Supporting the development of an 'educator' identity within a research-intensive university.

Clare Kell and Cath Camps, Cardiff University

Located within a research-intensive university in Wales offers Cardiff's small team of Educational Developers unique affordances for legitimate identity work. Post-devolution the 'flavour' of national Higher Education (HE) policy has been changing as countries articulate their local values and expectations of HE provision (WAG,2009). In Wales the 'twin pillars' of social justice and supporting a buoyant economy frame our discourses and challenge our reflections and discussions about practice. Conceiving the role of an educational developer within perspectives that seek to empower individuals to 'live effectively within a rapidly changing society' is not new (Crookston, 1972), but perhaps is more challenging to follow through into practice in today's HE context where pressures (real and / or perceived) experienced by university staff are complex (Billot, 2010). We run Cardiff's Postgraduate Certificate in University Teaching and Learning (PCUTL) and will use this paper to discuss the emerging findings following a multi-source evaluation of the identity work of participants on the programme.

PCUTL is a centrally-funded, HR-located Level 7 programme available to all staff with a teaching role. Successful completion of 40 credits is a requirement for many probationary-level staff. Cognisant of the tensions between learning empowerment, assessment and probation completion, we have created a new first module that requires participants to articulate their perception of their role as an HE educator and one specifically working within Cardiff. The module requires participants to explore, through cycles of secure, 1:1, critically-underpinned, e-journaling with a PCUTL academic, their sense of who they are as learners and teachers in the twenty-first century HE context of their subject / discipline / profession(s) and country of employment. The model adopted nests reflective practice within the socio-cultural context.

Analysis of 4 cohorts' e-journals suggests that short- and longer-term responses to the journaling activity align with Crookston's prescriptive / developmental model (1972). For some the journaling-into-practice experience is transformative as participants grasp their 'learning pain' (Rogers, 2001) and engage in a process of learning that enables them to do for themselves what they hope to empower their learners to do (Kreber, 2010). For other participants the e-journalling activity was seen (for a myriad of personal and / or work-related reasons) as tangential to current needs/wants. A third group of colleagues' journals appeared not fit into either of the previous broad categories. Rather, the data suggest that

these participants' ideological position is driving resistance to the identity work required within the programme.

The presentation will focus on two observations from the evaluation: the range of responses to the identity work activity undertaken during the module, and the resulting conundrums now facing the PCUTL team as we support participants through the rest of their programme. Specifically we will discuss the extent to which the curriculum is inclusive; how we should respond to those participants who choose to position themselves on the periphery of the academic identity work we are trying to support; and importantly, the impact this has on our identity work as academic developers.

References:

Billot, J (2010) The imagined and the real: identifying the tensions for academic identity, *Higher Education Research and Development*, 29(6): 709-721

Crookston, B (1972) A developmental view of academic advising as teaching, *Journal of College student personnel*, 13 (1) : 12-17

Kreber, C (2010) Academics' teacher identities, authenticity and pedagogy, *Studies in Higher Education*, 35(2): 171-194

Rogers, J (2001) *Adults Learning*, 4th Ed Buckingham: OUP

Welsh Assembly Government (2009) *For our Future – the 21st century Higher Education Strategy and Plan for Wales*, Cardiff