

Monk and Purnell (2014) consider whether peer supported schemes such as PSDS should be tied into institutional processes. They question whether this devalues the voluntary nature and sense of inclusive community generated by such schemes. I would argue whether higher education institutions are sufficiently mature in terms of reflective practice to ensure that academics will, on the scale required for significant change in practice, voluntarily engage in peer support. Additionally, I would question whether the University of Bedfordshire has an inclusive community of practice related to teaching and learning activity. In fact, fostering and developing this community is a key intended outcome of the PTS. Voluntary participation and the spontaneous development of an inclusive community seem idealistic notions, and possibly do exist, but as Monk and Purnell's (2014) analysis seems to suggest, within teacher education departments, rather than institution-wide in the higher education context. Thus, the peer support component of the PTS at the University of Bedfordshire is embedded within institutional processes, but is intended to be appropriately supported, to effect actual organisational change in both culture and practice related to teaching and learning. A comprehensive, robust, research-based evaluation and impact strategy will seek to measure these outcomes in due course.

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### **Key Pedagogical Thinkers: Vivien Hodgson Uzair Shah, Management School, University of Lancaster**

Vivien Hodgson is a Professor of Networked Management Learning in the Department of Management Learning and Leadership at Lancaster University Management School, UK. Her research interests are in networked learning and the learner's experience of learning. Also she explores the designing of learning opportunities from a critical pedagogy and constructionist perspective. Between 1995 and 1998 she was involved and responsible for the Open and Distance Learning (Socrates) Action within the Socrates programme of the European Commission in Brussels. Also she coordinated and participated in many e-learning research projects in Europe and Latin America.

She has researched and written much about collaborative learning, and on the importance of reflection and dialogue, along with research exploring the use of ICT and its impact on learning. Her research and ideas have also influenced and informed my teaching, and also research interests around pedagogy, learning technology, and networked learning.

Here I would like to briefly present my background as this may facilitate the reader in better understanding of how Vivien's research informed my thinking, teaching and research. Without mentioning the name of the university, my undergraduate teaching like in many other universities was quite a spectacle of instructional teaching – the teacher comes in,

'feeds' the information (which the teachers called knowledge!) and left the room after two hours. Maybe on one or two occasions the students' input was requested. The lecture material was later uploaded on the university Virtual Learning Environment, and the final examination was a good test of the memory.

With this background, concepts such as 'open learning' and 'networked learning' seemed odd and impractical, to say the least. The idea of openness in the educational process, where teacher is not a teacher but a facilitator and/or a participant; where the students decide what happens and what to study, are assumed to take responsibility for their own learning; where the assessment is a collaborative self-peer-tutor process; where ICT is used as a space for learning and not for information storage – no doubt all this sounds fascinating and forward-looking in theory surely, but could it really happen in practice?

Vivien certainly believed in this! These ideas are in practice and 'in-business' for the last 30 years at Lancaster University. She has played an instrumental role in developing the course called MA in Management Learning and Leadership (MAMLL) that based on the pedagogy of 'open networked learning' for management education, leadership and organizational development professionals. To put this in perspective, introducing and bringing such radical pedagogical models into practice in 1980s which was dominated by instructional teaching designs was quite remarkable. She comments about this that 'It was the only programme of its type – there wasn't really anything remotely comparable.'

The story doesn't end here – she, along with few other colleagues, carved out a research field of 'networked learning'. In this, the use of technology, open learning, and other radical pedagogies are explored and developed. It has a growing community, and since 1998, its international research conference is organized bi-annually. Two books have been already published based specifically on Networked Learning conference series and a third book is underway - Vivien has been a key contributor and co-editor of this book series on Network learning, and has only stepped down as the co-chair of these conference. She says 'in a global economy that is based on information and social networks a transformation of mainstream higher education is needed. Our view is the theory, practice and pedagogy of networked learning can contribute to this transformation' (Hodgson et al. 2012).

I write about Vivien as a key pedagogical thinker as her research and contributions have not only developed but also enriched the quality and thinking around MAMLL and networked learning, which are based on the relatively radical pedagogies of that time and perhaps still would be within many universities.

## References

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