

from SoTL gave rise to positive student feedback, which was a source of great personal satisfaction.

- *Keep learning* through the entire student lifecycle (as Haughton and Anderson suggest in their HEA research exploring embedding wellbeing in the curriculum) and, as we suggest, professional lifecycle and beyond. SoTL instilled a respect for and desire to engage in research-based educational development and pedagogical practice.

Conclusion

In exploring the challenges facing the HE learning community and understanding the inter-relationship between learner success and educator wellbeing, I believe the case for addressing educators' wellbeing is robust. Evidence tells us that SoTL enables staff to engage in the qualities that make up wellbeing. Further to this, in the same way as I suggest in the 'Maximising' success toolkit that wellbeing can be used as a model for curriculum development, could we, as educational developers, use the model to shape our staff development work?

If we were not convinced before of the importance of the 'research-led form of professional development' (Fanghanel *et al.*, 2016) that is SoTL, then I will let the words of an educator close the case:

'From a very personal point of view...[SoTL]...has re-energised and re-motivated me after a very difficult few years in teaching, and I would like to say thank you for the opportunity to study, think, read, find a sense of direction and really take pleasure in my work again.'

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Getting someone in: The role of blended professionals in HE writing development

Trevor Day and David Swinburne, Royal Literary Fund

Writing lies at the heart of academic practice as both process and product. In most disciplines, written assignments and/or exams are still the primary forms of assessment. Students' achievement in both is influenced by factors assessed as part of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). Writing also remains the chief vehicle

for communicating research findings and engaging with sectors outside academia. Reporting on these activities is required in grant applications and is assessed by the Research Excellence Framework (REF) as a basis for allocating government funding. And for graduate employers, writing ability and other communication skills remain at

or near the top of their list of concerns, often above numeracy and ICT skills (Kaplan, 2014; CBI, 2015).

If writing is so central to academic success for many students, who is responsible for nurturing its development? In most HEs this role is of course distributed. Academic

teaching staff are on the front line and in a well-designed curriculum the development of writing abilities is scaffolded across the years of an undergraduate course, so that assignments gradually prepare students for large final-year projects, which may culminate in a dissertation or a large report (Day *et al.*, 2010). Writing is not distinct from other aspects of academic endeavour – for example, it goes hand in hand with critical thinking. It should be possible to develop various writing-related graduate attributes at the same time as meeting the academic requirements of courses (Day, 2011). For many of us, ‘writing shapes the discipline as much as writing is shaped by the discipline: it is through writing that we think deeply, test ideas, self-reflect, and open up our ideas to the scrutiny of others’ (Day, 2015).

Others who help nurture students’ writing development include staff from a university’s academic writing centre, learning development centre, English language centre, or their equivalents, as well as students being peer mentors for writing (Ganobcsik-Williams, 2006). At its best, a sizeable proportion of this provision adopts a ‘writing in the disciplines’ approach, with writing development fine-tuned to disciplinary context (Deane and O’Neill, 2011). Writing development goes far beyond the technical (effective grammar, spelling, punctuation and appropriate writing style). It encompasses subtleties of structure, argumentation, narrative and register. Professional writers, pre-eminently adaptable in writing for different audiences and purposes, can play a special role, working closely with universities to develop such qualities.

‘Blended professionals’ working in the ‘Third Space’ are defined by Whitchurch (2009: 407) as ‘individuals with identities drawn from both professional and academic domains’. Professional writers as blended professionals work with HEIs in many ways. Novelists, playwrights and poets energise creative writing courses, while journalists, biographers and science writers inform non-fiction courses. Scriptwriters contribute to both. The focus of this article, however, is on the contribution of professional writers to universities’ wider learning, teaching and research agenda.

The Royal Literary Fund

The Royal Literary Fund (RLF), a charity, has had a significant impact on

the HE sector as a source of writing professionals. RLF Writing Fellows are professional writers with a noteworthy publication record, who provide one-to-one writing tutorials for students, free to the host university. This work is funded by the endowments left to the RLF by leading writers such as A. A. Milne and Somerset Maugham. Writing Fellows come from the broadest range of backgrounds: novelists, playwrights, poets, scriptwriters, journalists and a cornucopia of non-fiction writers. Typically, RLF Fellows work one-to-one with several students each day, in sessions of up to an hour, offering in-depth guidance that complements in-house provision. Since the scheme’s inception in 1999, more than 300 writers have held Fellowship posts at some 120 different UK HEIs. Testament to the scheme’s success is that many leading universities (Bristol, Cambridge, LSE, Manchester and Queen Mary, University of London, among them) have hosted RLF Writing Fellows for many years.

RLF Writing Fellows can only reach a proportion of students, so the RLF has been exploring ways to extend its reach to benefit more HE students and also staff. Since 2013, Writing Fellows with appropriate experience and aptitude have been selected and trained as Consultant Fellows (CFs) to facilitate group activities in universities. They undergo a one-year programme, drawing on principles of the Higher Education Academy’s approach to training, and its Professional Standards Framework, but with a specific focus on writing development. Training includes designing and facilitating workshops for students, with clear learning outcomes for specific writing problems. To be accredited by the

by keeping learning logs and other records. Finally, writing a critical reflective account integrates trainees’ knowledge of learning and teaching frameworks with their ongoing practice.

Only when all these stages are successfully completed is the writer added to the RLF CF register. To stay on the register, Consultant Fellows must document ongoing practice and undertake continuing professional development. Fellows meet as a community, at regional meetings, on training days and through online forums, so that individual consultants can benefit from the experience of others and are kept up-to-date with the latest writing, learning and teaching practices.

The Consultant Fellows’ scheme promotes high standards of professional and ethical practice while encouraging CFs to operate as independent practitioners. Many CFs have higher degrees and far-reaching teaching or training experience. Currently, 33 CFs are working across 33 HEIs, offering client-paid interventions ranging from workshops of one-day, half-day or less, through to 2-day to 4-day writing retreats and on-campus interventions called immersives. Run over several days, immersives combine group work with intensive one-to-one support. CFs work at all levels: with undergraduates, postgraduates and staff.

Examples

Julian Evans started out as a publishing editor before becoming a biographer, journalist and travel writer. He worked as an RLF Writing Fellow working in the Department of Health and

‘Of course, students don’t just study their discipline, they study the writing that goes along with it. The two are inseparable.’

Royal Literary Fund, trainee Consultant Fellows must be observed by mentors, and by each other, with developmental feedback gathered systematically from participants and observers. Trainees then engage in work experience at one or more of 30 universities, during which additional feedback is compiled from student participants, observers and the university client, and after which trainees must demonstrate their commitment to reflective practice

Social Sciences at the University of the West of England (UWE), before returning as a Consultant Fellow in 2014 to run four-hour ‘Improving your dissertation’ workshops for final year undergraduates and give one-to-one tutorials. Explained Julian, ‘Of course, students don’t just study their discipline, they study the writing that goes along with it. The two are inseparable. My job is to help them become more capable and more

confident in their writing. I want them to enjoy their writing, to be more in control, to not be afraid.'

Julian's contribution at UWE is reviewed each year by course co-ordinators and the Associate Dean (Partnerships) in the Faculty of Health and Applied Sciences. Since 2014, his involvement has grown. He has written and presented a UWE video 'Make your writing flow' for undergraduates and now offers presentations and workshops for first, second and final years, and Master's students. In the first year, one-hour sessions concern the nuts and bolts of writing at degree level: thinking critically, and writing clearly and concisely. In the second year, one-hour sessions build on this. In the final year, he runs the dissertation-writing workshops, focusing on structure and the direction and flow of argument, and how to manage the writing process. To Julian, 'It is entirely natural that a writer teaches students about writing, just as a psychologist teaches students about psychology'. The department clearly sees Julian's close involvement – offering 10 full days of intervention across the year – as a cost-effective and fruitful collaboration.

Anne Wilson began working as an RLF Fellow at Brunel University alongside a career in journalism and writing radio, tv and film scripts for corporate clients. With her commercial acumen, she has found a valuable niche in working with university staff keen to write more compelling journal articles and more enticing grant applications. Anne explains, 'Academics value my ability to understand complex technical and scientific ideas, pick the cherries, and help them tell their story in plain English. I help them analyse the target audience, find the hook, and frame the story so it gets attention. Sometimes, I see myself as a midwife, helping them give birth to their story and present it to the world beyond their discipline.' As an RLF Writing Fellow, Anne worked one-to-one with students and staff. Now, as a Consultant Fellow, she runs university-funded workshops on writing grant proposals and high-quality academic articles.

Anne's special interest in working with staff and students from non-traditional backgrounds drew her to the Occupational Therapy Department at Brunel, designing a bespoke

workshop on 'Creative approaches to support students' writing'. This led to a collaboration with Senior Lecturer Gail Eva, and their successful application for Teach Brunel funding to investigate the kinds of staff feedback that best help students improve their academic writing. Working from the ground up, Anne and Gail are running separate focus groups with students and staff before a consensus event for both, during which recommendations for best practice will emerge. Written guidance for occupational therapy staff will then be shared as an exemplar with the rest of the university.

For Anna Barker, journalist and novelist, her work as a Consultant Fellow evolved from being an RLF Writing Fellow at Teesside University, to providing writing workshops for students and staff there, to a collaboration to develop an essay-writing app. 'Many of the first and second year undergraduates I saw as a Writing Fellow were struggling with how to structure their essays,' says Anna. 'This was particularly the case for students from non-traditional academic backgrounds doing practice-based degrees in health and social sciences. I wanted to offer them an easy-to-follow guide. I tested out the concept in one-to-ones and in workshops, and then Teesside and the RLF worked with me in developing the guide as an app for mobiles, tablets and laptops. Called ALEX, it takes

the student through the components of an essay and through the process of writing one, i.e. generating ideas and gathering information, thinking critically, organising material, writing up paragraphs, and revising. ALEX involves colour-coding sources of information and themes, so everything is easy to find and the bulk of structural decisions are made before students begin writing. Undergraduates at Teesside have been involved at all stages of testing and shaping the app's concept and content.' The emphasis on visuals and colour for planning and organising makes ALEX particularly accessible for students with dyslexia.

Like Julian, for Anna her work has grown to embed writing support across year groups, but in this case, working with arts and humanities doctoral students. Along with two CF colleagues, Marina Benjamin and Tina Pepler, Anna offers a suite of interventions for the Midlands3Cities Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP): three one-day workshops for first years, immersives for second years, and a five-day writing retreat for third years. The DTP Manager, Susanna Ison, commented, 'The level of intervention and support offered by Anna, Marina and Tina has transformed the students' approach to writing. The workshops opened students' eyes to their potential as writers for both academia and outside, ensuring that the PhD, as well as standing as a coherent piece of research, can have impact with a wider audience.'

As for the wider RLF Consultant Fellows' programme, its dedicated website began as a shop window for explaining what CFs do, and how they can help staff and students solve their writing problems. The site now hosts blogs – *What's Happening?* and *Top Tips* – with insights and practical tips for helping university students and staff enhance their reading and writing practices.

Research and development

Alongside the 'hands on' approach to writing development, the RLF has been committed to understanding the wider context of UK writing development, and examining the effectiveness of interventions. The RLF-commissioned *Report on the Teaching of Academic Writing in UK Higher Education* (Ganobcsik-Williams, 2004) revealed a snapshot of the state of writing-

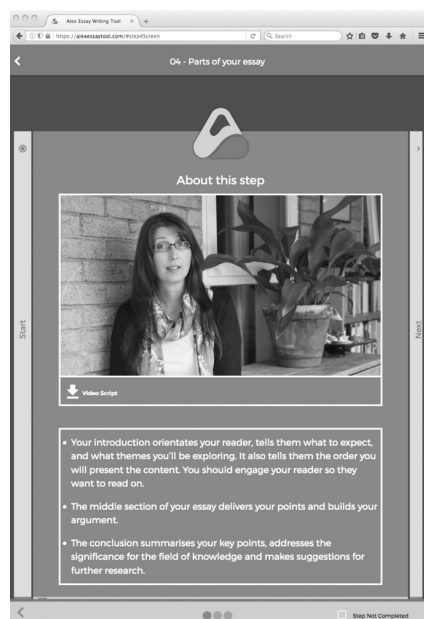


Figure 1 The ALEX app takes students through the essay-writing process, one step at a time, with video guidance accompanying text

related learning development. The RLF's influential report *Writing Matters* (Davies *et al.*, 2006), informed by its work in the sector, investigated the challenges of writing at university and recommended ways to support students. Sally Baker's 2015 doctoral research, partly supported by the RLF, examined the reading and writing practices of students entering university. The RLF is currently working with the Centre for Academic Writing at Coventry University to develop an online directory of writing support across the sector.

The RLF also commissions innovative research to bolster the quality of its Consultant Fellows' programme by exploring the effectiveness of its CF training and subsequent interventions. For the 2014-15 cohort, Professor Gerry Czerniawski of the University of East London interviewed trainees before and after their training, to investigate the challenges for professional writers on their journey to becoming writing development facilitators. As one trainee put it, 'writing is largely a very private activity and training is very public'. Given that trainees were selected for their ability to work as successful writing tutors, developing them as reflective practitioners within a strong, supportive community of practice helped smooth the transition into their new role. Another trainee got to the heart of the identity issue, '...you are a CF because you are a writer'. There is tension between the role of a professional writer and that of a writing facilitator, but as the experience of Consultant Fellows over the last four years has demonstrated, many CFs have found the two identities can be synergistic, each complementing the other.

Empowering students and staff to write more effectively can have formidable impact on key HE concerns; for example, student retention and research funding. According to Treaster (2017), at the University of Arizona there is correspondence between the grade achieved in Freshman composition and the likelihood of completing a first degree: for this with A grade (72% complete their degree); a B grade (61%); and for C (41%). The implication is clear: increase writing competence and you increase the likelihood of a student staying on a degree course. In Australia, Paliadelis *et al.* (2015) attribute a department's

doubling in academic paper output to an Au\$18,000 investment in writing retreats and writing support. Following the interventions, successful grant applications resulted in Au\$300,000 of external funding, much of which the authors imply would not have happened otherwise. Nevertheless, there is a scarcity of high-quality research in the UK on the cost effectiveness of writing development interventions, and which ones are most transformative for participants (Kornhaber *et al.*, 2016).

Feedback forms, filled with glowing comments at the end of a workshop or writing retreat, reveal little about the longer-term impact of an intervention. Have the participants' writing behaviour, confidence, skill or productivity actually shifted? To investigate this, one of us (TD) is collaborating with Erik Borg of Coventry University, and other HE colleagues, to compare these parameters before and several months after an intensive writing development intervention. In the future, it is hoped to accompany such investigation with analysis of changes in samples of participants' text (Borg and Deane, 2011). In the case of research staff, their before and after publication output can be compared. Of course, many factors affect an individual's writing trajectory within a university. The RLF-sponsored research, both qualitative and quantitative, is shifting its focus to self-efficacy and self-regulation (Zimmerman, 2008; Prat-Sala and Redford, 2010) and on participants taking greater control over their writing and publishing lives, something about which professional writers have insight won from long practice.

Other writing professionals

The Royal Literary Fund, through its various initiatives, has the greatest reach of writers' organisations in higher education. However, its work complements that of other organisations involved in writing development. The National Association of Writers in Education (NAWE), for example, supports all those who teach, study or research creative writing in schools, colleges or higher education. It provides continuing professional development for writers working in education, publishes a magazine, *Writing in Education*, and organises an annual conference and regional events.

Several HE-focused, writing-development companies have been established by former publishing industry or university staff. Cofactor, SciConnect and ThinkWrite focus on working with postgraduates and staff, and especially in enhancing science communication. Each has its niche in enriching the teaching, learning and research landscapes of higher education.

Final word

Given the uncertainty in HE created by Brexit, and the shift in universities' focus with TEF and the revised REF, the professional writers most likely to be successful in working with universities are those who embed themselves within the planning and working practices of their clients: those who co-construct provision with their HE colleagues.

Professional writers bring insight and inspiration to the writing experience of students and staff. They tend to be creative problem-solvers. They are explainers *par excellence*, revealing connections and patterns to develop structure and argument for different intentions and audiences. Writers gather, research and interrogate large volumes of material – in various media and from disparate sources – and integrate them into compelling narratives. All these qualities are invaluable in helping to inform and inspire students and staff in their writing practices. Above all, it is the living, breathing experience of writers in their day-to-day working lives, and their joy in wordcraft, that can help others develop confidence, power and precision in their writing – an activity that remains at the heart of the endeavour we call higher education.

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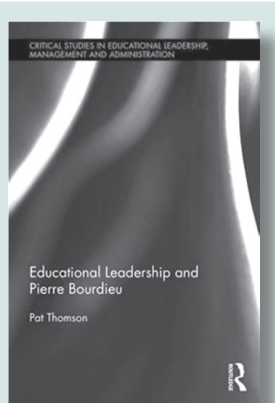
Book Review

Educational Leadership and Pierre Bourdieu

by Pat Thompson

Routledge, 2016

ISBN 0415603552



The towering figure of Pierre Bourdieu looms large in this thought-provoking and highly relevant book. Bourdieu (1930-2002) was a French sociologist, anthropologist, philosopher and public intellectual who wrote extensively about education, and the ways in which it produces and reproduces inequality. He saw society as comprising multiple interlocking and overlapping spaces, referred to as 'fields', that are simultaneously social, cultural and material, which are populated by inequitable positions. Other important concepts for Bourdieu were the notion of 'capitals', and 'social capital' and that of 'habitus' which frames and shapes human behaviour and often operates below the level of consciousness. This will resonate with those of us who work in UK higher education, recognising this in the reputational value of Russell Group Institutions compared to former polytechnics, along with the feelings of 'other-ness' and 'out-of-place-ness' expressed by working-class and BME students. One wonders what Bourdieu would make of university league tables, the Teaching Excellence Framework and Graduate Attributes.

I found this to be a well-structured and coherent book aimed at those who are interested in educational leadership and prepared to view it through an alternative lens. It reminded me of the contribution sociology can make to our understanding and interpretation of higher education policy and practice.

The reader is invited into the field of educational leadership, management and administration (ELMA) to consider whether taking a Bourdieusian approach might further our understanding of where we are, how we got here and where we might go next. For those interested in developments in policy and practice in education over time this makes for a fascinating yet sobering read as we marvel at the rapidity of change as reflected in the shift towards governance (and away from local government) within the UK schooling systems. Well-chosen examples and case studies from mainly the UK but also Australia are assiduously used to illustrate how ELMA is now viewed as a distinctive area of knowledge.

Prior to forging an illustrious academic career, Thompson was a Head Teacher and this is apparent in her writing as she moves effortlessly back and forth across the theory-practice nexus. Conversant with seminal and significant relevant literature, she uses this to good effect to offer historical, social and political context to support a compelling commentary on the 'capitals' and dispositions that educational professionals in leadership are now seen to need to 'play the game'.

Thompson does a good job of introducing Bourdieu and key aspects of his social theory in Chapter 1, rendering accessible what can sometimes appear complex without over-simplifying or failing to address some of the criticisms that have been levelled against him. In Chapter 3 she offers a succinct account of the ways in which Bourdieu is often used and misused by educational scholars, which is a 'must-read' for undergraduates studying his work for the first time. In doing so she shines a somewhat unflattering light on the 'scholarly game' which requires academics to advance their