

Afterword

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When we came together to create L2L I believe that we did so based on shared beliefs about the complex, evolving and 'moral' nature of our work as library staff who want to support the learning and growth of all our learners. Among its many interpretations 'moral' also means being virtuous, high minded, principled and decent. These concepts speak to the values of our profession. We felt that libraries and our work in them mattered and the world is a better place for having spaces for community, learning, curiosity, and creation that are neutral, non-judgmental and non-commercial. We in libraries, are witnesses to change every day as alluded to in the contributions here. Because of the evolving nature of life in our libraries less and less of what we do is predictable and more of it is emergent. More of our work is now 'pathfinding' rather than path-following.

This is challenging work and calls for approaches to development that invite inquiry, responsibility, growth, reflection, action, self-efficacy and confidence. We need to be drawn out from the internal world of libraries and to see ourselves in a wider context of the learning communities of our organisations. The Professional Development Framework for all Staff Who Teach in Higher Education (PDF) suggested itself as a possible model for a different approach to professional development and the needs of library staff in these new and emerging contexts. Over the past two years many of us, including the contributors to this work, have engaged with the framework through the lens of library staff. This publication is an aspect of that work and is a testament to the impact of the PDF on our practice, identity, aspirations and sense of who we are.

The chapters and many of the cameos included here present the journey of participants with the PDF and the exploration of what we as library

staff do, who we are and how we can develop our contribution. Through L2L we have had opportunities to discover our ground and the values and practices that matter to us as library staff and to articulate these in *Library and Teaching Philosophy Statements* and in *Values Statements*. Identity, exploration and engagement with the word and idea of 'teaching' has provided great opportunities for much reflection and unpicking of our assumptions (and those of others) about our work. It is clear from the work published in this book that the practice of on-going reflection invited by the PDF has had a substantial impact on our engagement and learning from day to day practice. All of this reflection and inquiry has happened within the framework of the PDF itself and has been supported by its values, encouragement to inquire and its invitation for on-going career long engagement. This is not to say that the PDF is a 'panacea' or that it will create 'perfection'. Some of the papers and cameos included here raise important questions that are long overdue about the power and 'swampy low lands' practice (NcNiff, 2006, p. 16-7 after Schon) and what is traditionally seen as valid knowledge and valid ground for inquiry. No one asks or expects the PDF to be explored uncritically and positioning it in wider social and political contexts is also further food for inquiry and engagement with our practice.

We chose to include the words 'professional artistry' in the title of this book because that seems close to the kind of practice presented and articulated in this book and what we sought when creating L2L. The term originates with Schon and can be taken to mean the possibility of creating different responses and actions from those prescribed by 'Technical Rationality' (Schon, 1991, p. 49). This is important because as mentioned above the nature of our work is increasingly in the emergent and unpredictable field. We do not know what a reader is looking for until we engage with them. We are working in multicultural communities. Values are not always shared. Situations can be 'messy'. Knowledge is not the same as information, and we often have to make choices between providers, platforms and service delivery options that are challenging to our values. Library staff are also increasingly active in the 'Third Space' (Whitchurch & Gordon, 2017) of their organisations where our work challenges traditional notions of teaching and learning, including those of colleagues operating in our own libraries. Such situations call for a different kind of knowing and of development

practice. The knowing and action generated by procedures and 'machine model' approaches to organisations do not suffice in these places. Rather as Schon says we need to bring other processes into the mix

Let us search, instead for an epistemology of practice implicit in the artistic, intuitive processes which some practitioners do bring to situations of uncertainty, instability, uniqueness, and value conflict (Schon, 1991, p. 49)

To me, the capacity to develop such a practice and response requires an approach to professional development that is open-ended, reflective, inquiry based and which enables us to question and unpick our assumptions, values, beliefs and approaches.

Such approaches wake us up to our experience and can also help us find our way through. When we include along with our professional knowledge, an understanding of Self, recognise that we are active agents generating knowledge and rediscovering practice, and engaging with others, we are creating a different kind of professional practice than the 'technical' one with which we are so familiar. My sense is that such practice cultivates confidence and self-efficacy and a surety about what we do, what we have to offer and that professional artistry, and the capacity to create and acknowledge our creative potential, can come into play from this discovered place. This is more eloquently articulated by Frost and Tichen (2009) who write:

Professional artistry is evident in those moments of highly effective or beautiful practice which, when witnessed, may seem inexplicable or even magical. It involves a complex blending of what the professional knows (in diverse ways), senses (in the here and now and in terms of possibilities) and is capable of. Although found in moments of action it has also to do with a professional's way of being (Titchen, 2009); it is embodied.

Library staff are not about the administration of learning, we are facilitators and co-creators, actively involved in discovering what is needed and what works. The more we embody this fully and knowingly the more our Libraries become alive to our context. If this sentiment resonates with you we invite you to get involved with L2L going forward. We welcome more involvement and use of the PDF and we would love

to hear and learn of your experience. At the time of writing we hope that Communities of Practice using the PDF emerge and we hope that you will join us there. While this book is a significant outcome from the L2L Project we also have a website (www.l2l.ie) which holds tools and guides we have developed and invites your engagement with us.

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