

Conference Keynote

On the threshold with students

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The idea of threshold concepts emerged from disciplinary experts talking with each other about teaching for mastery within a discipline. In this keynote, we will approach thresholds from a different perspective, starting by asking students to reflect critically on threshold concepts in a discipline and across their own university education. What threshold concepts do they identify as being most significant for their own learning? Why do they perceive certain concepts to be particularly troublesome and transformative? What do they think enables them to cross a threshold, and what constrains them from moving through such a conceptual portal? This keynote will explore what happens and what we learn when we have sustained conversations with students about their own experiences with threshold concepts. Drawing on threshold concept seminars with undergraduate students from three US colleges, this talk considers what we might understand about threshold concepts, and about teaching and learning in higher education, if we partnered with students to develop and enact our approaches to threshold concepts in practice.