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From the Editor

Welcome to the third edition of the TLC pamphlet. While this pamphlet does not follow any prescribed pattern, I would like to draw together my musings on some of the submissions.

As life reverts to a post-COVID "normal", it is interesting to see three submissions that reflect this. Dr Brownhill's piece, "Making a stand!", addresses the impact of extended bouts of sitting in large lectures, something that was absent from university life during the pandemic. While Inwan Hadiansyah's piece on power relations in workplace learning (a cornerstone of UK teacher training) made me reflect on the experience of those who were unable to undertake placements during school closures. Furthermore, Ming Chen's focus on peer-led reflective practice, highlights its importance for facilitating networking opportunities, providing peer support, and creating a dynamic environment. As face-to-face events that encourage such practice rematerialise, I encourage colleagues to attend.

Finally, I reflect on Saima Saleh's report and was particularly taken by her closing words "pupils need to be able to internalise the belief that their natural features are neither abnormal, nor something to be hidden, but rather something beautiful to be cherished". As you peruse this edition, I urge you to also think about the submissions in relation to your own context, and consider what changes they may inspire you to make.

Making a stand! Getting students to stand up in the large lecture hall
Simon Brownhill

A distinctive feature of sizable university campuses across the globe is the large lecture hall, this being home to the oldest and most widely used teaching method in tertiary institutions: the large lecture. Of personal concern is the amount of time that students spend in a sitting position during these large lectures. With duration times spanning on average between 50–120 mins, Cowgill et al. (2021, p.198) argue that this contributes to a suite of 'persistent sedentary behaviour' which has 'detrimental health outcomes' (p.198) and harvests a decline in learner engagement, participation, and attention (Jerome et al., 2017).

In an effort to counter the above, I believe that instructors need to make a stand by getting students "up on their feet" during large lectures. This simple disruption to prolonged periods of learner inactivity yields physical, mental, and learning benefits, as recognised by Paulus et al. (2021). To promote student movement in large lecture halls, I advocate a selection of personally developed strategies that are drawn from my own extensive professional practice, illustrative examples of which include:

1 Before the large lecture starts, invite students to physically stand and take a few deep breaths, gently shaking out their limbs and tilting their head toward each shoulder in an effort to 'prepare themselves' for lecture learning.

2 At the beginning of the large lecture, encourage students to physically stand and talk to a peer who is in front or behind them, reflecting on what they can remember from the previous lecture.

3 During the large lecture, ask students to 'ballot with their bodies', physically standing up if they are in agreement with a displayed statement or research claim.

I argue that strategies like these collectively serve as an important attempt to reduce the extended bouts of sitting that students are likely to endure when attending large lectures at university. The detrimental and cumulative effects of prolonged sitting are sadly well established. I assert that making small changes to the practices of instructors at the operational level are imperative if students are going to make a stand, both metaphorically and literally.

References

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Jerome, M., Janz, K. F., Baquero, B., & Carr. L. J. (2017). Introducing sit-stand desks increases classroom standing time among university students. *Preventive Medicine Reports*, 8, 232–237.

Paulus, M., Kunkel, J., Schmidt, S. C. E., Bachert, P., Wäsche, H., Neumann, R., & Woll, A. (2021). Standing breaks in Lectures Improve University Students' self-perceived physical, mental, and cognitive condition. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(8), 4204.

Adapted from "Making a stand! Getting students to physically stand up in the large lecture hall" published in the journal *College Teaching* in October 2023.

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Report on The Race and Education Film Club
Saima Saleh

On 11 May 2023, our film club watched *Hair Power: Me and my afro* (2020), directed by Nicole Charles, and first screened on Channel 4.

Following the film, a discussion was led by Malcolm Richards (Senior Lecturer in Education at UWE) and film club member, Alexandra Brown (Philosophy, Ethics and Religious Studies teacher). The inspiration for our film choice was a recent news item. An applicant for the job of dining reservations supervisor at a top London hotel had made it to the final round of interviews but was sent the company's 2021 uniform policy stating "unusual hairstyles such as spiky hair, Afro style" were not allowed. When the case became public, the hotel argued he had mistakenly received an out-of-date policy and later apologised.

Nevertheless, the issue of hair discrimination — alongside other challenges many black folks (in particular, although not exclusively) may experience — is real, as the stories told in *Hair Power* demonstrate. This recent event and the documentary act as a necessary reminder about the of how culturally specific head-covering and dress may impact the following:

_ the ways in which folks navigate life in schools

_ the power dynamics and language used between teachers and pupils

_ making professional judgements in classrooms

As well as a good deal of sadness, participants in the film share some of the joy they feel in expressing their 'real' selves in the ways they choose to model their hair.

Curls, kinks, locs and dreads. Black hair is so much more than hair that grows on our head. It's freedom, it's activism, it's making a statement. When hair doesn't conform with the Eurocentric view, a conflict unfolds.
Emma Dabiri, Hair Power

Our guest speakers began the session by sharing their initial reactions to the documentary. Malcolm stated that there were no surprises in what he watched, reflecting on the common first impressions folks have of someone (like him) with locs. He described the way he feels looked at and gave specific examples of the way he has been treated. How terrifying that this prejudice still exists! Emphasising how harmful and destructive racism can be, Alexandra spoke about how she related personally to the feelings of violation, and a sense of erosion of humanity that folks described in the film. For example, the discussion went on to focus on the issue of how some white folks see nothing wrong with touching the hair of someone identifying as Black, without their consent. This invasion of another person's body, the presumption, or sense of being entitled to do so, is both bizarre and unacceptable.

The issue of locs being tied back in order to fit in with the Eurocentric view of what hair should look like, and to detract from negative attention was raised. We questioned why someone should feel the need to do so. The issue of white folks then making comments (sometimes derogatory) about the hair when it was out and allowed to breathe was also spoken about. The harmful effects of (chemical) hair relaxers were carefully documented, as well as examples of students being placed in detention or sent home from school for having hair that was "too big". Alexandra's words —"In order to protect myself, I have to diminish myself" — were emotive and hit me hard. Yet sadly, the incidents raised during the film and the session are everyday occurrences to many Black folks, hence the need to raise awareness.

Language for black hair was another theme for discussion, such as "nappy", "good", and "picky" hair. It was evident that these terms needed some unpacking for those present at the meeting who found the terms strange and difficult to understand; establishing definitions wasn't as easy as we first thought. The context in which the language is used, who is saying it, and why they're saying it, all make easy understanding problematic but the interpretation by our expert speakers was fascinating.

They also responded to questions about sections of the film that explored the reality that many black folks' relationships with their barbers, hairdressers or locticians (a hairdresser who specialises in locs), is comparable to that of a partner and therapist. Both Alexandra and Malcolm spoke about the salon or barbers as a place of sanctuary, refuge, but also a sacred place where trauma could be witnessed and soothed. Malcolm reiterated this message when he recounted his childhood experiences of being with the same barber for many years. "A space of love and joy" was how Malcolm described his barbershop.

As we neared the end of the session, Alexandra and Malcolm gave some great advice for teachers for dealing with the sensitivities of black hair in the classroom. Alexandra stressed the importance of including lived experiences in lessons, so all pupils could see reflections of their natural selves reflected in authoritative examples. Malcolm reiterated this message, saying that school policies should be investigated to see how many cases of uniform breaches there have been in relation to black pupils who have got into trouble for having their hair in a certain way. He said: "Requests [or] demands should be made that this isn't acceptable. Enact a change! Make a change!"

Their words caused me to reflect how, through education, pupils need to be able to internalise the belief that their natural features are neither abnormal, nor something to be hidden, but rather something beautiful to be cherished.

For the past two years, Saima has been working with academics (including international professors) and other teachers to explore the impact of using film to prompt discussion of issues of race applied to education as a new model of knowledge production and exchange, using collaborative action research.

More information including resources to help support teachers and educators in relation to the themes raised by this film can all be accessed on the website:

Channel 4

How can poetry be used as an educational platform to explore issues of gender and gender identity in the classroom?
Louise Chapman

This illustration is based on my award-winning case study (Burnett & Chapman Hazell, 2022) that explores how literature, in particular poetry, can be used as an educational platform within the secondary classroom to explore gender identity. A six-week unit of poetry was created as part of a broader project to enable pupils to reflect on their personal and familial experiences of gender, whilst also utilising creative writing and performance as a tool for self-expression.

References

Burnett, C. and Chapman Hazell, L. (2022) Voices in the year 7 classroom: A case study tracing evolving gender identities during a poetry unit of work focused on gender consciousness, *English in Education*, 56:4, 372–387.

Fuller, C. (2018) The existential self: Challenging and renegotiating gender identity through higher education in England. *Gender and Education*, 30 (1). pp. 92–104.

Pupils' names have been changed for anonymity.

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Reflecting on changes between past to present: "it made me think about how lucky I am to do what I want, like play football, and **not get judged for it.**" (Jade)

"**Some things haven't changed** like the job payments, so men earn more money than women for **doing the same job**." **(Evie)**

"**Creativity here comes not just from making something new, but from transforming it as one's own experience is transformed.** The pupils were able to **process information received and develop strong narrative voices** which indicate significant empathy with the plight of the suffragettes." (Burnett & Chapman Hazell, 2022)

Empowering the female voice through poetry:

Women are more than you think,
We are humans too.
We deserve all that you do,
Because we are the suffragettes.

And we will fight for our rights.

[Extract from *Suffragette* by Sophia]

Poetry "impacts how an individual views themselves" (Fuller, 2018)

SLAM Poetry – pupil performance and responses

Everything has to be perfect
Figures made to be on point
Have to fit into the margin
because you have to look right.

Perfect in the day.
Perfect all through the night.
Fashion is everything,
because you have to look right.

Shaping, scraping
Chiseling at the naturalness
Why do we do this?
because we have to look right.

[Extract from *Everything has to be perfect* by Jade]

"**I felt angry when performing it because the words are so powerful, and it made me feel cross that the poem even had to be written at all. There's always that niggling feeling that says, 'I am not good enough' but the last line makes you cross that you even think it.**"

As she flicks through her magazines,
Each edited image she sees alters her opinion of beauty.
She doesn't realise just how much it has been tweaked to get it perfect.
The distorted image of beauty warps her mind, making her think 'I'm not beautiful'.

She stares dolefully at the mirror, wishing she was taller, slimmer, blonder.
A voice lingers in her mind, saying 'You're not beautiful!'
But she is, and she can't see that through the distorted image of beauty.

[*Distorted Image of Beauty* by Helen]

Power relations in workplace learning
Inwan Hadiansyah

The process of workplace learning has been a subject of inquiry and discussion among scholars for many years. As someone employed in the education and training sector within a public service, this question also occupies my thoughts. In my personal experience, my journey of workplace learning has been significantly driven by the prospect of career advancement and the financial benefits that I hope to attain upon completing my learning process. However, it is essential to consider whether the motivations I hold are shared by other employees in various work settings as this is likely to vary from one individual to another.

Apart from personal motivations, workplace learning is also regulated by established norms and rules. In organisations or workplaces where leadership aims to convey specific ideas, strategies are devised to ensure comprehension and implementation among employees. These strategies are often underpinned by rules and norms intended to guide employee behaviour.

In the context of my institution, an exemplary initiative took place in 2015 when the concept of a corporate university (CU) was introduced. CU is often employed by organisations to encourage individuals to embrace a culture of continuous learning, thereby enhancing organisational effectiveness and efficiency in pursuit of institutional goals (Homan & MacPherson, 2005). This strategy notably introduced the concept of the 10:20:70 ratio in the learning process, where 10% represents formal learning through structured training, 20% encompasses social learning, and the majority, 70%, is derived from experiential learning. This approach can be perceived as a tool to regulate and influence employee behaviour with regards to their learning processes.

As Lemke (2012) observed, learning is not solely an endogenous phenomenon; it is the deployment of resources provided within a social community and is shaped by the prevailing culture and its associated norms and practices. In workplace learning context, this implies that there are underlying power relations at play in the background, influencing how employees learn. Consequently, learning behaviour is not exclusively determined by the individual learner but is also impacted by external factors, including the power dynamics that operate within the workplace context.

In summary, the multifaceted nature of workplace learning is influenced by diverse motivations, strategies, and power relations. It is a continuous process that is essential for personal and organisational growth, and it reflects the interplay between individual agency and external influences within a given cultural and institutional framework.

References

Homan, G., & MacPherson, A. (2005). E-learning in the corporate university. *Journal of European Industrial Training*, 29(1 SPEC. ISS.), 75–90.

Lemke, J. L. (2012). Thinking about feeling: Affect across literacies and lives. In *Identity, Community, and Learning Lives in the Digital Age* (pp. 57–69). Cambridge University Press.

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Peer-led reflective practice at the School of Education: Building a dynamic learning community
Ming Chen

Peer-led reflective practice is a student-centred learning approach that leverages group reflection It promotes open communication and the inclusion of both academic and personal perspectives, building a reflective community (Palacios, Onat-Stelma & Fay, 2021).

For individuals, it enables self-awareness by encouraging the sharing of thoughts, feelings, and behaviours (Palacios, Onat-Stelma & Fay, 2021). Among peers, peer-led reflection gathers diverse insights through peer interaction (Palacios et al., 2022). It also fosters collaboration and group knowledge via diverse viewpoints. Furthermore, a reflective community promotes an inclusive, encouraging learning environment (Kurtz, 2019), as peer-led reflective practice brings people together, allowing for open communication and mutual support.

Class discussions, morning cafes, afternoon teas, and informal gatherings constitute peer-led reflective practice. These activities create spaces for open dialogue about academic and personal aspects of our academic journey. It is hoped that more colleagues will actively engage in the School of Education's activities to facilitate networking, provide peer support, and create a dynamic environment.

References

Kurtz, A. (2019). *How to run reflective practice groups: A guide for healthcare professionals.* Routledge.

Palacios, N., Onat-Stelma, Z., & Fay, R. (2021). Extending the conceptualisation of reflection: Making meaning from experience over time. **Reflective Practice**, 22(5), 600–613.

Palacios, N., Rafique, R., Kwihangana, F., & Zhao, X. (2022). Online peer-led group reflective practice in higher education: a seminar-based project evaluation. *Reflective Practice*, 23(6), 676–689.

Read more about reflective practice here:

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Blockplay.ai at the TLC Research Centre

Place blocks under webcam

AI-based app recognises blocks and plays audio and animations
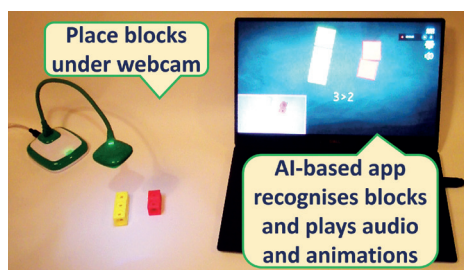
A new free prototype AI object-recognition app developed at the TLC Research Centre lets you do maths, music and science with multilink cubes via a visualiser.

Try blockplay.ai at:

Autumn on the allotment

"One must ask children and birds how cherries and strawberries taste." (Goethe)

If you would like to visit the TLC allotment all are welcome. Please contact cc18401@bristol.ac.uk for details.

TLC Annual Lecture 2024: All welcome!

Dispositional teaching: Developing positive learning dispositions in normal Lessons

The lecture is given by the hugely influential Professor Guy Claxton.

Many people now argue that positive attitudes towards learning (i.e. engaging confidently and capably with difficulties and uncertainties in everyday situations) should be seen as inherently valuable outcomes of education. But some are uncertain or even sceptical about the feasibility of pursuing this goal in "normal lessons" with all the pressures to cover content and do well on tests of knowledge.

In this talk we'll explore a style of teaching that both gets good results and systematically develops powerful independent learners. We'll also consider implications for teacher education.

Wednesday 6 March 2024
Room 1.20/1.21
35 Berkeley Square

4.30pm to 6pm
Followed by a wine reception.

The Research Centre for Teaching, Learning and Curriculum (TLC) is concerned with questions relating to education in schools, universities, community and out-of-school contexts, including a focus on issues of social justice. We research the learning of individuals, groups and systems from a range of perspectives, including practitioner research.

This pamphlet is produced to help the diverse perspectives and research interests and activities of the Centre reach a wider audience. All opinions are the authors' own.

To find out more about TLC or to download a digital copy of this pamphlet, please visit the website.