Quality and Curriculum Authority 2007.

> **Workforce Development:** Perhaps the most evident of all the terms, this term applies to employed work. It sometimes appears that other terms are meant to have this meaning but are used less precisely.

> **Apprenticeships in higher education:** HEIs facilitate learning aligned to employer defined apprenticeship standards which may also lead to a higher education award. The pathway for an apprentice to achieve the apprenticeship standard and the HEI award is a joint responsibility between the HEI and the employer.

Note:

1. The word 'work' includes all positive endeavour, paid or unpaid.
2. Work and Learning is usually meant to include all work and learning terms and activities.

Discussion and issues around definitions

Work-based learning (WBL)

In h.e. the initial use of the term WBL concerned professional learning that was structured through academic levels that includes reflection and research in work situations ([The Introduction of Work-Based Learning to Higher Education in the UK](#)). From the learning gained by mature part-time students through their work quickly became apparent as the kind of learning needed by undergraduates in their full time degree courses. The term wbl then started to be used for placement learning, part time work, sandwich courses and so on. A key point here is that the curriculum development and pedagogic skills gained by the university tutors had centred around transdisciplinary work situated abilities which were not always related closely to subject disciplines.

However, some academics did link such abilities to their subject disciplines and this was particularly prominent in Australia where they used the term Work Integrated Learning. Almost everywhere else, in the UK and throughout Europe, in Malaysia, the term WBL was

used to mean any of the learning associated with work experience whether is was related closely to a discipline or the more transdisciplinary model. The transdisciplinary aspect of WBL is a facet of the field that has been developed (Gibbs, 2015, Bravenboer and Workman, 2016, Garnett, 2016) and now features in much of the writing about WBL. The definition below, given by Garnett makes the point that work itself is a learning activity.

> *Higher education level work-based learning (WBL) in the UK was developed from a range of employment department funded initiatives in the early 1990s. These initiatives were grounded in a policy context which valued graduate employability and sought to extend participation in higher education. The key feature of this WBL is that it focused on work (paid or unpaid) itself as a learning activity, rather than being just a placement activity for the knowledge of the academy to be put into practice. WBL explicitly recognises and fosters the recognition of the potential of the activity, context and purposes of work to develop high level knowledge and skills.*

Garnett 2020, p16

Garnett gives some background and points out that initial conceptions of WBL in h.e. came from the UK where it was developed through work-based knowledge that emanated from work itself, that is, its main focus was not to examine subject discipline areas and consider which elements of these could be learned through work experience thus meeting current learning outcomes. Rather that WBL drew upon the everyday, learning that arises from doing work. It is therefore often transdisciplinary in nature. Learning frameworks with generic learning outcomes were developed that enabled assessment of abilities/ capabilities learned in work settings using level criteria as a key element for assessment. This approach enabled abilities in learning that are emergent, embodied, reflexive and often tacit to be acknowledged.

Below, Talbot reinforces the point and makes direct comparison with disciplinary knowledge thus drawing a distinction. Using the term practice he engages with the personal. Practice theory offers theoretical underpinning to the whole field of work and learning.

Work-based learning which is focussed upon the creation of practice knowledge ….
aims to create personal knowledge not just for knowing but as the basis for practical
actions. Paralleling developments in understanding of practice knowledge have been
improved understandings of learning in the workplace.

As with the developments in understanding of knowledge, the picture which emerges
is very different from the planned, uni-directional, didactic approach favoured by
formal educational establishments. Learning occurs socially between individuals in
highly specific (not universal) situations …. Much of it is unplanned, incidental and
informal…. but it is also often structured and planned …. It also takes place over a
considerable period of time so that it is progressive until a state of mastery is
attained.

Talbot 2019, p4

WBL curriculum development went in different directions according to individual providers and alongside developments in pedagogy. Nottingham (2016) researched into pedagogical matters in WBL and found three approaches: discipline-centred, learner-centred and employer-centred.

….there are both commonalities and distinctive attributes across the range of
practice that influence how academics develop and orient their pedagogy. It is
argued that the characteristics and discursive features of these WBL perspectives
present pedagogical approaches that could be adapted to inform more flexible
mainstream provision.

Nottingham 2016, p31

Nottingham's suggestion that these new approaches to pedagogy used in WBL could inform mainstream provision has taken some time to emerge, however it does appear that this is gradually happening. WBL providers identify and support flexible alternatives to conventional HE pedagogy, providing a student-centred approach (Walsh, 2008) that can now respond to more mainstream institutional initiatives such as employability and evidence of learning outcomes that meet the practice-oriented graduate skills agenda.

The conceptual framework for WBL, finds learning from practice; emergent, embodied, experiential and participative, co-constructed, situated and engaged (Lester and Costley 2010). Learning and teaching around these threshold concepts inevitably engages pedagogical practices that require a range of learning and teaching approaches (Boud and Costley, 2008).

The Interagency Group on Technical and Vocational Education and Training has the following all-encompassing definitions which constructs WBL with the more wholistic meaning that it has come to mean in many countries, organisations and education areas:

> *'Work-Based Learning refers to all forms of learning that takes place in a real work environment. It provides individuals with the skills needed to successfully obtain and keep jobs and progress in their professional development.'*

> IAG-TVET p2

Work integrated Learning (WIL)

This term is widely used in Australia where WIL is a part of many university courses, mostly in more professionally oriented courses but also quite prevalent in a wide range of others across many different disciplines. Australia has a national strategy for WIL (ACEN, 2015) unlike many other countries and has developed national strategies, that although have differing interpretations between HEIs, has produced a developing literature on the subject that has enabled an ongoing development in the scholarly activity and thus development of WIL. What distinguishes WIL is its specific link to subject disciplines. This is the historic legacy of Australian higher education and in many ways is a link that is more convenient and attuned to current practices. There is no doubt that there is an earlier enablement for university courses to be more linked to work practices through WIL. What it might not do is take a completely new look at knowledge in practice. The following gives a definition of WIL from Australia that provides a clear description of what a well worked WIL approach can provide in HEIs in the current subject discipline formular

> *Work integrated learning (WIL) is a curriculum design in which students spend time in professional, work, or other practice settings relevant to their degrees of study, and to their occupational futures. Students in WIL courses are encouraged by the specifically designed activities they engage in (e.g. reflective journaling; the creation*

of a commercial product; the conduct of research; or other discipline- or profession appropriate means) to apply and learn disciplinary knowledge and skills in a real world context. WIL curricula can include such familiar notions as placements, internships, practical, supervised practice, and even simulations.

Importantly WIL is not the same as work experience or work-based learning, neither of which require students to specifically learn, apply or integrate canonical disciplinary knowledge.

Smith, 2012, p34

Workplace Learning (WPL)

Researchers in the field of workplace learning who generally research into how people learn at work have published research which many teachers in h.e. and pedagogical researchers have found useful. The wealth of research produced by workplace learning researchers has enabled teachers of h.e. students to develop curricular models and frame these models using work situations as a source of learning and thus constructing pedagogical strategies in facilitating their learning. The workplace learning researchers have also written in the area of EDI, for example see the international conference series for workplace learning, Researching Work and Learning (1999- 2019).

Organisational studies and other fields

There is also an abundance of literature on work from organisational studies. and pedagogical researchers , management studies, sociology of work and so on. Government and cultural initiatives such as policy changes concerning equal pay, the class divide in creating opportunities, equal opportunities legislation, disabled rights, ageism, have also influenced the field of work and learning in h.e. These ongoing issues affect us all and whilst h.e. institutions (that also come under the same legislation and cultural changes) engage with organisations and communities outside of the sector, these issues will be pertinent in learning and teaching scenarios but we may argue, none more so than those who teach in the area of work and learning. This field of h.e. curriculum and pedagogy so engaged with organisations outside of h.e. has a unique focus upon Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI).

Higher Education for Capability (HEC) Movement

in the 1990s, a Royal Society for the Arts (RSA) initiative sought to expand education from a perceived narrowly academic focus, popularised the term 'capability' (HECA archive*).*
It was applicable to the growing need for professionals to move beyond discipline-specific expertise and engage with what Schön terms the 'swampy lowland' of practice. Lester drew from this, widely stating that:

> *......a capability approach is able to inform and modify competence frameworks so that they represent something that better reflects professional work, taking account of things that characterise the working environments of many professions such as emergent contexts, evolving and contested practices and the need for intelligent judgement and lived ethical practice. As a means of supporting professionalism and accountability, this would appear to be far preferable, more effective, and less bureaucratic than seeking to define competent practice through context-limited detail.*

Lester, 2014 p22

Lester's 2014 paper goes on to discuss the Capability movement and the ideas it had raised over many years. Stephenson, and Yorke's (*1998)* book provides thought provoking information that is still relevant today. The Capability journal is now archived with Advance HE.

Key Points

Nomenclature can be challenging and often problematic. In the case of the whole field of Work and Learning it would seem even more important to 'explain your terms'. Terms are now more than ever decided in an arbitrary way, assumed and used interchangeably.

Pedagogical research that seeks for HEIs to develop more practice-based curricular may need to include an understanding that vocational education has held a lower intellectual status in the past. Historically, even dating back to Aristotle, theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge have been separated with much greater kudos given to theoretical knowledge. It may be argued that the separation of knowledges in our current culture and

practice is unhelpful. Surely there is higher-level learning engaged in practices that we need to engage with in higher education.

It is apparent that Workplace Learning has been on the university agenda for a long time now. Scholars in this field have a history of deep and meaningful research about adult learning and how people learn at work. Those more involved in courses of work related/ integrated learning can relate extensively to this literature and often do draw from it. It has to be noted though, that as they do, many do not acknowledge that this valuable research does not apply directly to university-based courses. It is giving much constructive insight into how such credited activity can be realised but is not connected directly with it in most instances.

The mostly Australian and highly researched in-depth WIL approach is exceptionally helpful in the thinking around how the practice of work activities can be theorised and placed in curricular with specific learning outcomes in university courses. It is a compelling example of what it possible. It could be argued though, that whilst the emphasis is only on the subject-discipline focussed practical knowledge, some of the more transdisciplinary abilities that are indicative of practices may not be learned and assessed in curricula.

WBL in h.e., was greeted with scepticism in its early days which were in the early 1990's. The invocation of a transdisciplinary approach was equally greeted by the academy as a concept that was contested in the late 1990's and early 2000s. However now, with the changing culture of HEIs to be more responsive to employers, both WBL and transdisciplinarity have received a more positive reception by universities. They are also areas that policy makers round the world consider for current and future development in h.e.

Those of us that have been working in this broad area for some time, especially those of us in the Arts, Health and Education have sought to have the practice-based focus of our work

and learning recognised as higher education's capabilities. At the same time, it is acknowledged that in some curriculum areas practices, practice theory, practice-based curricula and pedagogy, the dynamic is not well represented in this burgeoning area.

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