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# Multiple conceptions of success

Sandy Ryder, BLPSS

Anthony Greenwood, BLPSS

Helen Carter, Brathay Trust

# The Aspiring Leaders Programme

- Partnership between University of Cumbria, Brathay Trust and Common Purpose
- Blend of experiential and classroom learning supported by Action Learning Sets and Work based Learning
- BSc in Social Enterprise Leadership

# Experiential Learning Examples

- Theories and models around group dynamics
- Groups making self-propelling model vehicles to reflect on Belbin roles and application to work groups and study groups
- Whaling Boats: effective communication, leadership capacity, dealing with change
- Goal setting and trust in groups using high ropes course, high “all aboard” course



## Initial observations

- Course team meeting
- Experiential learning exercise with specific goals (level 5)
- Students measured success in terms of not falling out with each other or out of the boat
- Intended learning outcomes not achieved for level 5 but could have done at level 4
- Does this mirror students' perceptions of academic success?

# Scoping exercise with students

- UCBS5041 Advancing Business Practice through Work Based Learning
- ILO1: “Demonstrate successful **engagement** and **progress...**”
- Engagement: everyone clear about everyone’s goal; common goal met; investing time in the group; not “getting 100%” but building good rapport; successful engagement = task completed
- Progress: growth towards goal; getting something from the engagement

## Scoping exercise with students

- Less comments on progress than there were on engagement
- At work, the students are accustomed to projects where progress = engagement
- “Social entrepreneurs are significantly more likely to use the word *we* in comparison to general spoken English and ... also significantly more likely to use *we* in comparison to private sector entrepreneurs” (Parkinson and Howorth, 2008)

# Looking for explanations

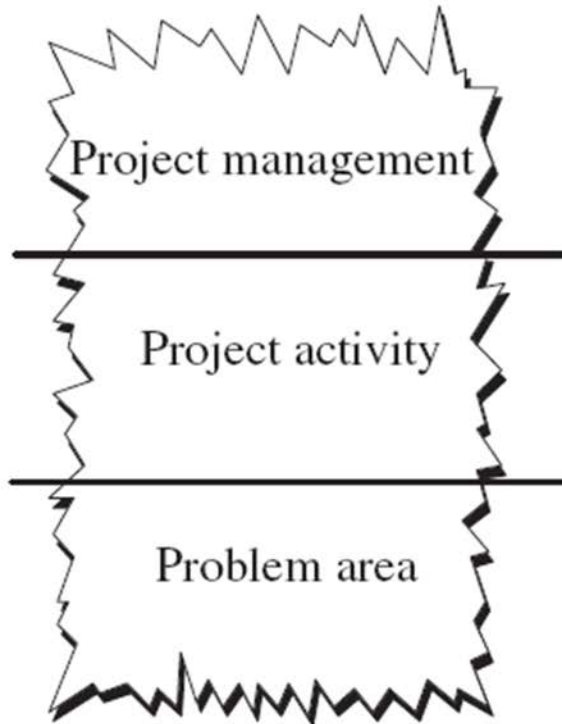
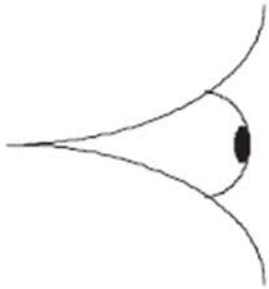
- Pedagogic
  - Stakeholder view of 'live' student projects
  - Success of blended learning development projects
  - Development of BSc Accounting skills matrix
- Echos from authors' disciplines (forthcoming)
  - Accounting (Green, 2012)
  - Information Systems (Cheng and Chen, 2015)
- Philosophical
  - Modes of reality



# Stakeholder view of 'live' student projects

(Academic)

Is this a valid piece of work for the final year of a degree course?



(Client)

Will the outcome be useful to my business?



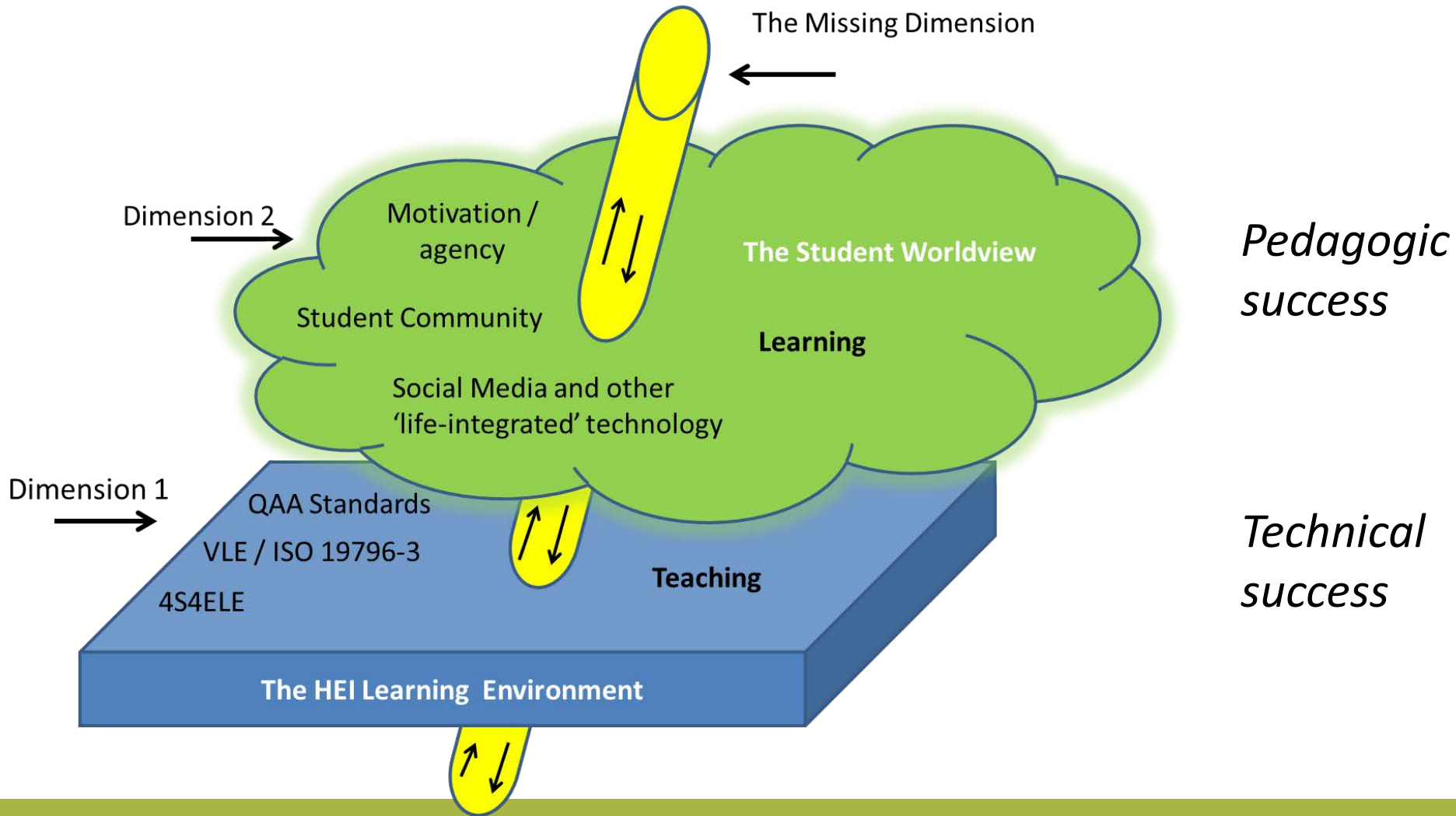
(Student)

Will the grade for this reflect my effort relative to other students'?



Also funders and partner organisations

# Success of blended learning development projects



# Skills Development Matrix

- Industry group: technical, personal, interpersonal, communication, business management, intellectual
- Personal at levels 6, 5, 4
  - 6. Professional identity development.
  - 5. Continuous improvement of self.
  - 4. Self-managed learning.
- Business management at levels 6, 5, 4
  - 6. Commercial awareness.
  - 5. Understanding of the regulatory environment.
  - 4. Understanding of the context in which accounting & finance operates.

# Modes of reality (Fleetwood, 2005)

- Fleetwood (2005)
  - Materially real (oceans)
  - Ideally real (discourse, symbols, belief)
  - Artefactually real (computers blend the other three modes)
  - Socially real (caring for children)
- Through the ALP blend, we dip or immerse students into all of these.



Helm Crag, north of Grasmere

## Concluding observations

- Multifaceted dimensions of success
- Differences between intended and emergent learning outcomes
- Measuring success in personal development
- Experiential learning facilitates discussions about feedback
- Skills at dealing with feedback in order to increase future success and perceptions of success (keep moving up the crag)
- False summits

## Planned future work

- Additional authors joining from an Organisational Behaviour perspective
- Observations from staff meeting and scoping exercise to form the basis of focus groups in April
- Abstract submitted to Chichester
- Paper to be developed based on further literature search; literature review; critical discourse analysis from focus group

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