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Multiple conceptions of success

Sandy Ryder, BLPSS
Anthony Greenwood, BLPSS
Helen Carter, Brathay Trust

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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

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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

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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

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Stakeholder view of 'live' student projects

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

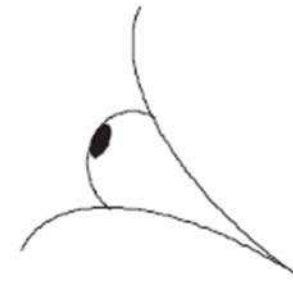Project management

Project activity

Problem area
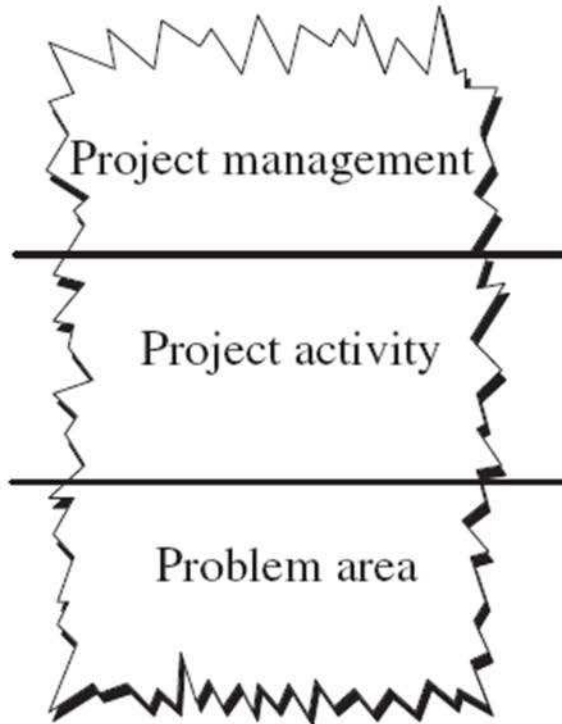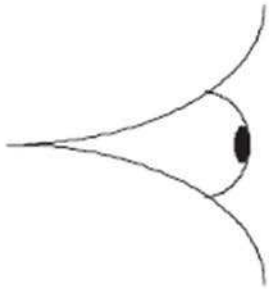
(Client)
Will the outcome
be useful to my
business?

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

Also funders and partner organisations

Success of blended learning development projects
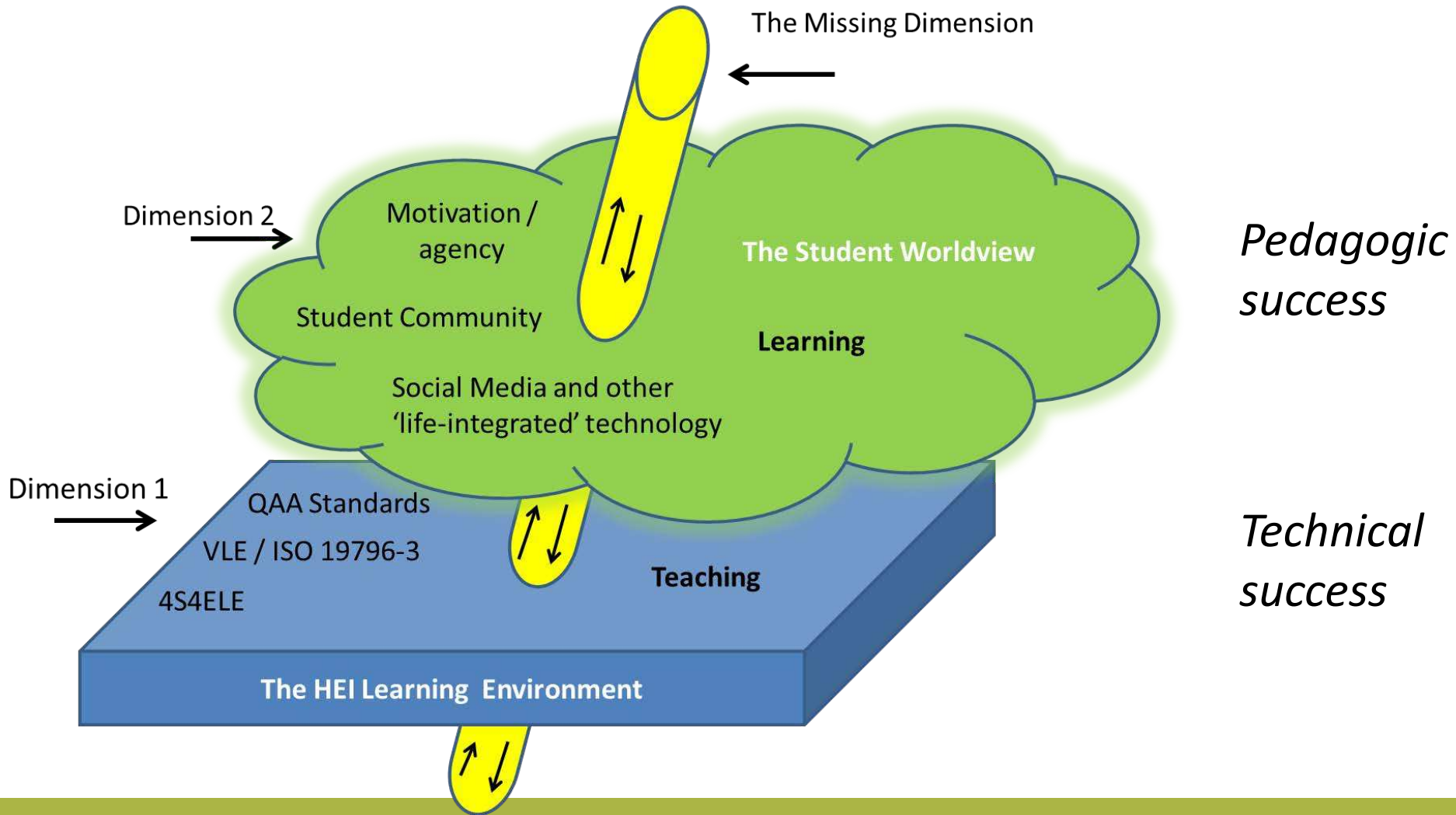
Skills Development Matrix

- 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.

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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

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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

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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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