

New PDF Award: Leading Programmes

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As we all know, Programme Leaders (also known as directors of study, course directors, pathway leaders and other titles too numerous to mention here) have a pivotal role within Higher and Further Education provision. They are expected to lead teams in effective curriculum design and development; to interpret and navigate fast-changing disciplinary, institutional, regional, national and global contexts; to influence colleagues, support staff and managers; to understand and effectively implement quality enhancement frameworks; to timetable effectively making the best use of resources (fight for room allocations) and to ensure an excellent student learning experience – the list is probably endless. In most cases this often comes without clearly defined responsibilities, without the official authority of a line management role and as a first step into HE leadership. Many learn their role through trial and error and some form of knowledge osmosis. The future may be uncertain but what we do know is that change is undeniable and Programme Leaders are faced with a range of new situations which will require complex decision-making and inspirational leadership.

- Reflect critically on the nature of programme leadership and its relationship to context, including influences beyond the course, discipline and institution
- Reflect on appropriate leadership theory in order to enhance practice as a programme leader
- Evaluate models of team effectiveness and consider strategies to lead, influence and enhance team performance
- Evaluate appropriate curriculum design, development and evaluation strategies and consider their application in order to facilitate an excellent student learning experience
- Inform their role with relevant strategy, policy and quality considerations.

The aims of the award are:

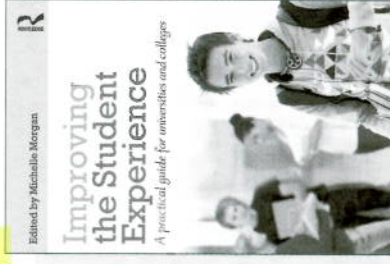
- To support individuals in their professional development as educational leaders
- To support and recognise individual progress, practice and professional achievement
- To enhance curriculum development and, hence, the student learning experience
- To promote the development of professionals with the knowledge, skills and attributes to effectively lead, nurture and guide educational change and development in the sector.

In addition to the core outcomes and values common to all SEDA PDF awards there are five Specialist Outcomes:

Book Review

Improving the Student Experience: a practical guide for universities and colleges

Edited by
Michelle Morgan



On first glancing through this book I was a little overwhelmed by its apparent density and the vast amount of case studies. However, on a second, and more in-depth viewing, it proves to be a useful insight for all interested in developing a coherent and effective approach to the student experience. The book is divided into three parts. Part one consists of chapters outlining the higher education landscape and, importantly, Morgan's Student Experience Practitioner Model. Part two has chapters that contain three or four case studies outlining ways in which each stage of the model can be practically applied. Each chapter is bookended with a short opening essay from an expert practitioner and is a short

conclusion. Part three continues in a similar vein to part two, with chapters containing a short essay, case studies and a conclusion, but this time the chapters focus on the interlinking themes Morgan identifies in part one. The book concludes with an insightful, and brief, chapter looking at future developments in higher education and a very useful further reading list for those wishing to pursue particular topics in more depth.

While it is possible to use this book purely for generating quick ideas to fix specific problems, its real potential can only be properly understood by reading it through. Morgan introduces a new model for approaching the student experience, and central to the success of this model is her conceptualisation of approaching the student experience in a holistic, joined-up way.

The Practitioner Model, in essence, is a more developed and more detailed version of the student life-cycle, which according to Morgan, is not advanced enough to deliver for students on a mass scale. This, I can see sense in. As participation in higher education expands, it is useful for practitioners to have tools that address the student experience in practical and manageable ways. However, as with any model, readers should be aware of the dangers of becoming too bogged down in the separate stages and their definitions. The case studies provide good examples of how the principles of the model can be applied to

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educational development during SEDA's lifetime. Looking at the work of figures like, for example, Royce Sadler, Gilly Salmon, Graham Gibbs, Marcia Mentkowski and David Boud, a 'celebrant' will introduce the work of the key influencer and invite two or more discussants to add perspectives about the impact of the work, then the discussion will be opened up to the floor for wider debate. We intend to video the symposium and make the outputs available on the SEDA website, enabling text responses to follow over the rest of the year, perhaps even with inputs from the key influencers themselves!

We are very keen to invite nominations for the seminal thinkers on whom we will focus, together with volunteers to be celebrants and discussants. Please contact sally@sedalbrown.net with your ideas and offers.

Gala dinner

On the night of Saturday 18 May the SEDA@20 Gala dinner will be held

different groups of students, and it must be remembered that in our diverse student bodies, one size can never fit all. The model is a useful conceptual tool for framing thoughts and an overall approach to delivering an improved student experience – I found the differentiation between orientation and induction particularly insightful. If practitioners become too welded to analysing the model, then they will miss the key point of it – that the student should be the driving force for activity.

The rest of the book is devoted to a wide array of different case studies, international as well as UK based. The short introductions into each area are helpful for focusing the reader onto the specific issues, whilst not being too dense. The case studies are useful, although vary in detail and information. However, as a set, especially when viewed through the frame of the Practitioner Model, the case studies are very useful at a practical level, hopefully inspiring similar innovation and approaches in institutions around the UK and further afield.

Overall, I found that the book gave a useful framework for the reader to think about how they approached delivering an excellent student experience and provided good worked examples of how to go about achieving it.

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at the Marriott hotel in Leeds: this will be a glitzy occasion at which everyone attending is invited to dress up and celebrate with us. There will be music, dancing, awards, entertainment and surprises with a strong focus on student inputs, for example as musicians. Ideas for the event have been developed to date by Event Management students from Leeds Met working with Sally Brown and Carole Baume, and we aim to use students to help with as many aspects of the event as possible.

Sunday social options for those staying over are likely to include visits to the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, the Hockney exhibition at Saltaire and historic walks round York and Leeds.

Helping us celebrate

We are very keen to involve SEDA members (old, current and forthcoming) in our celebratory year. Please do try to make some or all of our events, and if you know former members who might be interested in coming along, particularly to the

Gala dinner, please let them know about our plans. We are also keen to build the SEDA archives, so if you have photos or videos of SEDA events and people, or documents or artefacts you think we might not have access to, please let the SEDA office know about them.

Fiona Campbell (FCampbell@napier.ac.uk) would also like to hear about your personal recollections and reminiscences in text or video form to include within the showcase.

In planning the celebrations, many of us are recognising the significant impact SEDA has had on our lives and we very much hope to mark the occasion of our twentieth birthday with style, energy and purpose, reviewing our achievements but also looking to the future of the organisation too. Join us if you can!

For further suggestions, proposals and ideas, please contact **Sally Brown** (sally@sally-brown.net) and **Liz Shriver** (liz.shriver@btinternet.com)