

LTEC Post-Festival Publication

Developing Authentic Practitioners

“practice”, “identity”, “community”

Editorial

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Our post-festival special edition publication is a collection of papers and audio poster from the University of Salford’s Learning and Teaching Festival 2023. The festival brought together Salford’s learning and teaching community with over 130 individuals in attendance. The two-day event had a schedule packed with activity which embraced our theme of “developing authentic practitioners”. At Salford we talk about “practitioner” using terms such as effective, sustained, attested and strategic leading within our career framework. At the festival we explored this in the context of authentic “practice”, “identity”, and “community” which underpinned our historic institutional initiative “Enabling Student Success” launched in Spring 2020. The event (4-5th Sep 2023) included external speakers: Dr Emily McIntosh, Director of Student Success (University of the West of Scotland), Dr Gary Kerr, Associate Professor in Festival & Event Management from Edinburgh Napier University and Mr Tyrone Messiah, Head of Technical Services at Staffordshire University. Their contributions informed discussions/debates within and beyond the event.

Dr Emily McIntosh talked us through approaches to early intervention and integrated practice detailing authentic approaches to enable student success. This touched the heart and minds of the whole auditorium and prompted much interest as Emily skilfully unpacked the third space of integrated practice. She encouraged Salford to stand up, shout out and create

environments for staff “to thrive”. Her presentation outlined the importance of looking after each other, leading and supporting at every level with compassion. She acknowledged that as practitioners we need to be at our best to meet increasing demands, placing authenticity at the heart! Her inspirational talk focussed on intersectionality and the transition into “a brave new post-Covid world”, and how now is the time to strive and thrive! Her work encompassed the authentic experience through integrated practice and trauma informed pedagogy. Both key components to facilitate student success bringing together: social, administrative, and academic functions to create a greater sense of belonging for students and staff - an essential part of creating and sustaining authentic communities.

Day two opened with Salford PhD graduate, Dr Gary Kerr (Associate Professor in Festival & Event Management at Edinburgh Napier University). Gary shared his personal journey in balancing the multiple roles of being an authentic practitioner. Through evidence-based research he demonstrated the application of “Salford Values” in supporting students to achieve individual and collective success. Gary’s journey embraced authentic practice within diverse communities. His talk echoed “be the change” which is also the title of a recent publication and the ethos behind Cheltenham Science Festival. This inspirational talk explored learning and teaching practice through the lenses of the authentic curriculum and culture of support. He provided a visual story of authenticity through Festivals, Arcades and Paper Crowns to strengthen connection, confidence, and creativity, empowering both learners and colleagues.

Our final external speaker Mr. Tyrone Messiah (Head of Technical Services at Staffordshire University) hosted a fabulous discussion on holistic learning, the changes in the HE teaching landscape and the value of our professional services teams. He advocated that authentic practitioners have confidence, drive and passion and that everyone had a part to play to ensure our students have the best possible learning journey enabled them to reach their potential. Tyrone provided an insightful presentation on the important and impactful role that the technical community has within Higher Education. Storytelling was a key part of his talk he provided both a conceptual and practical strategy to capture practice and support the learning journey through the lens of technical services. He explored authenticity through identities, relationships and experiences, and encouraged the audience to find their authentic selves through a holistic approach, because “everyone has something to contribute!”

These essential themes of storytelling, confidence and compassion continued throughout the festival. Scheduled across the two-days were a combination of twenty-six presentations,

workshops and seminars and posters presentations, which together demonstrated the breath of authentic practice across our institution. This publication draws on the contribution of eleven festival outputs which have been carefully selected and re-worked to showcase the authentic practitioners: through the lens of “practice”, “identity”, and “community”.

Authentic Practice, draws together the work from Smith, Sadat and Pilkington, Conroy and Clark, and Fowler which engages our students in meaningful, relevant, and real-world learning experiences. Smith explores authenticity in the context of GenAI within legal education, his work focuses on preparing students for the reality of their future careers, equipping them not only with theoretical knowledge but also with practical and digital skills. Thus, ensuring our students are able to address real world issues and problems, developing sustainable solutions applicable to their world and the community around them. Sadat and Pilkington continues with the theme of authentic learning through the lens of: critical reflection and supportive educators within transdisciplinary science. Through an enhanced framework for simulated learning their work bridges gaps between theory and practice within clinical settings using an approach that could be easily transferred into other disciplines. It established practices aligned to authentic learning to increase learning motivation whilst developing communication skills and problem-solving abilities to enhance the learning experience. Conroy and Clark’s work moves our thinking to authentic assessment. They explore the use of constructive alignment strategies with postgraduate students. The Authors draw out real-world learning to enable and inspire professional development from different stakeholder perspectives. This work provides a rich evidence-based approach to underpin effective communication, professional identity, managing workload, and working with stakeholders. Identifying strategies to support life-wide learning to enhance core professional development.

The final two studies presented under this theme are from Fowler and Higgins. Fowler presents “podcasts” as an assessment tool for sharing beyond the classroom. This authentic approach to assessment design was proven to empower the learner through exploring identity through the lens of self and was found to support students entering education with different learning experiences. Higgins’ work expands our technology theme further by demonstrating the impact of technology enhanced learning through simulated learning within the field of radiography. This paper reflects the value of research-informed pedagogy in terms of the development of student research skills and self-efficacy.

Authentic Identity, brought together the works of Yioutani-Iacovides, Whitnall and Hurley, and Brooks. In this theme we recognise that authenticity happens when words, actions, and behaviours consistently match an individual's core identity, and it is a genuine presentation of oneself through values, actions and approaches. Yioutani-Iacovides shares a reflective journey of professional practice using "Bricks and mortar" as a metaphor to construct knowledge. This work draws together knowledge and the lived experience from both the participants and the practitioner, thus, showcasing an authentic playful learning environment embodying live briefs. Failure is presented as a successful learning opportunity to re-engage students in reflective practice leading to positive educational experiences. Whitnall and Hurley work continues to flip failure. It positions failure as a valuable and essential component of learning, discovery, and resilience building. Three individual examples of practice that capture the voice of failure are discussed. Their work presents failure as a transferable skill set which shapes learning, develops confidence, and prepares students to deal with uncertainty and messy spaces.

Our final study within this section is a piece that focuses on professional identity. We recognise that identity is multi-faceted drawing on values, beliefs, personal attributes and individual experiences. Brooks shares learning obtained from an international nursing budding scheme intended to reduce isolation for overseas students. This concise study demonstrates value for both home and overseas students through enabling social cultures to transcend into learning.

Our final festival theme, **Authentic Communities**, brings together the work of Blezard et al., Grayson, and Scott. We identify that sometimes we feel like a single cog in a highly complex machine but when all components of the engine work efficiently and authentically a harmonious relationship is achieved which is greater than the sum of its parts; enabling all to flourish and interact. Blezard et al. presents "*Reaching Out and Shouting Loud*" this work provides a thematic analysis of learning, teaching, and scholarly activities within our university. It presents a holistic approach to growth within pedagogical innovation and contribution to knowledge within higher education. Through auditing scholarly outputs, we were able to facilitate a deeper understanding of approaches to foster future communities of practice to promote excellence and raise awareness of best practice in Learning and teaching beyond the institution. Grayson's work underpins the notion of communities of practice, it explores a range of options for getting started in publishing through the lens of the practitioner illustrating organic growth in authenticity as publishing experience expands. Our final paper in this special edition is written by Scott. The work explores governance and transparency

within higher education audit committees. It uses TEF gold institutions as the sample to scrutinise academic voice and their value within audit committees. The paper endorses diversifying committee membership to include academic staff to create authentic communities of practice at the core of higher education governance.

Common threads throughout the papers and posters selected for this special edition are the value of **integrated learning** to develop confidence to promote professional values within respective disciplines. Developing **rappport with all stakeholders** was identified as a second theme which underpinned professional identity providing the grounding for life-wide learning. **Authentic practice** was woven throughout our special edition expressed through the many examples of **inclusive approaches** to learning which contributed to the wellbeing of staff and students. Our final theme of authenticity was brought to the forefront through **digital capacity and currency** which enhanced learning, value and reach as a creative form of intellectual inquiry.

The editors would like to thank all the contributors to this special edition for disseminating their scholarship, and to the keynote speakers who helped to make the festival a success. We also are very grateful to those who contributed to the reviewing: Carole Conroy, Dean Irwin, Ebba Brooks, Kiefer Lee, Helen Keegan, Lynne Marrow, Maggie Scott, Paul Vivian, Rob Higgins, Sami Safadi, Sara Namvar, Tim France, Vicki Harvey and Wendy Taylor.

We hope you enjoy our collection from Salford's Developing Authentic Practitioners Festival of Learning and Teaching 2023.

Best Wishes from the editorial team.

Prof Jess Power – APVC learning and teaching enhancement.

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Dr Nicola Grayson – academic developer.

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