Humanising Higher Education

A Positive Approach to Enhancing Wellbeing

Edited by
Camila Devis-Rozental · Susanne Clarke

Humanising Higher Education

"This book provides a fantastic insight into Higher Education's beating heart, its people and communities. Diverse and vibrant communities are at the centre of university life and this book captures this richness through very well chosen case studies and stories of people's journeys through life. A fusion of ideas and minds that brings these communities to life with a real energy and passion for making a difference and enriching society. The rhythm of life has been tested in recent times and to provide such a well researched and powerful analysis of what makes these communities thrive is just brilliant".

—Professor John Vinney, *Vice-Chancellor of Bournemouth University*

"Imagine how the world would change if all of the students graduating from every college and university not only experienced humanisation as part of their academic, social, and student employee journey, but also learned how to create it for themselves. Integrating kindness, wellbeing, and respect into our interactions with students and colleagues supports a cultural transformation to humanisation for everyone working, teaching, and studying in higher education and beyond. The chorus of voices in this amazing book will inspire, uplift, and propel you on your journey to humanise higher ed at your institution".

—Ruth Archer, Ph.D., *Director of Continuous Improvement at Michigan Technological University, US, and chair of the Lean HE Americas Division*

"This is a vital book that comes at a vital time. It's call is clear—in a world of AI and technological advances, chaos and uncertainty, we must never ever underestimate the power of humanity and the need to humanise our encounters with others. It is fundamental to our relationships and to our performance at work. Ultimately wellbeing leads to well-doing and this brilliantly written and researched book articulates this so well."

—Professor Paul McGee, *SUMO4Schools Foundation CIC, Cannock, Staffordshire, UK*

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palgrave
macmillan

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To our amazing husbands Steve and Shlomo and our children Kieran, Darcey, Jordan, Dani and David, we love you to the moon and back.

Foreword

Although many of you might know me as the Founder of the Love and Kindness Project Foundation and an author, speaker and lean services consultant, coach and practitioner, I actually come from an academic background. My father (now retired) was a Professor of Physical Education focusing on Ethics in Coaching and Sport. My husband is a professor of East Asian Studies and teaches Chinese, Japanese and Indian history, philosophy and religion. Growing up, I always imagined that I, too, would be a professor, and so I have a Master's Degree in Sculpture, the terminal degree in Visual Arts. Of course, as so often happens, life had other plans, so although I'm not a full-time professor, I do teach on an adjunct basis, and have the great pleasure of having the majority of my consulting and coaching clients as institutions of Higher Education.

So why have I chosen to focus my efforts on teaching service excellence to institutions of higher education? For a few reasons. Reasons that line up exactly with the themes of this book. First of all, because to truly practice service excellence we can't view students, administrators, support workers and professors as just their title or role within the institution. We must see each one as a valued and valuable human being. Second, because

institutions of higher education have been entrusted with an unbelievably important mission: to educate the people whose work, thinking and actions will shape and create the world of the future. The world that all of us—you and I included!—will be living in. By teaching service excellence concepts such as considering others' needs before our own, and that we must bring our 'whole selves' (our creativity, our empathy, our compassion and caring), to serve our very human customers, I can help those working in higher education model and actively teach those concepts for students. Those students will then bring those concepts out into the world. Both at work and at home. Finally, I've chosen to focus on teaching service excellence to those in Higher Education because I believe that we 'learn by doing'. That education isn't just about teaching the 'head'; it's about doing things in ways that integrate head, hand and heart. Exactly the golden thread of this book!

So, I'm honoured that Susanne Clarke and Dr. Camila Devis-Rozental have asked me to write this foreword. And although the concepts you'll be reading about are timeless, I believe that this work, and this book, is particularly important at this time. A time when as a world, we are in crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A time when the global academic world has been turned upside down. My husband has quickly had to learn to teach his classes online, something he has not ever done in twenty years of teaching. But it isn't just the format of teaching and student service delivery that Higher Ed has the opportunity to reconsider and change at this time. It's time to reconsider what we, as human beings, want to focus on going forward. Do we want to continue to focus on money, titles, and 'jobs'…or can we, instead, focus on becoming whole, fulfilled, balanced people, truly well on both the inside and on the outside?

I believe that this is the exact perfect moment to focus on humanising higher education. And I hope that you do to!

Congratulations to all the contributing authors. You are changing—and humanising—the world of higher education. To all this book's readers: I challenge you to use your head, hand and heart to work on

turning these concepts into reality at your institution! Your students, institution and world will be better because of it!

With love and kindness,
Karyn Ross
Author, Speaker, Consultant, Coach
Helping People Improve the World
Naperville, Chicago, USA

Preface

This book has been a labour of love and a passion for humanising higher education, looking at it from different prisms. Since each chapter has been developed by various authors, and we are keen to amplify their voice, the organisation of the book has been written by each author in their own words.

The Organisation of the Book

- Chapter 1 presents a rationale for this book and its golden thread, the themes, theories and ideas interwoven throughout the book. They form the basis of this tapestry of ideas, case studies, reflections and theories emerging from many corners of higher education institutions. The chapter ends by introducing you, the reader, to an example of how we have already begun this journey of humanising our practice.
- Chapter 2 explores socio-emotional intelligence (SEI) as a tool to develop a humanising approach to enhance wellbeing in higher education. The chapter includes a self-assessment questionnaire to allow the reader to reflect in their own SEI. Following this, the chapter explores the importance to challenge the 'them and us' culture existing

in areas of HE by developing research, teaching and working spaces
that consider SEI and are therefore humanised.

- Chapter 3 introduces the concept of relational energy outlining its
linkage to positivity. It argues that promoting and utilising this energy
amplifies staff wellbeing, happiness and the delivery of excellent service
to all within the university community. Within the chapter, various
strength-based approaches are presented to make a case for positive
organisation learning and the development of a framework of posi-
tivity and relational energy, based on the principles of humanisation.
The chapter ends with a call to action to university leaders to take our
rightful place as the anchors of society, enriching the world and fully
embedding humanising into all that we do.

- In Chapter 4, positive education as a tool to humanise higher educa-
tion is explored. The chapter provides examples of positive education
around the world. It makes a case for developing a positive educa-
tion approach in higher education institutions to engage and support
students and staff to flourish and therefore improve their wellbeing.
The last part of the chapter places higher education institutions as
culture leaders, which makes them ideal places to enrich working
cultures and society.

- In Chapter 5, the university experience is explored from the perspec-
tive of a student, considering some of the forms of humanisation.
It offers some recommendations of ways that universities can further
humanise the student journey and improve students' wellbeing while
at university and beyond. It focuses on how universities can prepare
for the various ways that students may arrive with individual needs and
expectations, considering how the university environment may directly
affect students' wellbeing, and how the homogenisation of students
by staff that fail to celebrate their uniqueness can lead to feelings of
isolation in students.

- In Chapter 6, the transition to university is explored, presenting find-
ings from a small study exploring this transition with current students
and staff in a UK institution. It then introduces ME@BU, the online
tool for pre-arrival students stemming from this research project, and
its evaluation based on a large survey carried out to gauge its efficacy. In
the second part of the chapter findings from a survey to staff exploring

their views of the induction process are presented. In this way, the chapter concludes that to support this transition, everyone within the university must gain a sense of ownership to support students, each in their own role.

- Chapter 7 uses the metaphor of 'strangers in strange lands' to argue that a deeper understanding of the practitioner-student encounter offers rich pedagogic potential. He believes aspiring teachers should become attuned to the historical conditioning of their own professional 'becoming' to comprehend how the past shapes their students. These 'hermeneutic teachers' liberate students and empower them to reimagine practice. Dr. Bissell advocates creation of Becoming Spaces where teachers and students can explore becoming journeys and the implications for wellbeing.

- Chapter 8 explores how digital competence, capability and/or literacy are still mostly understood and approached within higher education in terms of technical skills and knowledge. However, with media and digital technologies today embedded in everyone's life and learning, it is now becoming clear that nurturing digital competence has become crucial for the overall wellbeing of staff and students. This chapter combines the nursing humanisation curricula work with that of digital competence frameworks, offering a model which is of relevance to higher education practitioners concerned with the wellbeing of students and staff.

- Chapter 9 presents the case study of Bournemouth University's Fusion Fundraising Academy and the role that practical experience plays in the development of socio-emotional intelligence for students and interns. It highlights the need for wellness and resilience in fundraisers and addresses the most common graduate skills gaps. The chapter details the learning experienced by both interns and university staff who developed and ran the Academy, highlighting the lessons learned for other institutions considering the model.

- Using Ubuntu, the African philosophy, Chapter 10 provides examples and methodologies for practical approaches that leaders and managers can implement to develop the skills and abilities of individuals and in turn strengthen the teams in which they work. Ubuntu recognises that for a team to succeed there is a need to value everyone within the team,

acknowledging their uniqueness and by empowering them, enhancing their wellbeing.

- Chapter 11 explores a version of volunteering that offers a win-win to all parties, arguing for the sector to be much more organised and proactive in harnessing the capabilities of its graduates back into teaching. Such a connection offers teaching experience for engaged graduates, perhaps opening up for them a new career path. For staff, the value is the ability to insert current practice and case studies into classes; and to hear from alumni who were (recently) in the shoes of current students.

- Chapter 12 discusses the practice of leading with a kind heart. A more inclusive, authentic and connected form of leadership which revives humanity and enhances meaning in life and work. Developing HE leadership with heart requires a paradigm shift. We carry a core responsibility for the culture of our institutions. Therefore, we must demonstrate and propagate kindness through openness, authenticity, compassion and courage. This chapter uncovers the key elements of leading with heart, with a focus on how we can lead a heart-infused revolution in our own back yard.

- Chapter 13 discusses the concept of Lean management, exploring how lean intersects with humanisation in HE. This chapter discusses lean as an industrial approach introducing key concepts. It outlines how these principles can play out in practice through a case study, illustrating the interplay between lean and humanisation. The chapter then discusses some of the broader challenges facing the sector. It concludes by addressing how a humanising lean approach has a role in offering a practical way forward.

- Chapter 14 considers the vital contribution policy work can make to humanising the university environment and contributing to staff wellbeing. It discusses how policy work is all about influencing and the need to connect with people on a human level, for example by bringing theory to life and adding humour and a human element to the driest of policy briefings. People in policy roles are often in a privileged position with access to leaders and opportunities to shape the agenda—which gives us both an opportunity and a responsibility to question, challenge and role model the values and behaviours that our institutions espouse.

- In Chapter 15, the opportunities and challenges of humanising higher education through sustainable development education and climate action are explored. Using the framework of head, hand, heart the premise of 'Play with Purpose' and the metaphor of the 'Tree of Life', the chapter creates positive landscapes for change, bringing together contemporary theory and practice that provides guidance and inspiration for practitioners and academics working in this area, to be part of the community of practice of educators and professionals supporting, inspiring and challenging our future leaders and colleagues.
- Concluding in Chapter 16, we bring together our thoughts on our journey so far in the role of co-editors of this book which has been a privilege. Many of the chapters have lifted our hearts and brought to us new concepts and perspectives on the special virtue that is humanising. It provides an overview of how the key themes weave themselves throughout the book. One of our many mantras shouted very loudly, is the joy of working in the HE sector, we define this as—passion, purpose and privilege. This chapter allows us to explain what it is to feel passionate about our work, the gratitude we feel to be part of this sector, and the clear role that humanising has in our practice, in cementing our purpose.

We hope this journey continues, and we would love to hear more about your experiences of humanising practice in your own way. Those of you who we already know, you support and uplift us daily, we cannot express how much happiness you bring into our lives and the lives of others. Readers who do not know us, we already feel you are friends we are yet to meet.

Poole, UK   Camila Devis-Rozental
                                                                            Susanne Clarke

Acknowledgements

We are indebted to Dr. Caroline Ellis-Hill, who made the connection and realised how much we had in common, introduced us to each other and generously shared her philosophies of kindness, humanising and well-being. She also taught us the value of creating a space and seeing what happens. This happened!

This book would never have been written without the wisdom of Professors Les Todres, Kate Galvin and Immi Holloway whose concepts of humanising inspired this book.

Being able to embed a humanised practice is only possible with the support of visionary leaders. Therefore, we will be eternally grateful to Professor John Vinney for believing in us and supporting our ideas and passion, embracing a culture of consideration, kindness a positive mindset and a caring approach as part of our university's vision.

Bournemouth University as our intellectual home where we are known as Sumila is also the place where we are encouraged, supported and uplifted by colleagues, students and friends on a daily basis making our job exciting and always a joy to do. Some of them have contributed to this book and others have inspired many of its pages.

All our gratitude goes to every member of our respective families who have read, re-read, challenged, cheered and supported us in every way so that we could fulfil our dream of writing/editing this book together.

Producing a book is a team effort and creating this one has been a great experience due to the professionalism and kindness of our publishers, thank you for believing in us!

Our gratitude to all our contributing authors, for generously sharing your knowledge. You are all awesome and inspire us every day!

Meeting like-minded people and learning from them in various settings, cities and countries has been an exciting journey, and being able to hear from some of our heroes such as Dr. Kim Cameron Emeritus Professor at the Ross School of Business, University of Michigan, Dr. Denise Quinlan Director of the New Zealand Institute of wellbeing and resilience, inspirational educationalists Richard Gerver and Sir John Jones, or Karyn Ross award-winning author, has enriched our understanding of what it means to be human and how to build the space within Higher Education to allow for that to flourish.

We passionately believe that this generation of students are kinder, more caring and deeply concerned about the world around them. And we recognise, at the time of writing this book, that the future looks very different due to the global pandemic. The gift we would like to give to each student is hope so that you go on to rebuild a world based on the principles of humanising, outlined within this book.

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Notes on Contributors

Mandi Barron is strategic lead for student welfare and wellbeing and for Student Services activity, including induction and transitions. She has extensive experience of project management, academic administration and customer services. She was a Director AMOSSHE between 2014 and 2018, and is a member of the OIA's Higher Education Advisory Panel.

Dr. Andrew Bissell joined Bournemouth university in 2013 following a journalism career spanning three decades. His research interests include the historical shaping of industry professionals and philosophically informed approaches to teaching.

Susanne Clarke is an author, leader and organisational performance specialist. Starting her career in finance, she undertook a number of finance director roles, before taking her skills into the higher education sector. Susanne has developed her research and practice interest to become a well-regarded speaker in the field of positivity, kindness and strength-based approaches to organisational development. Along with

Camila, she is the recipient of awards to recognise her commitment to higher education and organisational learning.

James Garo Derounian work spans twin areas of community engagement and innovation in higher education teaching and learning. He also researches rural social issues and local governance. James was awarded a peer-assessed National Teaching Fellowship in 2007 and has been an active committee member of the Association of National Teaching Fellows.

Dr. Camila Devis-Rozental is an author, international speaker and educationalist with over 20 years experience in her field. She is a senior fellow of the HEA and has been the recipient of various grants and awards for her commitment to higher education teaching and learning. She is applying her expertise in socio-emotional intelligence in her current role having created an online platform to support students' holistic wellbeing, and developing Bournemouth university's cultural framework alongside Susanne Clarke in their quest to humanise higher education through a positive organisational culture approach.

Dr. Lois Farquharson is the Executive Dean of Bournemouth University Business School. She has extensive experience in academic leadership, with a commitment to positive organisational development and change in various HE institutions. Lois has scholarly interests and publications in key practice-based areas including leadership, organisational development & culture, and HRM.

Jane Forster has a with a wide-ranging role that includes political and public affairs matters at Bournemouth University. Before moving to Dorset, Jane was an in-house lawyer, leading UK and international legal and regulatory functions and was a member of the executive leadership team in several organisations.

Debbie Holley is a National Teaching Fellow and a passionate educator, she blends learning to motivate and engage a diverse student body. Her research interests in digital augmented and immersive worlds influence national policy through her published work, keynote addresses and policy articles.

Claire House-Norman has over 25 years' experience in the voluntary sector, specialising in fundraising, communications and PR. Currently the Director of Fundraising & Alumni Relations at Bournemouth University, and the lead for the Fundraising Academy, she has worked for a variety of charities and ran her own business.

James Mann is a Student Systems Co-ordinator at Edinburgh Napier University, with over 7 years of experience working in Higher Education. Fresh on his lean journey, he is very proud to have been invited to contribute to this paper. He won an "Above and Beyond" award in Edinburgh Napier for service and innovation, and when not stuck behind a computer he's usually found out walking in the Scottish Borders.

Kerry Noble has over 30 years' experience in commerce and the education sector, and has held a number of senior change management and organisation roles. Currently the Operations Manager for the Fundraising Department at Bournemouth University, Kerry manages the day-to-day activities of the Fundraising Academy.

Laura Roper has a passion for encouraging people to embrace continuous improvement and best practice. Laura's background is in accreditation management as well as having a wide range of experience and insights into HE processes. Laura strives to ensure a high-quality student and staff experience, supported by a culture of service excellence.

Daniela Rozental-Devis is a writer and recent university graduate, soon to start a Masters degree in Creative writing. She has been shortlisted for multiple awards for her writing and was the recipient of the Best Short Screenplay Award in the New York Genre Screenplay Competition 2018. She is passionate about equality and representation.

Tammi Sinha has over 20 years experience as a lean practitioner, academic and change agent working across sectors and Universities, taking a Communities of Practice approach to build capability in change, innovation, sustainability and improvement. Research Interests include climate action through systems thinking, circular design, operations and supply chains. Currently Director for Centre for Climate Action.

Sharon Waight has experience working at clinical, educational, strategic levels in the NHS. Sharon's clinical nursing practice is working in acute and community health services. Her passion is teaching and developing nursing and patient care in clinical practice. Sharon has held national roles, in clinical governance and reviewing quality and standards in the NHS.

Stephen Yorkstone founded and chairs Lean HE, the worldwide community of practice for lean universities. He authored "Lean Universities" in the Shingo Prize Winning *Routledge Companion to Lean Management* and edited *Global Lean for Higher Education: A Themed Anthology of Case Studies, Approaches, and Tools*.

Abbreviations

ABCD	Asset-Based Community Development
AI	Appreciative Inquiry
AMOSSHE	Association of Managers of Student Services in Higher Education
BU	Bournemouth University
BU2025	Bournemouth University Strategic Plan to 2025
CAMHS	Child and Adolescence Mental Health Services
CMHT	Community Mental Health Teams
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DHLE	Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (survey)
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
HHH	Head, Hand, Heart
HRH	His Royal Highness
KEF	Knowledge Exchange Framework
LSP	Lego© Serious Play
NSS	National Student Survey
OfS	Office for Students
PERMA	Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Accomplishments

PGR	Post-Graduate Research
PLN	Professional Learning Networks
POL	Positive Organisational Learning
POS	Positive Organisational Scholarship
REF	Research Excellence Framework
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEE	Social and Emotional Education
SEI	Socio-Emotional Intelligence
TEF	Teaching Excellence Framework
TEL	Technology Enhanced Learning
UG	Undergraduate
UN	United Nations
UNSDG	United Nations Sustainable Development Goal
UoG	University of Gloucestershire
VC	Vice-Chancellor
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment
WHO	World Health Organization
WONKHE	Home of Higher Education Policy
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

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The Golden Thread on Our Quest to Humanise Higher Education

Camila Devis-Rozental and **Susanne Clarke**

1.1   Introduction and Rationale for This Book

Before we begin our journey to humanise higher education, we want to introduce ourselves so you can get a sense of who we are and what we do, but more importantly why we wanted to begin this quest. For the purpose of this chapter and to be clear about our own voices, we will refer to ourselves as Camila and Susanne when we are talking about our specific areas of research. The rest of the time we are a "we" as we collaborate in most areas of our work, developing and embedding a positive organisational culture through service excellence. This book has been a collective effort; we asked our friends, colleagues and experts who have inspired us along the way to join this venture and explore how,

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within their practice and or experience, they have applied, embedded, experienced or practised with a humanised approach.

We wanted to capture as many areas within a university so that you, the reader, gain an understanding of how all these theoretical ideologies can be lived, and how within the different lenses we present in this book, higher education can be humanised. By doing so, we believe, student and staff wellbeing benefit as we put each individual at the centre of what we do.

When we refer to our golden thread, we mean those themes, theories and ideas which are interwoven throughout the book and without which the book would not exist. The humanisation framework, practising with an embodied relational understanding, areas of positive psychology and socio-emotional intelligence all form the basis of this tapestry of ideas, case studies, reflections and theories emerging from many corners of higher education institutions.

1.2   Terminology Matters

When we first started researching and getting ready to put the call out for our book, we came across misunderstandings regarding the terminology we were using. So, before we begin our journey, we want to clarify some of these. Humanism, humanisation and humanitarianism are all words derived from the Latin word Homo (human being), then humanus (of a man) and later old French and Middle English humaine. Although they are all concerned with humanity and human nature, they differ somehow. Humanising according to Galvin and Todres (2013, p. 10/11):

> humanisation is to uphold a particular view or value of what it means to be human, and furthermore to find ways to act on this concern. Such concern also needs to be practically translated into the more experiential issues of what practices can make people feel more human.

It differs from humanism which according to Humanists UK (2020) refers to:

people who have believed that this life is the only life we have, that the universe is a natural phenomenon with no supernatural side, and that we can live ethical and fulfilling lives based on reason and humanity. They have trusted the scientific method, evidence, and reason to discover truths about the universe and have placed human welfare and happiness at the centre of their ethical decision making.

This is considerably different from humanising as it is a belief system. There is also the concept of humanitarianism which refers to the promotion of human welfare and assistance to each other. This last term is concerned with the action rather than the experiential aspect of what makes us feelhuman, which is something that humanising encompasses. This term, along with some of its theoretical concepts and applications, forms the basis of this book, all within the context of higher education.

Education is, or it should be, person-centred; it refers to acquiring knowledge and experience of any type to enrich our experience and help us understand the world around us. It is in this process of assisting learning that educators play a crucial role that goes beyond imparting knowledge or instructions. Consequently, a humanising focus where this is coherently championed at every level within the organisation and considering the external factors which will influence our practice such as policy, culture, politics and even the economy are all important. Ensuring that this focus is kept on humanising issues can be done by developing a common lexicon and an in-depth understanding of what makes us feel more human.

In Camila's previous book (Devis-Rozental 2018), she talked about the need for higher education scholars, both students and staff, to develop their socio-emotional intelligence. This is because it is no longer acceptable to assume that academics are fonts of knowledge, and their role ends with their expertise. In an ever-changing landscape where students are increasingly arriving at university with complex needs, as well as higher levels of anxiety and other mental health stresses (Snape 2017), academics must have the knowledge to signpost or support their students, while protecting their own wellbeing and resilience.

In her research, Camila found that students feel they have a good experience at university when they develop meaningful and genuine

working relationships with university staff (Devis-Rozental 2018). It is through this relationship that students learn many of the soft skills that they will be able to utilise once they finish their education and commence their working life. This is why it is essential to develop and role modelmodel/modelling behaviours that drive healthy working cultures that students will then go on to emulate in their working life. We recognise that in some sectors where our students will be working, there is a tradition of long working hours and less conducive working conditions. However, if we are to believe that higher education institutions enrich society and are drivers of effective practice, we must challenge these traditional views and look for ways to develop working practices that lead to high performing cultures. Environments are focused not just on profit and productivity, but on kindness, wellbeing, compassion and understating—only by being the catalysts of this change, we can really engage the new generation of leaders into developing these healthy working cultures.

There are many ways in which this can be done, and in her previous work, Camila discussed some of the strategies used by positive educationeducation institutions to achieve these. She also explored the humanising framework developed by Todres et al. (2009), which has been traditionally applied to health and social care, and reframed it for higher education teaching and practice. In this book, we want to go further and delve into the various areas of higher education from different points of view to highlight areas that already are humanised and perhaps identify the gaps where there is still work to do. Clearly, these assertions, case studies and essays are not a representation of higher education as a whole. In fact, most of the areas we have covered have been written by authors in the UK. However, we hope some of these ideas, new findings and alternatives resonate with some of you and your practice or inspire you to find the humanising practices in your institution.

1.3 Humanising Practice

According to Todres et al. (2009), there are two "foundational assets" from which to base all the various strategies within a practice environment. The first one is that it must have a distinctive and straightforward vocabulary that continuously focuses on humanising issues. The second one is to ensure that this focus is championed at all levels. We envisage that within a higher education environment, these would encompass the language, attitudes and behaviours that can be shared and role modelled within various layers (see Fig. 1.1).

The outer layer ensures that the environment is inclusive, engaging and practical. This will help people feel that they belong and that they are important to their university. The second layer looks at having meaningful values that highlight what is essential to the HEI. These should consider the role of the institution and how this is relatable to its community. The third layer encompasses the interactions within the university, ensuring these are positive and engaging and that we all practise with an
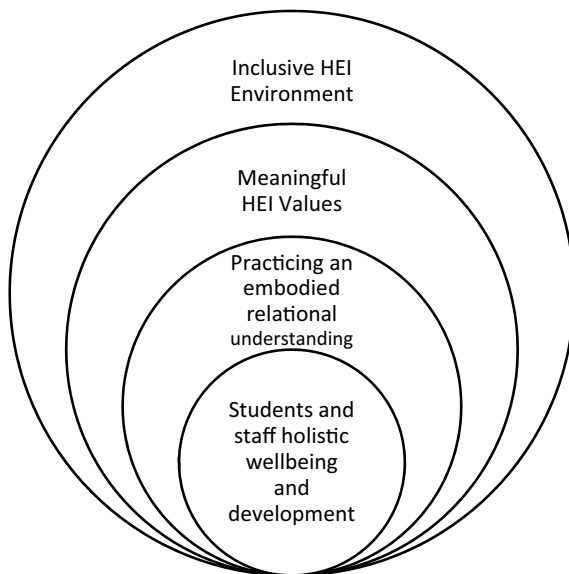
Fig. 1.1 Humanising higher education practice

embodied relational understanding. The last layer contains at its core our university community: the students and staff, and how it is our aim to provide them with the environment to flourish in every aspect of their lives.

1.4   The Humanising Framework

We have begun to embed this in our HEI by applying the humanising framework developed by Todres et al. (2009) (see Fig. 1.2) as the basis of the work we have been carrying out to develop our university's cultural framework.

The humanisation framework by Todres et al. (2009) was developed given the need to engage practitioners to be more compassionate and caring (Devis-Rozental 2018). Originally created for health practitioners, this framework can easily be used within the context of higher education teaching and learning.

The framework consists of eight dimensions which present "a spectrum of possibilities" (Todres et al. 2009, p. 2). Table 1.1 explains these dimensions (adapted from Devis-Rozental 2018).

We were very clear that we wanted to have a tool that highlighted our human nature, and the importance of understanding that our practice is something we do with our head (knowledge, ideas, culture, experience), hand (practice, behaviour, approaches) and heart (emotions, social relationships, self-belief, etc.), all interlinked and inseparable enriching our experiences and developing a type of practice based on our values and our purpose (Devis-Rozental 2018).
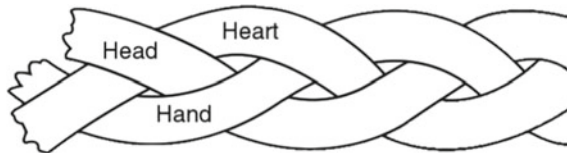
Fig. 1.2 Practising with an embodied relational understanding (Devis-Rozental 2018, p. 3)

Table 1.1 Humanising framework adapted from Devis-Rozental (2018)

Forms of humanisation	Forms of dehumanisation
Insiderness: The way we experience life from the inside, our feelings, emotions and even our mood. This allows us to have a sense of self and it is influenced by how we are treated or identified	Objectification: The notion that we have no value as we must fit into a given statistic or system without regard to how we feel and express and what matters to us
Agency: the possibility of making choices, participating and having responsibility for our actions and things that happen around us. It is related to our sense of dignity	Passivity: the lack of control in an environment where we don't have any say and we are merely subjected to what happen. For example being micro managed without any freedom
Uniqueness: Celebrating that we are all different and drawing on these to make a positive impact	Homogenization: Too much focus on standardisation and having to fit into labels, groups or situations
Togetherness: We are social beings, and part of a variety of communities so it is also important to find out what we have in common whilst perhaps practicing it in a unique manner. Empathy, a sense of belonging, social cognition and effective relationships are all part of this dimension	Isolation: Feeling that we don't belong with others. Situations where we can't find what we have in common with others. When we are isolated we may feel alienated from others
Sense-making: The way we see things with clarity. We are story makers of our own experience and that needs to be valued	Loss of meaning: Being seen as a number rather than as a person where our experiences don't matter
Personal journey: The sense of continuity within our life journey. To be connected to our past whilst navigating new experiences	Loss of personal journey: When our history, culture or any other area of our identity is not taken into account
Sense of place: Knowing and understanding where we belong, but rather than a physical place, it's about the type of belonging that makes us feel good, that gives us comfort or familiarity	Dislocation: When we don't feel we belong and can't find the space where things are familiar and we feel as strangers

Table 1.1   (continued)

Forms of humanisation	Forms of dehumanisation
Embodiment: Being present, having a sense of wellbeing where our holistic needs are met	Reductionist body: Neglecting to account for our needs or being seen in a holistic way. For example, an over emphasis on our physical appearance or a disability

1.5   Practising with an Embodied Relational Understanding

A term developed by Galvin and Todres (2013, p. 148), embodied relational understanding, refers to "a way of knowing that is holistically contextual". By this, we mean practising with our head (knowledge), hand (how we do things) and heart (our emotions and social interactions). And how these are interrelated and inseparable (Devis-Rozental 2018).

We have been fortunate to work at a university where a "positive mindset, professionalism, consideration, kindness and a caring approach" appear on our strategic plan and by this signalling a type of practice that is based on mutual respect and nurtures our talents and where we can work with our head, hand and heart. This has allowed us to develop strategies and ideas that we will discuss throughout this book, where we have been able to integrate areas that perhaps up until not recently would not have been considered areas to consider within the higher education sector.

For example, there is very little research carried out about socio-emotional intelligence within the context of teaching in higher education. It is only recently that ideas around kindness, wellbeing and LEAN's principle of respect for people, and even service excellence have been integrated to the job we do. As early adopters of these types of ideas that merge various disciplines such as health and social care, leadership, pedagogy and customer services amongst others, we have had a fair amount of criticism and scepticism by colleagues. Something which we embrace gracefully, as we know from our research evidenced practice

as well as the work of some of our heroes, which we will discuss in parts of this book, works and increases productivity, wellbeing and satisfaction.

Now, you may be thinking this is a bit too good to be true, but we have evidenced it time and again and we want to share these with everyone working in HE, teaching in HE and studying in HE. We have had transformative experiences, and we know that developing a more humanised HE environment can only but improve everyone's experience.

1.6 Wellbeing in HE

The New Economics Foundation (2012) defines wellbeing as how we feel and function in every aspect of our lives and how we evaluate these holistically. Considering everyone's wellbeing within a university community is very important as universities are places which breed and influence new cultures. Still, it has not always been an area studied or perhaps given enough attention (What works wellbeing 2020), this is especially the case with staff. But with headlines in the past few years highlighting an increase in mental health issues in both students and staff, it is necessary to take this into account when developing a humanised higher education community.

We know that wellbeing is integral to flourishing cultures, and it is this person-centred approach which drives our practice. It is known that environmental factors and to a lesser extent our genes influence our wellbeing, but fundamentally, the way we choose to live our lives accounting for the way we feel about ourselves, the relationships we have and our sense of purpose, the things that have the most impact on our wellbeing (Seldon and Lyubomirsky 2019). It is these aspects what make us human: the emotions, feelings, relationships and the subjective way in which we see ourselves and live our life.

Wherever we go and whatever we do, we bring this humanness with us, and whoever we are regardless of our culture, ethnicity, socioeconomic background, gender, ability or religious affiliation, each of us value wellness in our own way. When we are well, we are more creative, engaged and able to thrive, and we have taken these into account as we develop this book. As you will read, the chapters we have included

explore areas that can enhance our wellbeing from various different points of view. When we are humanised and feel engaged, supported and able, our wellbeing will be impacted positively. Therefore, drawing inspiration and implementing some of the suggestions we have provided in this book are ways, we believe, that can increase an individual's wellbeing within HE.

1.7 Service Excellence, What Does This Have to Do with Humanising Higher Education?

This is a question we get asked often, so we thought we would address it. Well, part of delivering service excellence is accounting for the culture in which we work. To us service excellence means to fulfil our purpose to enrich society and improve the world around us with all our passion; understanding the privilege is to work in a place that shapes minds, hearts and cultures.

At an individual level, we view service as anything that we do for others, be it supporting students, staff within the context of our role, or in the context of being human and considering others. This can manifest as taking the time, not just to give directions to someone looking lost on campus, but taking the time to chat to them, escorting them to their destination, putting them at ease, this is kindness, and it creates a great first impression. It can also be uplifting our team by bringing in cakes or doing something that you know will lift a colleague's spirits and make them feel valued for their contribution. Susanne has identified examples of this in previous work (Clarke et al. 2019). Others have given us great examples, sharing a smile and a joke with the person serving you coffee, lifts you, and you share your joy with others throughout the day.

According to Barrett (2013), service which is the highest of the growth needs (those which can be fulfilled once our basic needs are met—see Maslow's hierarchy of needs) refers to "satisfying your need to leave a legacy- to have led a life of significance that will be remembered". Service takes the top place within these being needs, followed by:

- Internal cohesion: Satisfying our need for authenticity and finding meaning
- Making a difference: Satisfying our need to actualise our purpose by making an impact on our environment
- Transformation: Satisfying our need for independence.
  (adapted from Barrett 2013, p. 7)

It is within this context that we want to place service excellence, practising in a way that brings meaning to our lives and that of those around us—a space where we can fulfil our purpose as part of something bigger than ourselves. To find this purpose, we need to know ourselves, and this is also at the centre of a service excellence provision that is values-based and human-centred.

1.8 Bringing Theory to Practise

As you can see from the previous sections, within our research, we have developed and adapted various theories to continue advancing knowledge. However, we are both practitioners with a passion for making a positive impact on our environment. We have started to do this in our work in service excellence, so here is an example of how we have adapted theory to inform our practice. In the autumn of 2018, we developed a series of service excellence actions as part of our work, developing our university's cultural framework (Fig. 1.3).

These actions were developed considering the humanising framework, positive organisational scholarship, socio-emotional intelligence, kindness and at its core the idea of practising with an embodied relational understanding. They exemplify the behaviours, attitudes and values we want to see in those working in our university. We have shared these actions with hundreds of colleagues through workshops, presentations and internal communications, and we are starting to see how this language and way of being resonate within the university environment. We want our working environment to be a place where individuals feel "called to work towards the creation of a world where [they] are able to
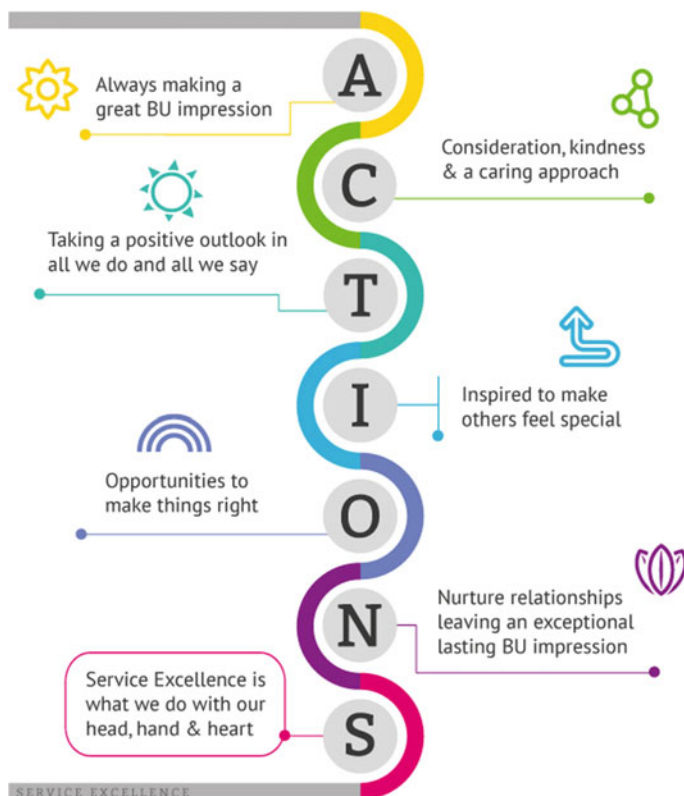
Fig. 1.3 Service excellence actions

grow and develop so they can live their own Unique Self story… and purpose-driven life" (Barrett 2013, p. 7).

Within these actions, we were keen to consider people's wellbeing and joy for what they do as vital, based on the premise that if people are happy and well they will enrich their working environments and excel at what they do. So, for example, in the area where we explore consideration, kindness and a caring approach, we are keen for people to reflect on self-kindness and their overall wellbeing. Another example of this is the section where we invite people to develop nurturing relationships as we know that social bonds are essential for our wellbeing and to deliver excellence in every area of our provision.

1.9   Conclusion

We are at the beginning of this exciting journey to humanise HE; in this chapter, we have provided you with an overview of the main themes that emerge within the chapters of this book. As you will see, there is work already taking place to humanise the higher education landscape, and we have attempted to collect some of these examples and present them to you in this book. We hope you find them inspiring, and they give you ideas and tools to develop your practice with a more humanised approach and that, to some extent, they enrich your journey and wellbeing.

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2

Socio-Emotional Intelligence: A Humanising Approach to Enhance Wellbeing in Higher Education

Camila Devis-Rozental

'What you think, you become. What you feel, you attract. What you imagine, you create.'—Buddha

2.1 Introduction

Understanding ourselves and how we react in a given situation are essential skills that we should have in order to thrive. Yet, until recently, higher education has not paid too much attention to these and their effect on wellbeing. In this chapter, I discuss the role of socio-emotional intelligence (SEI) in higher education (HE) as a positive strategy to impact on our wellbeing and the university environment with the aim to create cultures that thrive and flourish. With students and staff reporting an increase in mental health issues, it is imperative to account for wellbeing as part of the student experience. But even before we begin thinking

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about students, it is important to ensure that staff feel satisfaction in the job they do and that they report high levels of wellbeing. One way in which this can be achieved is by developing a better awareness of socio-emotional intelligence and how to apply it to enrich our experience.

I begin by questioning the current view of what higher education institutions are and the role of those who work in them. Following this, the importance of SEI within the context of practice in HE will be posed and useful examples of how by applying aspects of SEI, a more humanised experience, where people can, flourish can be achieved. It will consider the importance of practising with an embodied relational understanding to enrich the various environments within the university and to enhance the staff experience, contributing to an individual's wellbeing. In the last part of the chapter, I challenge the notion of the more "traditional" view of "the other" when discussing higher education staff and call others to action in challenging these destructive and dehumanised notions for a much more coherent and beneficial way of seeing everyone as peer scholars on this learning journey.

2.2   The Purpose of Higher Education Institutions Goes Beyond Research and Knowledge Exchange

Higher education institutions (HEI) are places that should be at the forefront of knowledge creation and exchange and where boundaries should be tested to enrich society. This is carried out through research and dissemination of this new and established knowledge. Traditionally, it is these two main areas, research and teaching, which have been the main focus of higher education institutions. Some are more research-based while others, perhaps newer universities, concentrate more on the teaching aspect. It is in these two premises where universities have, up to recently, been valued. However, there is a more recent idea which poses that higher education institutions should be places where students develop holistically, places that prepare them for the "real world" and

therefore must consider all aspects of learning. It is for this reason that student support services, academic advisers, tutors, pastoral support workers and many other types of specialised staff have surfaced and given importance with the creation of posts dedicated to the student experience or student wellbeing for example.

There are critics of these types of roles and practices, as they are seen as therapeutic and therefore not necessary. However, I believe that spaces where students can develop their social skills, places where they can reflect and develop their self-awareness, motivation and self-esteem, for example, should be made available to students now more than ever. The reason for this is that once students finish university, they will be entering competitive markets and challenging situations where it is that type of knowledge of their personal attributes and soft skills that will set them apart. From previous research, we know that knowledge gives people confidence and that students learn areas of socio-emotional intelligence from those around them (Devis-Rozental 2018). Interestingly, university staff are mostly unaware of the effect they have on students. They often don't feel accountable or responsible for the fact that their behaviour and their attitude can have an impact on students. I have given countless lectures, workshops, conference presentations and keynotes where I state that fact and every time, audiences seem surprised by this idea, perhaps because they don't think it is part of their role, as I had a lecturer tell me once:

> As long as I got them through their assignment, I wasn't particularly interested in their social and emotional development.

Nevertheless, we know from research that individuals don't fully develop their brain capacity, identity and perspective until their mid-twenties and sometimes even more. In fact, we are continuously learning, developing and growing, influenced by our surroundings and the people with whom we come in contact. Therefore, considering students' holistic development is necessary for their benefit.

On another occasion, a participant in a workshop for professional staff stated that it wasn't her problem as she never saw or worked with students. However, she did work with other staff who, in turn,

supported students; taking into consideration that we feed on the mood and behaviour of others, it is conceivable that a negative attitude, unmotivated behaviour or a toxic environment will eventually affect the students. Emotions are contagious, and we are social beings—our mirror neurons are a testament to that. So if students learn from their environment and others around them, shouldn't we have positive, engaging and motivating communities with staff that feel a sense of agency to be role models and exemplars of the attitudes and behaviours that we want others to have? For it is these behaviours and attitudes that students will learn and then take to their workplaces.

Consequently, to me, higher education institutions are hubs for human development and knowledge creation. We are the culture leaders that will influence working practices. But it is in these environments where people from a wide variety of backgrounds, specialisms and interests work together, most of them unaware of the impact that they can have on other people and some perhaps without the skills or understanding of what that means. And how are they then to be role models if they are not supported and encouraged to be aware of these skills, of developing them and putting them into practice? Therefore, it is important to also create spaces for staff to develop their own skills and knowledge to build a positive culture where everyone participates and works together with the knowledge that they are making a difference and having a positive impact on those around them. In the next section, I will explore SEI and present some ideas of how to develop it in HEI.

2.3   Is Socio-Emotional Intelligence Important in the Higher Education Environment?

In my previous work (Devis-Rozental 2018), I defined socio-emotional intelligence (SEI) as:

> the ability to integrate feeling, intuition and cognition to acknowledge, understand, manage, apply and express our emotions and social interactions at the right time, for the right purpose in the right context and

with the right person. Its overall aim is to have a positive impact on our environment and to engage ourselves and others to be present, authentic and open; in order to achieve a sense of wellbeing and to build effective relationships in every aspect of our lives. (Devis-Rozental 2018, p. 1)

This definition encompasses a responsibility by an individual to engage with others and to instigate positive change. By doing so, it moves away from more self-centred ideas where SEI is developed only for personal gain, even if accounting for other people, as it could be read as a manipulating tool to get what we want. The purposefully positioned idea of having a positive impact on our environment and others signals a more together approach to those around us, our communities and the wider world. It is no longer admissible to think that we should only care for our wellbeing, especially in a fractured world where we see more and more polarisation, division and a lack of at times compassion for the other, for our environment and for the world. Practising SEI means we care about ourselves and others too. This is important in HEI as we have a responsibility to be role models and to help develop cultures where people work to their strengths and by doing so can make a positive contribution to their communities.

SEI encompasses many areas that can be developed, some we already have and some we may need to work to improve. No one can confidently state that they are socio-emotionally intelligent in every aspect of their life, all the time and with everybody. This is fantastic because it means we can continuously learn, develop and engage in reflection to better our experience and that of others. Below are some of the areas that I consider to be important when talking about SEI.

I have identified these as the main areas of SEI:

2.3.1 Self-awareness

Self-awareness is our ability to understand how we feel and how we behave in different situations. It is also about knowing our strengths and weaknesses and how to develop them or improve them. It can be developed through reflection, by looking back at situations where things have/have not worked well and learning from them. Another way in

which self-awareness can be honed is by practising mindfulness exercises, learning to pay attention to the present moment and being able to identify how we feel and why at a particular moment. Being able to label how we feel is an essential aspect of self-awareness (Devis-Rozental 2018). It is also vital to be able to identify then how we behave in certain situations based on how we feel.

At work, self-awareness can help us identify our strengths and how to develop them and also our weaknesses and how to counteract them. It is also useful as a career development tool and to identify our preferences concerning the work we do and how we do it. With the amount of time most of us spend at work being quite long, it is important to find ways to enjoy what we do. Marcus Buckingham (2019), an internationally renowned speaker, advocates the notion of loving our work. He states that this is possible if we identify the areas of our work that we love and those we don't. According to him, once this has taken place, we should shape our work to fit our strengths, and this, in turn, will help us spend more time doing the things we love.

2.3.2 Motivation

Motivation is the way in which we use our deepest feelings and emotions to get us to where we want. It also encompasses resilience which is the strength to carry on in the face of adversity. Finding that fire that fuels our ideas and gets us going is very important. There are intrinsic (internal) and extrinsic (external) motivations, and these are unique to us depending on our preferences, circumstances and situations. By identifying what motivates us and focusing on these to achieve our goals, we can improve many areas of our lives. Just as with self-awareness, motivation needs a driving force. One way to find out motivation at work is to identify our purpose. Why are we here? Why do we do what we do?

In HEI, the answer could be to change lives, to improve practice, to make a difference and to feel useful. In fact, all of these have been given to me when we deliver workshops on values. Very rarely do I hear anyone saying: to make money, to feel important, to pass the time and to do something. Almost every time I have asked this question, there

is an altruistic reason for doing what we do. This is very telling and encouraging. It means that people, sometimes unconsciously, identify the importance of their role as integral to our values. Even if they have not explicitly identified this and have mentioned that they don't understand how their job is important, once we talk about purpose and how we need each other to be able to deliver excellent practice, people find the link to their purpose and this ignites or reignites their motivation to work in a place that impacts society in part because of them.

2.3.3 Managing Our Emotions

Managing our emotions is the ability to gauge how to react to a given stimulus depending on the circumstances. Once we understand how we feel by developing our self-awareness, we can manage how we respond to different situations. This is important for us as it can help us navigate the world around us without feeling that we are out of control. It is also essential for developing relationships and therefore, even without our intention, for role modelling appropriate behaviours in certain situations. There is a really easy way to work on managing our emotions by using the ABC method where A stands for antecedent, B for behaviour and C for consequence. We can use this as a reflection tool when we are not happy with how we have behaved in a given situation; looking at what happened immediately before the behaviour might give us clues for how and why we acted in a certain way. Once we have established that we can then look at the consequences of that behaviour. If these are not satisfactory, clearly, we need to look in more depth at what happened for that consequence to be.

Clearly, it is not always our behaviour which triggers a specific consequence, and this is the case when we deal with others. We cannot manage or control how other people behave around us, but we can manage how we behave and respond in a way that is true to our values, and that is respectful of ourselves and others. I am often surprised to find that people see what we call negative emotions such as anger, despair and sadness as destructive or bad (Devis-Rozental 2018). However, these are part of the array of emotions which are human, necessary and often a

source of protection in times of danger. In fact, there are evolutionary reasons for these behaviours (Darwin 1899), and managed and expressed in the appropriate way they are outlets of stress and sources of adrenaline, cortisol and other hormones that we need, albeit not all the time and never in very high or low quantities.

2.3.4 Self-esteem

Self-esteem is the way in which we see and value ourselves. Now this to me, is a big one. We live in a world where people are always looking for reassurance. Where in a sense we have "rented out" our capacity to love ourselves to others, and some people measure their worth in likes and only feel worthy if they look a certain way. However, self-esteem is deeper than that, firstly because it should never be dependent on what others think of us. It should be the way in which we understand that we spend all our lives with ourselves and we, therefore, should treat us with love, kindness and compassion being realistic and honest about our strengths and celebrating them. It is as if people have forgotten how important it is to look after our wellbeing. This is not to say that we should be vain, self-absorbed or self-centred, as some people sometimes misinterpret it. In fact, narcissism has no place in SEI as it would not have a positive impact on our environment or others. It is about knowing and understanding that we are inimitable, there is no other person in the world with our same qualities, and this makes us very special and precious while acknowledging that as humans we are imperfect, and that is okay. It is this uniqueness, this personal journey which helps us find our place in the world and to embody and celebrate being us.

Self-esteem at work can help us thrive, and it is linked to our "sense of belongingness, identity, worthiness, respect and competence" (Jan et al. 2015, p. 53). People with high levels of self-esteem make better decisions as they trust their ideas. They can also focus their time developing and supporting others and therefore, may make better leaders. Self-esteem is important to our identity, and it can influence our behaviour (Jan et al. 2015) and this, in turn, has a direct effect on our work environment.

One way to develop our self-esteem is to practise positive self-talk. By this, I mean referring to yourself in positive, kind and caring words—avoiding phrases such as *I'm so stupid*, *I hate myself*, *I am disgusting* and so on. Saying these things to and about ourselves serves no purpose and harms us. Next time you are going to say something about yourself, about what you did or didn't do, pause and think of something positive you can say instead. Try reframing the situation, for example, turning a mistake into an opportunity. The more you practise it, the more it becomes natural, and after a while, you will realise that you are using more positive phrases. Remember not to be too hard on yourself and to treat yourself as you would someone you loved. Moser et al. (2017) found that referring to yourself in the third person helped people regulate and manage their emotions; therefore, this could be an alternative to improve our self-talk.

2.3.5 Social Awareness

Social awareness is the way in which we see and understand the world around us, how we manage relationships and respond to external stimuli; it is how we understand other people's social cues, for example, their body language or facial expressions. Sometimes when we enter a room, we can immediately sense a heavy atmosphere. No one has said anything; still, we feel uncomfortable and uneasy. This is our intuition at play, and that intuition is being informed by thousands of experiences we have probably had over the years as well as cues within the environment that our consciousness is too slow to process, but our brains have picked up; this is based on our evolutionary fight or flight response when, for example, we sense danger (Darwin 1899). As mentioned before, emotions are contagious, and as we spend time in a group, we not only understand the rules of play, but we also pick up some of these cues and behaviours, sometimes adopting them as ours. This is the case with accents, sayings, posture and even way of interpreting things. We do this based on the idea that we are social beings, wired to connect and wanting to belong. It is our ancestral interconnection to others.

At work, being socially aware and therefore, able to identify specific behaviours can help us manage relationships, resolve conflict and overall get along better with others. HEI are places where an array of cultures, religions, races, ideologies, differences, preferences, additional learning needs and attitudes converge every single day and we must master the ability to navigate this environment successfully in order to thrive. Those that are not tolerant, understanding or prejudiced undoubtedly create barriers to people in marginalised groups. They will also have a difficult time adjusting to the requirements of working in a multi-cultural environment. Challenging biases, barriers and unacceptable behaviour and being able to adapt to situations and understand social cues will help us assert our sense of place in our work environments.

2.3.6 Empathy

Linked to social awareness, empathy is our ability to enter the world of another and to sense, understand and react to their feelings. It is about emotional knowing; although we may still feel other people's pain, we must be careful to ensure this doesn't affect us to the point of not being able to help others or to the detriment of our wellbeing; being able to put ourselves in someone else's shoes and see their point of view, even though at times we may not agree. This doesn't mean that we must always agree with others or that we need to put other people's needs above us. In fact, over empathising with others, taking their problems as yours and becoming clouded, overly subjective and biased are not effective ways of demonstrating empathy. In HEI, we will sometimes have to deal with complex situations. In an ever-changing arena where people are, at least in our Eurocentric culture, able to be more open about their identity, their mental health or their gender, it is important to be inclusive, kind, respectful, demonstrating a genuine caring attitude as well as compassion always putting the person at the centre of what we do.

This should not be confused with emotional labour and burnout (the process of managing our inner world and how we express our feelings and emotions to satisfy our job obligations), something that should never even come into question within our job, when in fact we must

be authentic, open and genuine. A study by Wagaman et al. (2015) found that some components of empathy such as affective response, self–other awareness, perspective-taking and emotion regulation may prevent burnout while increasing satisfaction at work. Undoubtedly, working with others can be emotional and sometimes difficult; this is why it is important to develop self-preservation strategies while practising empathy.

2.4 Self-assessment SEI Questionnaire

I developed this questionnaire to help us reflect on the main areas of SEI. It is meant to be used as a guide to help us advance our self-awareness and identify areas where we can continue developing our SEI. It isn't a psychometric test and responses will vary depending on when we do the test and how we are feeling about ourselves, and this is completely normal.

Please complete this questionnaire by scoring each statement from 1 (this is not me at all) to 5 (this is so much like me) (Table 2.1).

Once you have finished the test, you will be given instructions on how to evaluate your responses.

Now put your score (1–5) next to the corresponding question and then add up each column (Table 2.2).

You can evaluate your score in the following way (Table 2.3):

Now record each area according to your answers and identify possible ways to continue developing it (Table 2.4).

I hope this questionnaire help you reflect on your SEI and how you can manage and shape how you react. This will help you develop more meaningful relationships which can be beneficial when we work in teams.

At a HEI, we often have to work with others, and this can sometimes be difficult, especially if we don't understand what others do or how their role supports ours. Working collaboratively is one of the ways in which we can further humanise our experience. Doing so will help us develop a sense of belonging as we share our strengths and uniqueness complementing those of others. Ideally, teams should be made up of people with different strengths bringing something different to the team's dynamics.

Table 2.1 Socio-emotional intelligence questionnaire

SEI Questionnaire	Points
Question	1–5
1. I know when I am happy	
2. I like listening to what others have to say	
3. I can always get motivated even when I have to do difficult tasks	
4. I know when I am stressed	
5. I never interrupt people when they are talking	
6. I always meet my deadlines	
7. I make friends easily	
8. I usually like the way I look	
9. I don't worry too much about things	
10. I always know how someone is feeling	
11. I always feel good about myself	
12. I never leave things until the last minute	
13. I know when I get angry	
14. I can change my mood easily	
15. When others are sad I feel sad too	
16. I know when I feel emotional	
17. I know when someone isn't happy	
18. I can put bad situations into perspective quite easily	
19. I get along with most people	
20. It doesn't bother me when someone criticizes me	
21. I don't like wasting time	
22. I don't usually lose my temper	
23. I don't procrastinate	
24. I like spending time with people	
25. I often make my own decisions	
26. I can see things from another person's point of view	
27. I can list my strengths quite easily	
28. I know what makes me happy	
29. I enjoy working in teams	
30. I don't get annoyed by difficult people	

Table 2.2 Adding your results

Self-awareness	Motivation	Managing your emotions	Self-esteem	Social awareness	Empathy
Q. 1	Q. 3	Q. 9	Q. 8	Q. 5	Q. 2
Q. 4	Q. 6	Q. 14	Q. 11	Q. 7	Q. 10
Q. 13	Q. 12	Q. 18	Q. 20	Q. 19	Q. 15
Q. 16	Q. 21	Q. 22	Q. 25	Q. 24	Q. 17
Q. 28	Q. 23	Q. 30	Q. 27	Q. 29	Q. 26
total	total	total	total	total	total

Table 2.3 Evaluation of your results

5–12 points	This area requires some attention as a developmental need
13–18 points	Continue building this area
19–25 points	This area is one of your strengths

Table 2.4 Personal development of SEI

Area	Needs attention	Continue developing	Strength	Write 3 ideas or strategies that you will do to continue developing these areas?
Self-awareness				
Motivation				
Managing emotions				
Self-Esteem				
Social awareness				
Empathy				

It is not surprising, given the time we spend at work, that developing meaningful relationships in the workplace is also good for our wellbeing.

2.5 Challenging the Them and Us Culture: We Are All in This Together

In my previous research on socio-emotional intelligence, I found that the most important aspect for students to develop their socio-emotional intelligence while in higher education was to have a passionate academic who role-modelled positive behaviours, and that developed meaningful relationships with students. I would argue that this is also the case for other members of the university community who interact with students, even if these are short and sporadic, basically all staff.

Indeed, most of the roles that academics must fulfil could not be adequately done without the support of non-academic staff (Dobson and Conway 2003). However, non-members of academia are sometimes "treated with antipathy by many academics" (Dobson and Conway 2003,

p. 123). This lack of empathy is not only unacceptable but also unprofessional and should be eradicated in our HEI environments. Behaviours such as these are unhealthy and can lead to toxic cultures where stress is prevalent.

Some professional staff report that they feel invisible (Dobson and Conway 2003). This was evident to me recently, as I took part of in an Erasmus-funded international week, where we had a knowledge exchange under the theme of service excellence with over 50 university staff from various universities in Europe. I was the only academic attending this event, which I found peculiar but very interesting at the same time. During the week, everyone shared their practice in different activities, and I learned a great deal about how non-academic staff feel in, what seemed to me, most universities involved in this international week.

One of the events required us to explain what we did and how service excellence was delivered in our universities. When it was our turn, we talked about service excellence being for everyone at university and about the fact that we were developing a cultural framework where academic and non-academic staff feel like peer scholars and critical friends engaging in knowledge exchange to meet our outcomes. Most participants were surprised, and as we started hearing their experiences, we noticed that in their universities, there was still this hierarchal idea of the academic being served by the non-academic staff. In fact, they candidly told us stories of how they were made to feel inferior and that their role was not important or in any way contributing to the university.

According to Dobson and Conway (2003) in modern universities, it is time to recognise and accept that all scholars within the university have an interdependent role which must be seen of equal importance if universities are to thrive. I think it is time to purposefully change the state of play and develop new cultures where everyone in the university community feels supported, engaged and able to thrive, by sharing their expertise and understanding the vital job they do to help our institutions meet the many demands of the twenty-first century. This type of practice would ensure people are working in healthy cultures where they feel valued and that they matter. This would have a positive impact on people's wellbeing and the way they feel about their job.

According to Corcoran and Duane (2017, p. 229), "when satisfactory opportunities are provided and motivational issues are addressed, divides can be bridged, and faculty and staff will work together". Organisation culture can be a barrier to staff's knowledge exchange, and this is often aggravated by this "them and us" divide (Corcoran and Duane 2017). It is therefore important to take into account when developing this culture, the importance of collaboration and sharing knowledge and this, in turn, may "break down social divides and eliminate silos" (Corcoran and Duane 2017, p. 229) and therefore allow people to work much more effectively and positively.

Beckmann (2018) argues that:

> Professional recognition opportunities that do not differentiate between academics and professional staff have the capacity to engage and support the "blended professional" who contribute to teaching and learning in higher education

I would suggest that this is the case for all staff working in HE. Professional recognition, of course in their own fields, but with an understanding and signalling from our leaders that there is no more or less importance in the various roles within the university environment. There are initiatives already present in many universities, highlighting the importance of celebrating all staff, and this is a great starting point. I can categorically say that as an academic, I could not do my job properly without the support from everyone in our institution. Let me illustrate this: as an academic, we usually are very focused on our research in order to inform our teaching and our practice and to deliver outputs. As teachers, we are focused on ensuring that our units are well planned and delivered, and we aim to ensure that our students learn, thrive and flourish. At least, I am hoping most of us do.

Once we are in the lecture theatre, we might not usually pay attention to the facilities or technology, unless something is wrong, and we typically don't dwell on what it took for those students to get there in front of us, at least not at that particular moment. I don't mean they personally, as we will probably want to ensure their wellbeing and therefore do care about them, I mean more from the point of view of how many teams

and individuals did it take for these students to be sitting there in front of us engaging with our work.

There was certainly a marketing team dedicated to making our university look the best possible so that students would be interested. Then, there are the admission teams ready to answer any questions; those colleagues who came to open days and shared their enthusiasm for our university, and once students had chosen us a troop of people in academic quality, room keeping, estates, accreditations and many other professionals ensuring our university is well kept, that we have everything we need and that students feel comfortable and able to learn. Then, there are those who work with students needing some support and ensuring all the various activities students may want to engage with are exciting and well prepared and those keeping our students feel safe. So there seems to be a battalion of people behind each and every one of those students arriving ready for our lecture.

And then there's me, the academic. For me to be able to stand (well, in my case sit, as I am a wheelchair user) there in front of these students, I have received support and expert advice from our research development team, the technologists who have shown me how to make my lecture interactive, the colleague who served me a coffee with a smile and made me feel part of the university, the wellbeing team who helped me with the accessibility needs I had to be able to teach in my wheelchair or the programme leader that trusted me to share my knowledge, without questioning my sometimes strange methods. Without each and every one of these peer scholars, I would not be able to be doing what I do, what I love, what makes me get up every morning excited and ready to face whatever comes.

What makes a university a thriving place where people flourish is the people in it. In my quest to humanise education, I am determined to break the traditional them and us culture—that old fashion and frankly useless idea that academics are more important than professional staff and that professional staff are there to "serve" academics. We are all peer scholars in this learning journey, each of us with our expertise and dependent on each other to ensure we deliver an excellent experience and we inspire learning by developing and sharing research that is meaningful to all.

It is only when we truly understand and apply this that we will be able to develop communities where people who feel valued and respected do a job they love because they know of the positive impact it has on the overall experience. There is a famous story about John F. Kennedy when he visited NASA space centre in Huston in 1962 and saw a cleaner carrying a broom. Kennedy went over to him and asked him what he was doing. The cleaner responded, "Mr President, I'm helping put a man on the moon". This idea and feeling that we are part of something bigger, that our job is vital as it contributes to our overall aims and that our sense of purpose is validated as we matter to the organisation, to our leaders and our teams are much more than satisfactory; it can improve our well-being as we develop a sense of purpose and understand that together we are better.

There are many companies that work to these type of values, Google and Disney, for example, both deeply care for developing this sense of togetherness and have been successful in creating a working environment which is positive and stimulating as well as meaningful to individuals. In higher education, the reality is that it is impossible to offer a sense of collectiveness to the many roles that people have. Doing so would be dehumanising as people would be homogenised and it would "not adequately capture their dynamism as a group, or the new knowledges, relationships and legitimacies that are being constructed in their institutions" (Whitchurch 2008, p. 10). But that doesn't mean that we can't develop a sense of togetherness. Forming teams of multidisciplinary colleagues is a great opportunity to challenge the norm and develop new and improved cultures and communities where this uniqueness is what makes our institutions stronger. Indeed, being able to demonstrate and highlight this diversity is a strength. It is only by being able to hone in on our own strengths and feeling able to develop them and use them, that we can gain a sense of place, a sense of belonging where we feel valued and respected. And this, in turn, will foster a sense of community where people will feel no longer passive, neglected and invisible but in a sense leader, advocate and supported of our university culture.

This could also affect other work cultures outside of universities. As students learn from example and can see these communities working and

collaborating with respect and professionalism, students, once in employment, may feel validated to challenge those toxic cultures that are not conducive to working together and learning from each other. If students feel and experience a culture that thrives on knowledge exchange, cross-collaboration and engagement, they will want to practise that; therefore, it is our responsibility to role model the type of culture and practices that we want to see in our societies. We can and should be the catalyst to change, leading the way to developing working cultures based on humanised principles of respect that can only exist if people are working to their strengths if they feel valued and if they are practising with their head (their own knowledge and experience), hand (how they behave, practise and treat others) and heart (their emotions, social bonds and relationships) (Devis-Rozental 2018). It is only then when we will see communities and cultures that work not to their outcomes but to their purpose.

2.6   Concluding Thoughts

Within this chapter, I wanted to explore socio-emotional intelligence within the context of HEI. To do that, it was essential to review the purpose of universities in the twenty-first century, to then be able to assert why SEI is important not only for ourselves but for others too. Being and becoming more socio-emotionally intelligent is useful for our personal development, but also to be able to tap into our strengths to develop ourselves professionally and to find love in what we do, all areas that positively impact on our wellbeing. Additionally, these three areas will help us have a more humanised experience as we practise with an embodied relational understanding. SEI can help us work better with others as we see them with empathy and admiration as peer scholars, colleagues that have much to offer and who with we have meaningful relationships. This, in turn, will influence our working cultures and those of the people that come to our HEI. By developing research, teaching and working spaces that are humanised, we will set the tone as culture leaders taking our knowledge and practice to higher levels of meaning

and more profound impact which enriches communities creating a ripple effect to a better world.

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3

Putting Positivity and Relational Energy to Work in Higher Education

Susanne Clarke

3.1 My Journey—An Introduction

When I was first introduced to strength-based approaches for leaders and teams, these approaches intuitively made sense, and they were to me the missing piece, enabling me to continue on a different path (sense-making), as a leader, as a colleague and as a human being. Since then, I have extensively studied and implemented strength-based approaches in my practice. During this journey, I have also had the privilege to meet and learn from some of the leading experts in this field. In this chapter, I will briefly outline the path taken by these scholars and discuss the impact of strengths, relational energy and positivity within leadership, teams and organisations. I will also put forward my plea to all of us privileged to work in higher education (HE) to role model and embrace the life-enhancing ethos of humanisation (Devis-Rozental 2018). This will ensure we achieve our 'academic mission' to inspire students and

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create and share knowledge externally (Zomer and Benneworth 2011): From this, HE will play a leading role in building a future society based on strength and virtuosity. When virtuosity is recognised, celebrated and encouraged, our organisations, campuses and communities will be kinder, more caring, forgiving, energised and productive (Cameron et al. 2003).

Strength- or asset-based approaches, such as appreciative inquiry and positive organisational scholarship, are a way of thinking that starts by identifying and building on what already works, rather than the more traditional approaches used within organisations that focus on identifying problems or deficits. Some explain this as positive and negative deviance; Cameron et al. (2003) suggest we think of deviance as on a continuum, with 'normal' in the middle, 'negative deviance' to the left and 'positive deviance' on the right. Within organisations, including health care and education, we tend to spend a good deal of time thinking about the negative side of the deviance continuum. We focus most of our time and effort on illness rather than wellness, on what has gone wrong in an organisation, rather than what works well in that organisation.

Virtuosity and abundance in the context of the organisation is a phrase also put forward by Cameron et al. (2003), to illustrate the best of the human condition. The virtues exemplify 'human goodness' and include pro-social behaviours, such as kindness, fairness, gratitude and care. Abundance in this context refers to striving for excellence through learning from what is positively deviant. All these traits are perfectly aligned with the humanising framework.

3.2   My Journey—A Case for Humanising HE

For me, the understanding of humanisation has been **my** journey, and indeed, what makes us innately human is that we carry a view of living life from the inside (Todres et al. 2009, p. 69), based on our unique experiences and character. I say this to explain what to me now sounds like common sense—focusing on strength, virtuousness and positivity, contributing towards enhancing life and humanising the organisations. Yet, I did not instinctively have this sense of 'knowing'. Early in my

career in finance, the study of the technical was all-important to gain professional qualifications, and demonstrating 'toughness' was a route to career advancement; my role models tended to be those who excelled in technical prowess and ruthlessness towards getting the best deal. I am admittedly, slightly guilty here of over-generalising the nature of working in finance in the 1980 and 1990s; however, while I did experience pockets of kindness and support, many aspects of the practice were typical of those we know to be dehumanising, particularly, objectification and reductionism. I can indeed see parallels to the healthcare sector, which motivated Todres and his team to develop the humanising framework. Through their work in developing the framework, Todres et al. drew attention to dehumanising behaviours such as objectification—the separation of ourselves from others, for example, within a clinical environment—focusing on the patient as a series of symptoms, rather than considering the impact the illness or prognosis has on the person—the patient (Todres et al. 2009, p. 70, for a full explanation of the framework see Chapter 1).

Similarly, we feel dehumanised when others fail to see us and see only our role. This reduction of the whole person to a role is played out within HE every day—when we complain about individual departments and fail to appreciate the obstacles they face, nor take the time to get to know the people behind the role. We also see approaches within HE that fail to treat students in a personalised way and objectify them as a homogeneous group. This matters equally to overall organisational performance, as we experience increasing market forces that compel the sector to become more 'business-like'; it is essential we take steps to retain and build positive and personalised relationships within our HE communities.

Devis-Rozental (2018) has rightly called for the humanisation of HE and presents a compelling case for doing so, through raising awareness of the role of socio-emotional intelligence in HE Scholars. Devis-Rozental (2018), in using a 'tourist' metaphor to describe the student experience of being a stranger in an unknown land (this equally applies to staff), enables us to easily put ourselves in the shoes of others. In doing so, we better understand how being a stranger in an unknown land feels when that land is populated by locals who are friendly, kind, caring, supportive

and positive. A far different land would be experienced if the opposite were true—the stranger was made to feel like another 'cog in the wheel', objectified, with no one offering support and care.

3.2.1 Virtuosity and Strengths

Individuals who are motivated to support others and recognise the virtue in taking the time to understand, nurture and develop strengths in others are likely to be the individuals in an organisation who uplift and boost others (Cameron 2010). These traits are consistent with the aims of positive psychology, in supporting people to live fulfilling lives. Not only do we as individuals feel boosted when we are given the opportunity to discuss and make use of our strengths (Buckingham and Clifton 2001), we are more motivated and engaged in our work. Understanding of what brings joy, purpose and fulfilment to 'others' engenders not only a sense of togetherness, of being part of a community—it brings with it an innate positivity and energy for life. My favourite way to think about this is to consider the 'heliotropic effect', that is the tendency for all living systems to lean towards a positive source of energy—much like the houseplant you place in a sunny window, the plant will turn towards the positive light of the sun and away from the dark (Cooperrider in Cameron and Lavine 2006).

We need only to take a moment of reflection to think about how this aligns with our own experiences. How do you feel after a meeting with your line manager, or a coffee chat with your favourite colleague? I can recall many such interactions that would leave me feeling uplifted, energised, appreciated and motivated to do a great job—and I can also remember interactions at work that would have the opposite effect—interactions that have left me confused, depleted and more ready to swap negative stories over the water cooler, than to feel energised and motivated to take on the world. It seems so obvious, right? If we build positive relationships and embed humanising practices, our workforce will be happier, motivated to work harder, we will unleash their creativity, their ability to solve problems, and importantly, these approaches support our wellbeing.

3.3 What Gets in the Way?

When we consider what gets in the way of attending to asset and positive approaches, it would appear as El-Meligi (2005) suggests that have come to a somewhat muddled view of management practice and leadership. We have on the one hand management gurus such as Peter Drucker (2007, p. 79) suggesting that "the task of organisational leadership is to create an alignment of strengths in ways that make a system's weaknesses irrelevant". On the other hand, what we see happening in practice suggests we fix what is wrong and let strengths take care of themselves (Cooperrider and Whitney 2005). This, in turn, perpetuates our reluctance to move away from the cycle of 'deficit thinking' (Whitney 1998).

A detailed review of the historical context that surrounds management theory is outside the scope of this chapter. If, however, we do a quick look back to the early part of the previous century, and the theories that evolved to support manufacturing and industry, we can still see the legacy of scientific management theories. These theories were developed with a key objective of maximising economic efficiency, at a time when the workforce was often dehumanised and considered to be an extension of the production line. During the 1930s, the evolution of the human relations movement and its approach to workplace productivity started to explore the link between productivity and employee satisfaction, still very much concerned of course with manufacturing. In 1967, Peter Drucker first began to talk about the alignment of strengths and the knowledge economy, understanding that theories and routines found within manufacturing do not easily translate to the knowledge economy, where agility, creativity and collaboration are the key drivers of success. If we then add to this the 'symbiotic communities', that characterise HEIs (Allen 2003), and the multiple drivers for change the HE sector faces, it is not surprising that traditional frameworks for leadership and management do not readily suit the needs of most HEIs (Farquharson et al. 2018). Neither do they necessarily suit the society we wish to build for the future, which gives the sector the 'double whammy', of needing both to find ways to better manage itself and better ways to develop leaders and practitioners of the future. There is a need to address the noticeable gap

in our knowledge of the drivers of higher team performance (Wang et al. 2004). How we best motivate and nurture the workforce is undoubtedly complex, and as Ramdas and Patrick (2018) comment, leadership is now the most researched and yet least understood term. This all then suggests a vacuum and clear role for HE to support scholarship within the arena of the positive organisation.

3.4   Leadership

From the start of this new millennium, there has been a steep rise in the number of peer-reviewed 'top-tier' literature published on emerging theories of the traits of successful leadership (Dinh et al. 2014). There are contrasting views as to how helpful this focus on traits is, particularly, somewhat subjective traits such as charisma. Yukl (1999) cautioned against overemphasising specific leadership traits in so far as they draw our attention to the dyadic relationship between leader and follower, at the expense of advancing our knowledge more broadly across the organisation. In adapting the humanising framework for HE, leadership moves away from being 'above them' specific leadership traits that may or may not be deemed to be charismatic become mute; the role of the leader is to become 'part of them'. In building a humanised organisation, we are all part of a connected human system, where people matter, not just in words but in deeds. Central to this are collaboration, networks and positive relationships. Positive relationships in the workplace are fuelled by relational energy—a driver of high team performance (Quinn et al. 2012).

3.5   Relational Energy

Relational energy—the energy we feel when we interact with people who uplift us, motivate us to work harder through the sheer joy and happiness they project. Other sources of relational energy are the excitement you feel from being with others who love what they do, the positive habits they exhibit, and from being with someone who inspires you by

their ability to ignite passion in a topic and those that seek and propose new ideas. The central tenant of strength-based approaches is the focus on abundance, virtuosity and excellence—all sources of positive energy. This approach—while it does not replace a problem-solving approach—seeks to close the gap between acceptable performance and extraordinary performance (Cameron and Lavine 2006).

The construct of relational energy and its impact in the workplace is a relatively new area of study. However, many of the underpinning assumptions have been brought forward from previous works within fields such as neuroscience and psychology, including Barbara Fredrickson's (2001) seminal works, on her 'broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions'. Her work is particularly vital in drawing attention to the impact of negative emotions. When experiencing negative emotions, the mind focuses on the threat and limits our effectiveness, we become closed-minded and unfocused, decision making becomes difficult, and our ability to solve problems reduces, her beautiful use of imagery explains this perfectly:

> Just as water lilies retract when sunlight fades, so do our minds when positivity fades. (Fredrickson 2009, p. 55)

It is then not surprising that we now see a growing body of evidence demonstrating that positivity within an organisational context is a predictor of performance and an untapped resource. The positive energy emanating from one person can have a direct and positive impact on the motivation of others at work (The Oxford Review). Several studies (Cameron and Lavine 2006; Owens et al. 2016) have found that positive energy significantly increases our:

- Resourcefulness;
- Resilience;
- Creativity;
- Openness;
- Productivity;
- Capacity to learn;
- Levels of engagement.

Baker et al. (2003) found that positive energisers not only enhance the work of others, they noted that high performing firms employed three times as many positive energisers than low performing firms. As an emergent field, scholars agree that more studies are needed mainly to discover the antecedents of positivity and other factors that come into play. That aside, the benefits from encouraging and amplifying positive energies are genuinely significant. So who are these positive energisers? If you look to people who display many of the characteristics listed below, you will find them:

- Embrace Change;
- Enthusiastic;
- Positive;
- Problem solvers;
- Solution-focused;
- Energetic;
- Creative and have lots of ideas.

Tip: To confirm your suspicions that you have team members and colleagues who are positive energisers, who uplift, attract and boost others—go and talk to them and see how you feel afterwards.

I would like at this point to address concerns that positivity is related to extroversion and social skill, and that somehow positivity and positive energy are something that only the confident and extrovert posses. This is not the case; positive energisers are those who have a sense of purpose and contentment and take the time to understand and listen to others (Knowles 2017). Positive relational energy does not have to be noisily spread by those who enjoy being the life and soul of the party. Equally, it is ok not always to be ok, be curious about your emotions and know when to ask for support; these are all facets of what make us human (Devis-Rozental 2018).

Within HE, we do undoubtedly attend to the health and wellbeing of our workforce, with a variety of mechanisms, such as flexible working, assistance programmes and support for improving both physical and mental health. These actions are commendable and work to address maintaining energy at an individual level, addressing both physical and

psychological energy (Owens et al. 2016). When other essential forms of energy such as physical and psychological energy are depleted, we experience at worst burn-out or exhaustion and at best disengagement and underperformance. Not so with relational energy, the more abundant this is, the better we and others feel (Cameron 2010).

3.6   Growing Towards the Sun—An Example

Example

Assume you are asked to review satisfaction surveys completed by students and you note that some academic programmes or courses have achieved below-average scores, while other programmes consistently achieve scores of close to 100%. Using traditional problem-solving approaches, you would seek to identify the key problems causing the low scores, perhaps try to establish the root-cause and generate a range of solutions to address the 'problem'. Working with the programme team (this traditional approach inherently nudges us towards objectifying the team, as a 'series of problems'), you would implement the solution and in due course follow up to ensure that matters have improved. The underlying assumption: 'Problems to be solved'—if we find the problems we can 'fix them'. Scores may in time improve and performance may reach satisfactory levels; the programme team, however, may feel overburdened dealing with the negativity of being a 'problem team' and suffer depletion in both psychological and physical energy. It is likely that under these circumstances, performance will not go above ordinary levels to reach the extraordinary.

Conversely, using a strength-based or abundance approach, you would draw your attention towards the high scoring programmes or courses, celebrate and learn what factors have driven these extraordinary results. You are likely to find many 'positive energisers' within these teams, people who are driven by virtuosity and helping others grow. They will most likely be uplifted by helping others, to mentor and support lower scoring teams to not only improve but go onto replicate what they have learned from these colleagues who achieve these extraordinary results. The underlying assumption: 'Potential to be discovered'—we can share

> with others and amplify the web of strengths across other teams. The high performing teams will grow stronger and develop yet more positive relationships with others.

The above illustrates the scenario of actions we have taken at Bournemouth University. We organised 'enabling excellence forums' based on strength-based approaches to learning and supporting each other. We made it very clear when inviting team members from high performing teams that it was a celebration, and we were creating a 'positive space'. Participants felt safe to challenge assumptions, and correct and rewrite organisational dialogue, such as only academics with strong research profiles were ever promoted as teaching was less valued (absolutely, not correct, as there were many examples that disproved this assumption, yet for some the myth persisted). The group encouraged each other to seek out opportunities for career progression and to take risks in their practice. Importantly, the participants were uplifted and began to truly recognise their value. As a basis for the discussion during the forums, we took the five key core original principles of appreciative inquiry:

- **The constructionist principle**—that reality as we know it is partly dependent on our perceptions and personal experiences.
- **The simultaneity principle**—change begins the moment we ask questions.
- **The poetic principle**—creating our world can drive endless learning.
- **The anticipatory principle**—that hopeful anticipation creates positive action and transformation. And lastly,
- **The positive principle**—that positive questions lead to optimistic momentum and amplification.

More recently added principles include themes of free choice, wholeness and the transforming power of narrative (AI Commons in. Farquharson et al. 2018).

Our mantra for these sessions was 'words make worlds'—the more positively we frame the future, the more likely we are to achieve our goals and the 'questions we ask are fateful' (Cooperrider and Whitney 2005). Instead of using phrases, such as, 'I was given the role of programme lead because no one else wants it', or it is a poisoned chalice', we amplified the positive. Encouraged by this the group talked about their role and its value to the organisation and its value to them, there was a noticeable change, confidence and energy increased. This feedback given to us by one of the programme leaders involved in our forum really does sum up the power of positivity and interactions that energise.

> My experiences on different courses at different levels in different institutions helps me empathise with the challenges that others face. I do believe that the Enabling Excellence Forum serves a different purpose [to more formal procedure-based training]. I believe the Forum has the capacity to focus on the 'what-about-ism' that cannot be addressed in a structured training programme. While the majority of the role can be explained procedurally, the Forum allows for specificity, nuance and complexity, which is where I believe the 'excellence' resides. Furthermore, I believe that the Forum's focus on positivity is fundamental. As Goleman (1996, p. 87) argues, "having hope means one will not give into overwhelming anxiety". In my opinion, hope and positivity is unfashionable in HE. I think optimism indicates a shallow depth of thought, as if critical thinking should naturally result in pessimism. This manifests in a tendency to complain. Personally, I find our workplace to be one of the most privileged in society and I am grateful that I spend significant time engaging with a topic that I love. (Dr James Fair, Principal Academic in Film)

The outcome from this example and other work we have undertaken at Bournemouth University (Devis-Rozental 2018; Farquharson et al. 2018; Clarke et al. 2018) has convinced me that focusing on strengths, positivity, relational energy and virtuosity is extremely effective in building trust and collaboration. Best practice is being shared across teams, with noticeably increased confidence to try out new ideas. Positive energy is shared and visibly enthuses others. While more research is needed to evaluate the impact in terms of performance, there is no

doubt that this is proving highly effective in building networks and collaborations.

3.7   Conclusion—Our Call to Action

HEIs have an opportunity to become a force for good, heeding the call to action from Julia Unwin (2020) in her recent independent inquiry for Civil Society Futures, for universities to do more to take their rightful place as 'anchors of society'. The sector needs to not only challenge the status quo in terms of traditional management practices within but also to embrace, create and share knowledge that demonstrates the benefits of virtuous practices. This presents us with an alternative perspective for leadership in promoting the benefits of relational energy and positivity, within a framework of humanisation, we have what is needed to enable (HEIs), to embrace the challenges and opportunities of the current time.

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4

Positive Education as a Tool to Humanise Higher Education

Camila Devis-Rozental and Lois Farquharson

4.1 Introduction

The International Positive Education Network sees positive education as a double helix with intertwined strands of equal importance—academics and character or wellbeing. White and Murray (2015) argue that positive education is an umbrella term to describe research-evidenced interventions from the positive psychology stance, which have an impact on student wellbeing (White and Murray 2015).

In this chapter, we explore the main principles of positive education and its interrelated nature to humanising higher education. We will begin by explaining what positive education is, and we will then provide relevant examples of positive education around the world. Following this, we will make a case for developing a positive education approach to support

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higher education students to flourish and staff to improve their well-being. This, we argue, will place higher education institutions as culture leaders in a place to further enrich working cultures and society.

Slemp (2017) confirms that positive education has gained momentum in school environments in Australia and abroad to develop positive well-being and mitigate mental health problems during adolescence. Positive education aims to foster character strengths (individual positive traits that are widely valued), resilience (the ability to healthily respond to adversity), wellbeing and abilities in the educational setting, providing the opportunity for individuals to flourish. This has led to large-scale initiation of programmes, but the specific limitations of positive education are yet to be universally defined, and many complementary and intersecting approaches already exist. Positive education broadly includes psychosocial skills, including managing emotions, goal setting and building resilience, in addition to broader concepts such as meaning, purpose and physical health.

Initially highlighted by Seligman et al. (2009) in reference to early positive education programmes, an implementation framework was developed comprised of four interconnecting cyclical processes: Learn it, Live it, Teach it and Embed it. A narration of anecdotal evidence was categorised into Teaching, Embedding and Living. Teaching referred to the explicit positive education classes scheduled as a component of the school curriculum, in which students learnt elements of positive psychology, including resilience, character strengths, positive emotions and relationships, and active and constructive responding.

Embedding referred to the active inclusion of positive education concepts in the wider school community, such as in other academic subjects, in sporting activities and through pastoral care. Living referred to the active enabling of positive education in the day-to-day life of students, building upon the explicit lessons and elements of positive education embedded throughout the school.

According to White and Kern (2018, p. 11), positive education has the potential of having an impact on the way students understand themselves and their environment and indeed how they engage; this may be especially important for those that may be at risk. The research conducted in these areas has been mainly focused on schools rather than higher

education universities. Therefore, within this chapter, we will explore positive education as an essential aspect to develop within a university environment.

4.2   Positive Education in Higher Education

According to Hughes et al. (2018, p. 42), "universities should also seek to develop open cultures in which the wellbeing of the whole university community can be positively addressed". The implication for students would be the ability to apply this new-found knowledge to every aspect of their lives, thus enriching their experiences. For academics, it would be about realising that if students are self-aware and develop areas of their socio-emotional intelligence during their time at university, they will settle better, perform better and achieve more (Devis-Rozental 2018). This is one of the main principles of positive education, which, according to Seligman et al. (2009, p. 293), is "education for both traditional skills and for happiness".

In recent years, there has been a rise in students' mental health issues in developed countries. This is certainly the case in our university, where student services have had to adapt to this rising demand by extending their support. It is, therefore, essential to continue to understand how best to support students. The World Health Organization (2017) indicates that by the age of 25, one in four young people will have experienced at least one occurrence of severe mental illness. Consequently, programmes that specifically target social and emotional skills can help young people understand and manage their emotions, develop positive relationships with others and perform better academically, and this will have a positive effect on students' overall wellbeing (Durlak et al. 2011). Clearly, the role of higher education in supporting students to improve their wellbeing is important, as is the notion that the university experience influences students' holistic development (Quinlan 2011).

In the EU, a recent report (Cefai et al. 2018) highlights that policymakers and educators across the world are increasingly coalescing around social and emotional education (SEE). SEE is intended for children to develop competences in both self-awareness and self-management, and

to raise social awareness and improve the quality of their relationships. These competencies combine to enhance their ability to:

- understand themselves and others,
- express and regulate their emotions,
- develop healthy and caring relationships,
- empathise and collaborate with others,
- resolve conflict constructively,
- enable them to make good, responsible and ethical decisions and
- overcome difficulties in social and academic tasks.

SEE is something that can be offered by schools to all children, including those affected by the additional challenges arising from various forms of disadvantage. There is mounting evidence in this report that education that considers socio-emotional intelligence attributes is also related to positive academic attitudes and higher academic achievement, to increased prosocial behaviour and to a decrease in anti-social behaviour, anxiety, depression and suicide. More broadly, it contributes to harmonious relationships, social cohesion and inclusion in communities, to positive attitudes towards individual and cultural diversity, and equity and social justice. In the light of this, the report makes recommendations, based on international research, EU policy and current practices in member states, for the integration of SEE as a core component of curricula across the EU and beyond.

There are only two universities in the world that at present hold the title of positive education universities based on their approach to education and wellbeing. TecMilenio University in Mexico and the University of Buckingham in the UK have embedded positive psychology strategies to all areas of their provision. This encompasses a targeted approach to areas such as:

- The transition from school to university,
- The support given to students,
- The training provided to all staff,

- The importance of developing a culture where every stakeholder knows and understand the positive psychology PERMA-based principles and can apply strategies effectively (Devis-Rozental 2018) fostering a culture where students can develop their socio-emotional skills throughout the whole student experience, from pre-enrolment to successful completion and beyond.

These and other similar initiatives that account for social learning, peer support, self-awareness and a holistic approach, integrating mind and heart (Quinlan 2011), or what Todres and Galvin (2008) called practising with an embodied relational understanding where head (our cognition and ideas), hand (how we behave) and heart (our emotions and social understanding) all have equal importance. Practising in this way has a positive effect on the students and staff experience and their wellbeing (Devis-Rozental 2018).

4.3   A Positive Education Approach in Higher Education Can Aid Students' Success

Studies concluded that factors predicting university students' academic success and outcomes are quite complex in the sense that, although a single factor may not significantly affect the students' development, the relationship among different factors would do so (e.g. Allen et al. 2008; Freund and Baltes 2002; Lee and Robbins 2000; Vinson et al. 2010). In this regard, the literature confirms that behavioural, emotional and cognitive academic factors affect a student's learning and growth in terms of personal, social and emotional development and that such factors may be considered as predictors (e.g. Elias et al. 2010; Jdaitawi 2015; Zepke and Leach 2010).

With regard to the predictor factors of student success, the role of social connectedness, social engagement, achievement motivation and socioemotional learning as success predictors, many (Duru 2008; Elias et al. 2010; Jdaitawi 2015) have noted that students who are emotionally connected to peers and instructors and who value learning and high academic performance often adopt prosocial values (Allen et al. 2008;

Henderson-King and Smith 2006). Despite the importance of the above studies and their contributions, there is still a lack of research dedicated to student success in terms of the effects of social connectedness, achievement motivation and emotional-social learning on the life of youth in the world (Duru 2008; Elias et al. 2010; Jdaitawi 2015). Studies have highlighted some of the determining factors of students' adjustment to university and urged future studies to focus on students (e.g. Twenge et al. 2002).

University adjustment and integration are core aspects of several theoretical models dedicated to student development, persistence and withdrawal (Tinto 1993). Adjustment of students to the university settings has always been reported to be rife with challenges for the majority of students (Tinto 1993). Researchers categorised and identified various types of adjustments, namely academic, social and emotional-personal adjustment (Baker and Syrik 1999; Tinto 1993). Without support, these types of adjustments could make students feel dehumanised, as they are not treated as individuals with their own uniqueness and are therefore objectified and homogenised (Devis-Rozental 2018). Furthermore, this can cause isolation as students may not feel that they belong and will not settle at university and in some cases, leave.

In a research project conducted by Devis-Rozental (2018) to gauge how to support students to develop their socio-emotional intelligence, one of the participants stated that it would be a "tragedy to leave a course just because they (students) didn't know that support was out there". This statement highlights the importance of ensuring that students have the right support to settle and engage. This could help them develop a sense of connectedness, which is referred to as the individual's relationship with society, which in this case would be their university environment and is significant for psychological adjustment (Zachariah 1994). Social connectedness is also described as a type of relational scheme, signifying patterns of interpersonal relationships (Lee and Robbins 1998). This is characterised as an enduring and ubiquitous self-sense in world relationships (Lee and Robbins 2000), and we would argue, essential to succeed at university.

Clearly, social connectedness levels are linked to subsequent positive and negative outcomes. Individuals with social connectedness are not as

likely to experience psychological distress like depression and low self-esteem in comparison with their less-connected counterparts (Armstrong and Oomen-Early 2009). Social connectedness is a fundamental life aspect, with evidence of linkages to enhanced degrees of adolescent well-being (Allen et al. 2008). In this regard, social connectedness significantly predicts adjustment, and students displaying a greater level of social connectedness have a low level of adjustment issues (Allen et al. 2008).

Studies concerning social connectedness, and academic factors like achievement motivation and emotional-social learning skills, along with the nature and impacts on student life, are still few and far between (Jdaitawi 2015). This remains true for studies that examined the relationship between social connectedness and emotional and social skills within a positive education context. Therefore, there is a need to extend the literature by examining the effect of social connectedness on academic and emotional and social learning.

4.4 The Role of Staff in Supporting Students to Develop Prosocial Attitudes

The role of the academic has long been seen as one of imparting knowledge. Only recently the role of the academic as a culture leader modelling prosocial behaviours and having a positive impact on students' own sense of self has been investigated (Devis-Rozental 2018). Arjunan et al.'s (2016) investigation of good practice in higher education—based on students' NSS feedback—found that students preferred personable and approachable academics who know their names and interests. This is a critical find within the context of positive education as it signals the important role that staff have to engage and enthuse students. In fact, an academic that is passionate was also identified as important. In agreement, Derounian's (2017) study found that motivation, encouragement and passion were the main characteristics involved in making an inspirational academic. This was also found in Farquharson and Clarke (2015), where passion and care were identified as vital to the student experience.

Derounian (2017) also evidenced the need to develop effective relationships between academics and students. This emphasis on personal

relationships was further acknowledged by Arjunan et al. (2016, p. 2), who argue that good practice requires academics to engage with students so that they can "reach their true potential". We believe that this is important for all members of staff within the university.

We are social beings wired to connect, and because of that, we continually learn and develop by observing others and learning from their behaviour. For example, a student that has never been in an office environment may learn how to behave in that situation by interacting with members of staff. If this interaction is negative, unprofessional or discouraging, students may think that this is the correct way to behave when they go on to seek employment.

This also extends to healthy working practices. For example, there are careers where people need to work very long hours and may neglect other aspects of their lives to meet deadlines. However, if we want this to change in industry, universities have to lead the way as culture leaders developing and practising better working environments for their students. The common excuse of "this is how we do it in the industry" is no longer acceptable if we really want to instigate a change that is more humanised and therefore better for everyone involved. This is not to say that in professions of extraordinary responsibility where people need to work overnight, for example, nursing, we would not expect our students to practice this way. However, we would support them in learning that while working this way, they need to ensure that their wellbeing is also considered, for example regarding the number of hours expected to work, breaks and meeting their basic needs.

The only way to change the status quo is by educating the next generation of practitioners in many fields to develop healthy habits and to foster a culture of respect, wellbeing and overall positive attitudes and practices. Consequently, to encourage this shift to a more positive culture within universities, it is essential to support staff in understanding how important they are, whichever their role, to role model the types of attitudes and behaviours we want our students to learn and take with them to their chosen fields.

Additionally, we argue that it should not only be about academics and how they can engage and support students in developing holistically. In fact, everyone who works in a university, whichever role they do, should

know and understand how important they are in impacting students' behaviours and attitudes. Many students have never worked, and the only experience they may have of a professional relationship could be with members of the university body. Therefore, it is crucial to ensure we all take responsibility and ownership for this by being role models and exemplars in the way in which we manage our professional identity and behaviour so that students can learn positive strategies that they can then implement. This is not always clear to all members of the university community.

4.5 Positive Education Is About Developing Students Holistically

A positive education approach considers most students by supporting them in developing the skills they will need to thrive while at university (Seldon and Martin 2018). In other countries around the world such as USA and Australia, there is evidence that university education aids students' holistic development as they take part in activities where altruistic values and ideas around being a citizen are important (Quinlan 2011). Nevertheless, until recently, this has not been looked at within the UK to find out if our system fosters these in students (Quinlan 2011).

Identifying what this means may be complex as there is a wealth of terminology and meanings about what learning holistically constitutes. However, if we take into account the idea of practising with an embodied relational understanding, this can be simplified. Basically, a holistic approach would take into account:

- The academic, theoretical and cognitive knowledge (head);
- How these are implemented and practiced and their impact on students' professional development (hand);
- How this new-found knowledge takes into account the way our students' personal growth makes sense of their personal responsibility for their own health and wellbeing as well as making a positive impact on their environment and others (heart).

Essentially, it is about education with a purpose—a purpose to enrich society by supporting students to find their place in the world and to use their strengths to make a difference. Not merely from the perspective of developing the skills to get a job, but also to get them to understand the responsibility they have to create a better world. This is particularly important at university as this is a time when students develop their self-identity. For some, it is the first time they have real autonomy and self-management of all their needs. This is particularly prevalent in the UK where most students leave home to go to university and must, therefore, learn to manage all aspects of their life.

This time of constant change and self-development where students will have new realities, and to some extent, may reinvent themselves must happen in a safe environment where they can flourish—a type of space where students can assert their sense of place, where they can feel they can make sense of who they are and celebrate their uniqueness while finding their place in the world (Devis-Rozental 2018). Conversely, if we negate students the opportunity to develop in every aspect of their life, create healthy habits and develop values which are essential to them, they may feel dislocated and that they don't belong. They may even question or hide their personal journey by negating who they really are. An example of this could be the overemphasis that some freshers' fairs give to drinking alcohol or partying. If this is not something students are comfortable with, perhaps due to their culture or beliefs, they may feel that they don't belong unless they conform with what is seen as the 'norm' even though it might not be for everyone. This complex dilemma can have detrimental effects on those already vulnerable due to the many changes they have already been through by beginning their journey at university, for example.

Taking on a holistic approach requires reflection and a great deal of planning. It also takes time and a commitment from everyone in the university to see it as vital if it is to work. Unless everyone understands this, it may be quite challenging to achieve. This is one of the reasons why believing in the values of your university and how it operates is essential. We would argue more important than in other types of organisations. The reason for this is that universities have the great privilege of

impacting society and helping shape minds and hearts, and this comes with great responsibility.

4.6 With Great Power Comes Great Responsibility: HE Institutions as Culture Leaders

Higher education institutions are places where education, research and professional practice develop to prepare for the future. The opportunity to change work practices, influence societies and make important changes in our world to make it more human, compassionate and caring, which is something universities can do, carries a great deal of responsibility. We live in a world which at present is fractured and where polarising ideas are prevalent and, in some cases, growing in interest. Therefore, it is imperative that we support and engage students to reflect and critically think about the world in which we live and in how they have a role to play in making it better. But it goes further than that. Universities are also places where research is carried out, and new advances are discovered. What if there was a focus on looking at what is already good; what works and how this can be disseminated to make a positive contribution to our societies? This is something that can be done with positive education strategies, for example, looking at areas such as appreciative inquiry or other qualitative methods trying to showcase the positive strategies that do make a difference. This would also make a positive impact on how we view things. Indeed, Cockwell and McArthus-Blair (2012) assert that appreciative inquiry will pinpoint the positive core and link to it in ways that will inspire people to take action with a higher degree of energy. An example of applying an appreciative inquiry as a developmental pedagogic approach is explored by Jones and Masika (2020). They applied it while carrying out an action research methodology understanding of the first-year experience, belonging, engagement and success. They found that by taking on a positive stance, participants were given a voice (even those marginalised) and

enabled to share solutions to enhance provision holistically with meaningful recommendations for the university and the HE sector—therefore, becoming catalysts of change from within.

As culture leaders, universities and programmes should be challenging the status quo and providing solutions to make positive and lasting changes that will impact on societies. As previously mentioned within this chapter, there are certain working cultures where conditions are precarious, hours are too long, and there are no opportunities to step back. These working environments typically have a way of working which is accepted as a given. However, if universities are preparing professionals for these types of environments, which should be challenged and changed, we should not emulate those environments within our programmes but challenge them and change them. This would have an impact, not only in the wellbeing of our students and staff but also in future way these places function. Of course, it will take time, and there will be people who will challenge this. Still, if we want future generations to flourish and to have fulfilling professions where their wellbeing is part of the culture, we must influence these within our programmes and disrupt the accepted way, when it is unhealthy or unnecessary. This will help us create a better world.

Some of the work we have been carrying out to overcome some of these issues and to embed a positive organisational culture is further explored in previous chapters within this book, all rooted in a humanising methodology and realistic opportunities for meaningful change.

4.7   Conclusion

Within this chapter, we discussed the importance of taking into account positive education strategies within higher education to foster an environment where students and staff flourish holistically. Indeed, this can only be achieved if everyone within the university is committed to this and understand its importance. The role of those working in universities, in every single area of its provision, is to be part of a team who cares for its students and staff and wants to make a difference in the world. For us, higher education institutions should be places where students and

staff flourish and where opportunities to develop positive cultures are available. It is in these institutions where thousands will prepare for the rest of their life. If we can engage these individuals in creating their own healthy cultures, we believe that this can have a meaningful impact on our overall wellbeing. We are privileged to work in places which enrich society and advance knowledge. This gives us an excellent opportunity to change our world for the better and make it into a place where positive attitudes, healthy work practices, happiness, kindness and a sense of community can exist.

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5

Humanising Higher Education by Listening to the Student Voice

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5.1 Introduction

The jump from school to university can feel like a huge change for a lot of students, for various reasons. As a current student myself, I personally felt incredibly anxious about what to expect both academically and socially when I first arrived at university, and there is much evidence that shows that I was not unique in feeling this way. Many students describe their experience of arriving at university as a time when they feel lost, feel like they don't belong and are generally more anxious (Meehan and Howells 2018). As Xu (2011) suggests, many students find it difficult to transition and adjust to life at university, which is often underexplored from the student's perspective.

I am a final year undergraduate student, now almost four years into my degree and will soon be starting a master's degree; however, this has not been my only experience of higher education; in 2015, I moved away from home to study sociology at a Russell Group University. Though my

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time at that university was brief, the lasting effects of my dehumanised experience are still with me today, and it took over a year for me to even see the name of the university without it triggering a panic attack. Below I have highlighted just a few of the forms of dehumanisation outlined by Todres et al. (2009) that contributed to my negative experience at university:

- **Passivity**, **dislocation and inadequate accommodation**: According to Lahelma and Gordon (2003, p. 381), "Home as a mental space is a place of shelter, safety, privacy and independence". As a student in university-run accommodation, I did not feel at home at all. We were micro-managed; were not allowed to be in control of our heating leading to freezing winter nights and getting sick; consistently had our privacy breached with random "checks"; and our windows and walls were covered in mould which went unaddressed for months. When I was away from my accommodation visiting my parents to deal with my already deteriorating mental health, I received an email including a photograph of the inside of my bedroom, along with a threatening message telling me to remove a wall decal. I had not given anyone permission to enter my room, and it was extremely violating to know that a stranger had just walked into my home when I wasn't there. From that day on, I never felt safe in that room again as I was petrified that someone could just walk in.
- **Isolation, loss of personal journey and lack of support**: For the first time in my life, I was away from my family, living with strangers and expected to suddenly participate in society as an adult, with no support. When I hit the lowest point of my depression and accepted that I needed help, I sought advice at the on-campus doctor's surgery. Instead of offering counselling, appropriate medication, or even coping strategies, the doctor told me that I was making myself depressed and suggested I leave the university. This was incredibly disheartening as the doctor failed to see me as an individual and address the factors that were causing my depression. Furthermore, as found by Sawatzky et al. (2012, p. 13), providing students "with appropriate supportive services may help them to manage stress and prevent depression".

The negative experience I had at that university has shaped who I have become, and although it broke me, I was lucky to have the support of my friends and family to leave and have the time to heal. However, I want to use this experience to help universities become places where no other students have to go through what I did. This chapter draws on my experiences, also considering the voices of other students with different lived experiences to me. It will consider some of the forms of humanisation outlined by Todres et al. (2009), and offer some recommendations based on these, of ways that universities can further humanise the student journey and improve students' wellbeing while at university and beyond. I should also mention here that my second time at university has been entirely different and overall a positive experience, which reinforces how much different students have different experiences and should be treated as individuals.

When applying for the degree back in sixth form, in the back of my mind I knew it wasn't exactly what I wanted, but it seemed to be the right path for me, and I was excited to start. Having attended a Grammar School that I felt put grades and outputs above wellbeing, I had never really considered that there were other options, it just seemed to make sense that I had to apply to the "best" universities I could to succeed. This is an indicator of the privilege I had in getting an education that encouraged this mindset; however, this pressure is something that many young people from similar backgrounds have experienced (Winterton and Irwin 2012).

There are many nuances to my journey as a student which are essential to consider when taking into account my opinions and recommendations; my race, gender and disability among other factors all impact the way I experience life, and the way that I am treated by others. On the one hand, as a disabled student, I face barriers when accessing education that abled students do not, and may not even be aware of, such as struggling to keep up with classwork, accessing learning spaces or even harassment. On the other hand, though I am a second-generation immigrant, I am aware of my white privilege meaning that I don't encounter the same barriers as students from Black, Asian or other ethnic minority backgrounds, particularly when accessing higher education (Bhopal 2018). It is also important to consider that students who are

"trapped at the intersections of multiple oppressive contexts", in particular, "poor disabled students of color" face greater levels of inequality when accessing education (Erevelles and Minear 2010 pp. 2, 3).

Malcolm and Mendoza (2014, p. 596) investigated this, focusing on the intersectionality of afro-Caribbean international students and their ethnic identity development in the United States. They found that in particular international students are often represented as a "homogenous population with little differentiation based on national origin, gender, race/ethnicity, or sexual identities". I explore some of these intersections throughout this chapter, considering how different students may benefit from a humanised approach to higher education.

Therefore, though this chapter will explore some universal situations, it is imperative to acknowledge that it does not account for the diverse intricacies of each individual entering higher education, and the voices of marginalised students are incredibly important when discussing these topics. This is why humanising higher education is so important, as very often students are treated as a homogenous group, rather than as individuals with their own needs, issues and aspirations (Devis-Rozental 2018).

5.2   Openness, Honesty, and Realistic Expectations

Looking back on my experience as a first-year undergraduate student, I have identified that a significant factor in my negative experiences stems from the dehumanisation of students. Though it often starts with the treatment of students as a homogenous entity in secondary school, it also continues into higher education. A student's ability to thrive is largely based on their level of agency (Devis-Rozental 2018). Like anyone else, if a student is offered all the information they need and given the ability to make their own informed choices, of participating in their future, we are much more likely to succeed. Whereas, when we feel micro-managed, that we are all on the same timeline to make one big decision that will lock in our future, it can feel too suffocating, and we end up making decisions we think are right, instead of what is individually best for us.

Our socio-emotional needs are often not taken into consideration, and we are dehumanised and can often be treated as grade-output machines. And the universities we are being sent to frequently contribute to this narrative.

By the time I arrived at university, I had been assured by most of the staff at my school that they had prepared us well enough and that I was going to thrive. All the teachers had the same advice for every single student at my school, aside from one teacher. Because she had taken the time to see her students as individuals and knew me, she suggested that I apply to smaller institutions, or places closer to home, as she believed those to be the best environments for me. In hindsight, it is the attitude of teachers like her that should be encouraged at schools everywhere, and had I taken her advice I may have spared myself the pain I experienced. No two students should be getting the same advice; every person has their own considerations and barriers to account for when planning for the next big step in their life. Not every student will be prepared for university straight after high school, and not every student wants or needs to go to university, and this is an important factor to acknowledge. There is a large difference between ensuring that higher education is accessible to every student who wants to participate and suggesting that every young person should be attending university.

For young people from communities where "entry to higher education is routine", a year out of education to experience adult life before going to university could be extremely useful (Winterton and Irwin 2012, p. 860; King 2011). I attended university immediately after sixth form, which ultimately caused me a lot of anxiety and exacerbated my underlying health conditions. Had I been afforded the agency to plan my decisions post-school for myself, I could have taken time before university to adjust to adult life before jumping into higher education. When I was in sixth form, all students in my class had to write a UCAS application in PSHE (personal, social and health education), regardless of if they were planning on going to university or not. This time in class could have been better spent preparing these students for the world of work, teaching them about keeping self-employment records, updating CVs, applying to apprenticeships, but instead, all students were treated homogeneously, as

if we all had the same ultimate goal of attending university the following year.

On the other side of this, for some students, particularly those "in working-class contexts, university is not commonly part of the calculus of post-school options", and students who may want to attend university are not encouraged to, nor given the tools or support they need to get there (Winterton and Irwin 2012, p. 860). A balance here must be struck, as each student is an individual with their own desires, aspirations, barriers and skills. University should be something that is available and accessible to all, so that the only reason why students don't attend university is that they don't want to, rather than because they are unable to. To do this, universities should work with schools and continue developing their openness and honesty about what university life looks like in terms of the application process, finances, accommodation, exams, workload, etc. Higher education institutions have a responsibility to their students and must be clear about the reality of university so that prospective students are as prepared and equipped as they can before starting. One way to ensure that students from underprivileged backgrounds are not disadvantaged is to ensure that the courses they want to study are fully accessible to them. This includes not assuming that all students will come to university with expensive equipment such as cameras or MacBooks, and not expecting students to understand marking criteria or work their way around online learning. The tourist metaphor developed by Devis-Rozental (2018) offers a novel way of looking at the student induction experience, considering all commencing students as tourists arriving in a foreign country. Adjusting the mindset of university staff at all levels to consider commencing students in this way without any preconceived biases can help them understand the struggles that new students may be facing, and in turn, discover ways in which they will be able to help.

The current COVID-19 situation highlights some of these issues; for the first time, students all around the country are suddenly having to study remotely, which can lead to some students being disadvantaged over others. Many students who live off-campus may not have high-speed Internet or a quiet place to study, and the added stress of

the pandemic, and enforced social isolation can trigger PTSD (Post-traumatic stress disorder) or aggravate other mental health issues that students are coping with (Brooks et al. 2020). Ensuring that lecturers take these issues into consideration, allowing for reasonable adjustments, no-detriment policies or even checking in on students' wellbeing, can assist in students' feeling supported and able to continue with their studies. For example, my current lecturers have been incredibly supportive, sending regular emails, being available for phone conversations and creating a Facebook group where we can contact each other to discuss the course, and support each other through our university work. Conversely, the current lockdown has highlighted inequalities in the education system that are often unaddressed. I have heard from fellow disabled students who have had to drop out of university due to lack of accommodations, that it is painful for them to see those same institutions that refused to help them, suddenly implementing the assistance that they required now that it is needed for all students; for example, universities that refused to post lectures online are suddenly switching entirely online within a week. This is an example of how a university may often unintentionally dehumanise their students, neglecting to account for their individual needs. If universities can move forward from this situation and learn from it, taking into account the tourist metaphor, perhaps they can find new ways to be inclusive to all students and have benefits such as "reduction on withdrawals, an increase in student satisfaction, progression and success" (Devis-Rozental 2018, p. 120).

Essentially, universities should create an environment where all students will thrive, through implementing things such as scholarships, accommodation guarantees, building safe learning spaces, while also being open and honest about what can be expected from the university experience. If universities do this, it will allow for prospective students to make informed choices that are not affected by things such as finances, safety or accessibility, and in turn, receive the best education and university experience possible.

5.3   Building a Community

The social environment in which we learn is important, and evidence shows that when students feel isolated, they do not learn as effectively (Parkes 2014 cited by Devis-Rozental 2018). This is why it is essential that students see university as a place where they are not alone, and are a part of a wider community, and have a sense of togetherness. According to Tinto (2003), students are often isolated learners when it comes to the university experience, and one way that is important to combat this isolation is through developing supportive communities.

As a new student, it is very easy to feel as if we don't belong, as if we are the only person feeling alone, or stressed and this can be detrimental to our learning and thriving at university. Often universities try to combat this isolation through communities and societies on campus, ranging from sports to cultural groups, or film and book clubs. These can really help students ease into their new lives at university; however, it can also be quite overwhelming; this is why it is vital to give students space and time to face these for the first time without the added pressure of performing well academically straight away.

When I first started university, my flatmates and I went into the large sports hall where the freshers fair was taking place. It was certainly exciting, and there was a powerful sense of possibility in the room. Together we joined as many societies as we could, thinking this was the way to forge new connections, try new things and build a community. But as it does for many students, the excitement of it all wore off after about a week, when we realised we had joined groups that we had nothing in common with, and were suddenly being inundated with emails and offers and social invites, and had to discover for ourselves which ones to continue with, and which to let go. Academic and extracurricular societies at university are extremely important for students' sense of togetherness and belonging, but I think that there is often too much emphasis on them as the most important way to make friends, and often leaves those that haven't yet found their crowd, sitting on the sideline even more confused and alone than on the first day that they arrived.

One thing that I think universities can do to support students in this capacity is to give them the space and time to explore these things without the added pressure of academic work at the same time. For many students, university is their first taste of adulthood, and the "real world". For this reason, I believe that university freshers weeks should take place much earlier than the first "induction week" of a degree, as it gives students the freedom to go through all of these new things for the first time, and really take it all in so that by the time they go to their first class they already feel a sense of belonging that they have created for themselves.

This links very closely to agency as a form of humanisation. According to Todres et al. (2009), part of being human is to experience making your own choices and being accountable for your own actions. Most undergraduate students in the UK who arrive at university straight from school have spent the majority of their lives in a passive education environment, where they were told where to be at every hour of the day, where adults in their lives were responsible for deciding which classes to be in, what groups to join, even down to what clothes to wear. For this reason, it is a considerable jump to arrive at a new place where they suddenly have all the freedom to discover who they are for themselves, on top of the new adult responsibilities they have. As Devis-Rozental (2018, p. 112) states, giving students the options and space to make their own choices "supports them in developing their assertiveness, self-efficacy and becoming more confident" Therefore, in order for students to feel a sense of togetherness, they need to be afforded the agency to make the decisions for themselves, and forge their own paths, and create for themselves a sense of familiarity and connection that will encourage them to thrive academically and socio-emotionally.

Another aspect that contributed to my sense of isolation as a new undergraduate student was being one student in a cohort of over 300. As we become used to things, such as the size of lecture halls and classes, it is easy to forget the sheer terror of entering an enormous lecture theatre as an 18-year-old anxiety-riddled student and realising you have to find a place to sit. Do you sit at the front? That way, the teacher knows you're invested, but the other students might decide you're too keen. Do you sit alone at the back? That way, people will probably leave you alone, and

you have a quick exit strategy, but the other students might avoid you for the rest of the year. Or do you sit in the middle and try to mingle with that group who somehow have already become best friends even though this is the first class? It is difficult to find people you have something in common with when you are greeted with a sea of strange new faces who might be feeling exactly the same as you, but who seem unapproachable, and in turn, it can be challenging to focus academically when all of these social issues are weighing on your mind throughout the lecture.

Cheng (2012) looked at the impact of class size on the structure of a lecture, particularly on how the lecture ends and whether this affects the student's level of engagement and attainment. Cheng (2012) acknowledges that though the closing of a lecture is only one part of the overall lecture experience, it is imperative in creating rapport and engagement with students. Cheng (2012, p. 237) divided the ending of a lecture into three stages:

1. The Pre-ending: "when the lecturer prepares to wrap up the lecture, such as raising questions or issues for discussion, summarising or reviewing key points of the lecture and explaining course-related issues such as homework or exams, but not offering new information on the lecture topics".
2. The Ending: "follows the Pre-ending Stage, but it is the stage first identified in the analysis since the lecturer uses explicit ending expressions to signal the end of the lecture. The lecturer may, in the meantime, indicate future course plans, and allow students to leave, including leave-taking good-byes and good wishes".
3. The Post-ending: "referring to the period after the lecturer has explicitly indicated the end of the lecture but interactions and activities still go on before students leave".

According to Cheng (2012), the size of a class does influence the structure of a lecture closing and, in turn, has an impact on student engagement. Classes with smaller cohorts were shown to have lectures end with all three of the stages, considering non-course-related issues, particularly in the post-ending stage. In these cases, lecturers often used personal pronouns flexibly, addressing the class as "we", forging a sense

of togetherness, while lecturers of larger cohorts often skipped straight to the post-ending stage, not accounting for students' individual issues, questions or needs. They also were more likely to address the class as "you" versus "I", creating a sense of division. This research offers an opportunity for lecturers of all sizes to establish strategies and techniques to engage students on a more personal level and engage with them as a part of their community.

My second time as a new undergraduate student was a stark comparison to the first; my class had less than 40 students, and we all had classes together. Because of this, it was much easier to form bonds as we could establish a sense of security, knowing what to expect when entering the classroom each week. Furthermore, as the class was smaller, the lecturers chose to engage with icebreaker exercises so that we could introduce ourselves to each other, as opposed to expecting us all to sit in silence as they gave their class, which immediately forged a sense of togetherness and created an environment of co-creation and group learning as opposed to one of isolation and solitary study.

Though it is not possible for all university classes to be reduced to smaller cohorts, some of the techniques and strategies used by lecturers of smaller classes could be implemented in large classes. For example, asking students to introduce themselves to the student sitting next to them on the first day, having lecturers address students as a collective "we" as opposed to the often used "I" (the academic) and "you" (the student), or using the end of the lecture to allow for questions and establish close rapport with students (Cheng 2012). The importance of a support system and real lasting bonds with others is often overlooked in academia, as it can so often be treated as an individual struggle that each scholar goes through alone, but breaking down that barrier between the teacher and the student, creating a community of equal scholars that engage with each other is key in preventing isolation in students (Devis-Rozental 2018).

One final way that universities could encourage communication and engagement between students is through signposting to online communities. The difference between entering a classroom for the first time and not knowing any faces and entering a classroom after having met others online beforehand is enormous. Online communities are vital in creating

a sense of belonging and togetherness in students. I felt immediately more confident for my second attempt at university as I knew who to approach; this immediately relived a lot of pressure, and I felt comfortable sitting in the class and was able to engage more with the opening lecture.

5.4   Embracing Students' Uniqueness

Treating a group of students as a homogenous group does a disservice to each individual sitting in the classroom. No two students are the same, and teaching them as if they are, not considering their diverse backgrounds and experiences can cause a student to feel confusion at best and pain at worst. Students arrive at university from a range of socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds, with individual lived experiences that inform their education. Some students may be disabled, or be international students, or be parents, or have experienced trauma. All these things form and shape a student into who they are and how they learn. What often happens at university is that students are treated as if they are one large group of mostly white, middle-class 18-year-olds that are at university to have the best years of their lives; this is a very narrowminded perspective and does not foster an environment where students from such diverse backgrounds can feel that they belong, or will be able to thrive, and it does not address the inequalities that different groups face. Kendi (2019) suggests that when discussing racial inequity in the education system, that the problem that is often overlooked is an opportunity gap, and not an achievement gap, as it is often perceived. In order to ensure that students of all races are equipped and prepared for university, if that is what they choose, it is imperative to ensure that these racial inequities are addressed. For example, understanding the racist history of standardised tests and changing them, and acknowledging that young Black children are profiled from a young age, can all contribute to how a Black student feels a sense of belonging at university, and how that experience differs to that of a white student (Kendi 2019).

Regarding my own personal journey, I had so many expectations of university based on what I had been told at school, that I had a very real

shock to the system when I arrived, and everything was different. I was suddenly expected to manage my own time in a way I had never done before, no-one cared if I did not go to my classes, we suddenly had what felt like unrealistic deadlines, and were expected to do all of this while dealing with whatever personal journeys we were bringing with us from before. When a lecturer tells 300 students to hand in an assignment the next day with no exceptions, they fail to take into account the student who has to work a night shift, the disabled student who cannot access the learning materials, the single parent who has to stay up late with their child. And when these things are not considered, it creates an environment of resentment and stress, where a student may have to disclose to a teacher something they aren't comfortable sharing in order to receive the accommodations that they need. And furthermore, when that student does disclose these personal things, it is far too often that they are still not taken into account. As a disabled student, I am legally entitled to reasonable adjustments for my learning in order for me to thrive. In my first year, I requested that academics please make their PowerPoint slides available before the lecture so that I could access them before the classes, but after multiple emails from myself and my additional support tutor, these accommodations were never made. This caused me a lot of stress, primarily because I felt as if I was being a burden on my teachers, which is something that should never be the case. Todres et al. (2009) highlight that a sense of personal uniqueness is important for wellbeing; therefore, every student should be able to exist as a unique person, and treated as such, accounting for their individual identities, as opposed to only seeing how that individual fits into the larger group.

An example of this, although not my personal experience, is how transgender students' identities are sometimes neglected. There is no one journey that a trans student goes though, everyone is unique, and this must be taken into account. The process of changing one's gender markers and name on university systems is often overly complicated and can be emotionally very difficult for the student. According to the Trans Report (2018, p. 33), which looked at the experiences of transgender students at Oxford University, the process is "often arduous, time-consuming and a drain on mental or emotional resources". The report suggests that this process can and should be streamlined clearly

and concisely so that students can provide their pronouns and name for their record that would then be distributed to all of their departments and faculty. This, along with other measures outlined in the report such as ensuring all university counsellors have specific training on trans identities and ensuring all members of academic staff are provided with "extensive information about transgender individuals, as well as best practices for dealing with trans students", can ensure that transgender students feel safe and cared for at university. The way that transgender students are treated at university can have a direct effect on their mental health and wellbeing. The report identified one student that explained the "pressure of the work and lack of understanding tutors" directly impacted on their mental health, leading to a "potentially lethal suicide attempt" (Trans Report 2018, p. 8). By creating an environment where transgender students can live authentically without fear of harassment, universities can ensure that all students thrive academically and emotionally; embracing a person's uniqueness can directly impact their sense of belonging and wellbeing while at university.

This all highlights the importance that someone's identity has on their individual needs at university, who they are and where they are going, their sense of personal journey. Devis-Rozental (2018, p. 115) notes that "we as academics have a responsibility to ensure that while in our lectures, tutorials or workshops students feel represented and engaged". By taking the time to be supportive and encouraging to students, considering their varying life experiences, academics can directly be a part of making sure their students develop a sense of safety and belonging at university.

5.5   Conclusion

When I first set out to write this chapter, I had intended to focus on how schools and universities can best prepare students for arriving at university. However, through the course of writing it, I realised that what I had focused on instead were ways that universities can prepare themselves for the various ways that students may arrive with individual needs and expectations. This chapter explored how the university environment

can directly affect students' wellbeing, and how the homogenisation of students by academics that fail to celebrate their uniqueness can lead to feelings of isolation in students. Staff at all levels in a university must be fully aware of how students may need support relating to their individual identities, and find ways to ensure all students feel a part of a community, while still celebrating their individuality and using this to create a safe and welcoming place for students to thrive.

Based on the discussions in this chapter, I have outlined the following recommendations:

- Universities must ensure that they are fully accessible to all students while setting realistic expectation so that prospective students can make informed decisions for their future.
- Universities should ensure that all support available to students is signposted clearly, and communication between departments is open and clear. A university may have the best support available, but if students don't know how to access it, it will not be as effective. As a student, it is very easy to get overwhelmed and ask for help in the wrong place, so these processes should be streamlined in a way that each and every department knows exactly where to direct a student to receive the appropriate support.
- Doctors that are based on-campus should be uniquely trained in issues that are more prevalent within the student population such as depression, anxiety or other mental health issues. Furthermore, providing and signposting this support early on can prevent long-term issues from forming in the first place.
- The official academic induction week should take place after the Student Union organised "Fresher's week". I think that it is important for students to have the time and space to settle in, make friends and get used to their new environment before being expected to start studying immediately.
- In order to understand the struggles that new students face, and discover appropriate ways to help, university staff should consider the tourist metaphor and its applications when interacting with new students.

Finally, I would like to reiterate that this chapter has been based on my personal experiences as one university student, along with examples from others, but it in no way represents all students, and to interpret it that way will only contribute to the dehumanisation of students. I hope that by sharing my experiences that I may help humanise education institutions around the country, but I also encourage universities to seek out stories from other students, particularly marginalised students whose voices are often overlooked or erased when discussing issues of student belonging, and listen and learn from their unique knowledge.

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6

Mind the Gap: Supporting Students to Have a Successful Transition to University, It Is Everyone's Responsibility

Camila Devis-Rozental and Mandi Barron

> Today I'm gonna talk a bit about the jump from school to university. I call it a jump because that's exactly how it feels. Like a leap. With your eyes shut. Off a cliff. At night. Into shark infested waters. At least that's how it felt for me the first time. (Second year student)

6.1 Introduction

Transitions can be difficult and a time when we lose our sense of place (Todres et al. 2009). It could be a change in physical environments and much more; a sudden loss in an individual's sense of belonging, security or continuity, especially to those away from home for the first time and having to manage life skills they may not have done before. A time

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when students feel like strangers seeking to find a sense of place "in an unknown culture where norms and routines are alien" (Todres et al. 2009, p. 73).

This dislocation doesn't only have to come from a change in the physical environment, but at times from everything that we know and understand as familiar. This is the case for thousands of students who arrive every year to a university unfamiliar to them, perhaps in a different city, a different country or even a different continent. This represents a complete change from what is familiar to them. While some students may thrive during this time, others, unable to cope during such major shift, can become isolated, lose their sense of self in order to fit in, or feel as one student put it: "erased, unseen and incapable".

Of course, there is no one student transition experience—mature students returning to study after pursuing a career or raising a family will face different challenges to those who may progress directly from school to university with a cohort of their own age and with similar recent life experiences. Students who live at home may not face the challenge of relocating to unfamiliar surroundings; however, their opportunity for building relationships in the same way that those thrown together into a new living experience will be different. There are also those whose commitment means that university is just a peripheral part of their life, rather than its core purpose—student carers, parents, those studying part-time or distance learning. Additionally, there are students from different ethnic, religious or socio-economic backgrounds who may be unfamiliar with the norms of other groups.

In this chapter, we share our journey to develop an online platform to support students on their transition to university. After providing an overview of the state of play and the role of student services during this transition and beyond, we go on to divide the chapter into two main parts. In the first part, we present the findings from a small study exploring this transition from the point of view of current students and staff in a UK institution. We then introduce the case study of our online tool and its first evaluation based on a large survey carried out to gauge its efficacy. In the second part of the chapter, we present findings from a survey to staff (academic, professional and support) exploring their views regarding the induction process and the expectations to and from

students. The rationale for this is to gain a holistic view of this important transition and how to improve it and make it meaningful to the students coming to our university.

6.2 Background

The transition to university is challenging, and to an extent, it can even be traumatic if not managed properly. There are many areas where students will be doing things new to them such as developing social groups, learning new academic skills and for some, learning to cook for themselves for the first time (Perry et al. 2001). According to Tinto (2004), students withdraw due to a lack of academic, study skills as well as financial pressures and issues around social integration such as isolation.

Over the past three years, we have seen an increase in students arriving at university with complex barriers to learning. This is something that is a growing challenge within the sector and particularly important within the first year, as students arrive at university with a set of expectations that may be quite different to the reality.

Some students arrive without an understanding of the specific requirements regarding academic writing, marking criterion or referencing, for example. This, on top of having to get acquainted in most cases with a new city, is a new set of friends and, for some, living for the first time away from home. This combination of the new and unknown can exacerbate their barriers and block their ability to learn effectively and even harm their wellbeing.

Schools and colleges should continue working on preparing students for the practicalities of going to a university such as finances, time management, budgeting and other areas which can affect students' wellbeing (Seldon and Martin 2018). However, there seems to be a lack of understanding of the expectations that universities have of first-year students and this, according to van Rooij (2018), keeps teachers from paying more attention to university preparation.

A survey carried out by HEPI and the HEA (Seldon and Martin 2018, p. 10) found that students are "doing less well than 20 to 24- year olds

from the general population on four measures – life satisfaction; whether life feels worthwhile; happiness; and anxiety". Consequently, considering these areas is an important aspect of supporting students through this transition. This is not to say that universities are fully responsible for the mental health and wellbeing of students; in fact, the whole community should evaluate how young people are supported if at all. This includes parents, schools and the government as there has been a clear deficit in funding for mental health and wellbeing programmes that can support young people.

6.3   The Role of Student Services in Supporting Students During Their Transitions

Many schools and colleges focus on preparing their students for the academic aspects of university—for example, how to write a good personal statement, encouraging attendance at open days, school visits to universities. However, it is often the pastoral and personal issues that cause the most difficulty for students in adapting to a new way of life. The structure of student services varies widely across the HE sector. However, virtually all settings will have as a minimum a focus on students' welfare and wellbeing through the provision of mental health and counselling support and disability/SpLD (specific learning difficulties) support (AMOSSHE 2020).

Many students will have received significant and ongoing support for these needs throughout their school life, and both schools and students may assume that this support will automatically continue into their HE experience. This is not the case, funding streams are different and will need to be applied for; those with the severest mental health problems will now be supported by the Community Mental Health Teams (CMHT) instead of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), and the more general support that universities offer is designed to help students to develop coping strategies that will stand them in good stead for the rest of their life beyond university. This

different way of engaging with support can be challenging, and it is essential that students approach their student services as early as possible to explore the available support, and to get funding in place before the start of the course, if possible. For this reason, we revised our pre-arrival material to make students aware of the importance of this as part of the transition phase, something we discuss later in this chapter.

Mental health support, in particular, has come to the fore in recent years with media reports of their being a "crisis" amongst students and high rates of suicide in this population. These reports are normally as a result of whichever is the latest survey. However, as the research methodology differs, it is difficult to understand whether there is a genuinely higher risk to this group than young people generally. In fact, according to the Office for National Statistics (Caul 2018), the suicide rate for HE students is lower than the non-student population of a similar age. What is true is that there has been an increase in students self-reporting issues of mental illness, with anxiety, the most commonly reported reason for seeking help.

6.4 Part One

6.4.1 The Student Voice

Since the voice of the student is the most important to understand this area fully, the experiences of nine undergraduate students were explored through a symposium in the summer of 2018. The transition from school to university can impact every aspect of someone's experience. It does not only involve the physical and tangible changes, but there is also an inner transformation of students' identity and their sense of self. As this is a time of great change, and in a sense, a rupture to what has been and can, therefore, feel dehumanised, it is the role of those working in HE to account for students' wellbeing holistically during this period and indeed through each of their transitions.

In order to capture these qualitative transitions, which unless documented may be difficult to witness, we were keen to hear the voices of

some students whose journey could benefit our understanding of their experience and perhaps that of others.

During the symposium, various activities took place. Students presented their views in various formats and answered questions posed by members of staff. Following this, participants were divided into small groups to reflect on the perfect host during the induction process. Here various common ideas were identified. The last part of the symposium consisted of a plenary where all those present discussed meaningful findings and recommendations to improve practice. Some of their comments and main findings are presented in the following section.

6.4.2   Students Views

Those students who took part in the symposium provided rich information full of insights regarding their experience.

> **If I were to change the induction, I would make it more personal** and more target based…I think I would have benefitted from a personalised university experience sheet, asking what I wanted to achieve when I left university…University is as much as life lesson as it is an educational one. You learn that when it draws to a close. (UK student L5)

> I found the induction quite overwhelming, and **I think the day could have benefited from a variety of students (from all years) presenting a lecture on 'the life of a student**. (L6 student)

> When I came here, the first month was a bit weird for me because **I had days when I was happy and excited to study and live abroad, and then having days where I was feeling disoriented and alone**. (L6 student)

> Maybe it would be nice to have a chat with a uni psychologist when you are having a strange moment like this. I really appreciated the events that the university organised for us, parties and game nights included. I think it is a brilliant way to break the ice and meet new friends. Getting used to a new culture can be challenging sometimes. The fact that the uni staff is patient and very kind to explain (and re-explain) information

makes me feel at ease. **I think that this sort of personal support that the university offers is great and maybe even more important than the academic support**. I enjoyed this experience as much as I could, and I'm glad I got help when I need it. (L4 international student)

Other students mentioned that the gap from school to university was a "jump", but that smaller classes made things easier. The amount of support at their university was highlighted by all the students who participated. A second-year UK student added that:

- There should be better signposting for the support available.
- Fresher's week and induction week should not be at the same time.
- Perhaps having a PAL (peer-assisted learning) or peer to support them during the first weeks.

However, one student stated: "There were too many students in need of support (which speaks volumes in itself), and I was told I would have to wait months for support". This is not a stand-alone comment, and the increase in requests for support for reported mental health issues is already mentioned in this chapter. Considering smaller classes was mentioned as an essential aspect of students settling. For instance, a level 5 student stated:

On the course I'm at now, there are 30 of us, we all met online through the university Facebook page before starting, and I've made real, lasting friendships.

Another student commented:

Socially for me I was in my element, but **the sudden independence was something I wasn't used to so keeping on top of laundry, food etc. has been a challenge**. (L4 UK student)

While another said: "**I found it hard to make friends**" (L4 UK student).
Everyone is unique and will have individual needs, as seen above. Still, these views are important as every student voice matters. Within the past few years, the induction process at our institution has evolved

and developed taking into account students' views, and some of the concerns of those presented regarding personalisation or the need for additional support above have been tackled. We will be discussed later in the chapter.

6.4.3 Improving Our Whole University Approach to Induction

A report by HEPI (Seldon and Martin 2018) recognises the complexity of transitions. It discusses the importance of a whole university approach and something important in order to provide continuity and parity of support to all students. Our institution already took on a whole university approach to its core induction activities. Nevertheless, there seemed to be many avenues for students to seek support and some differed between faculties, and this can be confusing: For example, a level 5 student who attended the symposium stated:

> There is so much support that it's easy to get confused and have to be passed around from department to department until you find exactly the team you need to help you. If this was made clearer at the beginning of the year, or if there was better communication between departments, I think it would have made a lot of students' transitions a lot smoother.

Therefore, a review of the available channels to support students during this transition was undertaken to streamline the support and provide more clarity and efficiency. To do so, we looked at our student feedback through the arrival questionnaire from previous years. This, alongside the findings from the symposium as well as a focus group with commencing students during the 2018–2019 academic years, revealed that students wanted information in one central place and that this should be delivered taking into account a holistic approach. They wanted as much information as possible before they arrived. For instance, students wanted to know about accommodation but also about mental health or where to join societies—a one-stop place to get their pre-arrival information, which is something we didn't have fully developed.

We knew from previous research that we should not assume students knew anything about the university and that we needed to manage their expectations. Developing appropriate and useful information for students prior to their arrival would be a proactive approach to support student not merely "to cope and get through the period of difficulty" (Seldon and Martin 2018, p. 17), but to support them to learn to manage these difficult moments in their student journey.

To ensure we took all areas into account, we looked at the tourist metaphor (Devis-Rozental 2018). This metaphor sees a student arriving at a university as a tourist who may or may not have knowledge of the country they are visiting, and therefore, we as the representatives of the country must not expect any previous knowledge or understanding of the many different aspects that make this country what it is. Table 6.1 illustrates the types of things these "tourists" may need to learn about in order to thrive while in our country and beyond.

Looking at students with this lens helped us ensure we were considering every aspect with the same importance. To us, universities are places where students learn holistically and develop not only a craft or academic knowledge but their whole self. We knew that we wanted to engage students before they arrived so that they would feel more confident about their experience and that by going through our resources they could develop a sense of belonging and therefore feel part of our community. Therefore, we developed an online pre-arrival tool with the information we had found was important for students to have. We wanted to take on a positive education approach which considers most students by supporting them in developing the skills they will need to thrive while at university (Seldon and Martin 2018).

When looking at the actual information, we wanted to:

- Provide clear information on physical and digital locations.
- Be honest about the realities of being at university and that it isn't easy to leave, for some, everything behind.
- Have someone from their own generation talking to them rather than staff.
- Give them a personalised induction experience before they arrive.

Table 6.1 Decoding the tourist metaphor

Currency	Laws	Language	Geography	Welfare	Time zone	Culture
• Marking criterion	• Policies	• Academic language	• Campus	• Socio-emotional aspects	• Timetabling	• Clubs and societies
• Marking culture	• Procedures	• Academic skills	• Lecture theatres	• Student services	• Managing time	• Drinking culture
• Referencing	• Academic integrity	• Learning outcomes	• City	• Wellbeing centre	• 9 am lectures	• HE Culture
• Money exchange	• Who does what?	• EAL	• Accommodation	• Chaplaincy	• Self management	• Scholarship
• Student loans	• Plagiarism	• ALS	• Transport	• Doctor surgery		• Self-directed learning
• Grants	• Social norms	• Research	• Names of buildings	• Sport		• Digital presence
		• Referencing	• Online resources	• Nutrition		• Online etiquette
		• Accents		• Equality and diversity		• Social norms
						• Traditions

The best way to engage students before they arrived was to develop a pre-arrival tool that they could access once registered, but before they arrived. Even though the online environment may not seem as humanised, we knew that it was the only place where we could create meaningful resources that students could access as an when they needed them, before they started university and during their first year.

6.4.4 Online Transition Tool

Our online tool was launched in August 2019, hosted in the pre-arrival area of our intranet and was made available to all L4 (first-year undergraduate) and L7 (postgraduate) commencing students as soon as they registered. As previously mentioned, it was informed by student feedback through the "Mind the Gap" project as well as focus groups with students and a pre-arrival questionnaire carried out in 2019. It was also informed by relevant research around the area of transitions, positive psychology, humanising concepts and other relevant fields. Its aim was to include information and activities to support students in their transition from school to university. Each of these areas has been populated with links to various resources, tasks or further information. It has been developed working closely and collaboratively between the project lead, a technology-enhanced learning (TEL) developer, an administrative support colleague and working closely with the director of student services while seeking content and advice from various teams within the university such as student services, M&C (marketing and communication), library and others as well as liaising with faculty staff.

The tool consists of 4 areas which were identified as important (Table 6.2):

Our online tool demonstrates a commitment to enhance the student experience and to support students to develop holistically. It also highlights that the importance of ensuring students is well informed and that they understand that every aspect of their experience is important and should be considered.

Table 6.2 Areas to populate our online tool

Arriving to university	Self-care toolkit	Study skills toolkit	Thriving at university
Information for new students	How to use this toolkit	Academic expectations	Get ahead
Getting here	physical wellbeing	Learning styles	Global talent Programme
Our campuses	Mental wellbeing	Effective reading and researching	Groups and societies
Accommodation	Practical skills	Referencing and citations	Languages
What to bring	Student services	Language support	ResLifeBU
Explore and things to do		Additional learning support	Sports
Navigating around campus			Student support
Little book of IT			Study support
			Sustainability
			Student union
			Volunteering
			Careers and employability

6.4.5 Student Engagement with Our Online Tool

During the first seven weeks following its launch, our online tool was accessed 31,163 times which suggests a sound usage of the resources. Engagement with the tool increased weekly. An example of this is in Fig. 6.1 which shows the number of students engaging with the academic expectations tab over a 7-week period. Interestingly, this was the most visited tab, even though research suggests that study skills may not be as important to students starting university. This incremented usage was representative of all areas where every week more students engaged.
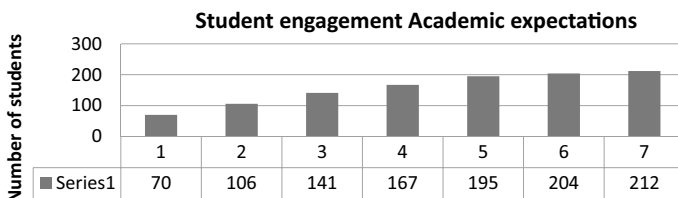
Fig. 6.1 Engaging with the academic expectations tab during the first seven weeks

6.4.6   Evaluation of Our Tool

Data regarding our tool have been promising. Of 999 students who completed the pre-arrival survey, 55% found it very useful or useful, 37% found it ok and only 8% of students didn't find the tool useful or didn't answer the question.

Student engagement with ME@BU data: We have tracked the number of students who accessed ME@BU before induction week and every week, the number of new students engaging increased. This was evident in every area of the toolkit.

Once the term began, student engagement dwindled as students were able to access the main page of Brightspace. However, they still have access to our online tool during their first year.

6.4.7   Online Information

When looking at previous surveys, this year's survey showed an increase in students preferring online pre-arrival material "with 46% of all respondents saying they would like to receive the Welcome Guide in PDF format via email only, compared with 38% last year. Amongst international students (especially non-EU) this preference is stronger with 60% requesting the same. This was also the most common preference for all other types of pre-arrival information" (Arrivals survey). Based on this, our online tool should continue to be included to support students online.

When looking at the amount of information students received, "73% of students felt that they received just the right amount of pre-arrival information, with 19% stating they felt they hadn't received enough and only 4% saying they felt they'd received too much" (Arrivals survey). Based on this, consideration must be taken to ensure students continue feeling they are receiving the right amount of information when advertising our online tool.

6.4.8   Moving Forward

This was the first year of our online tool, and it demonstrates the commitment that we have to the student experience and to supporting students to engage with the university and thrive. This year, and following the latest arrival survey, we carried out a focus group with students to see specific areas where we can continue developing more meaningful resources for our online tool and to ensure more students engage with it, and it impacts positively on their student experience. There are some things we are already looking at changing based on feedback from students. For instance, we have changed the tab "Thriving at university" to "Life at university" as students felt that culturally thriving could be confusing. As a living project, we will continue to fine-tune the tool to the needs of students, which will inevitably change as our student population changes.

Following its success, we were asked to develop the tool for all the other transitions students undergo while at university. We are now live, and our tool is available to all students within the university. As each transition has its own nuances and needs, we have considered many aspects. For example, students coming back from placement may join a new cohort and have to make new friends, and this must be acknowledged. We have also been proactive in our approach. As we have all currently moved to work virtually due to COVID-19, we have uploaded specific information to work safely online, to manage isolation and to signpost to where students who need it can seek support.

We are keen to keep our online tool in our academic portal as it demonstrates to students that we see their holistic development as essential and as part of their university experience. We know from research that if students are happy and settled if they have developed meaningful relationships and have all the information they need, they are more likely to succeed (REF), and this is our tool's main aim. However, we mustn't over-rely on our pre-arrival tool. Based on the premise that it is the relationship that students build which helps them thrive, it is vital to look at how staff perceive the induction and their role within it.

6.5 Part Two

6.5.1 Staff's Engagement on Student Inductions

In order to seek staff's views on transitions and their role within induction, we carried out a survey in 2017. It was completed by 58 members of staff of which 47% were academic, 44% professional and 9% other. Staff were asked about their current role within the university. Both academic and professional staff were engaged in the survey. This is important as everyone should be involved in the induction regardless of their job role at the university.

The next question looked at their specific role in supporting students. Figure 6.2 shows that most members of staff who answered the survey felt they supported students with their emotional issues, and over half felt that they give student academic and professional guidance.

Most of those that completed the survey saw their role as supporting students holistically, which is essential as it considers that the emotional context of learning should not be separate from other areas. However, it is vital to ensure that those supporting students have the right training, information or that they can signpost students to the right type of support.

The next question looked to find out if staff felt they were involved with the induction. Interestingly, under half of those who answered stated that they weren't involved in the induction process. In order to have consistency, all members of staff must feel they play a role in
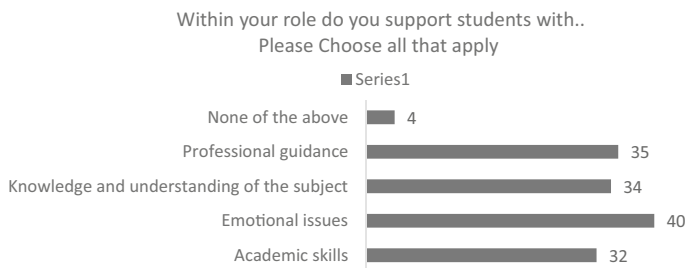
Fig. 6.2 Type of support offered to students

the induction. It could be something as simple as giving direction to a student, smiling when we see them or being aware of any students who may feel lost, worried or anxious in order to signpost them to the right type of support.

More needed to be done to ensure every member of staff within the university felt that they were involved in the induction process so that we can support students to develop a sense of belonging more consistently.

6.5.2 Staff's Views on Student Expectations

Most participants (40) stated that students wanted information during the induction. Thirteen said that students needed a warm welcome and to feel that they belong. This is interesting since, in a previous question, 40 participants mentioned emotional support, so there seemed to be a disparity here regarding their role within induction. One participant said that students expected "orientation and inspiration". And another,

> I think that varies enormously from student to student. Some want just to make friends, some want to get immediately into learning new things. Some want to get to know the town better.

Clearly, staff understood the importance of the induction process not as merely an informative activity but an experience that considers individual needs as well as the big change these students will experience.

Participants then were asked about the expectations students have of them during the induction period. Again, a fair amount of participants (23) stated that students expected information from them. Only five said that students expected support while nine added that students expected a welcoming or friendly member of staff. This is not concurring with the previous answer regarding the emotional support given to students. It could be some staff believe that within the first weeks the most important type of provision is to give information. Although without the emotional and social support, it is possible that students will not settle. Three participants stated that honesty was an expectation, which is essential to ensure that students understand the realities of being at university, away from home and in a new social environment so that they can manage difficult

times better. From research, we know that knowledge gives confidence (Devis-Rozental 2018). Therefore, learning how to manage this new life at university should make students more able to do it.

Some other comments included:

Clarity, Cleverness, Human kindness
   A combination of knowledge, empathy, understanding and nothing at all - it depends on the individual.
   A warm welcome and assurance that their studies are being managed appropriately, especially if any problems occur.

Here, there is an emphasis on human qualities to develop meaningful relationships and support students to develop a sense of belonging. Five members of staff believed that students expected nothing from them. These should be reviewed as clearly if nothing else; students will expect staff to know where to go or how to get somewhere. For instance, in the symposium, one student commented, "whether we should or not, we do have expectations when going into uni". Another one asserted:

I had so many expectations of uni, based on what I'd been told at school, that I got a real shock when I arrived there and everything was different. I suddenly needed to manage my own time; no-one cared if I didn't show up to class, the professors talked AT us, instead of TO us, and we had unrealistic deadlines, straight from week 1.

Therefore, it is important to ensure that all members of staff understand the emotional journey students have when transitioning to university and are vigilant in how to support them or signpost to the appropriate support. Additionally, a clearer message where all staff feel they are involved in the induction, and there is a consistency of approach will ensure a much better student experience.

6.5.3   Staff Expectations

Participants were also asked: What do you expect from commencing students during the induction process? Over half of the participants expected students to engage. Some other comments were:

> **A realisation that this will be a test of their resilience and hard work**. A willingness to accept they will work harder than they have before and that greater independence and engagement will be required of them".
>
> To be polite and to speak up if they are feeling lost or overwhelmed. To understand that coming to university is not only about academic study but about being part of something bigger - the community for example.
>
> Responsibility. Respect. Engagement - turn up to learn face to face! (Otherwise, universities may as well be a non-campus OU model). To familiarise themselves with campuses, transport, locations, rooms.
>
> good that they attend sessions. Nevertheless, if they don't attend all sessions, there may be a good reason for this. Don't expect them to engage (i.e. Contribute), scary to do so at this stage.

A variety of meaningful answers which demonstrate the overall commitment staff has to students and the understanding of the variety of needs these students will have depending on their circumstances. Still, 11 participants expected nothing or only for students to turn up. Therefore, a better understanding of the complex journey that all students make to get into university, their personal journey and how this is an emotionally charged transition which needs support, understanding and encouragement should be communicated to all staff.

It is important to disseminate information to all staff regarding the barriers to learning and the complex lifeworld of students before they arrive at university and how these can affect their engagement within induction. University staff should spend more time understanding how students are prepared at college (Seldon and Martin 2018).

6.5.4 Usefulness of the Induction Process

Most respondents saw the induction process as a time to settle in, meet members of staff and make friends. These are three essential aspects that influence a student's choice to stay at university. It is therefore important that the activities are interesting and varied and allow students to meet others and share their experience. It is also important to ensure that staff attitudes and approach are positive, encouraging and engaging so that students can develop effective relationships with members of the university community. Seldon and Martin (2018) suggest improving transition arrangements within HE by having an opting-out system to disclose mental health issues; contact by a personal mentor (L5 undergraduate student) before induction week as well as information to manage their transitions before the students' arrival. The last two points were also highlighted during the symposium as important in the transition from school.

We must continue embedding a positive approach to encourage all staff to develop effective relationships with students proactively, and to support students in developing a sense of belonging.

6.5.5 Working Together to Find the "Perfect Host"

During the symposium discussed previously in this chapter, students and staff shared ideas on the "perfect host" for an induction programme. The rationale was to allow participants to reflect on their practice and the wider context within the university. The main conclusion was that one person could not have all the qualities needed, therefore the importance of teams to deliver an excellent experience. This is why it is vital that all members of staff, regardless of where they work within the university, feel part of the induction process—that they know and understand their roles, but also their limitations and where to signpost students if necessary.

According to the participants in this workshop, some of the qualities needed to be the perfect host were (Fig. 6.3):

Fig. 6.3 Finding the perfect host

There was a general agreement from staff and students that students should be involved in the induction process with student reps or student ambassador and someone to create a personal link with each student. Interestingly, all the words that appeared for the perfect host describe a very human person, not too corporate or overly professionalised.

6.5.6 One Size Doesn't Fit All

Clearly, throughout this chapter, we have illustrated that within the context of student support, one type of approach may not be suitable for everyone. For instance, when looking at mental health support, a typical approach to address this may be to focus on increasing the resource in university counselling services. While this will meet an immediate need, it is not sustainable, and we also find that many students do not need counselling but alternative approaches. For this reason, at our institution, student services focus on the whole person rather than their symptoms, and in this way, we aim to deliver a more humanised provision.

We provide specific information pre-arrival, as mentioned within this chapter, to allow students to understand—and normalise—the specific challenges that they are likely to face as an individual, including isolation, loneliness and a lack of practical and academic skills and we support

students to develop these. ME@BU is intended to encourage students to think about their own personal and academic development needs prior to arrival to avoid some of the culture shock they may experience.

Integrating our sports department and residential services into student services has allowed us to focus on health and wellness promotion alongside mental health support. Our residential life programme is, unusually, delivered in partnership with a number of accommodation providers and involves three strands—welfare, social and skills. Welfare coordinators are available in halls as a first point of contact for anyone who needs any form of support or who just has a general question relating to their living environment. This team will signpost to those best placed to support the student, including in some cases, student wellbeing or our student support and engagement team. The social strand of residential life is designed to prevent isolation and therefore prevent loneliness and anxiety. With activities co-delivered by the residential life team, our sports department and our students' union it offers access to a large range of activities, both physical and virtual. Furthermore, our skills strand is designed to help students to develop their life skills through activities such as cooking demonstrations.

Of course, student services are not just there to support students, and their advice for academic and other professional services staff is invaluable to ensure that students can access all sources of support available to them in an accessible way.

As has been alluded to throughout this chapter, each student is an individual and will bring their own experiences and expectations. There is a tendency in HE always to consider the 18-year-old school leaver, living in halls and away from home for the first time, as our only new entrant. In reality, the majority of the student community at our institution does fall into this category, but we also have a substantial number of students who aren't. Mature students, those returning to study after a break, those who have decided to have a change in career, students with dependents, commuter students, all will have different needs and expectations. Even for those 18-year-olds, their life experiences to date will have prepared them very differently for university. The care leaver with little emotional support may be more resilient than the straight-A student with a supportive (emotionally and financially) family. However,

they will not have the same network to call on to understand how the university works. It's for that reason that transitions and induction activities need to be sensitive to individual needs and flexible enough to ensure it is relevant to all. Additionally, all staff must be aware of the vital role they can play in ensuring students develop a sense of belonging by understanding the complexity of needs and how to support or signpost to the right team those students entering a HE environment.

6.5.7   Conclusions and Suggestions

The enhancement of our provision and the pre-arrival tool we have developed, as well as our induction process, support students in gaining the skills they need within a holistic context. Students' comments are encouraging, and although they found the "jump" to university scary, the students involved in this research project settled well and enjoyed their university experience. We should continue building on this success and improve practice by considering the following suggestions based on the recommendations presented throughout this chapter:

1. Develop an awareness that every member of the university community plays an essential role during the induction period, which is an emotionally charged time for all students.
2. Continue working with schools to develop an awareness of life at university, including academic and practical skills to help students settle better.
3. Develop effective communication between different departments and services to signpost students to the right type of support effectively and to provide a more consistent approach.
4. Continue engaging current students as role models in the induction process and pre-arrival to ensure commencing students develop connections.
5. Continue developing a more personalised and user-friendly online presence that includes key information for pre-arriving students.

6. Ensure all areas of the university provide a consistent approach where all students can access the same type of support considering their individual needs.
7. Assign a mentor (either student or staff) to make contact with each student during the induction week to ensure students develop a sense of belonging and feel there is someone they can talk to or seek advice from.

The transition to university is a complex issue and students will approach it in various ways depending on the skills they have, and the resilience they would have built before they arrive at university. Therefore, universities must shape their Student Services provision to cater for their needs, in a way that takes into account a more humanised approach where students develop self-efficacy and flourish. What is more, all staff, whichever role they do, must know that they do have an impact on students' induction, retention and success. It is indeed everyone's responsibility to support students if it is part of our role, or, to know where to signpost them so that they can have the best experience by getting the right support at the right time.

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7

Strangers in Strange Lands: Exploring Pathways to Becoming and Wellbeing

Andrew Bissell

7.1 Orientation: Becoming in a Hermeneutic World

Practitioners from the world of industry can feel like strangers in a strange land when they set foot in academia. They stand on a foreign shore, gazing inland at the mysterious contours of higher education. Yet though the terrain is unfamiliar, this peculiar place is at least inhabited. Students can be found looking nervously seaward towards the strange land the practitioners vacated. These students are destined for the land of industry where they aspire to put down professional roots and become the practitioners of the future. They are strangers to this distant land and require the new academy arrivals to equip them for the voyage and challenges that lie ahead.

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They both listened silently to the water, which to them was not just water, but the voice of life, the voice of Being, of perpetual Becoming. (Hesse 2001, p. 78)

Dialogue between practitioners and students offers opportunities for mutually beneficial guidance; what may ebb and flow via conversation might assist their respective self-adjustments, tempering experiences of strangeness in the process. However, while words have the power to reveal, they can also conceal and withhold. Word meanings also change because contexts are always changing (Krajewski 1992). Practitioners and students thus encounter each other within a shifting, intersecting world of interpretation. This world, into which we are all thrown, is governed by the philosophical theory of 'hermeneutics' which decrees everything is a matter of interpretation; without interpretation, things would simply grind to a halt (Caputo 2018). Indeed, while "all understanding is interpretation" (Gadamer 2004, p. 390), our very being is to interpret a world that is already up and running prior to our arrival as strangers (Heidegger 1962).

The strangers meeting in academia—practitioners and their students—will also interpret themselves while traversing and interpreting their worldly domain. As "self-interpreting beings" (Caputo 2018, p. 33), we interpret who we are while putting our being into question. These self-interpretations are ongoing because every interpretation is exposed to an interpretation to come; our lives have an endless interpretability and questionability (Caputo 2018). During this interpretive evolution, the self is not passively awaiting discovery: "Selfhood is made in the active, ongoing process, in the German verb werden, 'to become'" (Kaag 2018, p. 220). I have termed the ongoing process of self-interpretation 'becoming' (Bissell 2018) and, consequently, 'self-interpretation' and 'becoming' are used interchangeably in this chapter.

Investigating the becoming process can, I believe, reap rich pedagogic rewards. For former industry practitioners, an opportunity arises to examine what has shaped their professional self-interpretations—and utilise the findings to inform their teaching. Through acquiring new understandings of themselves, these aspiring educators can encourage

their students to be critically aware of the forces shaping their own professional becoming. I argue such exploration of respective becomings offers teachers and students more than the prospect of safe arrival in strange lands: these self-interpretive insights can release a liberating desire to venture forth, challenge conventions and confidently commence a remapping of the landscape.

However, I will also forewarn that professional becoming does not occur in mechanical, perfunctory isolation within us. Becoming is accompanied by a sense of what the experience feels like. This chapter thus presents a hermeneutic inquiry into becoming that also attends to its human impact—the consequences for wellbeing. I duly propose a vocational teaching approach that aspires to nurture a student's sense of owned becoming while remaining vigilant to the felt sense of that experience. I will now chart this approach with reference to the becoming journeys of journalism students.[1]

7.2 Following Hermeneutic Signposts

I have suggested that the unpacking of self-interpretation—becoming—is an important pedagogic task. It's an important hermeneutic one too, one requiring teachers to get in touch with their becoming to understand and assist their students' becoming. These conclusions were reached during a personal journey along a philosophical trailway, one lined with key hermeneutic signposts (Bissell 2018). The reader is now invited to retrace these footsteps.

The first signpost I encountered confirmed that hermeneutic understanding must be viewed as a learning process entailing language—or "logos" as Gadamer calls it (1976, p. 59). Even though dialogue is "always ongoing and incomplete" (Scott and Usher 2011, p. 34), Gadamer (2004, p. 470) nonetheless reminds us that "being that can be

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[1]The journalists discussed in this chapter include former Bournemouth University journalism students who formed part of a research group (Bissell 2018) and aspiring journalists who are currently taught by the author.

understood is language". Clearly, the swirling world of conversation—one perpetually shrouded in interpretive fog—required closer inspection to afford a better understanding of myself and my students.

The next signpost stopped me in my tracks. It starkly revealed why self-discovery is important: we carry something within us called 'tradition'. Tradition is "what is handed down from the past" (Gadamer 2004, p. xvi). It affords the preunderstandings, biases and prejudices that help conditionally shape our interpretations. These collective inheritances—described as "fore-structures" by Heidegger (1962, p. 195) and prejudices by Gadamer (2004)—are not to be somehow bracketed from thought or placed in abeyance in one's bid to understand. On the contrary, it's precisely our prejudices that require exposure and situating in our understandings so that we can understand at all. Prejudices, emerging from our pasts, connect the familiar world we inhabit and the unfamiliar meanings that resist incorporation; here, we can begin to engage with 'otherness' (Gill 2015; Gadamer 2004). The implication was clear: I was required to become historically attuned to what has shaped my own professional becoming—my own self-interpretation; my prejudices could help me become more open-minded (Scott and Usher 2011).

When I arrived on the shores of the academy six years ago, my sense of being a journalist had been shaped and constructed following 30 years of immersion in journalistic tradition. I, therefore, carried much unknown baggage ashore as well as the visible hand luggage I deposited. It hermeneutically transpired that these hidden contents would require location and extraction if I was to better understand myself and others. I was required to discover and embrace my past, rather than attempt the futility of its banishment. While my prejudices arising from tradition were to be viewed as facilitative, tradition itself was not to be considered deterministic, assimilative or dominating: it's no more "a monster that dictates the future" than it is "a cemetery housing the bones of history" (Caputo 2018, p. 106). In fact, "in tradition, there is always an element of freedom and of history itself" (Gadamer 2004, p. 282). I wanted to explore the parameters of this freedom. If I could unravel how I was shaped by journalism's past, I might then be better placed to alert my students to the same historic forces. Perhaps I could steer them to

freedom and away from traditional, well-trod routes that headed towards conformity and constraint.

A third hermeneutic signpost indicated how I might achieve the prerequisite self-exfoliation. We can only know ourselves if we know others different from ourselves (Garrison 1996). It was my students who could conversationally provoke a sense of otherness and an awareness of my prejudiced past that I was otherwise in danger of transmitting to them. They were thus invited to catch me off guard, to break through regular routines and interrupt and unsettle my everyday, taken-for-grantedness of things; I wanted them to prompt a sudden questioning or a longer-term nagging, to cause me to stop and listen (Moules et al. 2014). I would then be required to adopt a willingness and capacity to put my own presuppositions into question to enter into a dialogue with my past; to address it with questions before allowing the past to answer me back in such a way that I was put into question (Caputo 2018). The essential goal was the dialogic attainment of Gadamer's "fusion of horizons" (2004, p. 305). While 'horizon' can refer to one's own standpoint in relation to another's standpoint, fusion results from an understanding that is grounded in both positions to create shared meanings; the resulting fusion "is an enlargement or broadening of one's own horizon" (Scott and Usher 2011, p. 33).

I commenced exploration of fused horizons by interviewing journalists who once studied on the journalism programme I now lead (Bissell 2018). I wanted to determine how they self-interpreted as journalists by confronting my own professional self-interpretation. Perhaps I could then glimpse the journalistic tradition that infused us—and promote awareness among my current students. However, this initial meander into becoming took an unexpected and disconcerting turn: the nature of becoming led to reflection upon the nature of wellbeing. These two connected clearings can now be revisited in turn.

7.3   Clearing 1: The Nature of Becoming

When interviewing the former journalism students (Bissell 2018), I was required to hermeneutically listen. Failure to do so would lead to failure to know myself, that is, my prejudices. My horizons of understanding would remain narrow due to my default filtering of the irreconcilable. A heightened conversational attunement was entailed, an alertness to the self-revelation contained in felt surprise, resonance, familiarity, difference and newness. These sensory notifiers would help locate, test and modify my biases.

The conversations that followed demanded intense focus. Consequently, little seemed to exist beyond the encounter, beyond the in-betweenness where otherness was invited to reside. My participants suddenly spoke with a sharpness and clarity that would once have been protectively muted by my prejudices. For example, they made me aware of how I tended to equate being a journalist with simple skills acquisition; this became apparent when I questioned my surprise at the plethora of additional accommodations they felt journalistic self-interpretation required. Indeed, their felt sense of journalistic becoming was shaped by multiple conditions: beyond attaining appropriate skills and knowledge, certain dispositions and qualities were deemed important; a communicative confidence and dexterity were equated with journalists; and the hierarchical importance of particular roles and jobs was highlighted. It was the invisible hand of the past that conditionally guided their negotiation of such matters. Now they had become tradition's carriers. Their inheritance was dutifully expressed in their linguistic and metaphorical reinforcement of long-standing role perceptions; one former student now described himself as a "newshound", while others were crusaders valiantly "fighting" and "chasing" stories on journalism's "frontline".

Tradition was also preserved in their embrace of historically ordained approaches to news story construction and conceptions of 'news sense'; it lived and breathed through their embodiment of the sceptical, competitive and thick-skinned reporter who is defined and celebrated in journalism's sacred texts. These traditions pervade the classroom ether. While professional bodies help infuse curricula, it's loyal disciples like myself

who encourage tradition's deep inhalation. Once in the workplace, newsroom culture appears to be absorbed without difficulty too; the "tricks of the trade" are revealed and transferred while professional acceptance and endorsement help further mould self-interpretations accordingly (Bissell 2018).

All this, I believe, would have remained buried without the hermeneutic excavation of myself (Bissell 2018). The more open I was to being challenged—and the more I reflected upon my participants' perspectives—the more I felt oddly cleansed. My ingrained journalistic prejudices were slowly teased out to provide the essential point of orientation for the interpretation and understanding of my participants' professional becomings. Horizons were fused as my participants obligingly facilitated an uncomfortable yet revelatory encounter with tradition. I emerged with a renewed determination to encourage my current students to challenge the unquestioned mantras of traditional practice and seize the becoming they desired.

However, I felt something else too. I was troubled by the human destabilisation that could accompany professional becoming. Indeed, my research revealed not only the historically conditioned and processual nature of journalistic self-interpretation but also the struggle for its accomplishment (Bissell 2018). The former students wrestled with their changing selves. While some appeared to have undergone a confident and relatively straightforward readjustment to become journalists, others questioned whether they could become at all. One former student discussed his journalistic becoming in terms of sculptural self-refinement when he described the "chipping away" of himself; he said he now embodied journalism and declared perhaps 90% of himself was a journalist. For others, however, the ongoing nature of their becoming was conveyed in admittance of not yet being the "finished article" or aspiring to "feel" like a journalist in the future. Amid their becomings, angst commonly surfaced when desired professional becoming encountered their current self-interpretation. For one former student, a "switch" continues to be activated to transit from introverted "home Jess" to the more extrovert journalistic persona perceived to be required at work (Bissell 2018). Another research participant, referring to the admired journalistic attributes of a work colleague, concluded he was "not fussed"

if he failed to become "that person"; it was, for him, a self-departure too far (Bissell 2018).

How we currently self-interpret may thus be in tension with how we wish to professionally self-interpret; becoming can demand overcoming. If becoming is the ongoing process of losing and finding oneself (Kaag 2018), I suggest self-interpretive tension can be located in the space in-between—where one's past meets one's potential future. These transitional moments of becoming—where new self-interpretations come into being—require the hermeneutic educator to be attuned to the fragilities of humanness. While "to be human is to be on a journey" (Galvin and Todres 2013, p. 16), teachers must nonetheless be sensitive to what happens at the border where new futures tempt and beckon; here, the most intimate and delicate self-negotiations and accommodations may be undertaken by students. The educator cannot afford to be solely preoccupied with the journey's end—the professional outcome of the becoming process. Care and attention must also be paid to how students get there. Teachers must be aware of the conditions shaping human wellbeing as well as those shaping professional self-interpretation.

7.4   Clearing 2: The Nature of Wellbeing

How can teachers better understand student wellbeing in the context of professional becoming? Perhaps we need to accept something about ourselves: we require the security and safety of just 'being' amid the relentless imperative to 'become'. This human equilibrium offers the feeling of both groundedness and possibility, of dwelling and mobility (Galvin and Todres 2013). It is where the self can find solace through balance; it is where a sense of wellbeing is experienced.

Wellbeing serves to check becoming while being dependent upon its driving necessity. Wellbeing requires us to be upwardly mobile, to strive, to dream, to explore and to become and self-interpret in ways that are valued. Yet wellbeing is equally becoming's nagging conscience; it whispers in our ear, reminding us of where we have come from and the comforts we may wish to take with us into the future. It reminds us of home, of a familiar connectedness and an identity "supported by 'merely

being' rather than 'having to be' something or someone" (Galvin and Todres 2013, p. 91). Wellbeing is found where the pace of the self's journey feels right. One is not striding too far ahead or dawdling too far behind. Wellbeing is a peaceful becoming, an experience where 'I can' and 'I am' are in harmony. In such circumstances, perhaps one is neither ascending nor descending a climb; one is on a verge where the next moment of becoming occurs "before one knows what is happening" (Kaag 2018, p. 221).

At these transitional junctures, I envisage a contented and secure sense of just being accompanies an empowering sense of the possibility and continuity of becoming; a sense of one's past layers of self-interpretation creates the relaxed acceptance that one is all these previous self-interpretations and more. The unity of these self-interpretations affords a sense of becoming wellbeing; while one retains the security of home and the self-interpretations that arose there, the door is left open to future destinations and the endless self-interpretations to come.

Teachers, however, appear to confront something of an educational conundrum: they seek facilitation of a transformative student journey of becoming while remaining thoughtful about the wellbeing found in homeliness as well as travel. Heidegger (1962) helpfully draws attention to the familiarity of 'at-homeness' that can be detrimental to taking on a life of one's own and deriving energising wellbeing from the resulting path of movement that opens up (Galvin and Todres 2013). Furthermore, facing the prospect of leaving home, though anxiety-inducing, can provide an energising potential "that can itself be felt as wellbeing"; the embrace of homelessness paradoxically provides "motivation for the quest to seek the experience of homecoming" (Galvin and Todres 2013, p. 72). Enriched, authentic homecomings await students who are bold enough to step outside and make something of themselves.

Let us pause in this clearing to take stock. Much is demanded of hermeneutic teachers. They must first seek discovery of their historically conditioned self-interpretations to access better understandings of their students' professional self-interpretations. Teachers thus attuned to the shaping power of past traditions then become liberators: their students, alerted to history's strong gravitational pull towards imitation,

can be encouraged to pursue their own authentic becoming trajectories. Yet teachers must also remain mindful that becoming entails feelings. Indeed, the teacher's fostering of professional becoming should be accompanied by an appreciation of wellbeing's checks and balances. Put simply, the pedagogic nurturing of professional becoming entails a duty of care: an approach best described as 'becoming wellbeing' is required. It's a lot to ask of teachers. Yet Nietzsche offers words of encouragement. While finding and knowing ourselves is a "dark, mysterious business", it's "true educators and cultivators" who can point the way and reveal "the original sense and basic stuff of your being" (Nietzsche 2014, p. 4).

A teacher attempting to capture these essences, frissons and ideals recoils from the all-knowing "bank-clerk educator" depositing knowledge into students; the banking concept of education, with its monologic and controlling tendencies, casts people as objects who are isolated from the world (Freire 1996, p. 57). When one former student told me how university had "hammered in" the "crux of stuff", I felt like a blunt, dehumanising instrument of cold, prescriptive skills transmission (Bissell 2018). In contrast, education attentive to care and wellbeing views students differently. They are not "docile listeners" but co-investigators in dialogue with teachers (Freire 1996, p. 62). The unfinished, incomplete character of beings and their becoming necessitates that education itself constitutes ongoing teacher–student problem-posing rather than anaesthetising, teacher-led problem-solving (Freire 1996).

This involves conversational interaction between teachers and students in the connected clearings of becoming and wellbeing visited thus far. In fact, I suggest this connecting corridor be widened, and these clearings be conceptualised as a singular pedagogic location: a Becoming Space where becoming wellbeing can be explored.

7.5   From Clearings of Understanding to Becoming Spaces: Locating a Becoming Wellbeing Pedagogy

A lot is said and written about the value in finding time for students. Investing time can, of course, forge deeper relationships and enhance learning. It can also help boost the seemingly all-important 'overall satisfaction score' on the National Student Survey (NSS). Clearly, what matters is how time is spent in teaching spaces. Spaces are not simply created by physical environment alone; it's what happens within them and the meaningful practices occurring there that make them "hospitable to the richness of human life" (Galvin and Todres 2013, p. 17). A recent personal experience prompted further consideration of these pedagogic locations and the precious time they contain.

Indeed, I was recently applauded for presiding over a degree programme that received a 30% increase in its NSS overall satisfaction score.[2] While the resulting personal attention challenged my natural modesty (such successes are a collective achievement after all), I still struggle to illuminate colleagues who seek the secret. There is, after all, no 'big reveal' to reveal. While my team is certainly attentive to the basics—such as the provision of timely, helpful feedback—a forensic approach to the NSS has not been adopted. In truth, I'm not sure what contributed to the NSS improvement. The generous accolades feel curiously discomforting.

All I can point to is an 'open door' policy. Staff are encouraged to become as office-based as possible to increase the probability of conversational encounters. While my office is a physical meeting space, this brick-walled abode is merely a venue of opportunity where becoming wellbeing can be discussed. Similar opportunities have been presented during impromptu conversations in corridors or campus restaurants. While educational space, like health care space, should be "conducive to privacy, dignity, homeliness and hopefulness", my focus is on bringing

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[2]The course, BA Multimedia Journalism, has been running at Bournemouth University since 1992.

"forms of life that are fully human to the space" (Galvin and Todres 2013, p. 17).

I call these spatial opportunities Becoming Spaces. Here, I strive to understand what students aspire to be by encouraging them to reflect upon their professional development. Through facilitating moments of mutual, introspective deliberation, we together explore the personal demands of professional becoming. These hermeneutic endeavours leave neither of the participants unchanged; the hermeneutic pursuit of Gadamer's (2004) 'fused horizons' entails learning more about others by learning more about oneself.

Becoming Spaces also provide collaborative opportunities to inspect the elephant in the room: journalistic tradition. I want students to experience becoming freedom through unravelling what journalism is, has been and could be. I want them to not only push the boundaries of occupational ideology but physically explore the shadowy peripheries of society where unheard voices must be heard. To develop a "strong, dangerous curiosity regarding an undiscovered world", one that "flames and flashes in all their being" (Nietzsche 2013, p. 8). I want them to disrupt normative discourses and create the agendas and narratives they want to create—ones relevant and pertinent to their present, not subservient to my past; to stand defiantly before the routines and complacencies of the everyday and start asking questions. Above all, Becoming Spaces are used to encourage students to be the journalists they want to be, not the journalists my team or I may have inadvertently decreed they should be. They must 'own' their becoming by taking charge of journalism's becoming. The stranger to journalism's in-group has no reason to feel meekly compliant: the stranger has come to challenge the "trustworthy recipes" the group employs to interpret the world (Schutz 1944, p. 501).

My Becoming Spaces essentially present opportunities to reimagine and reinvent journalism. Here, students are encouraged to create new, contemporary and more relevant manifestations of Gadamer's (2004) tradition. So, while we cannot change the past, it is possible to change the meaning of the past and the meaning it will have in the future (Caputo 2018). For Gadamer, it's not about denying the legacies of tradition

or honouring them, but a case of speaking to these influences, recognising them and becoming responsible for their implications (Moules 2002). Furthermore, hermeneutics concerns "pushing back against the pressure of received readings" to uncover, recover and retrieve from the original wellspring; hermeneutics goes back to the sources "and releases their deepest, hitherto untapped energies" (Caputo 2018, pp. 54–55; Heidegger 1962). In the land of journalism, I envisage this wellspring containing the courage and passion to think, do and be otherwise—conditions that become integral to the professional self-interpretation of liberated journalists.

However, we must not lose sight of the values that make humanness meaningful. A subjective sense of one's uniqueness is required together with a sense that agency can prevail over the dehumanising experience of oneself as merely passive or totally determined (Galvin and Todres 2013). In turn, it has been noted that wellbeing requires counterbalances to agency, mobility and becoming; a sense of rootedness, peacefulness and being should accompany feelings of flow and possibility (Galvin and Todres 2013). Becoming is, after all, entwined with human feelings. Just as wellbeing requires becoming, becoming requires wellbeing.

7.6 Future Mapping

Becoming Spaces are where attendance to becoming and wellbeing constitute a new pedagogic approach: becoming wellbeing. Yet while it's a pedagogy with the potential to holistically enrich skills-based teaching, it remains vulnerable to boundary encroachment. The propagation of instruments to measure HE performance, student satisfaction and student experience are never far away. These are the forces of the calculable, proudly hoisting the flags of requisite educational outcomes. They march confidently onwards, oblivious to hermeneutics and the interpretive, experiential world which is running all the time "beneath the radar of rules, algorithms and objectifying knowledge" (Caputo 2018, p. 233). If a pedagogic event can happen and no one knows it, how can we measure

the invisible, inaudible, imperative which has called the teacher and the students together, in the same room, closed the door and given them an hour together in order to let the event happen? (Caputo 2018, pp. 238–239)

It is in Becoming Spaces where I envisage such events unfolding. Away from preoccupations with methodological 'truth'—those concerns entailing judgements about worth, matters of frequency, reoccurrence, repetition, objectivity and the absolute—the truth is instead sought in events of meaning (Gadamer 2004). This is not to suggest that norms or standards are casually jettisoned; it is to suggest a "strategic depreciation of method and an appreciation of the event, with respect for a rigour that eludes exactness" (Caputo 2018, p. 240). Such events of meaning may inspire students to improve or change practice rather than replicate or preserve it; such events might also grant students a better understanding of the journey they undertake within themselves and the feelings evoked. These momentous happenings are hidden within sterile data sets. When human beings become subject to counting, what is important statistically may not necessarily connect with human experience or our care for the meaning of things and discovery of significance (Galvin and Todres 2013).

Similarly, a prescriptive, vocational focus upon rules and skills can further dehumanise through reducing the self to a receptacle of received interpretation. While the world of journalism is "governed by rules-based thinking", journalism education—keen to be accredited and approved—stands accused of too often giving over journalism to the publishers, taking their perspective and "their definition of what journalism is" (Cowan 2018, p. 20). Publishers, in turn, have also sought to

infantilise journalism education by keeping it limited to skills, partly to hold down wages, but perhaps also to control journalists, by defining their work, standards and lines of enquiry. (Cowan 2018, p. 20)

What it means to be a journalist has, it appears, been homogenised and safely restrained within a straitjacket of obedience and conformity. We risk failing students in their education if we fail to empower them to see

that they too have a place in defining journalism—and in defining the journalists they want to be (Cowan 2018; Bissell 2018).

Implicit in set ways, methods and routines is misplaced confidence that they are somehow future-proofed and will continue to be fit for purpose. Yet business as usual will not do in journalism. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that journalism today is facing unprecedented upheaval. While the technological revolution has "destroyed" the traditional business model of news, journalism must reconnect with community voices, establish more equitable relationships with social media platforms and address the unrepresentative makeup of workforces (Jukes and Fowler-Watt 2020, p. 14). The search for "new journalisms" also requires new academy pedagogies that can feed a healthy and sustainable model of practice (Jukes and Fowler-Watt 2020, p. 23). The becoming wellbeing approach introduced in this chapter is a response to this pedagogic challenge.

Beyond the world of journalism education, the invitation to explore Becoming Spaces is warmly extended to other vocational teachers who may similarly wish to hermeneutically attune. In Becoming Spaces, the task can begin to unshackle students from oppressive notions of their professional role while being attentive to the wellbeing that must accompany freedom. It starts with teachers' professional prejudices—their traditional ways of thinking and doing. These should not be guiltily suppressed and hidden; they must be provoked from the past to deepen understanding of themselves and their students. When teacher enlightenment facilitates student liberation, these former strangers become less strange to each other; they have, after all, secured each other's emancipation. Their worlds have become less mysterious too. Students who once surveyed faraway lands of strangeness, uncertainty and remoteness instead discover havens of possibility. They are ready to better our world while continuing their becoming adventures.

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8

Digital Competence Frameworks: Their Role in Enhancing Digital Wellbeing in Nursing Curricula

Sharon Waight and Debbie Holley

8.1 Introduction

Framing the expectations of digital literacies has been a problematic and contested path. To foster a digital mindset is an expectation of employers, and the susceptibility of jobs replaced by machine learning and automation has focused the endeavours of policymakers and educators alike. The seminal work of Frey and Osborne (2017) calculates that 47% of total US jobs are at risk from computerisation in the next decade. Whether the existing and future workforce has access to these yet unknown roles is predicated on educational attainment. In the UK, the Make or Break: The UK's digital future report (2015) had already started to categorise future skill needs, estimating that only 10% of the workforce were

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capable and highly skilled 'digital makers'; whereas 7% of the workforce were lambasted as 'digital muggles', for whom the digital may as well be 'magic'.

Mariya Gabriel (cited by Velker 2018, p. 4), EU Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society, reported 'the digital skills gap is real. While already 90% of future jobs require some level of digital literacy, 44% of Europeans lack basic digital skills'. Numerous technology reports highlight national economies driven by automated futures and fast-paced change (McKinsey 2018; PWC 2018; Ernst-Young and FCCI 2017).

> The pace of change of technology is far exceeding the speed at which many organisations are changing their behaviours and working practices at the moment. Businesses need to wake up to that now. Jonathan Tate, UK and EMEA. (Samsung 2017, p. 5)

Internationally, the New Media Horizon (NMC 2020) future scanning report, reports on the employers are increasingly turning to skills-based hiring and in quickly changing professions like health care or technology, commented that existing employees must continue to upskill. Against a fast-paced change in the working world, policymakers have sought frameworks to understand, measure and implement digital change. The EU through its digital vision for Europe 2020 first published the Digital Competence Framework (2017); in the UK, parallel work was undertaken by the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) and the foundations of their digital competence framework can be found in Beetham et al. (2009). The gap, however, in the digital frameworks is the thought and consideration needed for those working in these new ways. As digital ways of working, collaborating and networking offer great benefits in interdisciplinary working, for both industry and higher education alike, the impact cascades outside formal spheres of our lives and into our private life via a whole raft of social media channels and tools. Not all of these are invited—the power of the algorithm to follow our every tap and click has unintended consequences. Work by Biggins et al. (2017) identified a 'gap' in the most prevalent digital frameworks—the EU DigiComp and the UK JISC Digital Competency Frameworks. For

these researchers, the importance of life-long learning, self-development and wellbeing was inadequately developed.

Good practice can be found where governments place more emphasis on the holistic, and New Zealand has been quick to frame their digital framework through the dimensions of wellbeing that are potentially most affected by digital transformation. These are described as the evolving institutions of self, of social life and of civic life by Gluckman and Allen (2018). This chapter is thus located in an emergent body of work where digital frameworks are evolving to encompass wellbeing. JISC established a taskforce in 2018; the EU set out updated guidance for its DigiComp framework (2016) where, for the first time, the concept of digital wellbeing was articulated, under the digital safety category. The political framing of digital frameworks and skills is driven by economic success factors; it is timely to reflect upon what Brown et al. (2020, p. 54) articulates as:

> digital literacies need to strike a balance between a focus on the development of important skills for today anchored in the language of opportunity, and deeper levels of critique framed in the longer-term mission of promoting access, equity and education for all.

8.2   The Significance of 'Humanising' the Curriculum in Nursing

The cornerstone of nursing practice is person-centred care, and the cultural and philosophical basis is strongly embedded in contemporary nursing practice (Cummings 2017; NMC 2018). At the point of registration, the nurse must be able to

> demonstrate the numeracy, literacy, digital and technological skills required to meet the needs of people in their care to ensure safe and effective nursing practice. (Nursing and Midwifery Council 2018, p. 9)

Technological and digital advances in health care have significant implications for all contemporary healthcare professionals. The digital future

of Nursing advocates that digital skills training will need to be mandatory for nurse training and for this to be rooted in person-centred and humanising experience (Royal College of Nursing 2018). Nurses will, therefore, need to effectively and responsibly use technology. This includes finding and evaluating information, to evidence collaboration with others, to produce and share original content, using the Internet and technology tools to achieve many academic, professional and personal goals (Terry et al. 2019). These professional standards and requirements for contemporary professional nursing practice will require digital competence and literacy of current and future nursing workforce (Evangelinos and Holley 2015). They are essential in preparing nursing students for their placements; and to facilitate individual students for living, learning, working and participating in an increasingly digital healthcare profession (Grech 2014). Knowledge of self, the individual's own strengths and weaknesses as a professional nurse is an important attribute for understanding and building person-centred care (McCormack and McCance 2017). The need to place students at the heart of the learning process regarding digital skills and learning technological advances is paramount to the successful learning journey (Greaves et al. 2012). From the first entry into clinical practice, student nurses use a tablet device to record vital life signs such as temperature, pulse and blood pressure.

8.2.1 Underpinning Values Building Integrity and Trust

The values of openness, transparency and good communication are essential in building trust. Teachers that create learning environments in which students are given every encouragement to take ownership of their learning processes will increase individual self-efficacy, self-confidence and self-esteem, as outlined in the work of Bandura (1977). This will be essential when engaging in new and different learning material, such as digitalisation and technological skills. Facilitating students to be open and honest about previous experiences of technology and digital literacy will provide the foundations for continuous learning, helping them to build upon their experiences and any existing digital skills. Teaching

nurses requires empathy and compassion, showing a much deeper understanding of the individuality of students. Critical to how comfortable students feel about learning new technology and digital skills will be considerations of how the past experiences of the learner, the contexts of their lives are valued by those they are learning from.

Understanding how each student has engaged with digitalisation is the foundation for building upon experiences and changing perceptions of what digitalisation means to those providing person-centred health care. Mannerstrom et al. (2018) show that the majority of adolescents in Western countries engage in friendship-driven digital engagement, as opposed to interest-driven, creative and goal-orientated digital engagement prior to moving to higher education. This motivation towards friendship-driven, keeping up peer-relations, social networking will become an important area to build upon teaching the purpose of digital skills and transferring of the aim in health care, of connecting in a responsible way to patients, addressing needs, valuable health monitoring and information.

8.3 Digital Learning Journeys

Supporting students in their learning journey towards digital awareness in the Nursing context is problematic. Future technological innovation involves a step-change in culture, in ways of working, and draws upon bodies of work that practitioners may be unaware of, such as the legal requirement to work to General Data Protection Regulation (ICO 2020). Digital frameworks such as the JISC digital competency framework frame the actual competencies to be developed but lack guidance as to the underpinning values of a specific sector. Building digital and technological readiness for current and future health care needs to scaffold the engagement of nursing students as they access and engage with digital learning processes. The Todres et al. (2009) Humanising Framework sets out a way of understanding how to humanise nursing care, through the 8 humanising dimensions. The framework offers a way of examining how, as humans, we will learn differently using technology.

Demonstrating the significance of the relationship between student-centred learning of digital literacy and teacher can be understood through the quality of the interactions between student and teacher. Underpinning values and attributes become explicit in this model. Student centredness of learning processes is paramount in the human-ising of digital learning processes. As digitalisation in health increases, this enhances the gift of time nurses can spend interacting with patients and improvements in relationships with patients will be possible (Topol 2019). When applying this model, the patient is placed at the centre of healthcare delivery and nursing care.

> Nurturing the precious inter-human bond and deeper human interac-tions, based upon trust, presence, empathy and communication equals placing the patient in the centre of healthcare delivery and high-quality, safe patient care. (Topol 2019, p. 6)

In this chapter, the Todres et al. (2009) framework has been adapted as a model to show how we can conceptualise the humanising curricula to put students at the centre of the learning process. The concentric circles demonstrate a values-based offering, a relational model, with the students at heart. It demonstrates the relationship between students, their identity and wellbeing and the role of nurse academic in terms of the professional underpinning values, beliefs and principles (Fig. 8.1).

Themes: *Insiderness; Agency; Uniqueness; Togetherness; Personal Journey; Sense-Making; Embodiment; Sense of Place*

Values: *Empathy*; *Compassionate teaching; Integrity; Honesty; Respect and dignity; Professional role model for technology, presence and socio-emotional intelligence; Valuing prior digital experiences; Facilitative, supportive and engaging teaching style; Values and philosophical underpin-ning teaching of student-centred learning; Openness and transparency.*

8.4 The Framework for Nursing

The Waight and Holley framework for nursing draws upon the body of work by Devis-Rozental (2018), exploring socio-emotional intelligence; and the work of Todres et al. (2009) in offering a value-based approach to
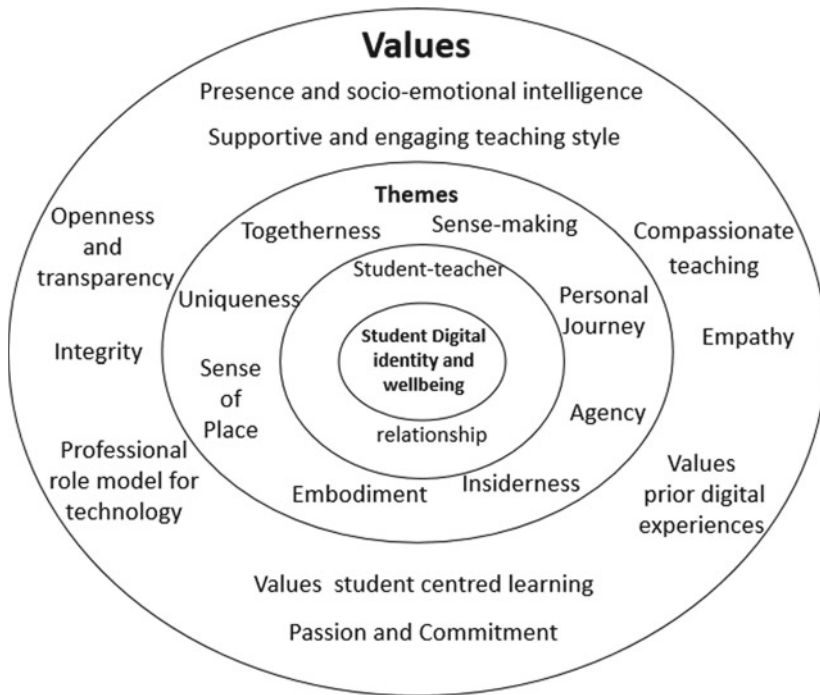
Fig. 8.1   A framework for nursing: humanising digital learning processes (*Source* Waight and Holley 2020 adapted from Todres et al. 2009; Devis-Rozental 2018)

building digital capacity for student nurses. This aligns with the professional requirements and its core values of person-centred clinical practice. Each dimension is framed as a value, followed by a brief explanation, with key proposals for good practice guidance for teaching and applying digital skill development.

Insiderness focuses on humanising student learning environments, encouraging student reflection about how the individual's experiences life from the inside, their feelings about using technology, their emotions and mood. The teacher interaction should, therefore, focus upon students' feelings, knowledge and motivation about digital skills. Many students will have had prior digital experience, and this may have been based upon peer friendships, social networking or about interest,

creativity and searching for information (Terry et al. 2019). Under-standing a motivational perspective from inside the person illuminates what students can do, building upon their existing digital footprint, and providing a good platform from which to build digital skills. The focus is about a 'can do' approach, is positive enabling positive self-efficacy and self-esteem, enabling the student nurses to increase understand and read patients in complex nursing situations.

Proposals for teaching:

- Nurse academics focus upon students' inner feelings, knowledge and motivations about learning digital skills; encourage exploring students' contexts, how they live their lives in relation to technology;
- Using good facilitative skills find out more about students' values, beliefs, feelings, opinions, needs, problems and solutions with digital and technology (JISC 2019).

Uniqueness is our underpinning values and beliefs that make us who we are and should not be viewed as a group with a set of the same char-acteristics (Todres et al. 2009). In our student context, it is important for the teacher/student relationship to understand students background and what makes students who they are as individuals. Careful consid-eration is required of educational background, social environments and how students live their lives from the digital perspective. Teachers may need to consider that some students have no digital experiences at all. Wellbeing is paramount for health professionals, and accessing resources online seems an easy fix. However, a scoping review by Webster et al. (2020) identifies a dearth of research into how technology can support the wellbeing, working lives and self-care of nurses.

Proposals for teaching:

- Set up empowering interactions with students that build self-esteem, valuing student individual learning needs as expressed with respect, honesty and trust;
- Open questions finding out what students do not understand, what puzzles them, what they do not like, do not agree with will enhance deeper and meaningful student nurse academic interactions;

- Challenging our digital assumptions about students;
- Add to the evidence base of how, and in what circumstances, technologies can support nursing, and nursing student wellbeing.

Personal journey can be explained as how students view life in terms of past, present and future. It will be important for students to understand that their past experiences are valued. Students will be familiar with the past, and anything new and unfamiliar can potentially cause distress and anxiety (Mannestrome et al. 2018). Teachers that are aware of a students' background, any limitations and indeed opportunities students have and can bring to the digital learning environment will promote much better engagement with digital literacy (Terry et al. 2019). Assessment of previous technological experiences, that is students' own personal journey, will enhance technological acquisition in the future. This approach can support and realign to a new health digital and technological journey applicable to healthcare requirements. Such teaching strategies that acknowledge and value students' personal digital journey thus far will facilitate meaningful navigation of and new positive digital experiences of the future.

Proposals for teaching:

- Interacting with students using compassion, empathy and deeper socio-emotional intelligence supporting students to navigate the unfamiliar digital learning environment and mitigate against distress and anxiety;
- Facilitate students to value who they are and consider the external environment fostering a sense of coherence and meaningfulness about the internal and external environment of learning.

Todres et al. (2009) explain having **agency** as having freedom of choice and being individually accountable for any choices being made. By participating freely and showing responsibility for our actions and things that happen around us, our own sense of dignity and self-efficacy is promoted. This is a key aspect when supporting students in unfamiliar learning situations such as digital and new technical skills. Students seeing themselves as taking control or allowed to take control and being

proactive in digital skills acquisition offers students control and owner-ship of the learning experiences. This is linked to student's emotional wellbeing and enabling meaningful learning in Devis-Rozental (2018); and contributes towards a more sustainable way of nurses enhancing their wellbeing online, an under-researched area as outlined in Webster et al. (2020). Supporting students through understanding that learning digital literacy is part of living and working in a person-centred society, and that involves respecting and promoting the dignity of all individuals (Goodyear et al. 2018; Topol 2019).

Proposals for teaching:

- Explore with students their perceptions of control and how they feel able, allowed and welcome control in their lives. Exploring the culture and structure of the learning environment to mitigate against blocks or barriers to positive learning experiences (Peters et al. 2018);
- Nurse academics need to facilitate choice in how students interact with digital skills acquisition, such as what to learn and how to learn, encouraging early research skills;
- Students own sense of dignity and self-efficacy need to be enhanced and maintained.

Togetherness is defined as being part of a community, recognising students' individuality while being part of a group or community of learning. Student-centred pedagogies, such as peer-led learning activities, are developing recognition as a fundamental aspect of many teaching programmes and are nationally recognised as excellent (Keenan 2014). Many benefits to the student are demonstrated, including increased confidence in practising skills, better self-esteem, improved communi-cation skills, developed critical thinking skills and overall higher perfor-mance during studies. This will be crucial when learning the unfamiliar, such as new technical skills and negotiating learning of new and different skills. Working together on digital literacy enhances deeper learning opportunities for new and different digital skills through the online and blended opportunities of technology, especially through the enhanced features of contemporary Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs).

Proposals for teaching:

- The role of nurse academic to be a facilitator, providing opportunities to build relationships with peers to work together on digital literacy and creating a sense of belonging to the peer group;
- Nurse academics need to focus interactions upon building a community of students learning together, social learning.

Nurse academics that are focused upon **sense-making** are focused upon and care about students' past and current experiences with technology. Understanding and what makes sense to students so far on their journey of digital learning supports meaningful understanding of the significance of technology to the nursing discipline and caring for patients. This approach goes deeper behind the surface learning of digital skills as it supports students to examine the world of technology around them while beginning to understand their own views and concerns regarding technology. For example, students will have prior skills in online social networking, seeking online information. These existing technological skills build upon online communication with patients such as the use of information Apps, telemedicine that promotes quick and efficient communication, accessibility of information for patients and the role nurses have in addressing patient information needs. A systematic review by Maudsley et al. (2019) reports mobile devices particularly supported student: assessment; communication; clinical decision-making; logbook/notetaking; and accessing information.

Informal and hidden curricula included: concerns about disapproval; confidentiality and privacy; security; distraction by social connectivity and busy clinical settings; and mixed messages about policy. Thus, the nursing academic has a key role to help the student navigate through this complex and fast-changing environment.

Proposals for teaching:

- Consider existing digital skills students use in social networking, build upon these and apply to concrete examples that relate to caring for patients. For example, using telemedicine to provide health information and education for patients;

- Nurse academics need to provide information on what technology is available that enables connection and meaningful interactions with patients. This will include telemedicine, information Apps, patient digital monitoring of clinical signs using handheld devices.

Having a **sense of place** offers security, comfort and familiarity (Hemmingway et al. 2012). Students exist in their own familiar space that offers security and, therefore, confidence. Experiencing a new and different environment and space based on new technology can be frightening and stressful for students (Topol 2019). Therefore, the student–teacher interactions need to do the best to mitigate against this in a supportive and understanding way, reducing stress and anxiety from the unfamiliar. The teacher–student interactions should be based upon building trust, flexibility in learning approaches, to support negotiating this unfamiliar space of the digital learning environment. Sensitive and flexible teaching approaches will enable students to be comfortable with digital learning.

Proposals for teaching:

- Encourage students to express views and concerns in an open, non-judgemental and sensitive learning environment culture;
- Support students to negotiate unfamiliar learning environment setting small achievable learning goals. Education through best practice learning design in online environments such as an online library, information seeking chat rooms, using digital access for education (JISC 2018);
- Encourage successful digital and technology learning stories to be shared amongst students in the group, this is surprisingly under-utilised in research and evidence-based practice reporting (de Jager et al. 2017);
- Support and educate students life skills development, such as assertiveness, decision-making, social interaction good interpersonal skills and linking this to resilience building and coping strategies (Devis-Rozental 2018, Meneghel et al. 2019).

Considering the psychological, physical and spiritual, the holistic needs of an individual are important to a sense of wellbeing. In the Humanising framework, this is described as **Embodiment** (Galvin and Todres 2013). Embodiment is about the whole person, the mind, body and spirit and these elements not being viewed as separate (Todres et al. 2009). Designing purposefully for the quality of the learning environment, and student and teacher interactions within these spaces have an impact on student nurses' emotional health and wellbeing (Tharani et al. 2017). Limited access to learning resources such as computers or noisy learning spaces can impact upon psychological wellbeing of students' undergraduate nurse training. Teaching digital literacy should, therefore, consider the needs of students holistically, provide learning opportunities that enhance emotional wellbeing, within the digital learning environment. Careful attention to students' psychological needs in addition to the practice of learning digital literacy enhances wellbeing.

Proposals for teaching:

- Focus upon students' strengths and build positively upon student-centred learning;
- Carefully consider the emotional and psychological health of students, in the classroom and in helping them prepare for clinical placement;
- Provide timely and helpful feed-forward advice to students building upon digital strengths;
- Monitor learning environments and building a calm and relaxed atmosphere;
- Ensure adequate information technology resources to reduce frustration and anxiety.

8.5 Conclusion and Recommendations

McCormack and McCance (2017) describe patient-centred healthcare environments that enable patients and staff to flourish, as environments of care when nurses really do focus upon patients, getting to know and understand their patients in a truly holistic way. Our model applies

this same approach, human interactions which aim to provide student-centred learning for digital literacy. Humanising the learning experience for students who are on the learning journey of digital literacy will require important and nuanced skills from the teacher. The need to consider the quality of student–teacher interactions is crucial. Compassion, empathy and socio-emotional intelligence are key attributes of the nurse academic when teaching a student-centred approach. Implementing this adapted model of humanising the learning experience and the values and attributes of nurse academics enables students to flourish and engage in some deep digital learning practices. E-portfolios, reflective blogs and online networking are ways of offering different spaces for reflection to happen. Teacher and student interactions based on meaningful connections, non-judgemental interactions provide a safe environment for learning new and different digital skills. The humanising dimensions of insiderness, uniqueness, agency, togetherness, personal journey, sense of place, sense-making and embodiment and what matters to students is central to achieve this.

A humanising digital learning environment will consider the social context, psychological, physical and spiritual aspects of our students. By creating the context for being 'present' in the learning environment, digital or face-to-face, space is available for meaningful interactions between the student and nurse academic. This reinforces the achievement of positive and successful learning outcomes. Role modelling professionalism in all the spheres of learning and teaching can reinforce positive professionalism. Whether this is during routine email correspondence, social media posts, blogging and posting on other social media channels; it is the nurse academic who will demonstrate the values underpinning good practice that should be followed by student nurses in all of their professional and personal life. Student-centred digital learning rooted in a humanising, holistic teaching approach provides the socio-emotional wellbeing so crucial for positive digital learning.

Our nursing model offers a way forward for those interested in embedding humanistic and holistic values with a digital framework, with the students at the centre of their practice. We hypothesise this can be applied across disciplines, especially for tutors supporting students who

will undertake professional placements; and this reflects the head, hand and heart approach reflected throughout this book.

Recommendation for good practice arising from this chapter:

- All academics are able to encompass aspects of a holistic teaching approach by finding out what matters to students, considering psychological and spiritual needs and creating a sense of wellbeing;
- Academics, not just nurse academics, would benefit from ongoing continuous personal and professional development to integrate the humanistic with the digital curricula;
- Embedding the JISC national digital competence frameworks adds breadth and depth to any curricula, as well as meeting the requirements of more clinical aspects of student nurse development;
- Students studying towards professional qualifications benefit from a spiral curriculum that reinforces the key values underpinning their profession and 'way of being';
- With the fast pace of technological innovation, we all, as academics, need specific and bespoke digital learning opportunities to enhance our own, and our students, technological capabilities.

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9

The Fundraising Academy: An Experimental Model Combining Knowledge Exchange, Real-Life Professional Training and the Development of Socio-Emotional Intelligence

Claire House-Norman, Camila Devis-Rozental, and Kerry Noble

9.1   Introduction

Doing something meaningful that gives us satisfaction and has a positive impact on the world can enrich our experience. Indeed, "to be human is to live in a personal world that carries a sense of how things are for the person" (Todres et al. 2009, p. 30). Being a fundraiser can be a way of achieving this sense of purpose and fulfilment. In this chapter, we present the case study of Bournemouth University's (BU) Fusion Fundraising Academy (the Academy). Launched in 2019, this unique programme aims to prepare the fundraisers of the future while demonstrating the vital role that universities play in enriching society. Through a robust

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programme developed with an embodied relational understanding in mind, it combines direct knowledge exchange (head) with professional practice (hand), social interaction and socio-emotional intelligence (SEI) (heart). In this way, the Academy exemplifies how fundraising can be taught in a more holistic or humanised way (Devis-Rozental 2018).

The Academy's model is unusual as it combines masterclasses and workshops with real-world fundraising for local charities, consultancy-style projects for small local, national and international charities, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) experience with companies or grant-making trusts. Each intern spends nine months developing their skills by gaining knowledge, and the participants are currently BU students undertaking their industrial placement year before returning to university for their final year. The model could, however, be rolled out for graduates or second-career individuals.

9.2   Background

The Academy was originally an idea born out of necessity, following the Fundraising and Alumni Relations Department's failure to successfully recruit new staff. We knew we had great projects for which to raise money, including researching the diagnosis and treatment of prosopagnosia, a state-of-the-art building for trainee nurses and conservation of a seventeenth-century shipwreck in Poole Harbour. We offer a competitive employment package with a good salary and excellent working conditions, yet we ran several unsuccessful recruitment campaigns. Our recruitment campaigns coincided with increased approaches from headhunters towards existing team members, with an interesting pattern of approaches from the US, Australia and New Zealand in addition to the usual UK/European requests. The traditional UK charity sector (i.e. not universities) also started advertising directly on university fundraising forums and in segmented publications.

In 2013, we undertook a short survey on one of the fundraising forums asking universities if they had struggled to recruit to fundraising positions. The 13 universities who took part all replied that they could not recruit. Responses ranged from Russell Group and Oxbridge colleges

to new, smaller universities. Many fundraising directors noted that they had advertised the same position several times, and either received no or few applications. Some put the position on hold; some continued short-staffed; and some decided to home-grow new team members.

The problem extends beyond the university sector and exempt charities to include registered charities. For instance, 71% of respondents to a 2017 survey said that their organisation did not have the requisite skills to run a successful fundraising campaign. 56% also said that generating income and achieving financial sustainability were their greatest concern (2017/2018 Local Charity and Community Group Sustainability Report, Local Giving).

We tried various ways to increase the size of the fundraising department, including home-growing staff. This had mixed success and the reasons for the failures which did occur varied. They included a lack of emotional resilience, adaptability, relevant transferable skills and mixed ability to ask for money. The successes were notable, but the whole team agreed that the investment in home-growing one member of staff—who would remain unproven for c12–18 months (owing to the lead time for fundraising)—was significant.

The successful fundraiser needs a sound theoretical understanding of the main laws impacting day-to-day work. It also needs socio-emotional intelligence encompassing areas such as empathy, confidence and self-awareness to work with donors, as well as the resilience to be exposed to sometimes difficult themes and activities while not getting burnout (which is the withdrawal of activities that used to be enjoyable due to stress and emotional fatigue). Symptoms of burnout may include disengagement, feeling alienated, loss of purpose or meaning and exhaustion, amongst other things. It is a term usually related to those working in the helping professions where compassion, emotional support and difficult conversations may take place (Ransom 2016).

Within the fundraising world, this is also a concern and clearly evident when searching online for "fundraiser burnout" which will return thousands of results. Fundraising, according to McGuinness (2018), is frequently referred to as the "revolving door". Additionally, resilience, happiness and a good work/life balance are as important for established staff as trainees—yet very little attention or training is given in this area.

We searched for internships or training which would help to develop the next generation of competent and resilient fundraisers, but found only single-topic courses and internships which were either short term and unpaid, or working with the larger established universities. Fundraising courses are not prolific: Smith (2018) notes that,

> there are over 880,000 people working in the not-for-profit (NFP) sector in the UK and it's no secret that effective fundraising is central to the success of an NFP organisation. It's therefore surprising that UK-based options for studying fundraising can be hard to find.

Many of the issues we consider vital do not appear to be addressed in training (for instance, donor dominance and sexual harassment, working with Royal Patrons and the press, costing projects, resilience and developing support networks). We also couldn't find any internships which actually enabled trainee fundraisers to sit down in front of a major donor to ask for money face to face—yet we expect individuals to segue into confident, knowledgeable fundraisers.

The internships we discovered were usually with larger charities or universities; this may be because they have the staff and resources to support trainees. The problem with these internships, however, is that they don't represent the majority of the voluntary sector in the UK. According to the Charity Commission, 98.7% of the (registered) voluntary sector earned less than £5 million in 2016, and nearly 40% earned less than £10,000 (Keen and Audickas 2017).

The Foundation for Social Investment (FSI 2017) recently noted: "Skills gaps in fundraising appear to be most pronounced in charities with a lower annual turnover. 53% of small charities with an income of less than £150,000 recognised a need for upskilling in fundraising, while only 19% of charities with a turnover between £1 million and £1.5 million recognised the same need". Internships could, therefore, be seen to self-perpetuate the supply of fundraisers to the wealthiest charities.

9.3   The Model

While all forms of fundraising are in demand in the UK and further afield, major donor fundraising is currently the area with the most considerable skills shortage (reinforced by our Research into other universities' shortage of fundraisers) (FSI 2017). It is also one of the areas with the best cost: benefit ratio, meaning it can be a very cost-effective way to raise money.

As previously mentioned, successful major donor fundraisers need a broad range of hard and soft skills, some less obvious than others. The Academy has been developed with a full-time comprehensive curriculum covering nine months, enabling each intern to learn from industry experts and through "on-the-job" experience. To develop the curriculum, we began with two main questions:

1. What skills would the perfect major donor fundraiser have?
2. What do we wish we knew/had experienced when we all started work?

These two questions allowed us to think carefully about the type of programme we wanted to develop to provide our interns with an experience that would support them in growing holistically. For this, we made use of our lived experience, and every member of the Fundraising and Alumni Relations Department reflected on their journey so far. We took into account our personal journeys and looked at our own mistakes, difficult situations and social faux pas. We wanted to try to prevent the interns making the same mistakes as us, by developing a curriculum based on the commonalities of our journeys while acknowledging that we are all unique. Each individual's experience would, therefore, be different, and they would have to be active in their own sense-making (Galvin and Todres 2013).

We decided that there should be a mix of masterclasses and theoretical learning alongside experiential learning activities with fundraising "on the ground". That was then split into internship positions with a partner charity and consultancy projects. The former enables the interns to experience a broad range of fundraising tasks and the reality of joining

an established charity team. This gives them the possibility to have real-life experiences and learn by doing while developing their own sense of place and agency to experience making choices, being generally held accountable for their actions, attitudes and decisions. The latter encourages the interns to work as a successful team to solve challenges and present real-world solutions in a time-pressured environment. By doing so, interns can develop SEI skills—an important attribute when working with others.

The masterclasses are delivered by a range of internal and external speakers. For instance, the first month's intensive sessions were primarily delivered by members of the Fundraising and Alumni Relations Department. As the interns grow in experience and confidence, the masterclasses evolve. All the external speakers generously gave their time for free, meaning the budget can be concentrated on good salaries for the trainee fundraisers. Topics covered by expert speakers included:

- Working with the press and Royal Patrons;
- Donor dominance and sexual harassment;
- Networking;
- Running a capital fundraising campaign;
- Forms of address;
- Managing a grant-making trust;
- Asking a major donor for money.

9.4   The Aim of the Academy

The ultimate aim of the Academy is to produce charity-ready fundraisers and to start to increase the pool of talented and able staff for causes in the UK.

There are, however, a number of secondary aims:

- **Community benefit**
  Our university has made a commitment to support local communities and to enable knowledge exchange through staff and students; this allowed us to gain funding to recruit salaried interns so that our charity

partners wouldn't incur a cost. This is a positive step since we know that the majority of charities (and certainly the smaller ones) struggle to raise enough money to fund their day-to-day operations, and they certainly can't afford to home-grow staff. Consequently, these charities are receiving free fundraising support while providing staff resources in management and coaching.

The interns are also undertaking a number of consultancy-style projects during the year, and we worked with The Fore (2020)—a charity which supports grass-route initiatives: "believes any organisation with the talent and drive to create social change should be able to access the support it needs to fulfil its potential"—to select small charities which were predominantly volunteer-run. These included a community kitchen in London, a farming charity in Malawi and a schools-outreach initiative. Since these charities could not afford to pay for fundraising consultancy, it is great to be able to give them a number of consultancy days for free. Doing so reinforces our fundraising team's commitment and passion about our community's benefit, while we are able to support small and often-overlooked causes.

- **Hard and soft skills development**

> the "insiderness" dimension of our humanity is the "soft underbelly" that often lies hidden in the shadows. (Todres et al. 2014, p. 9)

The qualities of a good fundraiser are directly transferable to many other professions. We can draw direct comparisons between technical/work specific (hard) skills such as learning to ask a donor for money (sales techniques), developing funding applications (learning to write for different audiences) and charity law (issues around liability). While the development of skills which can be easily mapped across professions is notable, far more critical is the fast-track acquisition or re-discovery of people's soft skills.

In the Academy, these include rediscovering a sense of self, where insiderness and personal journey are important (Todres et al. 2009) as a way of finding purpose in what we do. It is also about developing SEI skills such as assertiveness and confidence by becoming comfortable

asking for money, requiring negotiating skills, developing and maintaining empathy, social awareness and understanding the psychology of donors and their giving motivations. These skills all support the development of influencing skills for meetings, developing self-awareness, motivation and an understanding of management strategies while managing senior volunteers (leading beyond authority), all of which provide beneficial techniques and knowledge to use in any field. Soft skills are incredibly valuable; a recent report noted that the value of soft skills to the UK is c£88 billion, and they predict an increase to £127 billion by 2025 (Development Economics 2015). In personal financial terms, soft skills can increase in an individual's earning potential by up to 15% (McDonalds UK 2015).

Developing these soft skills will support these interns in gaining knowledge and expertise that can be transferable to any area of their lives and therefore enrich their experience. More importantly, reflecting and developing these areas have a benefit that goes beyond being a sound practitioner, as they may enrich an individual's experience and their self-identity.

Soft skills and self-development are very much in demand, yet there appears to be a considerable skills gap in graduates who have not undertaken work placements or internships. The Institute of Student Employers (2017) reported that the five most common graduate skills gaps were:

- Managing up (only 5% of employers believed graduates had this skill);
- Dealing with conflict (12%);
- Negotiating/influencing (17%);
- Commercial awareness (23%);
- Resilience (31%).

Furthermore, the Edge Foundation reports that 92% of employers surveyed said soft skills matter as much or more than hard skills. 80% said soft skills are increasingly crucial to company success, and this statement is particularly telling: "While hard skills may get a candidate's foot in the door, it's soft skills that ultimately open it" (The Edge Foundation 2019).

Gaining these skills is useful and necessary, especially as professions change and various "hard" skills required in many jobs may be automated. Still, these more "human" characteristics (including social interaction, kindness, consideration, empathy and engagement with others) are much more difficult to replicate—even though they are essential for success in the workplace, especially if we consider the idea presented by Devis-Rozental (2018) of SEI intelligence as being something which must have a positive impact on others and our environment. It is no longer merely about our own development but also how that impacts around us, and this is something that links well with the fundraising environment and particularly with the concept of leading beyond authority. Common Purpose (2020) notes that:

> People who lead beyond their authority can produce change beyond their direct circle of control… Leading beyond authority requires many different skills. Leaders need to be able to work in new situations and should keep in mind that they need three key competencies – the right approach, a good strategic mindset and the ability to work with people (especially people who aren't like you).

Several characteristics in each of the specific competencies resonate with both fundraising and SEI. They include "independence, passion, building coalitions and cultural intelligence"; these soft skills all have a great capacity to impact and influence those around us. The Academy's curriculum has been designed to gradually introduce increasingly challenging social situations such as networking lunches, formal and informal meetings and leading beyond authority. The interns learn in a safe environment where they can try things and learn from their mistakes. We argue that the best lessons within their working environment come from direct experience where they can make sense of their experience and develop their own personal journey (Devis-Rozental 2018).

Many of the skills required to master fundraising are soft and cannot be learnt from a book. The most successful individuals are those that have a lived experience they can draw from. Having the time and space to reflect on their learning helps them to contextualise these and gain

valuable lessons for their future jobs. This will also help them develop passion and enthusiasm for their work as they can see how meaningful it can be.

- **Wellness and resilience**

  As referred to earlier in this chapter, fundraiser burnout is a real concern—both for the individuals affected and for their employers. Research in the US by Mind Share Partners (2019) indicated that Generation Z (individuals born from the mid-1990s to mid-2000s) are more likely to experience mental health symptoms for longer durations; they are, however, also more open to diagnosis and treatment than their forebears.

  Even though socio-emotional skills are vital to employees, these are not usually explicitly taught within programmes. Still, being able to cope with challenges at work and particularly the transition from full-time study to full-time employment is incredibly important for the wellbeing of the individual, and perhaps more importance should be placed on this.

  One area which is essential to our wellbeing is happiness, which in turn is closely linked to resilience. For instance, Rapee (cited by McDevett 2018) notes: "if people can deal with stressors in their lives and can bounce back quickly from stressors, they'll be much more likely to be happy and happy for longer". Additionally, Rapee (cited by McDevett 2018) states:

  > Being able to manage emotions and stress can impact everything from family, social relationships and jobs to medical and physical issues. The financial costs are very high if we look at absenteeism, family breakdown and problems in the classroom.

  This is further asserted by Devis-Rozental (2018) when talking about managing emotions to enhance our wellbeing. Developing an understanding and self-awareness of how we react to situations can help us manage them better, even under challenging circumstances. Identifying our triggers and the areas, we must continue developing can help us become more resilient. This is important as we are placing more expectations on people. We shouldn't

neglect the psychological skills required by employees. It's not just about learning a job role and its technical skills, but knowing how to deal with pressure, workloads and all the stressors that are now intertwined with the technical demands of a role. (Rapee cited by McDevett 2018)

Happiness is a factor in wellbeing and employee health, and it is also a key factor in fundraising. Studies have highlighted that happy people are likely to give back to their communities, whether through time or money: "this effect is one of the most robust findings in the literature on positive mood and social behavior, (sic) having been variously called the "feel good, do good" phenomenon, the "glow of goodwill", and the "warm glow of success" (Lyubomirsky et al. 2005, p. 35). The reverse can also be true, in that the very act of giving back to one's community can induce a feeling of wellbeing, contentment and happiness. In fact, the Happiness Academy (2019) developed the 12 pillars of happiness with areas such as gratitude, purpose, resilience self-development and engagement seen as vital to people's happiness.

This can be the case for financial giving or time. Volunteering for a favourite charity (for instance) can lower stress, increase happiness and increase social connections (Brain UP 2020). This, in turn, gives us a sense of purpose which will improve our motivation and engagement.

The whole model of the Academy is based around small charities, their need for support and the service beneficiaries they support. The feel-good factor is a well-known motivator for fundraisers; it was listed as one of the top five reasons on JustGiving (2016) for why individuals fundraise. Specifically, the respondents said they fundraised "to feel good, helping others, making a difference".

Positive emotions don't just make us—as fundraisers—feel better about ourselves, but they can also be indicators of future success. A study by Cohn et al. (2009, p. 2) noted that "positive emotions forecast valued outcomes like health, wealth and longevity because they help build the resources to get there". Ego-resilience (the ability to bounce back from challenging life events) and positive emotions seem to exist in a loop, where they "maintain and build on one another" (Cohn et al. 2009, p. 9). This is particularly important if we are to

develop a more humanised practice where people are at the centre of what we do.

It would be too simplistic to say that fundraising for charities is an instant path to wellbeing and resilience. Still, fundraising is an excellent career in which to experience tremendous highs and the polar opposite, the freezing lows. The highs are enormously positive: helping to save lives through funding mental health nurses or finding cures for disease; preventing poverty and providing sanitation and clean drinking water; assisting a hospice in giving comfort in the final days of life and many more life-altering situations. The interns are faced with different life challenges during their work with their partner charities, which will test them in lots of different ways, and they must have the opportunity to develop the socio-emotional skills which will help them to succeed.

- **To promote fundraising as a career**
  Fundraising does not appear to be well known as a career path. Each of the interviewees for the first year of the Academy was asked whether they had thought about fundraising as a career before they saw the adverts—and 100% said they did not know it was an option.

  There are many paths to fundraising, but most positions understandably require some experience (in a charity, the voluntary trustees are legally and financially liable for mistakes made by their fundraisers which can make employing new fundraisers a risk). Experience can be gained as a volunteer or paid member of staff. Still, fundraising can appear quite one-sided to the public, with only community activities evident (such as sponsored tasks or events). The many specialisms of fundraising are not well known amongst the general public, and therefore, it is not surprising that fundraising is not often thought of as career choice.

9.5   Evaluation During Our First Year

Feedback from our partners was fantastic with one team stating:

> It was a brilliant day, thank you very much… your team [our interns] were quite superb, very well presented, articulate and personable, all the Fuellers were impressed and enjoyed the day.

Another charity wrote:

> The students conducted themselves in a professional and exemplary fashion throughout, respecting the confidentiality of our business and responding clearly to the brief given. They addressed our requirements astutely and concisely, providing two informative and practical reports. They have given us a clear direction on the way that [charity] needs to work in the future, in terms of both organisation and fundraising. Their suggestions give us a firm base upon which to operate in the future.

Additionally, and to evaluate the programme's efficacy in supporting students in developing their SEI while taking part in this distinct programme, we carried out a focus group with five interns nearing the end of their internship. We wanted to find out if this method of experiential learning mixed with masterclasses had supported them in developing skills for life.

During the focus group, it was clear that the interns had gained a wealth of knowledge and experience while attending the Academy. One participant stated:

> I think we've learned a lot of skills and SEI, so we've done lots of master classes in public speaking and transferrable skills for the future. When we did our public speaking workshop, we learned about our physical responses and made us a lot more aware of why we felt the way we did.

Interns talked about gaining skills from opportunities to network, practise skills such as public speaking and being able to practice what they had learned during the workshops. One participant explained:

> I definitely think that it has worked because we're doing theory but then putting it into practice. So that's been really good throughout the Academy. I think if we just had the Academy and none of us were with our charity partners, it would be a bit of a killer because it would be so much theory all year. They've definitely done it well that you learn and then you can actually implement it straight away…. so, it's nice to learn things and put it into practice.

They identified how this type of Academy was distinct, and all were appreciative of the opportunities given with another participant telling us:

> I think we've had loads of opportunities that maybe another type of internship may not have given us or the type of people we've met.

This, they all agreed, helped them build their confidence with an intern saying, "I'm a lot more confident in speaking out". Another intern said:

> I think a lot of events to go with our charities, we go out and do certain types of events. I think that helps with confidence and self-esteem.

These skills were then transferable to their work with charities. An example of this was given by one of the interns:

> I suppose for me today I've come from a bereavement session [in the charity], so I've gotta… I haven't lost anyone…well, I've lost my grandmother but some of these people in this session have lost husbands, wives, quite early on. So just being confident in myself and being sensitive. Although I haven't been in their shoes, you know, I have to sort of still…I want to be confident because I am there for a reason. I'm fundraising, and it's part of what I need to do, but yeah it's that whole 'I haven't been in that situation' so again, confidence and that's probably grown over time because I have become really invested in the hospice and what I was doing.

Being able to have experts talking to them and the opportunity to learn how to address people in various mediums and meeting was also beneficial to them:

> We have high net worth level individuals come in and speak to us, and we have to do a lot of learning which tells you how to address specific people …. Not only communicate but written communication as well. I found it really useful in that sense but also meeting high net worth level individuals and again the events. Just meeting a range of people, to be honest.

Another intern added:

> We've had to learn to have a working lunch and eat and then also talk. Little skills like that have been really good, like developing your confidence by holding a conversation with someone you just met.

The opportunity to learn from others was seen as very important by all. One participant illustrated this by saying:

> I've learned so much from this, and it is people coming in, and even if I get little bits from each person, I can kind of accumulate this and when I tie that to other work I will remember certain things that they've said.

Another intern mentioned empathy as something which had developed further:

> I definitely felt quite an empathetic person beforehand. But I definitely think this experience at the Academy, working with different people, being in a team, the environment, I've probably developed those skills more.

Assertiveness, self-awareness and a more critical approach to things were also identified as learning gains during the fundraising academy. Overall, they felt the experience has given them a wealth of knowledge that they will be able to apply to other areas of their life. They thought that the distinctness of the programme worked well, although they would

have liked more time "on the ground" with the charities and meeting people they could be helping because to them the main thing was to find purpose in what they do.

> At least I'm learning how I can help other people and especially working for a charity. You may feel like you're not doing a lot but actually me being here, I am helping them.

Furthermore, an intern asserted:

> I think sometimes it is difficult to feel like you are making a difference, especially if you are in a large charity and your internship level… we kind of didn't feel like we were making any difference. Now, as we started doing more and more and more, it does. I think if you're in a smaller organisation, it's definitely a purpose. It feels like a real purpose.

Regarding other opportunities for improvement, there were two main areas which participants identified. The first one was trying to ensure that there were more opportunities to liaise with people from different cultures and background. There was an overall consensus that there was a gender and age imbalance, although one participant stated:

> That's not really representative of the Academy though because you can't help that the industry at the moment is mainly men.

The reality is that this is a complex issue shaped by socio-economic and cultural traditions. This is slowly changing as gender roles continue to shift, and our environment becomes more multicultural. The fact that the interns were confident to raise this issue demonstrates a high level of critical thinking which is an excellent outcome as they move onto the next stage of their journey, as they will be mindful of this and eager to continue challenging it.

The second area identified was to develop a better balance in the way interns are seen within the Academy. To us, they were second-year students coming to learn a craft, but once they got into their charities, they were full-time employees completing a task. Therefore, we need to ensure that from the first day in our Academy, they are more empowered

to feel as members of staff and peers in this journey. This is something we had already identified as an area for improvement through our reflections in practice and which will be addressed as we get ready for our next cohort of interns.

Interestingly, the main area where interns struggled was time management, especially at the beginning of the programme and at times generational differences regarding what should be important, for example how to address people, as one participant stated:

> I know people have earned their titles by doing something, but I always see it as weird. I mean we're both people. I should be able to speak to you as a person without having this different power balance.

9.6 Main Learning Points

The Fundraising Academy has been developed and is being run by professional fundraising staff at Bournemouth University. It was not designed to be an academic course but based on a traditional industrial work placement combined with a fast-track learning process. We knew we had a lot to learn—both about developing a successful model which could be rolled out to other institutions and from the interns themselves. While some members of the team were experienced in training or home-growing staff, none of us had trained non-office workers before. We have adjusted the curriculum throughout the first year and made changes for the next cohort of interns—this will be an ongoing process! Our main lessons from the first year include:

9.6.1 Do not Assume a Level of Knowledge

The curriculum was planned to carefully induct each intern into the vagaries of fundraising, the laws and the socio-emotional skills required to lead beyond authority. We did not assume any knowledge of fundraising. We did, however, assume a level of knowledge about working in an office and basic office systems. For many of the interns,

this was their first job in an office, and therefore, we had to develop some additional learning sessions, for which we had to make time.

9.6.2 Transitioning from Education into Full-Time Work Benefits from a Lead Time

The soft skills required to be a productive member of a team, working full-time with a commute, cannot be learned instantly. University students have, on average, 11 hours teaching or lecturing time per week. If they don't see the rest of the time as if it was a full-time job, to cope with the expectation to undertake research and assignments, the cultural shock to move to a fixed 37.5 hour week can be significant, especially when interns are expected to attend fast-track training for many of the days. To ease these interns into a full-time routine, we enabled them to work shorter days for most of the first month until they had built up the resilience and stamina to complete the full week's hours.

9.6.3 Ability to Absorb Volumes of Information vs Societal References

The interns had completed two years at university before they joined the Academy, and their ability to absorb volumes of complex information far surpassed that of the existing team members. Not surprisingly they had been primed to sift through swathes of data and to accurately pull out what they needed. This meant that their learning curve (purely for technical sessions) was faster than expected.

The age and life experience of the interns (most had joined university straight after sixth form) meant that their societal references were different from existing team members. The interns learnt the theories incredibly quickly, but they needed more developmental time and support to apply that information in a practical sense. The learning curve for the application of the theories was, therefore, slower than expected.

This was managed by rearranging the curriculum to give the interns more time on practical projects, helping them to learn through experiential methods. This novel method of teaching and learning also challenged

us in how to support and engage the interns. We must continue developing our approach and always remember that these interns are our peers in the learning journey, and we are learning from them as much as they learn from us.

9.6.4 Fundraising Is Even Bigger than We Realised

As mentioned earlier in the chapter, the curriculum was designed to cover a wide range of fundraising and associated skills, primarily based on the combined experiences of the department. It became apparent that nine months are not long enough to cover all the "main" forms of fundraising, as these are evolving so quickly (for instance, we could not include crowdfunding or social media as dedicated new ways to raise money). We focused instead on the background skills which are in demand, but we will need to be agile with the curriculum as an organic evolution of the industry occurs.

9.6.5 The Charity Placements Might Experience Difficulties

Recruiting a new member of staff is always a challenge and taking on an intern requires a particular appetite for risk from the main charity partners. BU generously funded the salaries of the interns, so reducing the financial outlay required from the partners, but management time is still a precious resource. Our charity partners had to be willing to devote time (and therefore indirectly money) to manage the new staff without any guarantee of funds raised. There have been instances of a personality clash or sickness absences which we've had to manage. It is not always straightforward.

9.6.6 The Importance of Working Together

Something important to mention is that the Academy would not have been successful without the expertise and dedication of all the members

of our team. Everyone brought their strengths and gave their all to make the Academy a reality. They all supported us with gathering market data, delivering workshops, mentoring and role modelling the attitudes and behaviours we wanted our interns to gain. It would have been practically impossible to have achieved so much in such a short time without their commitment to making this happen. We are very grateful that they shared our passion and helped us deliver this new way of supporting the fundraisers of the future.

9.7   Conclusion

The Fundraising Academy is a three-year project, and so evaluation is ongoing. The early indication is that the model works, and the style of teaching and learning is greatly benefiting the interns. A measure of success will be how many of each year's intake decide to go into fundraising positions. Still, the self-reported resilience, happiness and work-readiness of each intern are also crucial, so we will be following up the interns as they return to their final year of study and then enter their chosen professions.

BU's Fundraising and Alumni Relations team has researched, planned, developed and run the Academy in addition to their "day" jobs. We are incredibly lucky to be given the budget and opportunity to do so, but this may not be the most sustainable model going forward. It may not work for other institutions, as it relies on the willingness and ability of existing staff to absorb additional work and to perform the tasks required (such as training, course development and securing external speakers). It does, however, provide a template model to develop the fundraisers of the future in partnership with the local voluntary sector. There is no reason why the model could not be developed to include individuals looking to change career from other professions (both civilian and armed forces).

It has been a great experience for the Fundraising and Alumni Relations team so far and has validated our belief that SEI is vital—regardless of one's chosen profession. Soft skills will become more important as the differentiator between average and excellent team members, and

it may be that universities can humanise education by helping their students—and their staff—to develop further in this area.

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10

Ubuntu: Strengthening the Heart of Your Team

Laura Roper and Susanne Clarke

10.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we examine the ancient African code of ethics known as *Ubuntu* and how, by understanding and embedding *Ubuntu* within higher education (HE) working practices, we can create a more empowered, engaged and positive team environment. Our premise is that this will, in turn, support the strategic aims of the institution, while assisting in enhancing overall wellbeing for the people within it.

Western approaches to management and organisational theory are often said to be classically grounded in economics (Mangaliso 2001). From this standpoint, Western communities and organisations are typically transaction-focused, individualistic and perhaps lacking in routines that add to the enrichment of the human spirit, our wellbeing and

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health. This stereotype, while overly generalised, does highlight several potential reasons for the increase in stress and poor wellbeing in our workforce. A 2003 study conducted by the Association of University Teachers (AUT 2003) found that 93% of surveyed members reported work-related stress. Since then, several studies have confirmed that this picture is not improving (Landsergis et al. 2014). To help counter this, there is we believe, potential in exploring the good from other cultures and blending them with the good that already exists in ours, and in doing so contribute to positive and collegiate cultures within HE (Woods 2010).

Ubuntu is a Xhosa word meaning "*I am because we are*" and is at the core of this ancient philosophy which still thrives today. The philosophy of *Ubuntu* and its teaching can be found not only across African villages, businesses and universities, it is also practised in everyday international business activities, and in pockets, it can be found within the UK tertiary education sector (Sayers 2016). *Ubuntu* encompasses the understanding of what it is to be human, and the human need for connection, we are social beings. This understanding underpins our developing knowledge of concepts such as socio-emotional intelligence and a resurgence in interest across the field of positive psychology (Devis-Rozental 2018).

While we are born human, Ubuntu philosophy recognises that our 'humanness' can grow or weaken dependent on our core beliefs and values as well as of those around us. As such, we should seek to tailor or prioritise values that enhance humanness. The core values of Ubuntu are areas including truth, harmony and reciprocity, and so through Ubuntu and a focus on these values, we can seek to grow humanness within individuals (Dolamo 2014). Ubuntu helps in identifying attributes that are worthwhile in life and add value in enhancing wellbeing. Although Ubuntu is an African philosophy, it is widely recognised that "they are values of humanity as such, and are universal" (Shutte 2001, p. 2) spanning both time and cultures and so of value to all of humanity.

This interconnectedness and understanding that for each of us to succeed and maintain overall wellbeing, we need to be part of a wider community, is now better understood and sits well both within the beliefs that underpin *Ubuntu*, and the 'Relational Embodiment' of the

Humanising Framework (Devis-Rozental 2018). This poses some challenges for the HE sector and is often at odds with the need to amplify managerial practices in an increasingly competitive environment and the dual loyalty of academics to both the institution and their discipline (Nijhof et al. 2012). This chapter will outline activities that have been adapted for HE and recognise its context and environment. For the purposes of this chapter, reference to *Ubuntu* will be in relation to the adaption of working practices as a guide to managers and leaders, rather than in the broader ethical context. *Ubuntu* does not impose a strict set of guidelines to which managers and team members must stick; but rather as discussed above, provides a signposting of values and ideas to guide how employees should be treated as well as appropriate communication styles that promote collegiality and wellbeing.

10.2 *Ubuntu* in the Higher Education Environment—How to Get It Right

To understand how *Ubuntu* can be applied in HE, and why it is highly beneficial, we first need to understand one of the key issues that affect wellbeing and harmonious working practices in HE. As discussed by Trust et al. (2017), those working within HE often do so within specialised departments or disciplines. This specialisation can manifest in working practices which can be both isolating and highly competitive. While there can be value in competition within disciplines as a driver to succeed, the isolating nature of this approach can often blinker teams and individuals from work that is taking place elsewhere from which they can benefit. Evidence suggests that this insular way of working is being improved by the use of technology and social media, the established routines with HE often mean that interactions outside of one's own subject discipline or department are often restricted (Trust et al. 2017). A typical institutional structure, as shown in Fig. 10.1, highlights how silos can easily form. As outlined by Bui and Baruch (2010, p. 231), this structure so typical within HEIs "creates a false impression that the real world is divided into fragmented parts". While the pros and cons of established organisational structures are outside of the scope of this
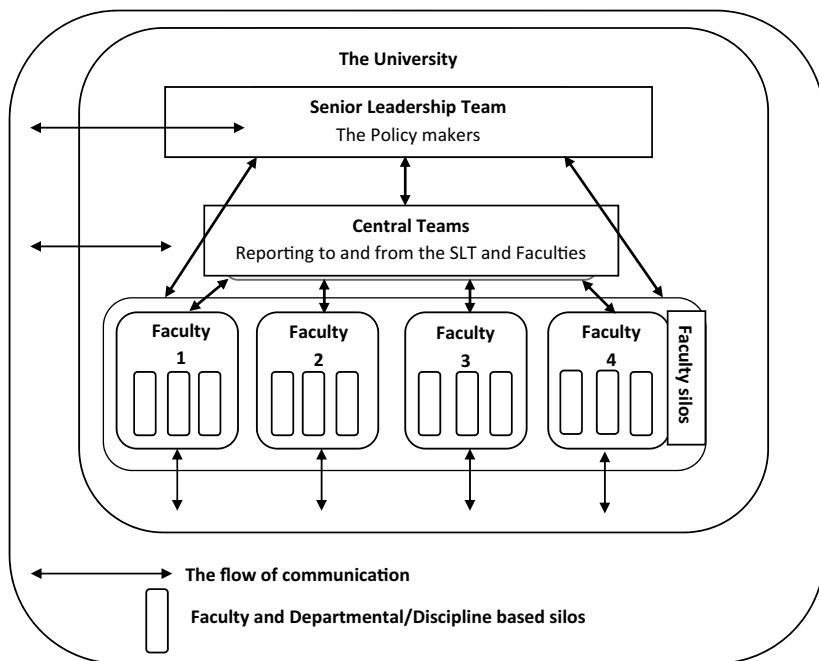
Fig. 10.1 Silos within a higher education institution (*Source* Roper 2020)

chapter, it is easy to see how these structures can be counter to more collaborative ways of working (Farquharson et al. 2018).

10.3   Communication Is Key

As previously discussed, while the formal typology of organisational structures is outside of the scope of this chapter, there is evidence that bottom-up approaches are beginning to have a positive effect. Jameson (2019) has noted that within HE, we are already finding many examples of what can be referred to as 'critical corridor talk'. This 'space' provides opportunities for staff to discuss topics and issues informally amongst themselves. From our viewpoint, as practitioners within HE, these conversations, should not be dismissed as simply workplace gossip but viewed as opportunities to air concerns and frustrations, swap ideas

and share best practice approaches. This 'critical corridor talk' is where, we can begin to breach the silos of departments, disciplines and teams and look to make the outcomes and ideas that emerge tangible. It is through this process that we can encourage buy-into new approaches and concepts such as the development of Professional Learning Networks (PLNs) (Trust et al. 2017). These networks can be used to encourage staff to move beyond their silo, connect with others and collaborate. This can be in a virtual or physical network. PLNs and 'critical corridor talk' in HE environments can become twenty first Century's '*Ubuntu* villages', in which growth is encouraged through open group communication and through learning from the knowledge and expertise of each member of the network.

This form of communication, by its very nature, is organic and non-prescriptive. The results are therefore largely qualitative and emergent; there is however a growing body of research that suggests that this is an essential part of maintaining a sense of wellbeing within a continually changing and scrutinised environment such as HE (Bryman 2007). In his writings, the Stodd (2020) promotes the development of the 'Social Age' and space for these community conversations as being an essential interface between the formal and the informal dialogue within organisations. Within our institution, Bournemouth University, we term this the 'third space' and increasingly acknowledge the importance of nurturing this space.

10.4 Communication Cells

One way that the progression of these informal corridor talks can manifest is through the development of communication cells. It is often the case that within a department or team, there is limited or infrequent communication between staff members who do not share a common role or discipline. This can lead to delays in confirming and communicating changes to processes; staff wellbeing can also be affected as they do not have a consistent or reliable mechanism for escalating concerns or questions. In addition, successes can often go unrecognised, which demoralises staff (Jameson 2019).

Communication cells are a Lean tool used to deliver team communication and drive forward continuous improvement in an open, non-judgemental environment (Ballé 2016). They give the team the opportunity to review workloads and plan for the day. The team discuss what has been working well, where there are opportunities or concerns, and agree on how these could be taken forward.

Additionally, the communication cell allows individuals within a team to:

- use their knowledge, creativity and experience;
- express opinions and ideas;
- be involved in decision-making and prioritisation;
- understand the focus and strategic needs of the institution and/or department, ensuring they can do their job well.

The 'cells' develop team working and shared ownership and could be a natural progression from the 'critical corridor talk' Jameson (2019) refers to. The communication cell keeps all members of the team informed and promotes the behaviours and standard ways of working that are desired by the institution. Communication cells also give the opportunity to share and learn from best practice examples and continuous improvement approaches. Most importantly, the cell provides each member with an opportunity to be heard. In setting up our team cells, we are indebted to the support given to us by the Continuous Improvement Team, within the University of Strathclyde (2017), who kindly shared their experiences of developing *daily stand-ups*. To find out more about this, you can refer to their continuous improvement pages on their website (www.strath.ac.uk).

The set-up of a communication cell is quick and efficient. Training for members of the cell does not need to take more than 10–15 minutes. Training should provide an outline of the format, frequency and expected output of the meetings; the key output being that every member of the team is heard, respected and given an opportunity to contribute to and learn from the session. Ideally, the cell should take place at the start of

each day at a time that enables all staff members to attend and engage (with flexibility for part-time, flexi-hours staff).

The benefits of the meetings are both quantitative, such as process improvements, and qualitative such as increased wellbeing and morale. The key benefit is ensuring that everyone is heard, and their concerns, questions and ideas are acknowledged and discussed.

10.5 Active Listening Skills

McNaughton et al. (2008, p. 91) describe active listening as "develop(ing) a clear understanding of the speaker's concerns and also to clearly communicate the listener's interest in the speaker's message". Most of us think of listening as something we do automatically like breathing, but the reality is that active listening takes a lot of effort. An active listener is tuned into the speaker's non-verbal behaviours as much as the words that they are saying. Through this, an active listener will interpret what a person is saying and the undercurrent of meaning in their words. For most people, listening is just absorbing the words being spoken without diving down for deeper meaning.

We have all had experiences of attending meetings in which colleagues sit looking at their mobile phones, answering emails on their laptops and chatting to one another. As a speaker during a meeting, this can be both demoralising and frustrating. Why speak up if you believe no one is listening? Thinking you are not heard and that your thoughts and opinions are not valued has a significant impact on wellbeing (O'Brien and Guiney 2018).

The main barriers to active listening include:

- A lack of formal training in listening
  - Within HE, many individuals spend much of their time presenting their ideas, research and projects. Do we put the same emphasis on listening to one another as we do on speaking?
- Seeing speaking as an essential social skill, where the same value is not placed on listening.

  – Are we overlooking quieter staff in a meeting and focusing too much
    on those with a lot to say?
- Letting bias impact on what we hear and how we interpret it.
- Finding ourselves thinking about what to say next instead of listening
  to the conversation.

So, what can we do to become better active listeners? In Zulu, we would
greet one another by saying "*Sawubona*". This translates as "*I see you*"
and embodies the warmth and inclusivity of *Ubuntu*. Active listening
comes from a place of respect. It acknowledges the value of each indi-
vidual: "I see YOU, the unique being in front of me, with their own
ideas, beliefs and experiences that have shaped the person that you are
today" McNaughton et al. (2008, p. 91).

Spataro and Bloch (2018) developed a method for teaching active
listening skills to university students which focuses on both the cognitive
and behavioural activities required. This method includes:

- **Initial self-assessment of active listening ability**
  Using the *Listening Styles Inventory* developed by Pearce et al. (2003)
  and a *listening self-inventory* (Lambert and Mayers 1994), people
  can complete a self-reflective assessment of their listening skills and
  those within a team/department. It would be recommended that this
  is conducted as part of a staff engagement or team-building event
  in which individuals can work through the exercises and discuss
  outcomes, identifying individual strengths and areas that require more
  work.
- **Learning materials**
  There are many useful materials that can be found online. Some of the
  best resources for team-building and group-based activities are videos
  and blog posts that can be found on sites such as mindtools.com
  (2016), which provide examples of both active listening and non-
  active listening for comparison and discussion. Most examples contain
  several key methods, such as:

  1. Paying attention—look at the speaker and avoid distraction. Do
     not focus on your response but purely on what is being said.

2. Showing that we are listening—use body languages such as nodding, smiling and small verbal cues such as "yes" and "go on" to provide encouragement.
3. Giving feedback and asking for clarification—summarise what has been said, this ensures that your own unconscious bias has not distorted your interpretation of the speaker's words.
4. Not interrupting—this can be frustrating for the person speaking and can limit your understanding of what is being said.
5. Responding respectfully—be open and honest but maintain respect for what the speaker has said. Active listening allows you to gain a more detailed understanding and a different perspective, even if you do not agree with the content.

- **Completion of active listening exercises**
  Once we are aware of active listening and how it looks/feels, we need to begin to test it out. Ask team members to hold short conversations or interviews using the active listening skills discussed and then discuss how it felt to employ these methods. We can ask individuals to think reflectively on how it felt to use them and perhaps even try non-active listening to provide a contrast in approaches. Discuss as a team how you can now build upon this.
- **Post activity self-assessment and reflection**
  We can then ask the team members to complete the *Listening Styles Inventory* (Pearce et al. 2003) for a second time. Discuss how everyone has improved and identify any areas which may still require further work.
- **Continued practice of and reflection of methods**
  As with all new skills, our abilities will improve over time with continued practice.

10.6 Celebrating the Successes

We cannot overlook the value in celebrating successes in HE, both the large and the small. The sector resides in a competitive environment in which we are all continually striving for improved NSS scores, better

REF, TEF and KEF as well as our own personal and professional development (O'Brien and Guiney 2018). When we achieve this, it is often seen as an expected part of the role, a required exercise and not as something remarkable or noteworthy. Achieving these milestones may be part of the role, but that does not mean that there is no great value in celebrating them. Having our work recognised and valued is an integral part of building teams and showing that each person is valued for the unique advantages that they bring to an institution (O'Brien and Guiney 2018). This may range from the successful publication of a journal article, an internal staff recognition award to the completion of the exam board period. All have value and should be acknowledged and celebrated.

10.7   The Potential for Getting It Wrong

While there are many examples of ways that *Ubuntu* can be effectively incorporated into HE working practices and how it can benefit those within it, there is with *Ubuntu*, as with most things, the potential for getting it wrong. Those embarking on a plan to implement *Ubuntu* practices within their own institutions should be mindful of these potential pitfalls.

For example, *Ubuntu* must be lived. The purpose of *Ubuntu* within a working environment is to change and redefine a team through honest and open communication, through empowerment and through celebrating the differences in each individual. *Ubuntu* needs to be used as a genuine approach to bring a group of people together with a shared bond and move forward collectively, promoting wellbeing and therefore humanising everyone's experience. *Ubuntu* starts to go wrong when managers and leaders see *Ubuntu* as the next fad to try on their team and do not 'live it' (Karsten and Illa 2005). If *Ubuntu* is adopted as a one-sided approach in which lip service is paid, with a false promise of transparency and equity, then it will most likely lead to individuals feeling disillusioned, frustrated or passive to the experience.

Within the wider context of an *Ubuntu* community, it is believed that knowledge comes from experience and experience comes from age. Community members are encouraged to listen to their elders and

follow their advice (Mangaliso 2001). Within HE, we are surrounded by knowledgeable and experienced individuals from many backgrounds, disciplines and age ranges. We would argue that to follow an *Ubuntu* practice within our workspace, we need to be open to listening to and learning from all individuals. Younger generations have much to teach older generations and vice versa. We need to learn from one another and, as discussed, recognise that through our own unique experiences and beliefs, we each have something to give to help others to grow and develop. By not listening to each voice, we undermine one another, probably develop a homogenised approach that doesn't take into account every individual's personal journey, we build walls and damage our own wellbeing as well as that of others.

10.8 Conclusion—A Toolkit for Success: *Ubuntu* Approaches for Managers and Leaders

So, what can we take away from this? What are the practical tips that we, as an individual, can bring to our team and the wider institution? Below are the main aspects of this chapter which we think can be used as a toolkit for success in encouraging and embedding your own *Ubuntu* practices:

1. Communicate clearly and effectively. Where possible, decisions should be made by consensus following open and honest discussion within a team. Yes, we are subject to regulation and procedures, and these are important to ensure a consistent level of quality. However, within those rules, regulations and procedures, we do have the power to define our own collegiate working practices and behaviours. Allowing people, the space and empowering them to discuss these approaches openly, without fear of judgement and in the knowledge that their opinions are genuinely heard can have a dramatic impact on both individual and team wellbeing.

2. Communication Cells: meeting regularly and informally to discuss work, challenges, successes, questions and concerns. Encouraging everyone to have a voice helps to build a cohesive team environment in which the value of each individual and their skill sets is promoted and encouraged.

3. Active listening: Can we really say we are active listeners? As a team, discuss active listening and what it means to each member of the team. Look to develop your teams' own approach for active listening using the guidance in this chapter. As humans, we are (generally) excellent speakers, but to truly actively listen to an individual is to demonstrate your respect for an individual and highlights the value you see in their ideas and skill set.

4. Trust and transparency are key. As a core value of Ubuntu (Dolamo 2014), the importance of showing trust and feeling trusted cannot be oversold. Through trust, we allow an individual to be themselves and respect their individuality.

5. Accept that we all have different ways of working to reach a shared end goal. We cannot force our own approaches onto others. Ubuntu is a philosophy, it is not a set of rules that we must each follow.

6. Acknowledge that each member of a team is different, with their own uniqueness, personal journey, beliefs and thoughts. A healthy team/community will be made up of a variety of different people. We can access these by breaking down the silos and looking across teams, disciplines and faculties.

7. What works for one may not work for another. Identify the needs of everyone, what is important to them, and how we can help to fulfil those needs.

8. EVERYONE has something to teach us—we must listen!

In this chapter, we have outlined the key concepts and values of Ubuntu, such as trust, harmony and reciprocity. Through a focus on these values and with the guidance provided in this chapter, we can see how this ancient African code of ethics can be integrated into today's' HEI to strengthen teams, build respect and promote harmonious working environments, thus humanising practice.

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11

Humanising the Pre- and Post-graduation Experience: Alumni Inspiring Undergraduates, a Hidden Resource in Plain Sight

James Garo Derounian

11.1 Introduction

In the United Kingdom, we are living through difficult times in which public finances are constrained. This is certainly true of universities where ideas flow, while the resources to deliver are limited. Policies are ubiquitous, while practical action often depends on volunteerism or an ethos of goodwill—at little or no cost to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), the effect can be exploitative and dehumanising. At the same time, academics are exhorted to undertake student-centred teaching, to be more attuned to pressures students experience in terms of balancing study and necessary part-time work, child and/or eldercare. The whole issue of student and staff wellbeing has come to the fore. How do we engage undergraduates more fully in their learning, to enable achievement, and to secure happier individuals who can flourish—both personally and professionally?

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In this chapter, I want to explore a version of volunteering that I believe offers a win-win to all parties. My argument and hypothesis are that, as a sector, we need to be much more organised, methodical and pro-active in harnessing the capabilities of our graduates back into teaching and learning. Such a connection offers so many potential benefits: teaching experience for engaged graduates, perhaps opening up for them a new career path or job component; for staff, the value of graduate inputs to courses and modules is the ability to insert current practice, specific experience, case studies and knowledge into classes; to maintain links with our graduates and to hear from those who were (recently) in the shoes of current students.

This is a manifestation of collaborative learning. So, graduates can, perhaps, pitch inputs based on the fact that they have (recently) been in the shoes of current students. And it offers the opportunity for staff, students and graduates to co-produce knowledge (i.e., learning from each other) and multiplying their complementary contributions; whereby combined effort is greater than the sum of the parts. Furthermore, linkage from student-to-lecturer-to-graduate can contribute to practitioners becoming more compassionate and caring, and thereby empathetic (Devis-Rozental 2018).

For the university or college, at root graduates represent a free resource, and potential market for further (postgraduate) study, or Continuing Professional Development, CPD. It is therefore essential to recognise a degree of self-interest at work here; plus contributing formally (in the case of England) to the institutional pursuit of teaching excellence (TEF ratings). And a clear demonstration of teaching innovation that might lead towards improvement of Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey results, based on returns from graduates of what they are doing months after qualifying from their HE course. DLE was replaced by a graduate outcomes survey in late 2018 (Hewitt 2017), to track where they are and what they are doing about 15 months after completing studies. Cooperative learning, more generally, is also suggested as a cost-efficient teaching approach (Baumgardner 2015).

I want to move beyond the "usual suspects" as outlined by Rushin et al. (1997) who—in a review of postgraduate Teaching Assistant

inputs to improved biology teaching—commented that in undergraduate classes, postgraduate assistants "play such an important role". My research looks at first-degree graduate inputs to undergraduate teaching and learning—**primarily linked to the subject or course they qualified in**. For example, a social work graduate working with vulnerable children lecturing social work students at the HEI they attended. This ties in with Galvin and Todres (2012) holistic approach to teaching and learning, and with Devis-Rozental (2018), who emphasises the importance of fusing head, hand and heart knowledge, that covers knowing, feeling and doing. In turn, this echoes Mahatma Gandhi's teachings (in a speech dated July 22nd, 1921) whereby an "academic grasp without practice behind it is like an embalmed corpse, perhaps lovely to look at but nothing to inspire or ennoble".

I argue here for the value of drawing on graduate practitioners to feedback into undergraduate teaching and learning. Staff and students gain from the input of recent case materials and practical examples to complement and, in some cases, challenge theory. It also exemplifies "sustainable" working in terms of cross-generational activity, and re-cycling expertise to the potential benefit of all parties. This is in stark contrast to the seeming tendency for HEI-graduate links to be blinkered, narrow and extractive in nature. For example, Monks (2003) observes from North America that the "single biggest determinant of the generosity of alumni donations is satisfaction with one's undergraduate experience."

Reworking US President John F. Kennedy's inaugural address from 1961 "ask not what your alma mater can do for you…ask what you can do for the university you attended"! Graduates as "cash cows"—a group predisposed to contribute money back into developments at the institution from which they graduated—is an overriding theme emerging from published papers (Gallo 2013). This would seem to be the antithesis of humanising higher education. Such extractive practices align with Todres et al. (2009) spectrum of dehumanisation, whereby the graduate as donor is disregarded in favour of monetary gain (for the alma mater).

The other university-graduate/alumni link that repeatedly features in published research is around mentoring current students to develop work skills; graduates' providing career advice and how to transition to

employment post-graduation (Weerts et al. 2010; Dowd et al. 2011). The study by Weerts and Ronca (2008), for example, sought to profile supportive university alumni who are predisposed to contribute time and money to the HEI they graduated from. But there's more to life and study than divesting graduates of money or employment advice, not least if a relationship is to be established for the longer term, rather than short-term, time-limited, financial gain (important though this may be). Back to graduate teaching contributions linked to Todres et al. (2009), who point to means by which agency can be increased, similarly promoting togetherness—showing how students can be part of a wider (professional) community; and where they belong in that grouping.

At a self-interested and pragmatic level, and in a UK context, such graduate co-production of knowledge may influence feedback positively in the annual National Students' Survey NSS, annual course evaluations, and central government's *Teaching Excellence Framework*. My contention is that satisfaction with undergraduate experience is like blood group O negative, in that anyone can receive that blood type. Similarly, graduate inputs to HE teaching can benefit all-comers—the student, graduate, staff, university and hopefully, society at large.

My hypothesis is that this can be a "win-win" for all. Not least, this is potentially a low-cost (in every sense) route to enriching the curriculum for undergraduate students. Our graduates represent the 'missing link' or asset connecting current students to the wider world; also linking ivory tower and society beyond, and for the subject or course content it moves theory and practice towards praxis. Furthermore, this relates to "Peer learning"—that is reciprocal learning based on "learning relationships, among students and significant others" (Boud and Lee 2005). Or as a Norwegian academic, Havnes (2008, p. 201), contends such collaborative approaches can foster "'learning beyond the curriculum' and 'extra-curricular learning'".

This also connects strongly with Lev Vygotsky's theory of a Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD); that he developed during the early twentieth century. Vygotsky (1978, p. 86) explained the Zone of Proximal Development as "the distance between the actual development level as
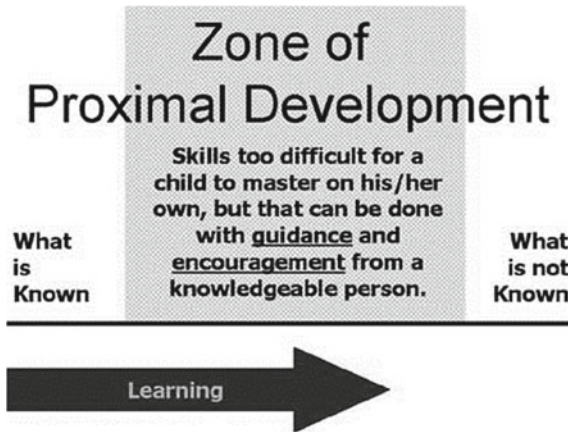
Fig. 11.1   Zone of Proximal Development (*Source* McLeod 2014)

determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with a more capable peer".

Although Vygotsky coined the ZPD in relation to optimal conditions for a child's learning, it chimes very strongly with the potential ability of a graduate to enable student "problem solving **under adult guidance or in collaboration with a more capable peer**" (my emphasis).

The diagram below illustrates the idea of a ZPD as the point or range during which an individual (child) can most effectively progress from what they know, to gain new, extending knowledge. This is why the original research reported in this paper tests the application of Vygotsky's ZPD—linked to graduate contributions back into undergraduate teaching and learning (Fig. 11.1).

11.1.1 Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

This approach also connects with previously published research: Graduate contribution to teaching and learning: A case study in sustainable process and content (Derounian 2007, p. 191). In which it is argued

"that a key strength lies in the approach's simplicity, in terms of development, administration, delivery and monitoring. It has the added benefit of connecting students to potential career paths, by demonstrating possibilities for work after university. The variety of graduate inputs exemplifies the many faces of sustainability, in terms of cultural, economic, social and environmental concerns. The graduates do not come to these sessions in any sense constrained by teacher training or convention; hence the activities are usually highly interactive." The proximity of student-to-graduate can also be construed as enabling "ourselves and others to be present, authentic and open; in order to achieve a sense of wellbeing and to build effective relationships" (Devis-Rozental 2018, p. 1).

Furthermore, Bandura (1982, p. 754) argues that social systems, such as education, "cultivate generative competencies, provide aidful resources, and allow ample room for self-directedness increase the chances that people will realise what they wish to become." Graduate–student connections would seem to represent such an aidful resource, and to foster "self-directedness" whereby students can "realise what they wish to become"—in that the graduate may be standing in front of them teaching. Also exemplifying Devis-Rozental (2018) who encourages humanisation of teaching and learning in HE through understanding our sense of place—knowing and understanding where we (graduate, lecturer and student) belong.

And from community development literature and theory, graduate inputs to teaching exemplify an *Asset-Based Community Development* (ABCD) approach: in which "communities can drive the development process themselves by identifying and mobilising existing, but often unrecognised assets" (nurture development, online). Adapting this to a community of learners (students), graduates—given their absence from research literature—can be viewed as "existing…unrecognised assets" (nurture development, online).

Markus and Nurius (1986, p. 954) discuss Possible Selves that "represent individuals' ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming, and thus provide a conceptual link between cognition and motivation….they function as incentives for future behaviour". Again, connecting this to the topic,

graduates "represent individuals' ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become", in corporeal form. Thus, manifesting positive education by alerting students to the importance of "soft" skills in work and life—empathy, consideration, awareness of interdependence.

Exposure of a student to a graduate may function as an incentive to become that person, in the sense of aspiring to the graduate's job role and, perhaps, lifestyle. With the graduate being a "link between cognition and motivation" (Markus and Nurius 1986, p. 954), for students who might otherwise have remained in ignorance of a particular job or career, with this sudden enlightenment moving them to consider a new path or possible self.

The overall aims of the research informing this chapter were twofold, to determine:

- The range of inputs to undergraduate teaching—if any—that graduates of their alma mater are interested and able to make
- What, if any, university opportunities an institution's alumni would like to see offered to them, e.g., CPD.

The more detailed objectives:

- To undertake a survey of alumni from 2016 to 2017, who studied courses on one campus of a teaching-led university in the English Midlands. To determine the range of inputs to undergraduate teaching that graduates of their alma mater are making, or likely to be interested in contributing (if at all), to undergraduate teaching;
- To undertake key player interviews with teaching staff and undergraduates from the same English University campus to determine what teaching inputs, if any, they believe would be useful from graduates.

11.2 Method

The first part of the research was in the form of interviews with 16 Academic Course Leaders (running undergraduate programmes) across the humanities, social and natural sciences, education and applied areas

such as youth work, taught on the same campus of the University of Gloucestershire, England.

Thirteen semi-structured, face-to-face conversations were completed between the author of this paper and colleagues. Three staff (19%), however, chose to return a survey form electronically (comprising identical questions to that posed face-to-face).

The justification and rationale for this first phase of research were to establish the attitude of course leaders to potentially, or actually, bringing (their) graduates into contribute to undergraduate classes. Also, to gain an understanding of what benefits—if any—they felt can flow from alumni involvement. Author approaches to colleagues on his campus represented a convenience sample. Some staff and their subjects were known to the author, most were not.

As a second phase of this triangulated research, a level 5 (second year) undergraduate undertook a 75-hour internship module, in which she selected other level 5 and 6 (final year) students undertaking courses delivered by staff interviewed in stage one; and studying in 2 faculties (those of Business, Computing and Applied Sciences; and the Faculty of Arts & Technology.) The point of this was to begin to see whether student views about graduate teaching contributions aligned with those of lecturers. In this way, the author was able to benefit from peer-to-peer research collection while providing general guidance and steerage to the intern. It was hoped that students would feel more willing to participate in the research, and more comfortable in sharing views with a student (than if faced with a staff member). The third part of the research proved the most difficult, namely, to discover the University of Gloucestershire graduate views on contributing to undergraduate teaching (on the course they previously studied). This should not, perhaps, have come as a surprise since the other two stakeholder groups spend much of their time on campus. In contrast, graduates do not, as they may be based internationally, nationally or regionally in relation to the HE establishment they studied at. Again, the survey form and content matched those for staff and students.

So, triangulation extended secondary research (Fig. 11.2).

The intern then selected a series of compulsory level 5 and 6 modules, and arranged with the module tutor to seek completions from those
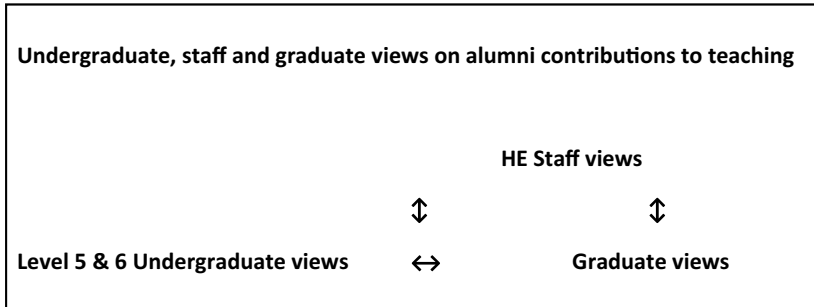
Fig. 11.2   Triangulation

present in class, which included 5 final year (**level 6**) undergraduate modules (Table 11.1).

Table 11.1   Students respondents

Applied Social Sciences	*Applied Research Project*, module NS6412	12
English Language and Linguistics	*Communication for Leadership* HM6201	11
Geography	*Migration Challenges* NS6307	22
History	*Dissertation* HM6000	7
Psychology (Criminology)	*Social Psychology: Cognition & Construction* NS6101	36
Total		**88**
And		
2 second year (**level 5**) modules:		
Geography	*Threats to Civilisation* NS5302	26
Psychology (Criminology)	*Policing in the community* NS5506	10
Total		**36**
Total number of student respondents		**124**

11.3 Findings and Discussion: What Course Leaders Said

As already noted, secondary research on graduate contributions into undergraduate teaching is scarce; and what there is predominantly articulates the view that alumni are a source of revenue for universities and their initiatives; and that they typically act as mentors for students transitioning from study-to-work.

All staff were positive about potentially or actually involving graduates in their undergraduate teaching. A few raised cautions—around the perception of getting people "on the cheap"; the trickiness of co-ordinating and focusing graduate inputs, and suggesting that involvement of graduates from other courses or universities may be just as valid (as attracting back those from the particular course and university they graduated from). Most indicated that they already utilise alumni in undergraduate teaching, while 4 (25%) did not. Of those that did involve their graduates, the majority engaged alumni as guest speakers for classroom sessions; a minority as student mentors (17%); 4 offered live projects or assignments for first-degree students (33%); and most contributed to course developments such as re-validation.

Across the programmes other means of graduate involvement included helping to network students; attending student-graduate social events; inputs to careers panels—indicating the types of work that graduates in a particular subject might target; alumni membership of staff interview panels, attendance at student recruitment days and other events for prospective students.

In terms of why staff believed graduates offered to help, reasons fell under a series of categories: Most often cited was that graduates chose to help—they believed—on account of loyalty or positive feelings towards the university, lecturer, course or a combination of these. Next, course leaders stated that graduates wanted to give back to the staff, university and/or course. This was encapsulated in the idea that it's an "element of a cycle – I had it, so I give back". A few mentioned supporting or inspiring the professional practice of others. Several members of staff said graduates wanted to continue the positive university association they had previously enjoyed as students.

These comments highlight the importance of humanising the curriculum and the way it is taught—not least against a backdrop of increased electronic communication and teaching via Skype and Virtual learning Environments (VLEs). The remaining points connected to benefits for graduates: Demonstrating professionalism, responsibility; offering experience of (higher education) teaching, building an individual's confidence; constituting professional development; or making a welcome change from their paid work. Only 1 staff member hazarded a reason as to why graduates did not get involved in teaching, commenting that "likely they are never asked".

Most did not give any remuneration for graduate inputs. But some offered expenses (travel and subsistence) Oran honorarium. One course paid those "who act as fieldwork supervisors for professional practice" and also recompensed placement providers. One gave graduate advice, support and careers mentoring as payback *in kind*. And another bought a bottle of wine—out of her own pocket—as a "thank you".

Academic colleagues were then asked how the involvement of graduates in undergraduate teaching could be improved for students, for contributing alumni and staff (Table 11.2).

11.4 Findings and Discussion: What Students Said

The phase 2 findings reflect the views of 124 undergraduates (at levels 5 and 6) based on one campus of the University of Gloucestershire, Cheltenham.

Most level 6 (final year) undergraduates, 53 (78%), felt activities delivered by graduates from their course would be useful to them. 15 (22%) disagreed. Reasons given were predominantly but not exclusively positive. In rank order: see Table 11.3.

Most level 6 students (54%) agreed it was a "good idea" to involve alumni as guest speakers for classroom sessions, and 56 (97%) were positive that graduates would make useful student mentors. However, in terms of them providing live projects or assignments for first-degree students, just 34 (39%) approved; while 61% (34) did not. 38 agreed

Table 11.2 Potential improvement for participants

For students	For graduates	For staff
• Ask what students would like, ask for feedback	• Funding ×5 [suggestion that university made an agreed 'graduate payment']	• Finance and time to develop graduate links ×6 and support to do so
• Want graduates talking "about their career pathway" ×2	• Gain profile: "I deliver training to HE students" ×2	• Don't expect too much
• Accessible external links for students with graduates (and/or their employers)	• CPD	• Establish register of graduates (to overcome loss of connections, with staff turnover) ×3; systematic links
• Clearly explain relevance of graduate input	• Gain useful experience and confidence	• Learn from graduates; share ideas
• Clear expectation of students attending graduate-given sessions	• An 'I've Given Back' Certificate	• Develop research/consultancy collaborations ×2
• Inspires, and equips students with knowledge about how to cope in practice	• Offer free attendance at Public University Lectures	• University Staff Award for 'Best Use of Graduate Contributions for Teaching"
• De-mystifies working life	• Attend Graduate-Student-Staff conferences	• Social Media to maintain links: blog, twitter, Facebook
• Student 'shadows' graduate	• Continued relationship with staff, course, university	• Graduate contributions to refresh module content
• Enthusiasm for subject/linked employment	• Be respectful/organised, don't over-burden graduates with repeated requests	• Recognise not just subject-specific graduates can make a useful contribution
	• Can help graduates to reflect on what they are doing and why	• Steer from Heads of School/course managers to incorporate graduate teaching contributions
	• Early notice/warning so graduates have best chance to make arrangements e.g. taking a day off work/to prepare	• Send clear 'brief' to graduate: what, where, when, why, who? ×2
		• Visit/Skype graduate to plan session
		• Maintain course level links
		• Staff presence in session/facilitate graduate input
		• Make simple to engage graduates in teaching

Table 11.3 Students' responses

+ves re graduate teaching inputs	−ves re graduate teaching inputs
"personal experience in the course and what lecturers look for" ×10	"seems better to have academic teaching" 6
"real world experiences of job market" 7	"prefer an individual with more expertise and higher level in-depth knowledge" 3
"advice on assessments and how to do well" 7	Lack of experience/knowledge 1
"they know the situation we are in, useful to speak to for support" 6	"weird dynamic…being taught by your peers" 1
"May know a better way to teach" 5	
"wider insight" into the subject 3	
Different perspective/"way of explaining" 3	
"Show different career paths and how to get there" 2	
"Mentoring" 1	
Total 44 comments	**Total 10 comments**

graduates could usefully be internship providers (70%); 30% disagreed, and 52 (95%) saw graduates as helpful contributors to course developments such as re-validations or refreshing module content.

Of the minority who viewed graduate inputs as negative, there seemed to be an undertow of suspicion that this was about alumni replacing teaching staff. This was a misunderstanding and had never been the intent of the question posed. 27 responding students (63%) agreed graduates could help in other ways, for example, "tutoring those needing help"; and 5 mentioned assistance with exam preparation/assignment guidance. Students were then asked if graduate involvement in teaching could be improved (Table 11.4).

Interestingly, when asked, "have you been taught by UoG graduates from your course?" 33 (77%) had not; while just 10 (23%) said they had. However, of those 10, there was noticeable warmth and enthusiasm:

"very good because she was passionate on the topic she came into deliver"
"it was helpful as she knew a lot about the module & the kind of questions students ask about it"
"She was enthusiastic and helpful and showed she could see our perspective…Excellent"

Table 11.4 Potential improvements for graduate involvement in teaching

For students	For contributing graduates
• Ensure graduates have experience of the particular topic/theme they are asked to teach	• Ensure graduates understand "presentation styles of lectures"
• Graduate advice on coping strategies for university e.g. time management ×4	• "Promote discussion and critical evaluation of literature"
• Want graduates to talk about their career pathway ×2	• Involve graduates alongside lecturers
• 1 session per module on how the topic "can be applied to future employment"	• Provide case studies ×2
• "Chance to meet graduates once a month"	• Provide specialist knowledge e.g. of lab techniques ×5
• "When undertaking practicals in GIS etc. get graduates into show how they use it in industry"	• Pay teaching graduates x3
• Build a relationship between graduates and students	• "Advertise opportunities just before uni finishes…so student has this as an option" pre-graduation ×2
	• Enable graduate-organised sessions

"fun, interesting to see it from the perspective of a previous student"
"Really helpful. Clear delivery of topic".

11.5 Findings and Discussion: What Graduates Said

Interestingly, what took the most time was locating graduates and gaining feedback from them! On reflection, perhaps this shouldn't have been such a surprise given the finding from secondary research that there appears to be a very narrow interpretation of graduate inputs—namely mentoring and contributing funds to university initiatives. In the end, I went back to the staff interviewed and asked each to either send my questionnaire to 5 of their graduates or to forward me e-mails for 5 alumni to contact direct.

This convenience sample generated a total of 7 replies from a combination of youth work, psychology, social work and English graduates. What emerged from these was a universal willingness to deliver teaching

to undergraduates linked to each graduate's qualification and expertise. In explaining their enthusiasm, they emphasised the benefits of "clear and honest inputs", "practical learning opportunities" and students hearing direct from practitioners: "Voices from the field to complement academic inputs." Unsurprisingly, offers of teaching-related directly to their employment/job role: "All aspects of youth work and working with young people, who have a family member with a life-threatening illness"; "processes and procedures for child protection". One respondent said it's "fantastic. As a student, I enjoyed the lectures where current social workers came into discuss their roles and the challenges…" Another saw it as professional development in terms of "good practice, helps get over…nerves".

All of the graduates would consider guest lecturing; acting as a student mentor; providing student placements; and contributing to course developments. 3 of 7 could provide live projects or assignments, with the same number registering willingness to help in other ways: 1 offered "a minimodule aimed at a specific subject", and online "support through social media". 5 of the 7 expressed similar sentiments that "reward was not expected or essential…. but would be welcomed". As a linked aspect, all respondents expressed interest in "reward in kind" in the form of CPD events or invitation to free public lectures at the university.

11.6 Conclusions and Recommendations

A limitation of the research underpinning this chapter/opportunity for further research—would be to try to establish whether an optimum time exists in which to "capture" or harness graduate teaching contributions to undergraduates. The hypothesis, based on insights and responses to the current study, is that there appears to be a "V"-shaped graph exemplifying an optimal time period. The start of the letter **V** dips to its nadir after about 2 years' following graduation and then rises once more maybe 10–15 years later. This implies a cooling of the link and connection 2 years or so after leaving; but a re-warming later, as graduates progress in careers (to become managers, employers and gain more senior positions).
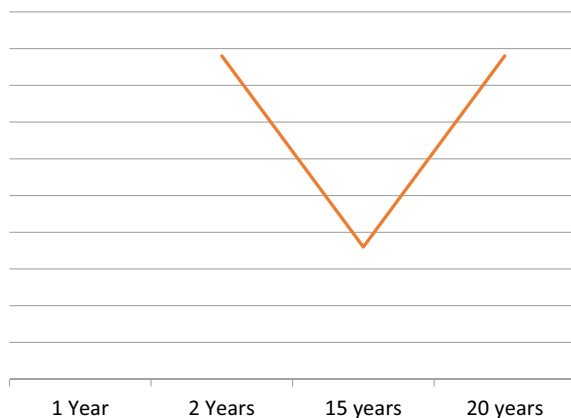
Fig. 11.3 V curve of predicted graduate contributions to undergraduate teaching over time

This, however, is a tentative finding that requires further empirical study (Fig. 11.3).

A further limitation is that the data comes from students, graduates and course leaders from one English university, studying on one campus, courses from three Schools—*Natural and Social Sciences, Education and Public Services,* and *The Arts*. The research and findings are, therefore, broadly illustrative and exploratory. They would lend themselves to a scaled-up study of students, graduates and course leaders from a number of English HEIs and/or from further afield, and from programmes not represented in this research, such as Business Studies, Law, Languages and Sports Development.

Returning to the hypotheses and objectives set out at the start of this chapter, that:

Graduates are broadly interested in reciprocal arrangements whereby their inputs to teaching are matched by university offers to them— for example—through CPD. Involvement of graduates with their alma mater does appear time-sensitive. Graduates do represent a means by which to enact Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). In John Bunyan's book *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678), for example, the Pilgrim in his journey towards the Celestial City (Heaven) receives help from *Faithful*—shown in the image below and illustrating Vygotsky's Zone

of Proximal Development (ZPD). *Faithful* could represent a graduate—'armed' with practical capability and an understanding of the fears and worries, hopes and dreams of the *Pilgrim* (student) (Fig. 11.4).

The graduate is steps ahead of the student and can thereby connect and lead her on from what they know, to what is presently unknown or that they need to know, through encouragement and their more advanced knowledge and greater experience. In this way, the graduate can also open up "possible selves" that the student has not thought of in terms of their life and career.

A further image would be to imagine the graduate as leader of a cycle race peloton, with the student in the main group following the leader. In

Fig. 11.4 Illustrator Gustav Dore: Pilgrim's Progress, John Bunyan, 1860s ed (Caption reads: "Christian break out with a loud voice, 'Oh! I see him again'" this text given in image folder check and keep)
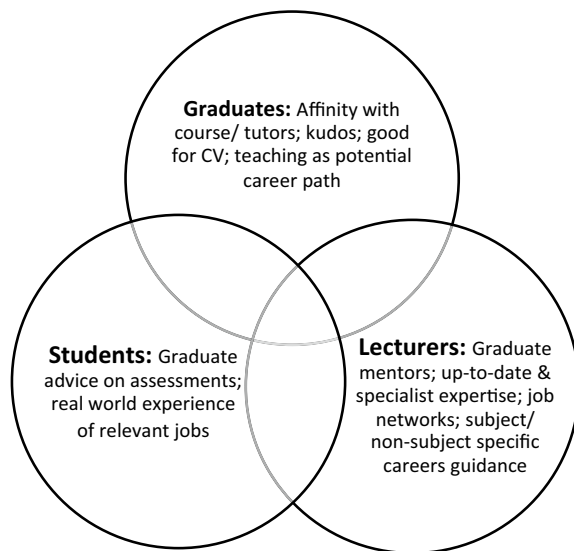
Fig. 11.5 Key findings linked to stakeholders

this way, the frontrunner (graduate) acts as a buffer, reducing the wind resistance experienced by following cyclists (students).

The two key aims for this chapter have been addressed, that is determining the range of inputs to undergraduate teaching that graduates of their alma mater are interested in and able to make. Second, establishing what university opportunities an institution's alumni would like to see offered to them (Fig. 11.5).

11.6.1   Key Findings Linked to Stakeholders Are Alumni Inputs to First-Degree Teaching

Recommended future research could be done around the potential and actual teaching contributions of alumni from other courses, or institutions than that they qualified from. For example, human geography undergraduates might well benefit from inputs by graduates in tourism, social policy or sociology. There is also a need to explore the point raised by graduates and staff—around payment for teaching inputs.

A further piece of research could focus on case studies to illustrate the range and organisation of alumni inputs to undergraduate teaching. For example, universities will have very different staffing levels and capabilities in terms of capitalising on graduate contributions: Plymouth University (SW England) appears to have a well-staffed unit dedicated to this function and connected to many of their graduates. It would also be interesting to collaborate across universities to compare and contrast findings from this research.

My final observation—as voiced by a close colleague—is "perhaps (more) graduates don't offer to teach with us because….they haven't been asked"…….And returning to the overall purpose of this book in advocating humanising higher education, graduate contributions into undergraduate teaching and learning seem to offer a simple, inexpensive, effective means of nurturing head knowledge, practical skills and socio-emotional intelligence (Devis-Rozental 2018) for all involved: students, lecturers and graduates.

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12

Leading with a Kind Heart

Lois Farquharson

12.1 Introduction

'Lead from the heart'—an oft-quoted mantra in the global context of increasing complexity, competition, intolerance and impatience, where there has been an erosion of public trust in both public and private sector organisations and their leaders. At the same time, there are calls for a more kind, inclusive, authentic and connected form of leadership in organisations and society (Crowley 2011). Kouzes and Posner (2017, p. 313) state:

> It's hard to imagine leaders getting up day after day, putting in the long hours and hard work it takes to make extraordinary things happen, without having their **hearts** in it…Leadership is not an affair of the head. **Leadership is an affair of the heart**.

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This suggests that we are moving away from 'heart' as a weakness, antithetical to ensuring profitability, and as a sentimental or soft concept. Of course, the real value in directing attention towards the acknowledgement of humanity, and to helping other people through kindness, is that it gives meaning to life and work, in a way that self-attention never can (Burrell 2017).

It is particularly personal for me to be writing this chapter as my approach to leadership is part of my identity, not only as an academic but as a human being. There are two universities which have left a positive mark on my heart as a leader. At Edinburgh Napier University, my first significant academic leadership role proved to be challenging—the colleagues I was interacting with (leading) were more experienced and had longer length of service in HE. The experience of learning to lead in this context taught me so much about the importance of empathy, compassion, courage and resilience—and I often saw these practices illustrated by my line managers and mentors (often women leaders) as they went about their day-to-day work. At Bournemouth University, I have had a number of academic leadership roles in which I experienced both the joys and the challenges of leadership at operational and strategic levels. While all organisations have their ups and downs in terms of culture development, I have been reinvigorated by the embedding of real kindness at the heart of the university, supported by the university strategy BU2025. This, for me, has become a growing antidote to the continuous challenges we, as leaders, face—my strong belief in the values and practices associated with kindness in leadership supports my wellbeing and resilience, which I can then pay forward to my colleagues and students. Where we have the privilege and responsibility of supporting students' learning and development in readiness for work and life, leading with heart becomes essential—not only should leaders demonstrate this, but the curriculum should propagate this. This chapter seeks to uncover the key elements of leading with heart, with a focus on how we, as leaders, can lead a heart-infused revolution in our own back yard in HE.

12.2 What's at the Heart of Kindness?

This surge in interest in kindness is the result of several developments. Scientific evidence has shown that empathy and altruism are innate and emerge spontaneously in early childhood (Warnecken and Tomasello 2009). There has also been the rise of 'Positive Psychology' and the societal need to hear some 'good news'. In the current political, economic and environmental climate, having a belief in the value and practice of kindness is vital for keeping us positive and hopeful and maintaining a positive culture.

The Oxford English Dictionary Online (2020) defines kindness as 'the quality of being friendly, generous, and considerate'. Synonyms associated with kindness include a clear link with the 'heart'—'kindliness; kind-heartedness; warm-heartedness; tender-heartedness; goodwill; affectionateness; affection; warmth; gentleness; tenderness; concern; care; a kind act; good deed; act of kindness; good turn; favour; act of assistance; service'. This is the basis of kindness, but in recent years more focus has been awarded to the outcomes and impact of kindness rather than kindness as a *state of being*. The capacity for kindness is fundamental to human nature. Its importance as a universal character strength and virtue is recognised widely in the field of positive psychology. It falls under the factor of 'Humanity' in Christopher Peterson and Martin Seligman's (2004) Inventory of Strengths.

The concept and practice of kindness itself are intertwined with other notions such as altruism, compassion and prosocial behaviour. However, kindness is distinctive in its focus and outcomes—it has both behavioural and affective components. The 'giver' as well as the person who's on the receiving end benefits profoundly. According to Action for Happiness (2019), people who practise kindness and gratitude experience greater levels of happiness and life satisfaction. There is, in fact, just a single research study that has rigorously explored what psychological processes underlie kindness and how it can be measured. Recognising the lack of research on how to define and measure kindness, Canter et al. (2017) took a factor analytic approach to analyse responses to a series of statements relating to kindness. They identified three components to kindness:

- **benign tolerance**: no matter who crosses our path each day, we treat them with courtesy and acceptance
- **empathetic responsivity**: a calm consideration of the feelings of those with whom we interact, even if we do not agree we try to understand
- **principled pro-action**: being clear about our actions and decisions and how they impact on others—we don't have to like everyone we work with, but we must behave fairly and honourably.

They also identified an overarching aspect of kindness: **core kindness**, which relates to empathy but tends towards active gestures born of warm feelings for others.

To fully explore how kindness impacts our lives, it needs to be unpacked further taking a scientific perspective from other existing studies.

Kindness reduces anxiety and increases life satisfaction: In a study by Alden and Trew (2013), socially anxious participants who engaged in acts of kindness for four weeks showed a decrease in social avoidance goals. The authors concluded that undertaking acts of kindness is an effective way to reduce social anxiety in society (Shin et al. 2019). A study by Buchanan and Bardi (2010) asked participants to carry out kind acts each day for ten days. An increase in life satisfaction was observed. And in a six-week experiment led by Nelson et al. (2016) participants were randomly assigned to carry out acts of kindness to others, or to the world/humanity, or to themselves. Prosocial actions (other-kindness and world-kindness) led to greater psychological flourishing than self-kindness or control (Christakis & Fowler 2017; Nook et al. 2016; Baskerville et al. 2000). According to a study by Warwick University (Oswald et al. 2015), happier workers use the time they have more effectively, increasing the pace at which they can work without reducing quality.

Empathy reduces the common cold: In a randomised controlled trial by Rakel et al. (2009), patients who rated their clinicians as showing greater empathy had reduced common-cold severity and duration and increases in immune response levels.

Spending on others is good for heart and happiness: Dunn et al. (2008) carried out a study in which participants were given an envelope of either $5 or $20 and asked to spend it by 5 p.m. that day. In the prosocial spending condition, they were asked to spend the windfall on a gift for someone else or to donate to charity. Those who spent the money on others (regardless of the amount) reported greater post-spending happiness than did those who spent on themselves. In another study (Whillans et al. 2016), participants with high blood pressure were randomly assigned to spend payments on themselves or on other people. Those who spent money on others exhibited decreased blood pressure over the course of the study. The magnitude of the effect was comparable to antihypertensive medication or exercise. In 2015, Aknin et al. studied the close-knit community of the Pacific Vanuatu islands—participants were randomly assigned to purchase (with money given to them) candy for themselves, or for friends or family. Positive affect increased in the prosocial spending group.

Heskett (2015) made a clear statement that organisational culture is not a soft concept. He believes it can significantly impact profit and that a **culture of kindness** results in lower wage costs for talent; retention; lower recruiting, hiring, and training costs; and higher productivity (fewer lost sales and higher sales per employee). This leads to better customer relationships that contribute to greater customer loyalty, lower marketing costs and enhanced sales. Cultivating and extending kindness is an essential step in developing a kinder organisational and societal culture. Once goodness is established in social networks, the potential for prosocial behaviours and emotions to spread exists—kindness can be socially transformative (Reece et al. 2019). A study led by Chancellor et al. (2017) speaks to just this. In an experiment involving workers at Coca-Cola's Madrid site, the researchers found evidence that receivers of acts of kindness enjoyed significantly higher levels of happiness compared with controls. Furthermore, kindness is contagious—the receivers of kind acts also paid them forward (Pressman et al. 2015): engaging in nearly three times more prosocial acts than did the control groups, and not just to the givers, but to other employees also. Summers (2019) takes this further by focusing specifically on leaders of the future and the value

of building a culture where kindness is brought into their day-to-day lives as a way of life.

12.3   Leading with Heartfelt Kindness—Fad or Fixture?

Kind leadership integrates the complementary elements of authenticity, transparency, warmth, building trust and empowering people (Haskins et al. 2018). I believe that being an impactful leader is about understanding and valuing what's happening with the people you lead. It's about understanding the personalities you work with and creating a cohesive team and culture that is responsive and meaningful enough to support individuals to be their **whole selves** at work. By taking this approach, the impact of leadership, in my experience, is both sustainable and memorable. There are many contemporary leadership approaches which integrate, leading with heartfelt kindness.

George et al. (2007) suggest that **authentic leadership** begins with a journey of understanding self and that it is the individual's experiences that ground a context of their life story providing inspiration to have an impact in the world. Authentic leaders share their passions, practice values consistently, and most importantly, they lead not only with their cognitive abilities but also with their hearts. Therefore, authentic leaders can establish long-term, meaningful relationships, and through self-awareness and self-discipline can achieve results.

Compassionate Leadership (Ali and Terry 2017) is also about leading with the head and the heart, recognising that both cognitive and affective domains need to be engaged (Mascaro et al. 2015). It is about having a balance of leading with kindness but also with honesty, consistency and courage to challenge behaviours that are not compassionate towards others. Ali and Terry (2017, p. 83) call this '*gritty compassion*'—one who is vision-driven, passionate, down to earth, resilient and a doer who creates success across multiple bottom lines (Stoltz 2015). This style of leadership is not always seen as kind, caring or fluffy, it's one that's honest and courageous and treats people the way they would want to be treated themselves. They also emphasise the importance of paying attention to

the small but significant ways in which we treat each other with kindness and as human beings is where compassionate leadership was most effective (Caldwell et al. 2019; Bramley and Matiti 2014).

'Being' **courageous** is a key part of leading with a kind heart. For Brown (2018), this approach is called '**Daring Leadership**' which means modelling and encouraging healthy striving, honesty, empathy and self-compassion. It also places emphasis on shared purpose and values, practising gratitude, celebrating milestones and victories, setting boundaries and clarity ('clear is kind; unclear is unkind' Brown 2018, p. 48), being a learner, and practising kindness and hope. These actions are said to cultivate a healthy culture of belonging, inclusivity and diverse perspectives. However, this, of course, does take courage to maintain resilience through leading with heart. When struggles and challenges affect us, it's not only our experience that counts, it is what we do with the emotional learning and how we go forward with heart. This is called '*Wholeheartedness*' and is focused on the integration of thinking, feeling and behaviour (c.f. Devis-Rozental's 2018 Head, Hand and Heart) through self-awareness and authenticity. Daring leadership is, at its core, about serving other people, not ourselves (c.f.—Servant Leadership, Eva et al. 2019). This takes vulnerability through courage and bravery alongside fear.

Brisciana (2018) encourages us to practice '**Empathetic Leadership**'—leading with kindness, courage and confidence. The premise of this approach is recognising that new 'leading-edge' solutions which seem impressive and 'shiny' do not necessarily overtake the fundamental importance of a deep-rooted understanding of human behaviour. Being empathetic as a leader involves the ability to '*walk a mile in their shoes*' before we make assumptions or knee-jerk reactions—thus enhancing inclusivity, trust and commitment. This, again, does not preclude us from challenging behaviours and ensuring accountability. Still, it does do this in a manner which considers the impact on others in order to maintain dignity and respect for all involved. Thus, effective relationships and teams are central to this approach and underpin the need to have fierce conversations (constructive criticism, honesty) with good spirit (positive intent). The empathetic leader has a clear understanding that it is all about your team, and how your actions are understood, embraced and

followed by them. In order to solve problems, Brisciana (2018) suggests that in turbulent times leaders should become 'lighthouses' for their employees—by openly offering light (cutting through the fogginess of uncertain times), hope (plan and path for the future direction) and safety (reassurance and guidance). Of course, this can only happen if the leader brings clarity and purpose with a decisive approach, is self-disciplined, and leads with positivity, humility and hope. It is suggested that this will move forward the teams' hearts and minds and will support the leader in leaving a legacy with kindness, authenticity and caring.

Schein and Schein (2018) introduced us to the practice of '**Humble Leadership**' in a future context which will be characterised by increasing levels of Artificial Intelligence (AI). They believe that culture must be centred on interpersonal and group processes—'the soft stuff' (2018, p. 120). This means evolving technical rationality into *socio*-technical rationality through a focus on relationships, experiential learning and active reflection. This supports the leader in fostering openness and trust in teams and individuals. Although the words 'kindness' or 'compassion' are not mentioned in the book, they are inherent in the approach to '*personizing*' (2018, p. 38) which emphasises collaboration, co-creation and mutual help, thus encouraging individuals to be seen as a '*whole person*'.

12.4 Leading the Kindness Revolution in Your Own Back Yard…

What should a kind-hearted leader do in practice to facilitate the results which are described above? Here are some simple suggestions which my colleagues and I have used that may create interest and inspire (Random Acts of Kindness 2020; Rowland and Curry 2019):

- Introduce a gratitude wall or tree to encourage colleagues to share small appreciations anywhere they are seen regularly.
- Start meetings with everyone expressing gratitude to a colleague or for some small positive change that has happened that week at work.

- Start meetings with good news from those around the table—our regular Executive Deans Forums always starts with this.
- Use awareness days to highlight kindness and gratitude, e.g. World Kindness Day.
- Ensure you thank all involved in a project, including those who normally get missed—I introduced 'Making a Difference Awards' in the Business School to ensure colleagues can thank anyone who has made a difference to them. Everyone nominated gets a certificate and a small gift.
- Ensure daily acts of kindness are part of your workplace culture, but also set aside special days to focus on external kindness. For example, we ask colleagues to bring food to donate to our local food bank, and we encourage volunteering for local charities.
- Get involved and engage—our Vice-Chancellor and Chief Operating Officer take time to serve in our café by making coffees for staff.
- Introducing mindfulness into the workplace will improve attention, reduce stress and increase gratitude. Meetings could include a ten-minute mindfulness session.
- You can also encourage wellbeing champions from all levels and departments to support, plan and encourage participation in activities. Gaining input from employees will increase engagement and inclusivity.
- Another approach that is gaining traction is kindness-based meditation, which directs attention outward towards other people. Hutcherson et al. (2008) found that just a few minutes of loving-kindness meditation (LKM; directing compassion and wishes for wellbeing towards other people) can be effective in increasing feelings of social connectivity and positivity towards others.

In terms of key leadership behaviours, below are some examples which my colleagues and I continue to develop in practice:

- Set clear expectations—have a clear sense of direction and communicate that in a way that works for everyone. What goals is the business trying to achieve? What role do we play in reaching those goals?

- Give honest feedback—when we don't tell people the truth, under the guise that we don't want to hurt the individual, we are not being kind. All we are really doing is being kind to ourselves, by protecting ourselves from a potentially awkward and uncomfortable conversation. But when we assume that everybody wants to be the best they can be at their job, then the best way to show kindness is by being honest when someone is not on the right path. To get the best out of our people, we will also need to coach or mentor them, but we can do this with kindness and integrity.
- Encourage growth and development—we can be kind by offering colleagues opportunities and encouraging them to achieve their full potential and gain self-worth. In my experience, talented employees are sometimes those who have been overlooked or have not been afforded opportunities in the past—subsequently, they have lost their confidence and resilience. Taking time to know your team is central to their effective growth and development.
- Be transparent in your decision-making—show consideration and openness about decisions you make that impact on others. Whether the impact is positive or negative, you need to tell the story of how you got there and then hold space for people to process it, understand it and come back with their comments and questions. It's about showing clarity rather than hiding things and letting rumours or untruths to unfold. There is also a responsibility to make your decisions land kindly, especially when it's a tough decision and one that might negatively impact people.
- Be human!—smile, say thank you, acknowledge people, celebrate people's successes, talk to them like adults and check in to see how they are doing. Show people that we're all in it together, respect them and trust that they'll do the right thing.
- Lead with positivity, purpose and an open-mindedness that embraces new ideas—an example of this could be a staff suggestion scheme using an appreciative inquiry approach so that new ideas and positive activities can be encouraged and supported. Ensuring that staff meetings are designed to be interactive and inclusive can also create impact. When leaders show kindness, they accelerate trust and in turn, create

happier, more empowered employees, who will be inspired to deliver better results.

It is also crucial that, while doing all of this and supporting others, we take time to look after our own wellbeing as leaders. The old adage of putting your own oxygen mask on first before helping others is very apt here. If you don't present as a happy, healthy person, it will impact others' perspectives of acceptable norms and behaviours. It is essential to be self-aware as the authentic leadership theory suggests, but self-care must be a core activity in which we engage to ensure that we do not suffer burnout. Taking time for ourselves to enhance our wellbeing through downtime, relaxation and exercise is not something to feel guilty about as there are a range of aspects of our lives that make us human, not only work.

12.5   Facilitating Students as Kind Leaders with Heart

When students enter HE, they are able to acquire knowledge and skills needed to underpin their academic, social, emotional and physical wellbeing. All of these factors contribute to their holistic growth and development. In particular, socio-emotional intelligence is a key ingredient to a students' ability to adjust and interact with others in rapidly changing societies. Therefore, the experiences that students have in their HE institution are essential to the holistic development of their academic, social, emotional skills and interpersonal relations. Both Sax and Gialamas (2017) and Devis-Rozental (2018) point to the importance in fostering socio-emotional intelligence in all HE stakeholders and in finding an equilibrium in authentic leadership by demonstrating agility in policies and processes where genuine care can prevail—this covers matters of the heart and mind. Therefore, in HE institutions, it is crucial that clear thought is given to what type of academic leadership is needed to inspire and prepare our students for life and their role as authentic future leaders. Gialamas and Pelonis (2009) stated that our principles (specific ways of behaving) and values (standards of actions and attitudes deep in heart and mind that shape our world view and

interactions with others) must also be identified to ensure that vision is attained by aligning both personal and professional goals through a holistic approach.

The concept of universities as 'caregiving organisations' is explored by Waddington (2018, p. 27) in her opinion piece paper which argues that there is a compelling need for compassionate academic leadership in order to promote the practice of compassionate pedagogy. Kahn (2005, p. 231) also stated that

> the primary task of a caregiving organisation is, ideally, the meeting of the needs of those who seek its services such as students … When members and leaders hold fast to that task, in the way that sailors hold fast to the topmast in the midst of roiling seas, they create the possibility for conversations, interpretations, conflicts and mutual engagements that are in [the students'] best interest.

However, critical studies of university contexts (e.g. Smyth 2017; Waddington 2016, 2017) reveal troubling compassion gaps that have been attributed to the marketisation and commodification of higher education globally. Relationships between academics and with students (who often see themselves as consumers with high expectations) can become rather instrumental, resulting in staff and students being used as a means to an end; as a commodity to be used, rather than as valued human beings. At its worst, this environment could be described as a toxic bureaucratic culture that is high on task focus due to regulation and fear of student complaints. This would, of course, undermine staff morale and feelings of dehumanisation.

Strategies for developing compassionate higher education leadership will require a paradigm shift (Robinson 2018; Ludvik 2017). Universities have a duty of care to ensure that all stakeholders, whether this be students, employees or the general public, are fully protected from any personal physical and/or emotional harm. Thus, care, kindness and compassion are not separate from being professional, they support the humanisation of the workplace. Arguably, in the future, universities that can demonstrate compassionate credentials and pedagogy will

successful—this requires kindness in leadership and compassionate institutional cultures. In order to nurture cultures of compassion, universities require their leaders—as the carriers of culture (Mathieson 2012; Schein 2017)—to embody compassion in their leadership practice. However, this must be a shared approach, rather than a hierarchical top-down approach, and is characterised by openness, curiosity, kindness, authenticity, appreciation and compassion. de Zulueta (2016) suggests that this can be achieved through adoption of shared, distributive and adaptive leadership. This involves leadership development throughout the organisation as a whole, and creation of collective, holistic learning strategies and cultures. Thus, organisational leadership and culture can be considered as interdependent and synergistic (deZulueta 2016). Their co-development entails sustaining high levels of trust, mutually supportive interpersonal relationships and opportunities for reflection and action.

12.6 Conclusion

Leading with a kind heart is not an easy choice—it is the moral, humanistic choice in a world where connectedness is critical to positive developments in organisations and society. Leaders taking this approach must see themselves as the bridge which connects colleagues, students and other HE stakeholders. Leaders must believe in the value of care, kindness and compassion, acting as a role model for others. There are several leadership principles which usefully sum up our discussions in this chapter and underpin our orchestration of the proactive humanistic approach to leading with heart, which is much needed in the continuing complex and challenging HE environment:

- We are calm in the face of adversity—know yourself, use your socio-emotional intelligence to stay humble and grounded, and ensure you practice self-care to support your resilience.
- We are confident—provide clarity on the purpose and direction for the organisation, department or team.

- We communicate—regular, transparent and ordered communication to avoid knee-jerk reactions and rumours. Ensure when communicating, you consider relatability for your colleagues.
- We collaborate and co-create—be honest that you do not have all the answers and engage with your colleagues and with teams in an inclusive way to engage their key skills to get results.
- We are part of a community—we lead by example in our organisations and wider society, building meaningful networks and relationships.
- We are compassionate—when colleagues may not be resilient, we must be available to show we care, provide support and understand and address concerns. Actively work alongside our diversity of colleagues to seek solutions.
- We are courageous—we do not shy away from challenging issues. We retain our honesty and integrity when addressing difficult matters.
- We are cultural glue—our leadership with a kind heart supports pulling down emotional and hierarchical barriers throughout the organisation to humanise work and respect everyone's contribution.

What will your leadership legacy be? Remember, '*What comes from the heart, goes to the heart' (Samuel Taylor Coleridge).*

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13

Lean as a Framework for Humanisation in Higher Education

Stephen Yorkstone , **Susanne Clarke** ,
and James Mann

13.1 Introduction

Lean management is a compelling concept, with a significant history. Lean is at the root of the Operations Management discipline and is now in practice, relatively ubiquitously. This includes in Higher Education (HE), where lean, although not always described as lean in name, is having an impact in Universities worldwide. Central to lean is the idea of beginning from true purpose, and the authors seek to explore how lean intersects with humanisation in HE.

We will begin by introducing the roles we have taken as authors in writing this chapter: Stephen (Steve) Yorkstone and Susanne Clarke both work in HE—Steve in Edinburgh Napier University in Scotland,

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and Susanne at Bournemouth University in the other end of the UK on the South Coast of England. Despite this geographical distance, we meet up regularly all over the world to support the development of lean and continuous improvement in HE globally as leaders of the Lean HE Global community of practice. In this chapter, we share theoretical perspectives on lean and humanising, with Steve providing the guiding hand for the case studies in this chapter, and his experience in lean. James Mann at the time of the case study was the service desk supervisor at Edinburgh Napier University. He has enthusiastically contributed and taken forward ideas into practice and has shown great generosity in sharing his experiences to support embedding these ideas more widely within HE. Susanne brings her knowledge of the humanisation framework in theory and practice.

We will introduce lean by discussing lean as an industrial approach, in order to introduce key concepts in use where lean is practised. We will go onto outline how these principles can play out in practice through a case study describing a programme of lean activity in a university helpdesk. Foremost is our wish to illustrate the interplay between lean and humanisation. The chapter then discusses some of the broader challenges facing the sector. It closes by addressing how a humanising lean approach has a role in offering a practical way forward.

13.2 Understanding Lean

Lean is often viewed as an approach to continuous improvement. Frequently, lean is associated with the removal of "non-value adding activity" to add velocity to business processes. This understanding of lean is limited, however, and misleading. More recently lean has come to be synonymous with the concept of "respect for people". Lean advocates suggest that it is not simply that continuous improvement requires respect for people to succeed, but rather that genuine respect for people is what causes the emergence of continuous improvement (Clarke et al. 2018).

Lean as a term was made popular by Womack et al. (2007) describing research into the Japanese automotive industry, especially in Toyota.

Originally "lean" was a term of derision for the Toyota Production System, reflecting a system running on the minimum resourcing required. However, as the discussion regarding lean went further, it came to be understood that using the minimum resource to achieve the goal was optimally efficient and therefore a blessing (not a cause for derision). Early translations of lean into other workplaces focussed on the removal of "waste" from processes, i.e. any activity that does not add value to the customer. This focus solely on removing waste, however, is only part of lean, and to solely apply this is to misunderstand lean's nature.

Currently, worldwide lean academies (associations of lean practitioners and thinkers) are represented by Planet Lean, who offer this definition of lean:

> Lean is about creating the most value for the customer while minimising resources, time, energy, and effort. (Priolo et al. 2020)

Since its inception lean has evolved, responding to the challenges of systems thinking. More recently, lean (and especially lean in higher education) has been influenced by coaching, service design, agile and other approaches. This smorgasbord approach means contemporary lean can be hard to pin down (Yorkstone 2018).

Womack and Jones described what they saw in Toyota as what have become guiding "principles" in lean, a series of steps often observed. Womack and Jones' lean principles are:

- Define value, as perceived by the customer.
- Map all the steps in the value stream, eliminating those that do not contribute to the creation of value.
- Ensure your products or services flow towards the customer in a smooth way, with no interruptions, by the value-creating steps occurring in a tight sequence.
- Let the customer pull value from the next process upstream, allowing them to set the pace for your work.
- Strive for perfection by trying to achieve a situation in which value is created with no waste.

For some sectors, such as HE, referring to those who interact with our organisations—our students, colleagues, stakeholders and research beneficiaries—as "customers" grates. This tension has become known as the "customer debate". However, this debate is to miss the point: lean is not tied to a superficial transactional financial relationship with stakeholders—one understanding of a customer—but a deeper, more meaningful long-term connection. In the Japanese roots of lean customer can instead be translated as honoured guest.

Since lean's inception, the concept has been poorly served by organisations who, with much good intent, have taken techniques that work in one organisation or sector and have applied these in another sector or organisation without understanding context or nuance (Radnor and Boaden 2008). Lean is more maturely understood as a learning system, a philosophy, part of the culture of organisations and "the way we do things around here". In this way, understanding lean is not so much about the type of activity that is undertaken but the qualitative approach to how this activity is done. Parallels with the humanising framework are clear, as the way that actions are taken in context is also key to their nature as humanising or dehumanising.

For this chapter, lean is viewed as a cultural or behavioural phenomenon, founded upon respect for people and continuous improvement; but one displayed in a pragmatic approach where experiments are undertaken to move iteratively towards ever better service. Lean is not understood as purely "top-down", managerial, reductive, solely functioning on a project basis, or necessarily tied to a financial model of our organisations.

With a broad menu of approaches, tools and applications in diverse industries outside HE, lean offers a useful improvement framework for the diverse university sector. To illustrate the application of lean in HE in practice, this chapter includes below a narrative account of lean improvement in the service desk at Edinburgh Napier University.

13.3 Case Study: Lean, an Information Services Service Desk Journey

13.3.1 Case Study Introduction

The Information Services Service Desk (the "desk") in Edinburgh Napier University is core to how the University works. The desk is the first point of call to deal with enquires about the technological services critical to how the institution operates, for services such as email, security, but also academic delivery such as our virtual learning environment.

The desk is staffed by a small team based on one of our Edinburgh campuses. With nearly 20,000 students at the University (primarily in Edinburgh but also studying with partners in China, Hong Kong, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Switzerland and Myanmar and increasingly across the globe online), we are a very busy service.

Here our co-author, James takes up the narrative to talk us through this case study, with Steve and Susanne providing the connections with lean and humanisation.

We were aware that Steve Yorkstone worked in the area of lean, so towards the end of 2018, we invited him to one of our monthly Service Desk meetings. We asked him to tell us about his job at Edinburgh Napier University, then we shamelessly asked him for help.

We had initially started to review our Knowledge Base—a database where we keep all our Service Desk documentation, and we were looking to make significant changes, such as relocating the database. The task was starting to look impossible, and we hoped Steve would be able to wave a magic wand. It did not take him too long to set us straight and one brainstorming session later we were well and truly on the path to lean.

This case study includes several tasks—how we approached them and what we have learned. The conclusion, although certainly not the end of our journey, is where we try and measure the success of our efforts. Steve and Susanne have added their thoughts at the end of each section discussing how the actions we took relates to both lean principles and humanisation.

13.3.2 Task 1: Service Desk Layout

Would Looking at Reorganising Our Space Help Us Work Better as a Team?

We took a good look at our space and how we wanted it to work for us as a team. Until we started on this journey, we had naturally gone through lots of different combinations. Mostly, however, we would settle for what was the easiest to configure, rather than what would work best to promote team interaction (Fig. 13.1).

There were, as you would expect, several questions that would define our office layout, such as:

- Where were the working network points?
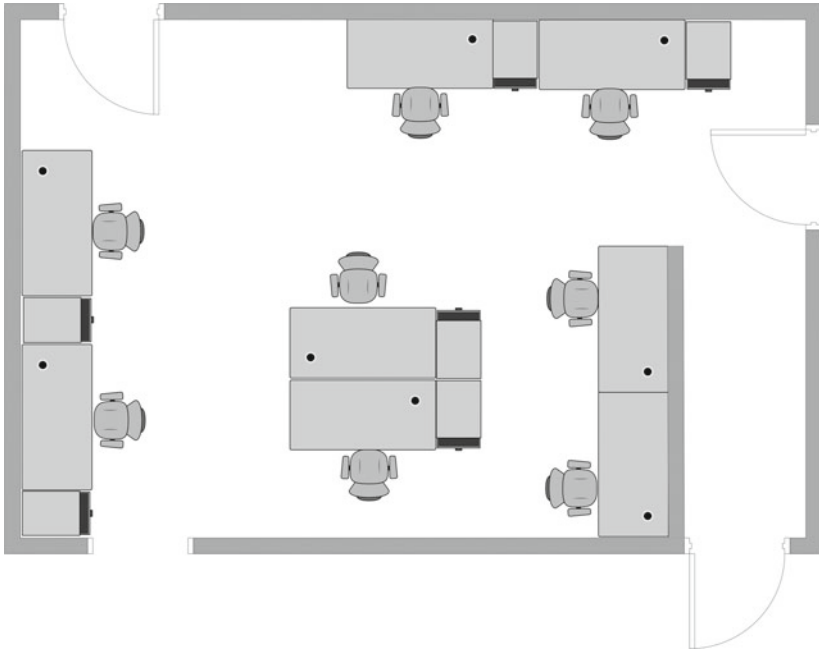
Fig. 13.1 How the Service Desk work space was originally organised

- How many sockets did we have?
- Who wanted to sit together?
- Where was it warmest?
- Who would have to answer the door?

All we found though was that the layout was never right and for the large part we just ended up playing musical chairs. It became the running joke for anyone visiting the office, thinking that we had shifted everything around for their amusement.

In seeking to make lean improvements to our space we changed the kind of questions we were asking about our room:

- What was the purpose of our space?
- Did we just want to have a desk and get our job done or did we wanted to work in an environment that fostered collaboration and inclusivity?
- Would designing a creative and functional space result in better call management, knowledge sharing and team morale?

In asking these questions, we realised that the "hive mind" of the Service Desk is how a lot of things get resolved and issues identified. We need to speak to each other and to have assistance close at hand.

Our first attempt was to create three separate groups of desks. By getting creative with the groupings, we hoped that everyone would be able to see and interact with everyone but still have a sense of their own space. Although cosy, it had the opposite effect, and the team were not happy working this way. We were too close and felt overly exposed to each other, even with desk dividers in place. We discussed as a team how we all felt, and we agreed that proximity is an important consideration—the closer you sit, the more distracting it can be when you are on the phone or concentrating. The team reported that they found this both tiring and stressful. The opposite of what we had set out to achieve.

The next idea we had was to bring our separate groups into one big group of eight desks, in effect creating one long table. This seemed to work, and we now had a space that we all agreed promoted communication and collaboration. We could seat the team strategically, placing

people in the right place so they would have quick and easy access to the people who could help them best (Fig. 13.2).

During this journey, we discovered that addressing physical space is vitally important. Since moving to this layout, we have seen improvements within the team in terms of morale and in the professional approach we take with each call. We now have people seated according to their strengths. Newer staff are closer to someone who can support them. Everyone is available to help, but also have enough personal space to get on with their job.

Bringing a communal feeling to the office has brought us closer together as a team. By allowing everyone to work together with minimum physical barriers, we are beginning to collaborate more. Curiously, it also feels more professional and as a result, we take more pride in the service we provide. When given the freedom to organise our space we have found that we work better together and get more things done.
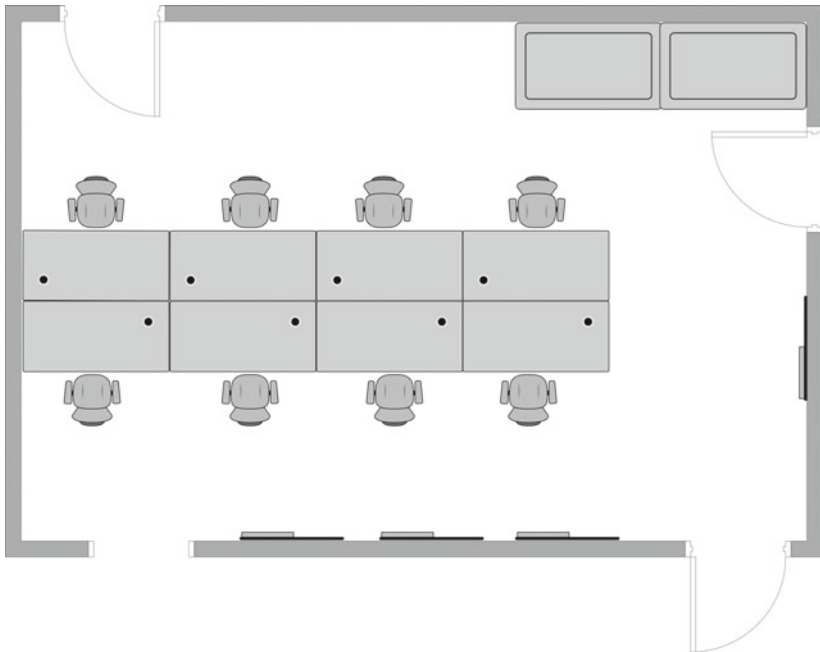
Fig. 13.2   How the Service Desk work space is now configured

- We have learned that it is essential to play with your space to find out what works and what does not. Sometimes you must get things wrong just to find out what works.
- Even though we have a wish list for new furniture, we also learned that we could make do with what we have.

Thinking about the way the team undertook this task, it was clearly an iterative process and experimentation was key to arriving at a better layout. This is an example of continuous improvement in action.

For lean thinkers, flow is key, when a process aligns around purpose and steps in the process occur seamlessly. This is true in the efficient physical production line origins of lean, but, also as we see lean being implemented in other sectors, where the flow relates to the flow of information between teams. This improvement illustrates how physical space is key to the flow of information across the team on the desk.

Elements of Todres et al. (2009) humanisation model are similarly highly practical in the healthcare setting where constructing a physical space around the patient enables embodiment (a sense of wellbeing, through having our needs met, a sense a place), and therefore, better health.

The intersection between lean and humanisation here is an interesting one. In many humanising systems the primary thought is what people might display at the surface level as their humanising needs; the first questions the team asked themselves in this section of the case study "who would like to sit next to who" "who would be warm or cold", etc. However, this instance would suggest that focussing on the purpose of the team, and removing the physical barriers to communication, has enabled an increased sense of place and decreased dislocation—as communal feeling and togetherness as team bonds are reported to have increased.

It also illustrates how in lean, the decision making is taken at the closest point to where value is delivered, and the team were "given the freedom" to make these improvements. For humanisation, this would be an example of how agency placed in the appropriate place enables better outcomes.

13.3.3 Task 2: Service Desk Visualisation

Will Using Simple Tools to Record and Display Our Work Help Manage Tasks Better?

Visualisation of work is important to not only allow us to manage complex tasks, but also allows visitors to the desk to easily see what we do. Making the work visible is one of the things that Steve told us is commonly seen across lean implementations in various industries.

To achieve this, we had several whiteboards attached to the wall, and we cleared space to use a couple of walls to their full size. We also added a board to help us manage major calls, which are infrequent events, but events that take up a significant amount of time and resource to deal with.

This new way of managing our tasks helped us to manage the "Knowledge Items" effectively. We did not always have time to work on them, with day to day pressures often taking priority. Having the task visualised like this meant that it never disappeared and forgotten. It also served to keep work visible and ensured that everyone in the team was aware of the current status of projects.

High Tech is not always the best solution. To have something that requires you to move away from your desk, your screen helps us think more creatively and work together to find solutions to what can often be very complex and challenging problems.

These visual spaces have allowed us to discuss issues and manage complex tasks easily. They became space where our thinking or tasks remaining were visible for everyone to see, contribute and revisit.

These visual work boards have also become central to our team routine, providing room to work through different processes, provide feedback to the team, manage our major calls and display our important management data.

Visualisation of the work is core to lean, lean thinkers, talk about building a "visual workplace" where anyone could enter the space and identify the activity underway, and indeed whether there were any problems to the smooth flow of that work (Womack et al. 2007). This is

often deliberately physical in nature, despite the availability of software solutions for this, with teams gathering in real space daily in front of a visual control board (an "information radiator") that they are responsible for. The real-world physical meeting enables enhanced relationships; however, discipline is required to ensure that short daily "huddles" do not become overlong.

While this approach makes sense in the context of manufacturing and is now widespread in the healthcare sector, it would seem unusual for this practice to emerge in our institutions. That said, I am sure we can all picture that school office who uses their whiteboard to manage key tasks; what assignments are due when, key committee meetings and decisions, leave and absences.

Elements of visualisation and the embodiment of work often do emerge as we see humanisation emerge. Combined with the sense of space the team started to develop with their room layout, we see the work become crystallised in the space around them. Indeed, often this happens without intent, as we see the embodiment of perhaps less healthy working practices in detritus that accumulates around busy desks or in less often visited corners. I know when I am over-worked you can see it in piles of un-attended papers on my desk!

Visualisation, the embodiment of work, is bring meaning and supports the development of lean thinkers. In this instance, the concept of visualisation has provided a structure that creates the "official" space for the human business of embodiment to be practised, leading to performance improvements. The space around the people here has become an enabler for understanding meaning in relation to their work. This sense-making brings with it comfort and confidence that comes with knowing we are part of the team—in contrast to the dislocation that dehumanises us, the feeling we get when we don't know what is happening around us.

13.3.4 Task 3: Service Desk Rota

Could We Make Positive Changes to the Way We Work by Reviewing the Current Working Rota?

We decided to review the current rota pattern, which was very much an unstructured system with ad hoc updates made each day. Mostly this would work fine but when things started to get busy this would often lead to confusion and as a result regular breaks were missed; consequently, both the service and staff wellbeing declined.

This approach also affected the daily tasks assigned to each member of the team, with some analysts feeling like they were stuck on the phones, always picking up voicemails and feeling an increased pressure to take on more daily tasks.

Key issues that were identified:

- Wellbeing
- Service impact
- Distribution of rota tasks
- Structured breaks.

The experiment then was to create a new rota that would address these issues and see if the changes made would have a positive effect.

To really get to grips with the rota we needed to understand how our week was broken up. We started by mapping out our working week. We set about identifying our key tasks and assigned them daily to a shift, which was then staggered across the week, ensuring they were evenly distributed without duplication. These tasks would in turn help identify which breaks an analyst should be on—and provide a fair allocation of breaks across the week.

The impact of the changes was easily measured through a management information system and from feedback from the team. Feedback was positive from the team, who were keen to adopt the new pattern. The real indicator of success, though, was that they started to engage with the process and make suggestions on how it could be further improved.

In summary, by working with the team, we had the correct cover to manage the Service Desk effectively. This had a positive impact on our time to resolve (one of our key metrics) and as a result, better customer service for the end-user.

The even distribution of tasks allowed everyone to enjoy more variety and manage their workload. As a direct result of the changes to the

rotas, the team were better able to respond to calls. There was a marked improvement in team morale, as they felt part of the decision-making process, they had a stronger sense that they mattered and that their preferences and views were heard.

Having a structure in place was more efficient, and peaks and troughs could be better managed. Importantly, it also gave everyone a clear understanding of their roles each week. Since the rota was implemented, we have been able to cope with changes and still see a positive impact on monthly results.

In lean flow is not just about space, but also time. "Takt" time, from the German, is the measure in lean of the time between the start of production of one unit to the start of the production of the next unit. Known as the heartbeat of the work, lean thinkers pay attention to this in order to ensure processes are designed with the right capacity, the right bandwidth if you like, to meet demand (Liker 2012).

In this example, however, focus on a clear structure also enabled the people within this team to work more effectively, but in doing so, release the appropriate time for breaks and personal tasks. The conceptual framework of the dimensions of humanisation function on an individual basis enhanced the sense of togetherness, a focus on the wider team.

This concept of "Takt" time, while understandable on a production line, might seem dehumanising in a university environment. However, this example demonstrates how these boundaries, or disciplined nature, can enable humanisation as the staff work with an increased agency to meet their own and the team's needs. Improving the rota used feedback from staff in its design, made the problem more explicit, and the benefits help customers and the staff on the rota, including increasing work-life balance.

13.3.5 Task 4: Service Desk Call Management

By Applying Lean to Our Call Management Process, Will We Be Able to Work Smarter and Provide a Better Service?

We set out to redefine the roles and responsibilities of managing the queue. Running up to the change, there was no clearly defined system or call ownership in place. Calls were taken from the queue by analysts with the oldest calls being dealt with first. There was a little in the way of standard approaches to common issues and calls were at times directed to analysts without the correct information from the user, resulting in delays.

This often resulted in a backlog of calls, increased pressure and a perceived imbalance of workload within the team. We still functioned well as a Service Desk, but there were clearly improvements which could be made. All members of the team contributed to the design of a new process and way of working, as detailed below:

- Simple requests were dealt with immediately.
- Standard solutions were applied to common issues.
- Further details were requested, were needed from the caller, before being assigned to an analyst.
- Major issues and priority calls were handled promptly.
- Call volume was evenly distributed across the team.
- Everyone got time off the phone every week, and morale was improved.

The changes made here have become key to everything we do on the desk. Consistency across the calls allows us to provide a high level of customer service, report effectively and to make informed decisions about any process and procedural changes we need to make. We are now able to measure effectiveness, which is a great check to ensure that we are on the right track.

This process has had a positive impact on the team as well. Since its adoption, we have been able to manage our calls efficiently and to a high standard. This is reflected in the monthly reports, which clearly shows the improvements we are making and continue to make using this system.

Here we can see a clear delineation of roles, the creation of what lean thinkers would refer to as "standard work" (Liker 2012). In the context of the previous improvements, this change has also acted as a positive enabler on the team, including improving morale.

It is interesting to reflect on the patterns between the elements of the humanisation framework that emerge through this case study as enabling improvements positively as staff take an increasing amount of control over their own work.

However, likely, this controlled approach to work isn't without its challenges, as doubtless some of the expectations of staff members were not met through these changes. It is this paradox that is contained within lean's "respect for people" principle. Not that we should give people what they seek or ask for in the immediate, but that we should take a deeper or longer view of needs and seek for these to be fulfilled.

13.3.6 Case Study Conclusions

There is clearly within the data a numerical case for lean, with targets being met and key indicators improving; however, it is the humanising elements that have underpinned this success. Each of the interventions necessitated the application of practical changes to the workplace, each of which will have doubtless caused some level of discomfort for some or all the staff involved. Nevertheless, this case illustrates how despite this the actions together have had a transformative effect for the people who use the service of the desk, and indeed for the team itself.

Similarly, to the way that each of the interventions above has worked together, we have seen numerous elements of the humanisation framework displayed and intersecting here. Improving the workplace involves not just one intervention but a consistent approach where people are at its core. Lean is a philosophy, an approach to work, and through seeking improvement, this case study has seen the team culture improve.

Of course, this case study has limitations, being drawn over a relatively short period of time. In a context where there is relatively high staff mobility, including of both the supervisory staff who operationalised these changes (moving on to promoted positions elsewhere), it has yet to be seen whether these benefits will be maintained.

This case study is also drawn from a transactional team in a higher education context, with a clear physical environment, very different

from the classroom, library, or laboratory or other space our academic colleagues work within.

Yet there is learning that is applicable across different working contexts, that of the humanising quality of these improvements being key to their successes thus far. An intervention is necessary for improvement; however, this case study illustrates that the qualitative nature of the approach taken is key to positive long-term impact, almost in excess of the interventions themselves. Humanisation is not about what is done but the way that is done. All these changes could have been made without the humanising elements—and the self-same activities acting as dehumanising rather than humanising—and perhaps without the same kinds of success.

Coaching is an important activity within lean and is sometimes traditionally referred to as being offered by a lean Sensei. Often controversial figures in practice, the ideal Sensei embodies respect for people and encourages those involved in improvement activity to learn through doing. In this way, the team is supported by a coach who provides a stimulus from outside the team to do the right thing. This coaching resides outside of line management to enable individuals and teams to learn what it means to take agency in relation to their work, in a way where staff and management can feel safe (Liker 2012).

The desk team continues to maintain statistics to monitor their performance. Data since the case study has been completed and it is broadly positive. There are plans to re-measure now the team staffing has changed, to see if results are being maintained. We will also assess whether behavioural cultural changes are being maintained in terms of positive team working, with a view to further sustainable performance improvement enabled by humanisation; even in the current challenging context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

13.4　Challenges to Lean in Higher Education

The example above outlines a response to some challenges faced in the sector, and how a lean type approach helped discover purpose, and meet purpose without extraneous activity. That said, the context of HE is one

which is distant from lean's manufacturing beginnings, and what that offers challenges classic lean.

13.5 Organisational or Intrinsic Challenges

There are challenges to applying approaches like lean to HE. One challenge is that of the complexity intrinsic to universities.

Universities are perhaps unique in being our creators of knowledge, they abound with theoretical discussion. This discussion includes, quite rightly, academic criticism of lean as a concept. Academics are powerful communicators unafraid to challenge. This offers challenges to the lean practitioner, who might face vigorous discussion that would not be offered in a non-academic workplace.

It almost seems impossible for continuous improvement in a lean way to work in these contexts. Universities are themselves structured almost like "wicked problems", i.e. at a level of complexity that is without definitive solutions (Dickinson 2020).

13.6 Situational, or Extrinsic, Challenges

Generalisations can be misleading; however, externally the sector is facing challenges, like many others. Financial constraints are an increasing reality for institutions certainly in the UK. Immediate challenges are facing the business model of HE from increases in technology, notably the growth of online learning. While there is a large take-up on online learning, historically there is also a high non-completion rate from online HE courses, and people taking online courses seem to be from a different demographic to traditional face-to-face students (Ashford-Row and Barajas-Murphy 2019). That said, as we write in March 2020 the pivot to online in response to Covid-19 is enormous and will doubtless have huge repercussions.

Changing population demographics are also likely to have an impact, with students from a broader range of backgrounds, and more diverse life stages (HESA 2020). Yet the sector appears to be continuing to seek to

grow, and to sustain this by leveraging the globalisation of the sector, either through importing international students to existing campuses, through sending academics to teach overseas "flying faculty", through establishing operations overseas more directly or through franchise agreements (Jais et al. 2015).

At the same time, countries with large populations where the middle classes had made the most of international education in the west (India and China for example) are increasingly developing higher education provision in country (Ruby 2020). This challenges whether growth through internationalisation will be able to be a continuing sustainable approach.

Alongside this there is the climate crisis. Students and staff of Universities are often connected into the importance of the current threats to our biosphere and keen to act on them. Doubtless, the implications of climate change will change many things, including for Universities (Allen 2003).

13.7 Responding to These Challenges

Universities are almost impossible organisations in an impossible situation. However, when seen together, these challenges represent opportunities. We know that creative solutions are often the result of serendipity and messy contexts. It is a truism that when we know the answer to the question before we start the process of answering it, we cannot discover anything new. The most successful universities have learnt to use the unique features of the sector and to enable success in our always-changing world.

Universities require a mature approach to improvement, one flexible enough to change and embrace difference, and that can be applied in diverse way. In this, taking a lean approach can enable improvement. If lean is applied as a top-down managerial improvement approach, it is unlikely to have impact. If lean is taken as a philosophical approach to work, flexible and dynamic, but based around respect for people and scientific method, it has the power to be transformational. As lean itself is a broad approach to change, it fits universities well.

Thinking about lean through the lens of humanisation, and humanisation through the lens of lean, enables interventions to be more likely to succeed. However, there are limits to the application of lean and humanisation in HE.

Notwithstanding, it is the view of the authors that it is the genuine treatment of all people within our organisations in a humanising way that holds the potential to take improvement to a true win-win outcome. For lean practitioners, this is not new, the humanising framework simply makes tangible the "respect for people" principle discussed at the start of this chapter.

13.8 Conclusion

At the time of writing, the future for lean in higher education appears bright. Many universities are working to apply lean or related improvement approaches, and the numbers of institutions engaging Lean HE events are growing. It is hard to predict where this will go next, however; lean practice has been sustained in the sector for over a decade, and some lean practices that would seem to be far from the culture of universities—the daily stand up for example—are proving to be beneficial.

The daily stand up, championed by the University of Strathclyde is a daily 15-minute meeting to discuss a brief standard agenda focussing on the most important things for the day. It is an example of a practical lean tool that acts as a scaffold to enable people to relate differently to their work—when done with the appropriate qualitative approach: i.e. humanisation.

The real challenge for applying lean is to stay true to respect for people, as this volume is exploring, with an embodied relational understanding (Galvin and Todres 2010). A mature understanding of lean places people at its core and does not view those who intersect with our activities as disposable "customers" but rather as people and communities with whom we offer lifelong service. This is at the core of the success of lean enterprises, realising that helping people achieve their needs in the long term, no more and no less, is at the core to sustained success. Even if it

is not, working in a sector that chooses to work for the benefit of people is doubtless somewhere we would all choose to be a part of.

The service desk case study above illustrates how lean done properly can provide a helpful framework for the humanisation of HE in practice, linking to challenges facing the sector. Lean tools provide a practical framework for the business of making improvements, the humanisation model a practical framework for the business of respecting our people.

For lean thinkers, high-level purpose (as defined in the context of people's needs) is prior. There is the potential for tension in the interpretation of humanisation as placing the needs of the individual as prior to higher level purpose. However, perhaps the tension between the purpose of the individual and the purpose of the organisation is an interesting question; but is it the right question? Like the elements of the humanising framework, while in some ways distinct, lean and humanisation are deeply interrelated.

So lean and humanisation are perhaps a way that the higher education sector can look at practice externally, navigate their challenges, and through doing so, find a way of reminding itself what universities are really for. This would to be to not shy away from the complexity of the sector but rather to engage with the opportunities that exist in the beautifully complex and important purposes of our Universities.

Lean demonstrates how business objectives and humanisation are in concert, not conflict, and furthermore how the forms of humanisation and forms of dehumanisation are not contingent upon an act in and of itself but the qualitative nature of that act. The qualitative nature that successful lean springs from is respect for people, from humanisation.

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14

Why Politics Is a Good Thing—The Positive Potential of Policy Work (and the People Who Do It) in Universities

Jane Forster

14.1 Introduction

The link between policy work in universities and wellbeing is not an obvious one. Higher education policy "wonks"—experts in the politics of higher education—can contribute by influencing political outcomes (sometimes), but more importantly by influencing the way that policy is understood and implemented in their institutions. In addition, because policy work in universities is specialist work, many of us also have other roles alongside the policy role, with even more opportunities to support wellbeing. I hope in this chapter to demonstrate that those of us working in this area have an essential role to play in humanising the university environment and contributing to staff wellbeing.

Leach (2012) calls us "wonks" and has built a whole business on the label (Wonkhe is a platform for HE analysis and commentary: https://

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wonkhe.com/). The usual definition of wonk isn't very flattering—Cambridge Dictionary online explains it as: "a person who works or studies too much, especially someone who learns and knows all the details about something", and the suggested synonym is "nerd"!

The role of policy adviser is a relatively new one at UK universities,

> The role of the wonk who works in a vice-chancellor's office varies widely in scope and responsibility …Duties can include that of speechwriter, gatekeeper, henchman, fixer, trusted adviser, public affairs officer and administrator, and often the job involves juggling all these roles at the same time…
>   (Leach 2012)

We have a correspondingly wide range of job titles, including Executive Assistant, Chief of Staff, and my own, Vice-Chancellor's Policy Adviser (Bailey 2019). Much of what I do day to day is actually more to do with helping the Executive team to run the University and working with the Vice-Chancellor on what can seem like a random set of activities. But whatever we call ourselves, policy roles in UK universities are on the rise; we even have our own network, the Lighthouse Policy Group (2020) with a growing membership.

At Bournemouth University (BU), the policy team (of 2) work on policy issues related to higher education policy and the wider political context as it relates to HE and our organisation. We also work on public affairs and support the policy impact of research activities. This latter set of responsibilities doesn't always fall into the policy adviser role. At Bournemouth University, we do this as part of a wider network of staff working on research support, communications and external engagement.

It's hard to make this role sound exciting. "Policy" sounds incredibly dry—I've already said that those who work in the field are recognised as being nerdy. Worse than that, to many, the "politics" word conjures an image of either the unpleasant organisational manoeuvring of office politics, or the intrigue and compromise, and slipperiness and polarisation often associated with our national and local politicians.

As described by Kaiser et al. (2017):

> Politics is a dirty word. But office politics are unavoidable; as Aristotle noted, "man is by nature a political animal." Whether you participate in them or not, politics have a big influence on what happens to you, your projects, and your team, so it's hard to be indifferent to them.
>
> Bad politics are pretty easy to identify. They include the wrangling, manoeuvring, sucking up, backstabbing, and rumour-mongering people use to advance themselves *at the expense of other people or the organisation.*

So why is this chapter in this book? What does policy work in universities have to do with wellbeing and humanising our universities?

The key to the answer is purpose. You could look at HE policy and see a complex matrix of regulatory, contractual and organisational imperatives, overlaid by a vast array of additional priorities for attention and resource, pushed by a range of groups and stakeholders with competing interests. In that context, the day job involves filtering out the "politics" in order to help our organisations and the staff we work with navigate that matrix.

But there is more to it than that. As third sector bodies, our over-riding obligation as universities is to act for the public benefit, specifically in the context of advancing education. Most universities are "exempt charities" (Charity Commission for England and Wales 2019). Dandridge and Stephenson (2019) note:

> Organisations established for the valued charitable purpose of advancing education must do so for the public benefit, helping society to flourish beyond the confines of their own campuses.
>
> Teaching and research are clearly at the heart of what higher education institutions do. Still, the wider difference they make is increasingly being recognised, not least through initiatives that stress social and economic impact and a research excellence framework that credits its importance.

At BU, when setting our new strategic vision and plan in 2018, we decided to define our purpose, which is "to inspire learning, advance knowledge and enrich society". The first two aspects are essential on their own, and contribute to the third, as our students, graduates and staff, and the knowledge and experience that they bring, contribute to society now and into the future. Enriching society is also an important

aspect of our purpose in its own right, for example through the things we do as a large organisation, such as engaging with our local community, taking steps to manage our environmental footprint, making sure that as an organisation we are inclusive and are supporting diversity and equality.

In this chapter, I hope to explore some of the ways that policy work in universities benefits our wider society and in doing so also contributes to the wellbeing of our staff and students, as well as highlighting the importance of a human approach to the wider aspects of the role.

With apologies to colleagues in Scotland and Wales, this chapter focusses on the position in England.

14.2 Ivory Towers v Left-Wing Bastions

One challenge with working in HE policy inside an institution arises from the critical narrative about a perception of an increasingly corporate approach in universities. As Tucker and McVitty (2019, p. 5) explain:

> Inside higher education institutions, there is a longer—standing tradition of scepticism about "managerialist" leadership, that has an ideological problem with a trend in university leadership that prioritises compliance, efficiency, financial sustainability and entrepreneurialism or, as adherents might express it, "running the university as if it were a business". Institutional leaders are characterised as having lost sight of the core academic values of higher education.

Leach (2018) adds to this by stating:

> On the one hand, there is a narrative pushed broadly by the left. This argues that academics and students are under constant assault from managers, ministers and market forces. That vice-chancellors are complicit in turning universities from open, academic communities into cold-hearted corporations, driven by profit.
>
> On the other, there is a narrative pushed broadly by the right. It claims that universities are ivory towers. They are unaccountable, lack transparency and are out-of-touch. Universities are just another vested interest

to be burst open by the free market. Vice-chancellors represent all that is anti-competitive, protectionist and inefficient in education.

… And perhaps this means publicly subsidised universities have lost the right to be judged against Kant or Newman. They must now be judged against contemporary business ethics, legislation and regulation – and above all, public opinion.

As one example, Morgan (2019) sets out an interesting analysis of the view we often see in the right-wing press that universities are stuffed with left-leaning academics. There is a game that we policy wonks occasionally play; to guess the headlines that each newspaper will use to announce a major breaking story. The impact of social media on national discourse is a modern cliché; it is easy to live in an opinion bubble. But in this world where we are all connected, all the time, public opinion definitely matters. Of course, knowing what public opinion actually is, is a very different problem (Sturgis and Kuha 2018).

The answer to the question posed by Leach is "both…and". That may be uncomfortable for commentators who prefer back and white to shades of grey, or principle to compromise. As noted above, most UK universities are not businesses, they are charities, and while this means that they are not generally required to produce a profit for distribution to owners, they are still subject to many of the same financial constraints and other regulatory requirements as other large organisations. It's complicated. This is important to the question of wellbeing in universities. If perspectives are polarised, and lines between personal and professional discourse are blurred, these compromises are harder to accept. Effective internal communications are vital; the way that senior leadership connects with staff informally as well as formally is a key part of this. Those of us in roles like mine have an opportunity to influence that and provide a humanising narrative for our leaders.

14.3 The Institutional and Regulatory Context

My time working in higher education policy started in November 2015 as Jo Johnson launched his Higher Education Green Paper (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills 2016). As four successive governments (so far) have implemented the ideas set out in the Higher Education Green Paper, as supported by the subsequent White Paper (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills 2017), the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 (HERA 2017) and numerous consultations, not to mention the part-completed Review of Post-18 Education and Funding (Department for Education, 2019) (there has been no government response at the time of writing), it has felt as though the sector has been particularly under the policy spotlight. Not so, say more experienced hands, it has always been like this. Kernohan (2018a, 2019b) in two articles for Wonkhe describes changes over the years. But even if this level of change is normal, it is still change, and change creates uncertainty and risk.

At the time of finalising this chapter, we are all subject to some level of restriction to protect the nation from Covid-19. The changes implemented rapidly across the sector to address teaching, assessment and admissions needs, amongst other things, in this strange new world, may have enormous implications for the long-term future of Higher Education or may just be a temporary blip, destined to be a footnote on graphs of HE in data for years to come. What is interesting is the rapidity and positive attitude with which the sector and its staff are embracing change, when the need for it, and the benefits, are clear.

The sector is now more tightly regulated than before, following the establishment of the Office for Students (OfS), replacing the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) as part of the implementation of HERA 2017. The implications of this change of approach for the governance (and governors) of universities were spelt out by King (2018). The new registration process, the data disclosure and transparency requirements (HEPI 2019), the regime for reportable events (Office for Students 2019), have all changed or will change, the way that universities manage themselves.

Two changes, in particular, are making a difference—the increasing focus by the OfS on the role of university governing body (Jones and Hillman 2019), and the condition of registration that requires universities to take part in the Teaching Excellence Framework (the TEF).

PriceWaterHouseCoopers (2019, p. 4) highlights the context for this in their report on risk in higher education:

> But it is not just financial uncertainty that senior managers and governing bodies will be concerned with. …The new Office for Students (OfS) continues to emphasise value for money, despite uncertainty (that word again) on what this actually means in practice.
>
> Universities need to maintain and improve their performance in the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), while also preparing for the Research Excellence Framework (REF2021) …. New consumer laws have led to an increase in complaints, appeals and legal action by students. In addition, institutions are having to respond to the increasing risks around student welfare, in particular mental health.

Commentary to fill several books exists on the Teaching Excellence Framework (the TEF), and it is also the subject of a separate independent review mandated by Parliament in HERA 2017. At the time of writing, the publication of the review and the government response to the review is still delayed. It seems likely, however, that the TEF, and TEF at subject level, will continue to be part of the regulatory regime for some time.

The TEF built on the REF, which has been running for a while (although using a completely different methodology, definitions, classifications and everything else). Jo Johnson, the Minister responsible for the introduction of the TEF, also introduced the Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF) to inform potential partners about universities, and ultimately to inform the distribution of government funds for knowledge exchange, which will run for the first time in 2020 (Coiffait 2017).

Metrics and measurement, or what the government call "information and choice", are here to stay, at least for a while. The one thing that might force a re-evaluation is the impact of Covid-19—in the short term, this has pushed some deadlines back. In the longer term, some are suggesting

that it will make the data so useless that the exercises will have to be abandoned. I am not so sure. For university leaders, this increased focus on measurement is a practical challenge, however they feel personally about the ideology behind the role of the Office for Students as a "market regulator" or about the validity or effectiveness of the REF, the TEF or the KEF. However much those leaders believe in the value of education as a value that can't, or shouldn't, be measured in terms of value for money, whatever their politics, we are where we are. The organisation needs to be run. The regulatory requirements have to be met; students need to be recruited and research grants obtained; otherwise the institution will cease to exist, and it won't be able to contribute to society at any level.

In this context, those of us working in policy at an institution can contribute in several ways. We can seek to influence policy, working with colleagues across our institution to respond to government initiatives and sector consultations, highlighting and sharing the risk and impact of policy changes. We can work with local and national politicians, with the help of colleagues in other teams, to inform and enthuse them about our institutional perspectives. We may have the opportunity to work with academic colleagues to build research evidence to support these arguments. Attempts to influence national policy may not make a great difference to the outcome, but it's worth trying. Perhaps just as importantly, we can seek to understand and interpret policy, sharing our knowledge to help the institution and our colleagues navigate that messy matrix I mentioned. We can bring the theory to life, reduce the burden of following the twists and turns, and bring humour and a human element to the driest of policy briefings. And that is definitely worth doing.

14.4   It's All About Our Values

University leaders must be pragmatic and constructive when implementing government policies. But everything that leaders do in a university is done through and with people. HESA analysis of HE expenditure (Higher Education Statistics Agency 2019) shows that staff costs are by far the highest costs for universities.

As Tucker and McVitty (2019, p. 11) explain:

> In a highly complex landscape, leaders are prioritising values, in some cases explicitly prioritising articulation and practise of values over developing strategy. A strong belief that your actions are grounded in what you believe to be right is necessary when you are dealing with uncertainty and doubt. Values help to bring the wellbeing of the institution to the fore and give a counterbalance to external pressures on performance.

This is part of the role of an adviser with access to leadership. We have an unusual opportunity to promote the values of the organisation in carrying out our roles. At Bournemouth University, kindness, consideration and a caring approach are mentioned in our strategic plan, as are open and transparent communication and our values (excellence, responsibility, creativity and inclusivity). These also feature frequently in our communications, given our commitment to humanise our practice (Devis-Rozental 2018). The non-policy aspects of my role include supporting the strategic and implementation planning process, Vice-Chancellor communications and running leadership team meetings. This gives me, like many of my colleagues in similar roles across the sector, the opportunity to support leaders to role model our values, positive leadership behaviours and open and thoughtful communication, working with colleagues in HR, organisational development, communications and our service excellence team. We are often in a privileged position as regards access to leaders and opportunity to shape the agenda (literally or metaphorically)—which gives us an opportunity, and I would argue, a responsibility, to question, challenge and role model these values and behaviours.

14.5 Dancing with the Devil

Policy wonks are sometimes criticised for the company we keep and the people we work with. Whatever your political views, if you are asking someone to do something for you—like change their mind on an important sector issue or read about your research and consider bringing you in for a discussion about policy change—it is unhelpful to start by abusing them and irrelevant to attack their political beliefs.

The policy adviser's role in this context is to work constructively to achieve the best outcome, not to facilitate a political debate. We might as individuals loathe everything about the current government and what they stand for—but they are the ones in power. We can engage with them, or not. A policy adviser might be excused for advising a staff member that they would be more likely to achieve their immediate objective of policy change by toning down the political criticism in their one-page summary and focussing on practical changes supported by the evidence in their research. It's about being constructive.

But as a sector, we are bad at it. As Thompson says (2016):

> When Johnson became prime Minister in summer 2019, he set off on improving the visa regime for science – something that the community has long called for. But the announcement was ridiculed by some senior researchers as inconsequential in the face of a bad Brexit outcome. There is some truth in what was said – but the hostile tone was unnecessary. At worst, a response like that could make a government decide it's not worth bothering. Why make improvements if all you get is bad publicity from the people you're trying to help?

Hillman (2016) points out:

> The higher education sector is better at destructive than constructive criticism. This is a problem.

There's another problem too; with independence. Mansfield (2019, p. 89) points this out:

> In most areas of public policy, those carrying out research are from outside the groups who will be affected. …In HE, the majority of researchers on the subject will, as academics, be part of the system they are studying…this has the unfortunate consequence of making it more challenging to obtain perspectives that are not heavily influenced by the prevailing attitudes and "common wisdom" of the sector they are trying to study.

In other words, members of universities have a conflict of interest, which means that policymakers will, as Mansfield points out, "*understandably be sceptical*".

Great effort has been invested across the sector, criticising the approach to metrics in the TEF. Still, the sector has not proposed effective alternatives. Maybe these are problems to which there is no solution, and perhaps the government should not be trying to measure outcomes in HE at all. But in the meantime, measurements are happening and are likely to have consequences for institutions.

Looking at the TEF again, despite its flaws, it has changed the debate about education. Before the Office for Students really got their teeth into Access and Participation planning, the TEF gave focus on widening participation and outcomes for all students, using data split by student characteristics (DfE 2017, p. 43).

Universities UK highlight many flaws, but also benefits noted by participant institutions (UUK 2017, p. 2):

> There is widespread belief that the TEF will raise the profile of teaching and learning. There is also early evidence that the TEF process has enhanced engagement with institutional metrics, will reshape internal assurance processes and has influenced teaching and learning strategies.

So, what's the answer? How do we recover from our principled opposition and engage with what some might see as the "enemy"? Constructive engagement with the implementation of policies gives us an opportunity to influence them for the better. Time invested in understanding and responding to these issues helps us contribute to discussions about how these mechanisms are operationalised in the institution. And it helps if we don't actually treat the politicians as the enemy.

14.6 Politicians Are People Too

In her book "*Why we get the wrong politicians*", Hardman (2019) describes many challenges and problems with the political system and its structures in the UK, and the implications that these have for all of

us, if they lead to bad policy or no policy, or if important but difficult decisions are put off. But what shines out from the range of personal stories that she includes is the humanity of the individual politicians she has interviewed.

In supporting academic staff to get their research considered by politicians, in supporting our institution to respond to policy initiatives, it helps to remember that we are dealing with human beings. People who may be, as Hardman (2019, p. 282) says, "all flawed, sometimes selfish and sometimes stupid", but the vast majority of whom are "decent, well-meaning types" (Hardman 2019, p. xvii).

Why does this matter? It matters because when we approach politicians, we want them to do something for us. We are asking them to listen to our views, to read our evidence and think about their position in the light of our submissions. We are asking them to collaborate with us on a joint endeavour, of making policy as good as it can be. We might be asking them to change their minds on something. So, taking a human approach, understanding the challenges they face, helping them and seeing things from their own perspective are all valuable.

As Thompson says (2016):

> …When we do get out to seek influence, we shouldn't restrict ourselves to making the evidence-based case. We should be evidence-led, but to be effective in our influence, we need to get better at using strong narratives,…This means not being afraid of emotion and human stories that people can relate to.

Additionally, Beech says (2019):

> Don't just criticise, offer solutions. For those on the outside, it's easy to point out flaws in existing policies. Often, policymakers are already aware of these faults and are working hard to correct them. But in times of political crisis, their capacity to refine policy becomes ever more squeezed. The last thing they need is people stating the obvious. Help them identify solutions instead. Be proactive – and be sure to keep ideas short, simple and jargon-free.

It works both ways, too. Politicians and their staff ask university staff to engage with their policy consultations, submit evidence to their inquiries, lend their voices to their policy initiatives. As many have noted (see Hillman 2016 and Beech, 2019 for just some examples), they want our help, but they want it in very specific ways—they want our advice to be short and easy to understand, they want it to be provided on short notice. They are often not interested in the wider context, just in a quick political win for the issue of the day.

Policy advisers are in the middle of this, trying to reconcile these two groups of people and help everyone get a beneficial outcome. With staff, we try to be helpful and supportive. We understand that we may be asking a lot from them. Policy work is all about influencing, within our institutions and outside them. For that, it helps to connect with people on a human level. In fact, we are using the head, hand and heart model developed by Devis-Rozental (2018, p. 3) every day.

14.7 The Positive Potential of Policy Work (and the People Who Do It) in Universities

My argument in this chapter is that policy work and policy advisors can be a force for good—supporting wellbeing, helping to humanise universities as workplaces, supporting a values-led agenda and helping the University to achieve a positive impact on its wider community. We can interpret, explain and inform, we can persuade and influence, both within the University and externally. We are in fact, the ultimate proponents of office politics, in the good sense,

> Common phrases for playing good politics include being savvy, well-networked, or street smart, socialising ideas, and managing stakeholders. (Kaiser, et al. 2017)

At the time of writing, the overwhelming priority for universities is navigating the crisis of Covid-19. Universities have had to work to implement their responses to the crisis in a rapidly changing regulatory environment.

The usual policy work is mostly on hold as we all focus on practical ways to replace normal processes. History will judge how well we managed this as a sector. However, from my personal experience, the enormous focus on the wellbeing of staff and students, as well as on "doing our bit" for wider society in a range of ways, has been one of the most positive things to come out of the crisis so far. Suddenly people are so much more aware of the different impact of different pressures on different people, and the impact on their work of what is going on outside work. The human touch in communications, from the top down and also between colleagues, has been a priority, at a time when the simplest physical touch is forbidden or made through gloved hands. I am hopeful that the lessons learned from this experience about the importance of bringing your heart to work as well as your head and your hands, will last a long time.

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15

Humanising Our Experience in Higher Education Through Sustainable Development Education

Tammi Sinha

15.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the opportunities and challenges of humanising higher education through sustainable development education and climate action. Using the framework of head, hand, heart (Devis-Rozental 2018), the premise of 'Play with Purpose' and the metaphor of the 'Tree of Life' (Sinha 2018), the chapter will create a positive landscape for change, bringing together contemporary theory and practice that will provide guidance and inspiration for practitioners and academics working in this area.

We are truly privileged to work in the higher education (HE) sector. To be part of the community of practice of educators and professionals supporting, inspiring and challenging our future leaders and colleagues. One of my core values is 'build the beauty', and with this, I do not mean

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the fluffy kind (although this is also great) but the powerful, transformative kind. The 'head hand heart' model woven together to humanise HE is a powerful, beautiful image (Devis-Rozental 2018). We have an opportunity to develop our understanding of the complexity and beauty of our world, to nurture it, care for it, and provide sound reasoning for protecting it. It is my belief (from years of observation, reflection and pondering) that we need to transform our HE system and link it to positive transformational change to protect our planet from further harm, and in so doing, give ourselves and our young people, the best chance of a fulfilled and beautiful life.

The council of 13 Indigenous Grandmothers (Wobser 2015) have been advocating this way of working for years. Concepts such as developing our governance systems to include the question of how our decisions may affect our children's children and actually considering the impact on the next seven generations. This seems to me to be grounded in systems thinking, to offer a way of appreciating our internal and external values, and to appreciate the beauty of what we do in terms of challenging, inspiring and supporting future generations.

It is interesting to note that HE feels transactional on many levels, we need to fight wholeheartedly against this. Learning, teaching, researching and exchange knowledge should be fiercely protected, the joy of this also should be fiercely protected. Linking this premise to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, provides a global platform, supported by all member states of the UN, to promote positive transformation in the 17 goals, and to use these as a platform for extraordinary change. The UNSDG 13—climate action and UNSDG 4—quality education is inextricably linked.

15.2 Sustainable Development Education, the UN Sustainable Development Goals and Higher Education

Humanising our experience in HE through sustainable development is a powerful opportunity. The NUS Futures initiative talks about

the formal, informal and subliminal curriculum. When developing our campus assets, our education and research programmes, we need to ensure that we embed sustainable development within our work. The WCED & Brundtland Commission (1987) defined Sustainable Development as:

> "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

This marries beautifully with the concept of thinking about future generations when developing business cases and detailed plans for the needs of the present.

The three main pillars of sustainable development include ***economic growth, environmental protection and social equality.*** While many people agree that each of these three ideas contributes to the overall idea of sustainability, it is difficult to find evidence of equal levels of initiatives for the three pillars in countries' policies worldwide. With the overwhelming number of countries that put economic growth on the forefront of sustainable development, it is evident that the other two pillars have been suffering, especially with the overall wellbeing of the environment in a dangerously unhealthy state.

Sustainable development education brings together the three pillars of environmental protection, social equality and economic growth. It is highly apparent that economic growth has priority. The UN SDGs has sought to equalise this; however, we should question whether 'growth' is a misnomer, we do not have infinite resources on our blue marble. Therefore, logically we cannot have infinite growth, economic growth could be refined to move from financial measures to other measures bringing in health, and wellbeing. Economists such as Molly Scott-Cato (2019 cited by Cato and Fletcher 2019) advocate post-growth economics which brings together the hard-hitting truth that we do not have the capacity for infinite economic growth, that to enable sustainable development we need to find a more equal and fairer model to wealth and health creation and sustainability. Black Elk (1953 cited by Brown 1989) is quoted as saying,

> The first peace, which is the most important, is that which comes within the souls of people when they realise their relationship, their oneness, with the universe and all its powers. When they realise that at the center of the universe dwells Wakan-Tanka, and that this center is really everywhere, it is within each of us. This is the real peace, and the others are but reflections of this.

A more well-known quote is generally credited as a Cree proverb (Speake 2009, p. 177):

> When the LAST tree is cut down, the last fish eaten, and the last stream poisoned, you will realise that you cannot eat money.

This can be linked with the three pillars of sustainable development and can be embodied within the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). The UN SDGs were adopted by the General Assembly resolution A/RES/70/1 on 25/09/2015. The 17 goals adopted by all UN member states aim to end all forms of poverty, fight inequality and tackle climate change by 2030, with the remit that no one is left behind.

The UN SDGs are a global way of humanising education and are becoming the norm in our HE programmes. We need to ensure that they are not seen as a fad, and that we take the opportunity to embed systems thinking within our education and research programmes to help embed sustainable development and the UN SDGs.

The table outlines the 17 SDGs and provides examples and opportunities for links for humanising our experience in HE. These are opportunities for the future, and many colleagues are working hard to embed these in Higher Education (Table 15.1).

15.3 The Humanisation of HE Through 'Play with Purpose'

One of the worrying nuggets of feedback we get as academics is that our students are 'bored', 'scared', 'turned off' by the spectre of global warming and feel disenfranchised and at a loss about how to tackle

Table 15.1 The UN sustainable development goals linked to our work to humanise higher education

1 No poverty	2 Zero hunger	3 Good health and wellbeing	4 Quality education	5 Gender Equality	6 Clean water and sanitation
Ending period poverty by providing sanitary products in all ladies' toilets	Christmas cafes and work with the Sustainable Food Trust	Well-being advisors, therapy dogs, student services, flexible working	Full range of programmes from access, degree apprenticeships, undergraduate, post graduate and doctorate level programmes, underpinned by	Providing equal access to promotion for staff, and opportunities for students	Programme to twin toilets with toilets in countries where women and girl are in danger due to poor access to sanitation and clean water

(continued)

Table 15.1 (continued)

7 Affordable and clean energy	8 Decent work and economic growth	9 Industry, innovation and infra-structure	10 Reduced inequalities	11 Sustainable cities and communities	12 Responsile consumption and production
Divesting from oil-based investments and ensuring new builds meet the requirements of the BREAM standards for energy building efficiency	Creating challenging and stimulating environments for students through degree apprenticeships, work placements, entrepreneurship opportunities, and linking with the NUS charity 'Students organising for Sustainability'	Linking operations and project management teaching and research to the circular economy, sustainable supply chain management and the Tree of Life	Ensuring learning agreements for students who need additional support to meet their potential	Working with Hampshire County Council embedding lean foundations and practitioner work across the public sector	Move to eradicating zero use plastic at the university, a zero-waste shop and organic food sold in university outlets

13 Climate action	14 Life below water	15 Life on land	16 Peace, justice and strong institutions	17 Partnership for the goal	Sustainable development goals
Centre for Climate Action acts as a hub for all faculties and professional services at the University of Winchester	Developing opportunities for students to innovate and start businesses which have an impact on our eco systems	Centre for Animal Welfare	Centre for religion, reconciliation and peace. Centre for Information Rights	Institute for Value Studies	

these issues. A method such as LEGO ® Serious Play ® (LSP) offers the opportunity to 'play with purpose'. Linking knowledge with our theme of head, hand and heart we can use various approaches to achieve 'flow'. We can look to LSP to enable us to experience and enable our students to experience 'flow' (Csikszentmihalyi 1997). Flow is defined by Csikszentmihalyi (1997, p. 110) as "being completely involved in an activity for its own sake. The ego falls away". If we are able to facilitate our colleagues and students to tap into their ways of knowing, through building models, being creative and experiencing 'autopoises' (self-discovery), we may be able to adapt and build more ways to weave 'head hands and hearts' within Higher Education. It can be argued that knowledge is personal, history-dependant, context-sensitive and oriented towards problem identification more than problem-solving (Roos and Victor 2018). LSP created by Roos and Victor emerged as an antidote to 'tedious strategy practices' using play. Sensemaking is crucial if we are able to explore and make change to problematic situations.

LSP draws on various theoretical foundations, including organisational theory, leadership, identity, and how these are expressed. Aspirational identity, current identity and perceived identity can be used as a conduit to explore how to move from our current state to our desired future state. Linking this to the humanisation of HE and sustainable development education, we can provide powerful opportunities to change our narrative, to create agency and to enable students in HE to be positive about the future and to be in 'flow'.

At the heart of this is systems thinking. How we make sense of our situations and choose appropriate action is key. These complex adaptive systems and their exploration (Kaufmann 1993) are a central pillar of LSP. Helping to unravel seemingly complicated messes, with the underlying principles of emergence, hierarchies, wholeness and interaction, purposefulness, circularity, feedback, and cause and effect. All this helps with sensemaking, which is what our students are (hopefully) seeking from their education. To visualise this takes creativity and vision. Building 'knowledge landscapes' help us to explore these complicated messes.

Knowledge landscapes are used to explore complex phenomena and to make sense of business and natural environments. Through these

landscapes and storytelling, we enable ideas to be explored through the models, with scenarios tested in real time. Simple guiding principles emerge and are used as a basis for action. Through imagination and the ability to destroy, create and describe (Kearney 1988) we can make sense of the complexity under review (describe), we can create something new, and we can disregard it (destroy/negate).

The 5 principles of LEGO ® Serious Play ® developed by Roos and Victor (2018) are wonderfully appropriate for humanising our experiences in Higher Education through, sustainable development education and in linking kindness, with play and dare we say it, having fun. We increase our agency and wellbeing (Table 15.2).

LEGO ® Serious Play ® enables us to explore the current state of higher education, develop themes, principles and systems that can be used to bring about change in our higher education systems. With our aim of humanising HE, we are asking colleagues and students to bring their authentic selves to this. We need to provide an immersive approach that enables people to do this. By building models of the current state, sharing our perspectives through storytelling, and reaching our 'aha' moments, we can identify what is working well, and what isn't in our current systems. We then build models of our aspirational or future state, these models are physically constructed, linking head, hand and heart in our enquiries. These aspirational models and current state models are placed carefully together, linked with connectors and artefacts that are crucial to the complex systems. The shared models are then tested in real time.

15.4 The Tree of Life

'The Tree of Life' is an innovative Student Engagement project to explore and embed the UN Sustainable Development Goals within the curriculum and subliminal curriculum at the University of Winchester. The outcomes of the project were events and ripple projects across faculties and professional services. The project aimed to inspire students to take local and global action to adapt and mitigate the effects of climate change.

Table 15.2 Principles, findings and phases from Roos and Victor (2018)

Five principles	Five conclusions
1. Subjective views matter 2. Metaphors and storytelling are powerful sense-making tools 3. Start by depicting the identity, then look at the outside landscape 4. Interactions among agents of all kinds matter enormously, so heed them carefully 5. Let simple principles guide appropriate action in complex environments	1. The concept is exciting, but people can be anxious to engage: we saw consistently high levels of interest, but also concerns about how participants' colleagues react to the idea of "play" 2. Warming up is vital: gradual warm-up and skill building needs to set the tone and validate the play, since simply offering LEGO materials was intimidating 3. Material choices matter: materials should be unified and sorted, and there should be neither too much nor too little 4. The atmosphere must be safe, playful and comfortable, though there is flexibility in the setting 5. The process is delicate: Facilitators are absolutely essential; they must be able to play several roles during the process like convener, instigator, feedback provider, and process manager

3 phases required
Action phase with parallel constructions ending with satisfaction that the build is true to their imagination
Interaction phase with story-telling and sharing ending with collective understanding and appreciation
Transformation phase, when people change their views and discover aha and wow experiences

1. Build identity, using metaphors and storytelling
2. Create the landscape (agents and connections)
3. Heed the interactions among interacting agents in this landscape
4. Articulate simple guiding principles, not rules to deal with potential change scenarios

The 'Tree of Life' project is the 'brand' for the Centre for Climate Action at the University of Winchester.

The 'Tree of Life' rationale for this project comes from 2 major drivers:

1. Building humanity and kindness into higher education through student engagement
2. linking to the NUS Responsible Futures in terms of the formal, informal and subliminal curriculum.

The governance of the Higher Education Sector in England is in flux. The Office for Students (OfS 2020) has provided additional drivers for the sector to focus on Student Satisfaction and Student Engagement. Student engagement is a key driver for the success of the HE Sector. The OfS has provided key metrics and key performance indicators to drive changes established in 1 January 2018, enacting the higher education and research act 2017, and it is the regulator and competition authority for HE in England. A non-departmental public body within the Department for Education, reporting to the Secretary of State for Universities and Science, the OfS replaced the Higher Education Funding Council for England and the Office for Fair Access.

> We want every student to have a fulfilling experience of higher education that enriches their lives and careers. Office for Students Regulatory Body for Higher Education in England.

The University of Winchester (UoW) Centre for Student Engagement aims to enhance the student experience, through the Education and Research Project offered, and the environment committed to the UoW values.

> We are a community committed to making a difference, passionate about seeing individuals and communities flourish - Our values of Compassion, Individuals Matter and Spirituality shape how we do this and why – we believe academic freedom leads to big ideas which in turn lead to social justice and creativity for a better world. (University of Winchester 2020)

Responsible Futures was a UoW wide steering group represented by the Vice-Chancellor, the faculties and professional services. The steering group seeks to play a significant role in the dissemination of the UN

SDGs to enable real action. The Centre for Climate Action was established in November 2017. The Centre is a cross-disciplinary university-wide hub for activities, research and knowledge exchange to enable local and global action to combat, mitigate and adapt to climate change. Student engagement in this area is critical. Recent reports highlighting that time is running out for humanity to act (IPCC 2018) and that as global citizens we all have a part to play in solving this wicked issue. One of the primary regulatory objectives for the OfS is to ensure students "Receive a high-quality academic experience". A proposition of this is that students benefit from a rich, challenging experience at University, learn when they are stretched, and as we are developing and educating the citizens and leaders of the future, we need to ensure our formal and subliminal education, and all student engagement activities add value to this aim.

The Tree of Life Student Engagement project aimed to deliver the following benefits for the students and colleagues of the University of Winchester.

- Sustainable development and continuous improvement to enhance the hand, heart and head connection.
- Student and colleague engagement with the UN SDGs.
- Improve wellbeing and employability for students.

The 'Tree of Life' also embodies the Prosci © change management ideals of ADKAR© (Hiatt 2006)—for any transformation to occur in terms of behaviour, we need to be AWARE of the change needed, we need to have a DESIRE to change, the KNOWLEDGE of how to change, the ABILITY to change and this needs to be REINFORCED.

The 'Tree of Life' depicts our possible paths to the future, the positive, appreciative inquiry approach (Cooperrider and Whitney 2001) looking at what is going well in terms of climate action. The foundations for this work are built around developing Communities of Practice as a way of embedding sustainable development and continuous improvement. Raising awareness of the disciplines and systems thinking should work hand in hand to enable us to move in the right direction. There is a body of knowledge around the 'silo mentality' having an impact

on our graduates leaving higher education embedded within their own discipline/silo. We used to joke about 'over wall engineering' in the 1990s, maybe we should coin the phrase 'over the wall higher education' (Manoharan 2019). The Covid-19 pandemic has provided a perfect storm, challenging many of our norms in Higher Education, it throws into perspective that we can and must change in many ways. Humanising higher education has never been more important (Fig. 15.1 and Table 15.3).

The 'Tree of Life' is designed to provoke a debate, to take a position and to explore how we can embed a holistic approach to sustainable development education, bringing in the 'head hand and heart'. We all
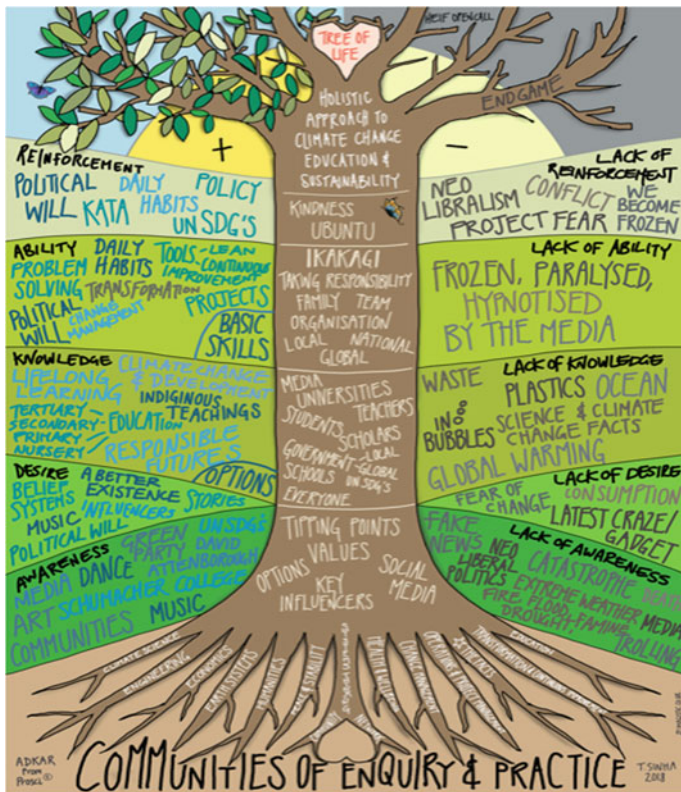
Fig. 15.1 Tree of Life (Sinha 2018 drawn by Emma Paxton, Imagistic)

Table 15.3 The Tree of Life distilled (Sinha T, 2018)

		Trunk		
REIN-FORCEMENT	Political will, infrastructure, 5S, kata, UN SDGs, carbon neutral by…	**Kindness, Ubuntu**	Neo liberalism, project fear, conflict, oil based economies, frozen	LACK OF REIN-FORCEMENT
ABILITY	Basic skills, problem solving, daily habits, lean, continuous improvement, change management	**Ikigai, Taking Responsibility, Family, Local, National, Global**	Frozen, paralysed, hypnotized, manipulated by elements of the media,	LACK OF ABILITY
KNOWLEDGE	Climate change and development, sustainable development education, lifelong learning, harmony in education, options, risk, responsible futures	**HIGHER, FURTHER, TERTIARY, SECONDARY, PRIMARY EDUCATION, UN SDGS**	Waste, plastics ocean, science not understood,	LACK OF KNOWLEDGE
DESIRE	Belief systems, 'a better existence' political will, influencers, nudge unit, storytelling, tipping points	**Key influencers**	Fear of change, status quo still bearable, consumption based economy	LACK OF DESIRE
AWARENESS	Influencers—Greta Thunberg, David Attenborough, UN SDGs, Communities, 13 Indigenous Grandmothers, Schumacher College, liberal arts, music, blogs, vlogs, social media	**Tipping points, values, options, Social media**	'fake' news, extreme weather, social media trolling	LACK OF AWARENESS

Table 15.3 (continued)

Trunk
Community of Practice & Inquiry Climate science, engineering, economics, earth systems, mathematics, peace & institutions, systems thinking, change management, operations & process management, the facts, transformation & continuous improvement, and education

have our own lenses through which we see humanisation in higher education. ADKAR © gives us a route map to enable us to humanise at a personal, team, organisational and planet level (Tables 15.4, 15.5, and 15.6).

15.5 Benefits of the 'Tree of Life' Approach

15.5.1 Tree of Life—Action Research for embedding kindness and Sustainable Development principles within Higher Education

15.5.1.1 Risks, Impacts and Dependencies

Linking this work to humanisation with values of—logic, reason and evidence woven with warmth, understanding and respect. Linking this work to humanising Higher Education, We can build a landscape showing paths, domains, challenges and opportunities to use sustainable development education to humanise higher education. Paradoxically we need to address the imbalances and move from dehumanisation strategies and consequences towards humanisation.

These principles are also embedded in the 'Harmony in Practice' work initiated by Charles, H. R. H. Prince of Wales, Juniper and Skelly (2010). Richard Dunne (2015) has pioneered work for humanising education at a primary level. Linking the principles of harmony are embedded through:

- Values-based education
- Learning questions
- Enquiries of learning
- Natures cycles
- Experiential learning
- Sketching
- Geometry
- 'Take one principle'
- Community projects

Table 15.4 Benefits from the Tree of Life Programme

Benefits	Description	Tangible/intangible?	Metrics	Related project milestones and component work-streams
Sustainability & Continuous Improvement (CI)	Provide SE opportunities to embed sustainability & CI	A mixture of tangible and intangible	No of opportunities	Encourage students to engage in the Lean/Continuous Improvement professional qualification run by the Continuous Improvement Unit to enable enhancement to the student experience and their employability
Student engagement with the UN SDGs	Increase awareness and action for UN SDGs	A mixture of tangible and intangible	No of projects and units updated to incorporate UN SDGs Module feedback for pilot units	Provide inspiration and guidelines for project leaders to embed the UN Sustainable Development Goals in their project, by running a series of communication events and workshops Work with the Student Fellows Scheme to identify needs and wants of students in the area of Climate Action (SDG13) and Quality Education (SDG4)

Benefits	Description	Tangible/intangible?	Metrics	Related project milestones and component work-streams
Improve employability	Enable students to enhance their CV and HEAR	Tangible	No of students from each faculty No of students taking the LCS lean qualifications	Run workshops at the Play and Creativity Festival to inspire students to take action using the whole earth exhibition Chair a Lego Serious Play 1-day conference to explore the themes of sustainability, consulting and education, with access to students to explore these themes through a competition run in semester 2 Encourage students to engage in the Lean/Continuous Improvement professional qualification run by the Continuous Improvement Unit to enable enhancement to the student experience and their employability

Table 15.5 Tree of Life Programme—individual projects

Component/Project name	Description	Primary deliverables
Tree of Life—The UN SDGs and whole earth festival	*Provide inspiration and guidelines for project leaders to embed the UN Sustainable Development Goals in their project, by running a series of communication events and workshops. Event Management students invited to bid for the launch project with a budget of £500. Play and Creativity Festival to inspire students to take action using the Whole Earth Exhibition*	UN SDG kits Series of Workshops Communication campaign Brief and event launch from Event Management Students. Play and creativity exhibition
Tree of Life—Learn engage play	*Organised/Co-Chaired Lego ®Serious Play ® 1 day conference to explore the themes of sustainability, consulting and education, with access to students to explore these themes through a competition run in semester 2*	Lego Serious Play Conference
Tree of Life—student voice	*Working with the Student Fellows Scheme to identify needs and wants of students in the area of Climate Action (UN SDG13) and Quality Education (UN SDG4)*	Online Survey Focus groups Working paper SF poster
Tree of life—continuous improvement	*Encouraged students to engage in the Lean/Continuous Improvement professional qualification run by the Continuous Improvement Unit to enable enhancement to the student experience and their employability*	A range of UG and PG students across all faculties—10 from each faculty

Component/Project name	Description	Primary deliverables
Tree of Life—improvement community of practice	*Engagement with local community across sectors to embed Transformation at a Global and Local Level—The United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals—how to forge theory with practice to bring about real positive change*	Engaging students

Table 15.6 Risks, impact and dependencies

Risk	Risk description	Impact	Likelihood of occurrence H/M/L	Mitigation and contingency plan	Owner and trigger
Funding restraints	Finances are under pressure due to the demographic downturn and budget constraints	Funding for the tree of life project may be diverted elsewhere	Medium	To ensure benefits are captured both qualitative and quantitative. To understand what 'success' looks like	Senior Risk Officer monitors the risk through the RKE committee and the Responsible Futures Steering Group
Lack of Student engagement	Students not taking up the opportunities to get involved	Objectives would not be met	Medium	To ensure close working with the Student Union and officers, together with marketing and communications to ensure good coverage	SU and SRO

- Great works
- Sustainability projects and food

The principles of the harmony project include:

> ***GEOMETRY***—NATURE HAS A GEOMETRY,
> ***INTERDEPENDENCE***—EVERYTHING IS CONNECTED,
> ***CYCLES***—NATURE DEPENDS UPON CYCLES THAT LIMIT,
> ***HEALTH AND WELLBEING***—LIFE NEEDS TO BE HEALTHY,
> ***ADAPTION***—NATURE SPECIES ARE BRILLIANTLY ADAPTED TO PLACE,
> ***ONENESS***—WE ARE NATURE. (Dunne 2015 from Sustainable Food Trust)

These principles and ways of working have a strong correlation with the ideals of humanising Higher Education. Bringing the 7 principles of harmony together, and building them into higher education, would enable us to use systems thinking and human-centred design to radically improve student and staff experience. The Tree of Life shows 2 alternative realities, happening at the same time. The true outcomes will be a mixture of the two. With Covid 19 we have the opportunity to embed new working practices, to practice self-care, planetary care, and care of our students. Bringing balance, by exploring the relationships between wholeness and component parts. Systems thinking exposes our reliance on inter connectiveness, the need for both diversity and biodiversity. Higher education is perfectly placed to act as living labs, bringing together a variety of cultures, disciplines and approaches to knowledge development and exchange. The principles of harmony enable us to put love, compassion, collaboration and community at the heart of Higher Education.

15.6 Humanising Experiences in Higher Education Through Sustainable Development Education

In summary, this chapter has explored the opportunities and challenges of humanising higher education through sustainable development, education and climate action. The framework of the 'head hand and heart' has been really useful in helping to understand how we can use the premises of play with purpose, and the Tree of Life.

The landscape that we have developed will be used to inspire and build on our body of knowledge, to help with bringing sustainable development education and humanising higher education together. The Tree of Life brings together the principles, processes and themes, underpinned with the principles of harmony, to show the attributes, skills and knowledge that exists to blend 'hand heart and head' to the principles of geometry, interdependence, cycles, adaption, wellbeing and oneness. One thing (out of many) that I have noticed with the Covid-19 lockdown is how these principles are embedded in community. How do these types of situations bring out the best in people? We need to capture this learning and embed the best of it in life as usual and HE as usual.

The challenges are many, but the opportunities are immense. And actually, we need to ensure that we enable our teams to be in 'flow'. That means that our teams are not paralysed with fear or bored by our approach.

Coming back to the Brundtland Commission's definition of sustainable development,

> sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

This needs to be at the forefront of the work that we do in humanising the experiences, our students and our colleagues have in higher education. Dimensions also include the three main pillars of sustainable development, including economic growth, environmental protection

and social equality. These weave beautifully with the United Nations, sustainable development goals.

The key message from this chapter is to develop a system and humanising approach to embedding sustainability into Higher Education. Systems thinking covers the human aspects, and this should be core to our approach. When we see ourselves as part of the whole, connected and intrinsically linked, we can ensure that we celebrate and build our approaches with the sense of togetherness, ensuring our uniqueness is celebrated and not lost. The other side of the coin is dehumanisation through isolation, lack of diversity, being passive bystanders and engaging in objectification. If we discard the systems view and stick with a reductionist view of the world, if we are dislocated from our inner and outer spaces, we may lose our way in our personal journey and lose our sense of wonder and meaning of the natural world.

Using our agency and empowering others to use theirs. Noting that we are 'nature' and that our inner and outer landscapes are forever shifting. The harmony principles, and engaging in Serious Play, enable us to embody our sustainability interventions. Ensuring we have a clear sense of place, that we know will shift on our personal journey. All the approaches covered in this chapter help us to make sense of our inner and outer world. This has a powerful impact in humanising our experiences in Higher Education through Sustainable Development Education. The 50th anniversary of Earth Day in 2020 provides another platform to link these principles.

15.7 Key Actions: 'Play with Purpose' and 'Systems Thinking'

- *Be proactive*
- *Be brave*
- *Explore alternatives*
- *Research and reflect*
- *Ensure the management of change is human, not just process*
- *Enjoy it!*

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16

Our Quest to Humanise HE, the Journey so Far

Susanne Clarke and **Camila Devis-Rozental**

When we set out to write this book last year (2019), the world was very different. It is April 2020, and we are on lockdown, due to Covid-19. Universities in the UK, as well as all educational establishments and non-essential business, remain closed. We are now in the midst of a global pandemic, some of us social distancing or shielding and some keeping the world safe and well, putting their lives at risk every single day to look after the sick, put food on our table, clean our streets or deliver our parcels, amongst many other necessary activities to keep our countries going. We have been asked to stay home, and that in itself is a privilege, while those who have to keep the world 'moving' work selflessly and are the heroes we will be forever grateful for. They exemplify what practising with an embodied relational understanding is. They have shown us what compassion, empathy and hope mean.

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In this new way of being and working, many of us have had to get used to working remotely and meeting up with colleagues using virtual environments. Some of us have had to rapidly learn how to manage online platforms and juggle personal responsibilities with working from home and adapt quickly to this new world. This has made us reflect and truly appreciate the things, that perhaps, we used to take for granted. We are missing real-life teaching activities, corridor chats, coffee breaks, field research activities and meetings. We are longing for human contact, perhaps, as we never had before. And this has made writing a book about humanising even more meaningful and relevant than ever.

Thousands of people, not only in the UK but in the world have lost their jobs and face hardship daily. For them, this pandemic brings uncertainty as well as fear, and that will undoubtedly have an impact on our world when we go back to whatever will be our new normal. We know we are privileged because, in our personal experience, we have witnessed amazing examples of courage, kindness and compassion. We have been lucky enough to experience at work how our leaders have managed such a complex situation with consideration, professionalism and an abundance of kindness that has warmed our hearts. We receive weekly updates from our leaders, that clearly tell us that what matters to them, is us, the people. Every single message carries a reminder about looking after our wellbeing and letting us know that they do understand that this is all new and difficult. These messages set out expectations for us to be mindful of not overdoing it and reassuring messages which have exemplified that it is our humanness that has been tested with this pandemic, but that together we can overcome its hardship and that whatever happens we are not alone.

This same period has shown other amazing examples of human kindness with people going out of their way to help strangers and where after a call from the UK government for volunteers, over 750,000 people signed up to join the 'volunteer army'. Individuals who will support 2.5 million people in the UK who are considered at risk, to ensure their needs are met and can get through this challenging period. This sense of togetherness has been incredibly inspiring to witness.

We have also seen this type of humanised practice within the HE environment. There has been a sense of togetherness, friendship and

collegiality, that has enriched our experience. In this book, we have presented different approaches that explore humanisation in a variety of contexts within HE. There are many more and we are aware that we have not included every single area, and that we have not considered specific roles and their complexities. This is something we plan to do in our next book as we continue learning and developing our thinking on how best to continue humanising HE. Although this book was conceived with the UK universities system in mind, we hope that some of the strategies, approaches and ideas that have been presented are of use to people all around the world. At the end of the day, we are all human, and it is this humanness that makes us relatable and indeed wired to connect. The country may be different, and its cultural and social context may be too. Still, perhaps some of the recurrent themes and various practical examples may be transferable to different types of educational environments. We have certainly gained expertise by learning from other cultures and different contexts to inform this book.

16.1 Main Learning Gains

We have identified the following recurring themes within this book. They are intertwined within each chapter and signal how we envisage our humanising work growing and developing as we continue creating and disseminating knowledge and experiences that are meaningful to HE and indeed many organisations both public and private.

16.1.1 Positive Organisational Culture

Many of the chapters spoke about the importance of developing and maintaining a positive organisational culture (3, 4, 10, 12). One particularly poignant message is the tendency within academia and within wider society to give more attention to the negative, the bad news, as if we consider it to be somehow more robust, credible and newsworthy. Unfortunately, when we focus on the negative it quickly becomes the organisational norm, literally sucking the life out of an organisation and

its people. Supporting a positive organisational culture requires an intentional focus towards promoting a positive mindset as an organisational attribute. This needs to be leadership behaviour, brought to life through celebrating good news, recognising and rewarding those who demonstrate a positive approach to their work, those who work creatively to resolve problems, and build effective networks and relationships. It is also incumbent on leaders and managers to prioritise workforce wellbeing. We must all set aside time and space to hear and respond to the voices of—the individual—our teams and the wider campus community. Positivity in this context should not be confused with constant cheerfulness, resulting perhaps from, unrealistic expectation or lack of awareness, we all know that work and life can be hard. Positivity in its truest definition supports our recognition of our purpose, drives our passion towards a common good, and no matter how hard things may seem on a particularly challenging day, remembering that working in HE is an incredible privilege.

16.1.2 Using Our Head, Hand and Heart to Humanise HE

Chapter 1 of this book explored the notion of practising with an embodied relational understanding. Throughout the book, there were many instances where this type of knowledge that accounts for, knowing, feeling and doing (head, hand, heart) was explored within the context of HE practices (Devis-Rozental 2018).

Some chapters use this as a framework (Chapter 15) to link to strategies to develop sustainable teaching opportunities—others have intertwined it such as Chapters 2, 4, and 10. Others looked at specific areas; this is the case of Chapter 12, where leaders are encouraged to lead a heart-infused revolution or Chapter 14, which reminds us of the importance of bringing our heart to work. One thing that is certain is that cultivating our strengths, developing our socio-emotional intelligence (Chapter 2) and learning about ourselves can help us find purpose in what we do and therefore have a more meaningful practice. This will also have a positive impact on our wellbeing.

16.1.3   Purpose

The purpose of higher education is to enrich society and to advance knowledge. Within this book, we have explored the importance of this as universities have a role to play as culture leaders. Every single individual who works in education in our case HE should know how important they are. This should give us the agency to find purpose in what we do, as explored in Chapters 9 and 11, and therefore feel that we are contributing to something bigger than ourselves. Indeed, those who enjoy what they do and find purpose in their job also make a positive contribution towards their own wellbeing. And it is this knowledge of being part of something important that contributes to a better world that inspires people to do great things. Indeed, Chapter 4 reminds us to deliver education with a clear purpose to enrich society while Chapter 14 emphasises the importance of a shared purpose and values.

16.1.4   Passion

The intense desire or enthusiasm for delivering an excellent experience for students and staff that is human centred (Chapter 7, 8 and 10, 13) to share our knowledge to instigate change (Chapters 4, 11) and to ignite a passion for a subject (Chapter 2, 3 and 11) are all vitally important in HE. As culture leaders, we should find that thing that makes us want to get up in the morning and share our enthusiasm by advancing meaningful knowledge to instigate positive changes for our colleagues, our students, our community and the world. This, as discussed within the book, is something that should be honed on every single member of the university community as it is this shared passion that will enrich society.

16.1.5   Privilege

The definition of privilege is to have an advantage that only a small number of people have. Working in higher education, we have the privilege to help shape minds. This aspect of the joy, and privilege of being part of the HE community, is discussed thoroughly in Chapters 2, 4, 5

and 6. We have the privilege of supporting our colleagues to be the best they can be as explored in Chapters 3 and 10. As leaders we have the privilege to enthuse, motivate, engage, teach, support, lead and ensure others find their passion and purpose and follow it (Chapters 3 and 12). As researchers, we have the privilege to enrich society by following our interests becoming experts in various fields, most commonly those that we feel passionate about, this is a privilege which was beautifully posed by Dr James Fair in his testimony in Chapter 3 where he states:

> I find our workplace to be one of the most privileged in society and I am grateful that I spend significant time engaging with a topic that I love.

In our view, we must not take this for granted. With this privilege comes the responsibility to ensure that what we do, how we do it and who we are doing it with has a positive impact on our environment, on others and why not, on ourselves.

16.1.6   Relational Energy as We Look to the Future

A relatively 'new kid on the block', introduced in Chapter 3, is an untapped organisational resource, referred to as relational energy. The boost that we get from being in the company of positive energisers, those with the ability to uplift us, and seemingly unstoppable capacity to develop relationships and networks. This resource needs to be recognised and nurtured not just because it makes for a happier working environment; it also contributes towards better staff wellbeing, which leads to better student experience. Indeed, in Chapters 4, 10, 12 and 14 the importance of this type of energy is demonstrated within their themes. Research from the Centre for Positive Organisational Scholarship at the University of Michigan shows that the most successful organisations (who participated across five research studies) have a noticeably higher number of people who are deemed (by their peers), to be positive energisers (Cameron et al. 2003).

We have recently contacted people in our network involved in organisational change across a number of UK universities. We asked about

their work journey, how they had become successful in their field. The one common factor was recognition of the networks, relationships and friendships they have formed across the organisation. Not only did this contribute towards career progression, it had a major impact on successfully delivering organisational change and their own sense of purpose. The lesson here we believe is not that we are advocating a world where extroverts have the edge, as relational energy, has nothing to do with factors related to social skill or preference, it is the energy we share through, caring, listening, respecting and trusting. The key message is to get involved in activities and contribute towards campus life and share your strengths. By reaching out to others, we show them that they are more than just their role—we uplift them, we humanise them.

Rethinking and reinventing our roles to continue developing our understanding of what it means to be human while working, sharing and learning in this new landscape of HE is a journey that will take a great deal of reflection. We hope that within this book you find ideas that inspire you, words that encourage you and reflections that energise you to continue developing a positive culture within the HE environment. By doing so, you will join us and all the wonderfully wise and generous contributors of this book to humanise HE.

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