Ensuring travel broadens minds: a suitable case for Learning Design?

Catherine O'Sullivan MA MSc EdD FRSM

Terence O'Sullivan MA MSc PhD SFHEA

O'Sullivan (2018, p. 283) advocates 'an ability to continue to learn, both from your own experience and from the good practice of others' as a strategy for professional development in cultural organisations, using a case study of international exchange visits. Yet in spite of their popularity, there is little systematic evaluation of such exchanges. The lack of an evidence base for improving practice in cultural and educational exchange visits threatens their continued justification in a resource-constrained environment. It threatens to leave barriers to participation intact through lack of analysis (Gastinger, 2011; O'Sullivan and Flecknoe, 2000), and perpetuates the danger of transferring inappropriate educational paradigms and cultural ideologies through unexamined practices (Cramp, 2016: Fallon and Paquette, 2015; Maranzan et al, 2013; Martin and Griffiths, 2012). On the other hand, evidence-based improvements in the effectiveness of cultural and educational exchanges would strengthen the case for widening participation (MacInnes et al, 2019) and increase their value to international educational development (British Council, 2018). As a learning tool, international exchange visits should be amenable to the same quality enhancement processes used for other educational materials. The UK Open University has embraced Learning Design (Cross, et al., 2012) as a methodology for the design and continuous improvement of its courses. Learning Design theory analyses courses into generic activities centred on learner needs and experience. Designs can be tested, reused and refined as appropriate in the light of evidence from learning analytics (Rientes and Toetenel, 2016; O'Sullivan and O'Sullivan, 2018). Drawing on literature and case studies, we propose that

applying the principles of Learning Design to planning exchange visits will help prevent some of the identified practical and ideological problems. Furthermore, we argue that incorporating elements of distance learning around the exchange visit will improve and enrich the value of this kind of professional development.

Introduction

International exchange visits, and other forms of mobility between countries, have been a common feature of programmes designed to promote professional development in the higher education and cultural sectors. In a highly interconnected world facing challenges and opportunities that can only be addressed effectively through international responses, there is a high perceived value to providing learners and professionals with the means to broaden their minds and understandings. Spending a limited amount of time in a different country and culture appears to offer an accelerated route to knowledge transfer and skills development. This is because the combination of formal and informal learning, married to comparative professional experience, offers a unique opportunity to interrogate personal knowledge and develop cultural competence in a new environment. Prominent examples of frameworks within which international mobility takes place include the EU's ERASMUS programme (promoting European student mobility for study and work experience amongst participating institutions and organisations), and the US Government's Fulbright program, which funds exchanges between America and over 160 countries involving 'students, scholars, artists, teachers, and professionals of all background' (ECA, n.d ; European Council, 2017). Alongside major schemes like these, individual professional bodies and Higher Education Institutions may offer their own mobility initiatives, as well as working with international agencies and large corporations. Sometimes such schemes attract

considerable prestige for participants. For example, the competitive Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation scholarship offers a limited number of elite UK graduates the chance to spend almost two years immersed in Japan, learning its language and professional and cultural norms (Daiwa Foundation, 2019).

Alongside such elite schemes between developed economies, many mobility initiatives aim to address international inequalities by capacity-building through the transfer of know-how and good practice from a more developed economy to a less developed economy. Mobility under the auspices of the Global Business Schools Network is a case in point (GBSN, n.d.). Learning from each other in an international community of practice is a powerful means of improving standards for all members. But in order to do this effectively, particularly when it comes to leadership development in education and the creative industries, we need to be sensitive to the causes of inequality between economies, not just our immediate experience of them.

We chose to feature one such scheme as a case study in our recent book *Creative Arts Marketing*, the ACCELERATE leadership development programme run jointly by the Australia Council for the Arts and the British Council (Hill, et al, 2018). From its inauguration in 2009 to its final presentation in 2016, ACCELERATE facilitated professional placements in UK arts organisations of arts leaders from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities (British Council, 2019). ACCELERATE epitomises the benefits of mobility schemes, as well as some of their potential challenges (and creative ways of addressing them) to which we will return in this paper. ACCELERATE alumni have called it 'transformational' and 'life-changing', evaluating their international experience not just as an opportunity to meet and share practice with other professionals and organisations across borders, but to reflect on

their own growth and creative trajectory away from the pressures of their everyday professional context (Carty, 2017).

Ideological and practical barriers to successful Study Visits

Living, working and learning in an unfamiliar geographical and cultural context, away from 'business as usual', appears central to the value of mobility programmes. However, the perceived benefits of programmes like this often underestimate the issues raised for participants (Doyle et al 2010). These impediments to learning can be grouped into four headings: financial and accommodation, context, states of mind and course organisation (O'Sullivan and Flecknoe 2000). While the idea of international exchange is attractive and stimulating, practical and cultural barriers need to be anticipated and actively managed to maximise the likelihood of success at both an individual and a programme level.

Rapid developments in the technology and application of online learning, and the opportunities this creates for distance learning, invite the question of whether mobility could be achieved virtually rather than involving physical relocation – thus minimising disruption, cost and other barriers to participants. Virtual mobility (de Gruyter et al., 2011) is already a feature of the way that many distance learning providers, including the Open University, operate schemes such as ERASMUS. But, as we shall argue, while online and distance learning (ODL) has a crucial part to play in mobility, it is best regarded as complementing rather than substituting for physical mobility. A participant on the ACCELERATE programme articulated this, arguing:

"I couldn't believe the generosity of the people we met in terms of sharing their expertise and knowledge...There was little discourse about cultural leadership in Australia – in the UK, it was front and centre – not just the work – which was new to me. After going there, I

thought, 'Our work is in Australia, that's where we need to connect and build relationships' – but it was the eye-opening aspect of seeing so many different creative models." (Carty 2017, p. 18)

At the same time, in spite of its potential richness as a learning experience, mobility cannot be justified for its own sake. As O'Sullivan and Flecknoe (2000) argue, it needs to serve intended learning outcomes like any other element of a programme of learning. As we will argue later in the paper, a thorough process of learning design, involving the selection of the most appropriate tools, is essential in conceiving and implementing international mobility as a form of educational provision.

Careful design cannot rule out potential problems, but by forcing the consideration of such problems at an early stage in planning, it can make them easier to mitigate. While systematic evaluation of mobility programmes is relatively rare, the academic research literature draws attention to a range of potential pitfalls which can prevent successful outcomes. These pitfalls can be broadly grouped into practical considerations (such as the four groups of issues listed earlier from O'Sullivan and Flecknoe (2000)), and what might be termed ideological considerations. Both can have a detrimental effect on the experience of participants and the effectiveness of the learning experience.

Looking first at ideological considerations, mobility schemes need to acknowledge the sometimes difficult international and intercultural relations that frame professional practice. Martin and Griffiths (2012) argue that neo-liberal global education policy can find expression in North-South study visits in ways that run counter to their intended effects. Critics of neo-liberalism argue that it reframes education from being a public good to being a source of private advantage (Peters, 2012). The neo-liberal view of history stresses the

advance of globalisation and technological progress, merging the world into one all-encompassing market. In this analysis, international mobility in education and training would seem to be a highly appropriate adaptive strategy. But Martin and Griffiths argue its use in teacher education leaves historical issues of power and representation insufficiently explored. '[S]tudy visits', they write, 'provide experience of another country and culture [but] they do not, de facto, challenge teachers' worldviews for two key reasons. Firstly, study visits are often not facilitated by differently knowledgeable others, so participants' implicit (neo-liberal) worldviews are left unchallenged, acting as filters to their experiences. Secondly, without facilitation, participants' attention is naturally drawn to the most obvious difference, that of inequality in the world today, without necessarily understanding the influence of the past, (that is, the former colonial relationship between the UK and Southern countries), which potentially denies an understanding of how that inequality came about.' (Martin and Griffiths, 2012, pp. 907 – 8). What goes for teacher exchanges in this criticism might well apply to other exchange visits.

Martin and Griffiths' solution to the ideological problem they identify starts with a pre-visit stage, exploring taken-for-granted assumptions about relations between the North and South, followed by study visits which are facilitated by 'knowledgeable others' with whom culture and identity can be explored honestly and constructively.

Fallon and Paquette (2015) and Maranzan et al. (2013) strike a similar note of caution when writing about leadership development programmes addressing culturally-specific populations of learners (in their cases Canadian First Nations educational and community leaders). They warn, respectively, against the unconscious application of Western educational paradigms (prioritising technology and consumerism); and not taking into

account culturally-derived barriers to participation by women (such as family and home responsibility, community pressure, and lack of support). The mention of domestic responsibilities in Maranzan et al.'s list reveals the close intersection between ideology and practical barriers, at least as they apply to women participants.

Feedback from ACCELERATE participants illustrated that the programme underplayed the history of the UK in Australia, including British appropriation of First Nations artefacts, and that host organisations need to be educated about the history and context which led to the visits (Carty 2017, p. 26). Some participants questioned the appropriateness of the British Council in leading the programme (Carty 2017, p. 37). Interestingly too, the initial programme failed to understand programme participants' own understandings, and the meanings they would attach, to their potential identity as cultural leaders:

"But I never saw that as leadership. Leadership in the Noongar world is about elders. You have to earn that…I would never have called myself a leader." (Carty 2017, p.21).

In terms of practical challenges, the ACCELERATE alumni encountered a range of practical and pastoral issues that had to be addressed in the first few iterations of the programme (Carty 2017, p. 58). These confirmed earlier findings (Flecknoe and O'Sullivan 1997, O'Sullivan and Flecknoe 2000). Following their work with cohorts of Indonesian and Grenadian professionals who visited Leeds in 1996/7, the latter authors proposed the following test for funders and programme developers in relation to proposed study visits:

"IF participants need to come to the UK…this should be for as short a period as is consonant with the aims of the programme and after an in-country preparation which minimises cultural dissonance and maximises personal motivation. The element of any programme which does not require comparative study should be made by block intervention in the

domestic environment" (O'Sullivan and Flecknoe 2000, p. 84). The authors go on to recommend continuity in personal tutoring, peer support and creating sustainability after the programme, shorter visits, host organisations' understandings of their visitors' context, the use of digital technologies, and planning for sustainability. These features of a study visit can be deployed as a strategy to mitigate some of the impact of both ideological and practical concerns on participants.

The ideological and practical issues that surfaced in the ACCELERATE programme required the programme to undergo considerable transformation and development between 2009 and 2016, demonstrating to us that more thought and analysis needs to be given to programme design at an earlier stage than may usually be the case. In practical terms, as the programme developed, greater care was taken with logistical and day-to-day support. Mentors for the participants while on their visit were added following feedback from the earlier cohorts, and seen as a significant added resource. There were issues about the sequencing and timing of elements of the programme, most notably culturally-focused support and the purpose and positioning of the action learning sets (Carty, 2017, p. 68). The fact that the ACCELERATE programme continued to be substantially revised through out its life is evidence both of the care with which the designers of that programme attended to participant feedback, but also of the need for a wider general understanding of how to design study visits more effectively from the outset. Carty (2017, p. 38) notes that there is a serious issue around knowledge transfer from ACCELERATE with, perhaps, even the sponsoring organisations failing to recognise the valuable transferable learning from the programme:

"…it is notable that this beacon cultural leadership programme does not appear to be championed by (or demonstrate significant traction with) the arts, creative industries or cultural skills teams." (Carty 2017, p.38).

Given that there is a recognised need for more robust sharing of best practice in relation to study visits, and the need for further research into what works (Gastinger, 2011; O'Sullivan and Flecknoe, 2000), it is regrettable that empirical evidence from such programmes is not disseminated more widely.

In summary, as we have seen, the barriers to effective participation in international mobility are complex and interwoven. While we have divided them into ideological and practical categories in this brief review of extant research, they interact and reinforce one another – for example lack of money makes it more difficult to resolve accommodation problems, and inflexible organisational arrangements can increase the sense of alienation felt by some participants. Furthermore, the hidden filters of ideology and history can exclude potentially enlightening avenues of interpretation and analysis, and deprive participants of the deep and transformative experience that they might otherwise have enjoyed.

Improving the impact of study visits

All the recommendations made by authors cited so far in this paper for improving international exchange and mobility programmes share a common theme. They all address the matter of design. In other words, they suggest changes to activities, and the sequencing of activities, which will enhance or improve the learning experience available to participants. Understanding how such activities combine to create a learning experience is essential to creating effective programmes. For example, Cramp (2016), writing about a school leadership development programme, explicitly addresses the activities carried out by

participants in their visits, particularly 'learning walks' – staff or student-led tours of the schools visited by a group of participants. The walks themselves were an opportunity to absorb information about a school and its operations, but were followed by reflective discussions where participants developed an understanding of the walks themselves as expressions of a particular school's priorities and values. Such analysis led to further reflections on the role and meaning of learning walks in the participants' home context. Thus the value of one activity was complemented and enhanced by its sequential relationship with another.

One lesson from this experience is that it is important to limit the amount of assimilation of knowledge in a programme to allow time for subsequent reflection. The temptation, in a limited period of mobility, might have been to cram in as much assimilation as possible – thus crowding out the opportunity to process it and critique what has been learned. By incorporating reflective sessions where the group shared and discussed their insights, the design of the programme led to a much richer and productive experience. Standing back from the immediate experience of the study visit and seeing it as a sequence of activities, whose duration and ordering have material effects on the quality of what is learned, allows the adoption of a design perspective. Learning Design (Cross, et al., 2012) advocates the value of such a perspective – and gives guidelines on how it can be applied prospectively rather than retrospectively, to enhance the value of mobility experiences.

Interestingly, Cramp (2016) also draws attention to the importance of informal learning taking place in the interstices between more formally designed activities. The chance conversations between colleagues outside of formal settings, the surprising encounter with an idea or an unplanned event, are always going to be an important part of an effective

learning experience. But while such serendipity cannot be designed into any programme, formal approaches to what *can* be designed may well create more opportunities for the unexpected by helping avoid an unbalanced or overcrowded schedule of activities.

In the rest of this paper, we will argue that a closer attention to the learning design of the visit will reap benefits in terms of both the immediate experience and the development of deep and transferable learning. We will argue that pre-preparation prior to the visit should encourage a strong cohort experience; to support the student while they are away and encourage sustainability after the programme. Furthermore, learning about reflection will give students the ability to record the experience as it happens and then to interrogate it in different ways after it is over. Finally, in terms of pre-preparation, we suggest that helping the students clarify their own learning needs will enable deeper learning.

One of the participants in ACCELERATE explained:

"I think as indigenous people, we grapple with thinking of ourselves as leaders in our own communities, and the different set of responsibilities it entails. Some segment that acknowledges and explores that at the beginning would be useful, because many of us had to get beyond that before we could really take on the lessons that were on offer (Carty 2017, p.68)

At the same time, parallel preparations need to be made in the host country to ensure those receiving the participants are in the best place to support their learning. Willing though host organisations may be to welcome international visitors, it cannot be assumed that they will necessarily have the cultural competence and contextual understanding to offer an optimum experience without some pre-work on their part. Host preparation about the programme, the participants and the context from which they are coming can prevent

awkward misunderstandings. Carty cites, for example, inappropriate comparisons being drawn between what cultural diversity means to UK organisations with the experiences of the First Nations in former colonies.

During the visits, which may potentially be overwhelming for individuals, we suggest the main activity is to observe and to record; with reflection and exploration an activity towards the end of the time to check understandings and triangulate new insights. Upon their return, participants need to be supported through short term action planning; and then a longer period of varied activities which enable continued learning and knowledge transfer.

Using digital technologies to enhance Study Visits

All of these recommendations for enhancing the value of mobility are relevant to the application of Open and Distance Learning tools and resources as part of a programme. For example, depending on their professional backgrounds, students might be more or less familiar with the planning and objective-setting techniques which would make their pre-preparation stage more effective. Exposure to an Open Educational Resource (OER) such as the free OpenLearn course 'Planning a Project' would provide generic support for participants intent on clarifying their needs and how they might be satisfied within a study visit (Open University, 2016b). Derived from material originally presented as part of the Open University Business School MBA, 'Planning a Project' is now available under a Creative Commons licence in several formats. Users can select and customise content relevant to their requirements.

As to the processes of observation and reflection, smartphones or tablets using widely available free blogging tools offer a convenient way to collect and keep text, images, and audio-visual material in one place for later review and reflective analysis. Blogs can be

shared within a group of participants if required, allowing reflection to take place in a social context as endorsed by Raelin (2002) for triangulation of insights.

The practical and theoretical underpinnings of reflection are available in another free OpenLearn course, 'Learning to Teach: Becoming a Reflective Practitioner', written primarily for teachers but readily adaptable to other professionals and available on the same licensing terms as the project planning material (Open University, 2016a).

Developing a sense of cohort is facilitated by face-to-face contact, but can be enhanced and sustained by online support – particularly through free video conferencing apps such as Skype and Google Hangouts. Using these and other asynchronous communication tools such as WhatsApp or Facebook groups, cohorts can keep in touch before, during and, crucially, after the period of mobility in order to boost knowledge transfer and application.

Integrating such open and distance learning tools into the design of physical mobility activities can help meet the ambitions of emerging economies. Properly used, they should reduce costs and increase the speed with which participants can implement what they learn. This is important in the context of capacity building in education and the cultural industries. For example, if sub-Saharan Africa is to reap the 'demographic dividend' of a young highly-educated population, it needs to expand its post-school provision rapidly over the next 30 years as the number of 20 – 24 year-olds doubles from its present 90 million (The Economist, 2019). Similarly, African cultural and creative sectors, whose potential economic and social value has attracted considerable policy interest across the continent since the turn of the 21st century (De Beukelaer, 2016), urgently need to find sustainable business models for a globalising economy. International exchange, supported by online

tools, can be an important part of the solution to both challenges, if appropriately conceived and planned.

Learning Design theory and Study Visits

There is now an influential school of thought which advocates making the process by which we design courses and qualifications, or any other kind of learning experience, more rigorous, objective and subject to evidence-based improvement. The advantages of doing so include the ability to share and reuse what appear to be successful designs, and improve existing learning experiences by trying different combinations of design elements in the light of feedback and evidence.

Learning Design takes this sense of 'what works' a stage further. It is defined by Conole (2012: 121) as 'a methodology for enabling teachers/designers to make more informed decisions in how they go about designing learning activities and interventions, which is pedagogically informed and makes effective use of appropriate resources and technologies". Part of the spur to Learning Design's development has been the rapid growth of online learning, and the extensive data about learner behaviour which has come in its wake. But the principles of Learning Design are applicable to learning in any mode, including international exchange and mobility programmes.

The radical innovation of Learning Design is not the technology or use of data it implies, but the fundamental way it centres on learner needs and their experience. This tends to run counter to the traditional concerns of universities and academics which are about transferring knowledge in more abstract terms. It is however absolutely appropriate for the kinds of mobility programme we have been discussing in this paper. The evidence points to the need for programme designers to address the context and needs of the learner first

(including cultural and ideological issues), and then building the learning experience around them, paying attention to the content and sequencing of the activities which result. Placing the learner at the centre of the design process ensures the most effective combination of activities and resources to achieve appropriate outcomes for that individual, and the best value-for-money for programme funders.

Learning Design encourages educators to think realistically and relevantly about the needs and capacities of their target learners at the very inception of each new piece of learning. The variety of Learning Design practiced at the UK Open University is based on the Open University Learning Design Initiative (OULDI) developed over a five year project in collaboration with a number of other higher education providers (Cross, et al., 2012).

An important part of the process involves devising detailed learner personas for new courses based on a mixture of intuition and research data. In this respect, anyone planning an episode of learning based on international exchange and mobility is at an advantage. Instead of creating imaginary students from desk research and intuition, they are likely to have concrete information about real or potential candidates, including motivation for participation, expectations from the experience, educational and professional background, cultural setting, and demographic characteristics. Considering actual or potential participants at the outset of a design process helps educators create learning experiences for real students who are faced with a variety of individual barriers and incentives to success.

Another powerful technique for concentrating the mind towards producing relevant learning experiences is OULDI's typology of learning activities. As one would expect, any new piece of learning material is developed to realise a set of predefined learning

outcomes. In the spirit of constructive alignment (Biggs, 1999), all the content and activities envisaged for the learning material should clearly support (or 'align' to) these learning outcomes. The OULDI process invites designers to consider what mix of activities is most likely to achieve the outcomes in question. A typology of seven possible learning activities is provided as detailed in the following table:

Activity type	Explanation	Typical activity prompts
Assimilative	Take in information	Read, Watch, Listen…
Finding and handling information	Search for and use information	List, Analyze, Collate, Plot, Find, Gather...
Communicative	Discuss course content with at least one other person (student or tutor)	Communicate, Debate, Discuss, Argue…
Productive	Actively make something	Create, Build, Make, Design…
Experiential	Apply learning in a real-world setting	Practise, Apply, Explore, Investigate,..
Interactive/adaptive	Apply learning in a simulated setting	Explore, Experiment, Trial, Improve, Model, Simulate.
Assessment	All forms of assessment (summative, formative and self-assessment)	Write, Present, Report, Demonstrate, Critique.

TABLE 1. OULDI LEARNING ACTIVITY TYPOLOGY

Source: Adapted from Rienties and Toetenel, 2016

On the face of it some of these categories appear to overlap. An activity carried out by a study visit participant, for example a piece of writing, might fall under a number of headings. Writing could count as communicative, productive or assessment depending on whether it was, respectively, an online forum post discussing an aspect of the visit, a set of notes for personal use, or even part of an assignment which might be graded (summative) in certain contexts. The benefit for designers is to help them think rigorously how any specific activity supports the intended learning outcomes of the programme.

Toetenel and Rienties (2016: 982) point out that Learning Design can be applied 'at activity, course or qualification level'. It is therefore extendable to the design of programmes of learning using international exchange or other mobility. As we have already observed, the typology of activities on which Learning Design is based offers diverse educators a common language, through which they can make their design intentions explicit, share them with others, and refine them over time. This offers the opportunity to learn from their own and others' experience in a more systematic way than has been hitherto possible. The prospect of creating international exchanges and mobility activities which are more effective and offer better value-for-money is a positive development.

Applying Learning Design

When planning for an international exchange scheme or mobility programme, the challenge for the designer is to determine an appropriate distribution of finite learning time between the activities necessary to achieve the intended learning outcomes. How might the seven types translate into the experiences available to someone undertaking mobility in the

education or cultural sector? Table 2 offers some suggestions, covering the pre-visit, on visit

and post-visit phases:

Activity type	Explanation	Potential examples re visit to UK
Assimilative	Take in information	Watch videos pre-visit to learn about UK Meet UK colleagues in the field and listen to their experiences
Finding and handling information	Search for and use information	Research potential in-country hosts and collaborators in advance Visit UK centres of excellence and analyse contextual data
Communicative	Discuss course content with at least one other person (student or tutor)	Email other participants prior to departure to build relationships On visit hold reflective conversations with mentors Post-visit online dialogue with former hosts
Productive	Actively make something	Collaborative work with in-country host using unfamiliar processes e.g. for textile production Organise post-visit conference to disseminate learning to local practitioners
Experiential	Apply learning in a real-world setting	Practise new techniques with the host in situ Plan career progression using insights from facilitated workshops

Interactive/adaptive	Apply learning in a simulated setting	Shadow activities in host organisations Experiment with new techniques on return with others in workshops
Assessment	All forms of assessment (summative, formative and self-assessment)	Be interviewed for a place on the programme Present post visit to funders. Self-assess the sustainability of the learning after return

TABLE 2. TRANSLATING OULDI ACTIVITY TYPOLOGY INTO LEARNING ACTIVITIES FOR AN IMAGINED VISIT TO UK

Source: Adapted from Rienties and Toetenel, 2016

Table 2 presents a selection of activities translated into the kinds of experiences participants will have had over the programme. By thinking carefully about what activities participants need, and when they need them, the designers can ensure the best use of different resources. For example, orientation days before leaving for the UK can concentrate on more culturally sensitive material, while online resources can deliver factual information. Mentors can be used to help with individual planning before the visit and benefits realisation after; while they may be useful during the visit to provide pastoral support and to act as a critical friend for reflection.

While we might expect all of these activities to be included in any mobility programme, the Learning Design process ensures they are considered and justified, rather than taken for granted, or included unnecessarily. More importantly, conscious decisions about their relative importance to the learning outcomes (and thus the proportion of the available time they might occupy) can also be taken.

There is no compulsion to include all seven types of activity in any one piece of learning – in fact the principle of constructive alignment (Biggs, 1999) should encourage the use of only what is necessary. To concentrate the mind, Learning Design workshops at the Open University require participants to create and agree on a bar chart showing the seven activities expressed as columns whose height represents the percentage of time they occupy, treating the whole learning event as 100%. This is then used as a guide to planning, for example the week by week unfolding of a module, with an appropriate sequencing of activities to ensure a consistent workload over time; avoiding the peaks and troughs that might throw learners into crisis as they struggle to balance their studies with the other demands on their time.

One positive effect of this approach is to bring home to educators how relatively little time they have at their disposal. It helps avoid the temptation to overload learners with more work than is feasible in the time available. Programme planners may be tempted to maximise the amount of assimilative activities at the expense of communicative and productive activities that internalise and consolidate the skills and knowledge acquired. Learning Design helps prevent this kind of content overload, allowing learners to access deeper and more transformative experiences, as we have seen in the example from Cramp (2016) of an assimilative activity (learning walk) sequenced with the communicative and productive activities of discussion and reflection. Given the potential for overload during the actual visit, and the volume of material that is likely to need assimilation, a careful balance of learning activities during the period of the visit is necessary to manage the experience. Productive, experiential and interactive/adaptive activities can be particularly effective once the visitor has returned home and can utilise or experiment in their own context with what they have assimilated elsewhere.

A further advantage of Learning Design is that it facilitates the documentation, sharing and evaluation of programmes of learning. Despite their potential richness as learning experiences, the general thinness of an evidence base for improving practice in cultural and educational mobility schemes may hamper their continued justification in a resource-constrained educational economy.

ACCELERATE, as we have seen, is an exception to this rule – demonstrating how periodic evaluations led to change and improvement in the programme. Ironically, a change in Australian government policy following the elections of 2016 led to the programme being abandoned due to significant cuts in funding. Despite all the work of the developers, it may be that the programme in its present form has come to an end. Whether or not the wider world will ever find out about the deeper legacy, as the programme participants lead the Aboriginal and Torres Straits artists' cultural development over the next thirty years, remains to be seen. By including it as a case study in our book, *Creative Arts Marketing* (Hill et al 2018), and focusing on the ACCELERATE programme as an example of good practice in this paper, we hope to have helped share its learning on effective study visits abroad more widely.

In conclusion, although Learning Design theory was not used explicitly in this particular programme, its use could potentially have reduced the need to keep revisiting programme design. Furthermore, the existence of an articulated and documented programme plan would have facilitated learning beyond the cultural sector interested in First Nations leadership. Given the concern of funders to ensure value for money in terms of the impact achieved by such programmes, stimulating discussion of a design methodology that

accelerates the development of more effective visits, and facilitates experimentation and evidence gathering, merits further exploration.

5600 words

References

British Council (2018) *Next Generation Kenya*, Report [Online]. Available at: https://www.britishcouncil.co.ke/programmes/society/next-generation-kenya (Accessed 15 August 2019)

British Council (2019) Accelerate home, [Online]. Available at: https://www.britishcouncil.org.au/programmes/arts/accelerate (Accessed 10th October 2019)

Carty, H.S. (2017) 'ACCELERATE 2009 - 2016 Impact Assessment and Evaluation Report', May, [Online]. Available at: https://www.britishcouncil.org.au/sites/default/files/accelerate_impact_report.pdf (Accessed 10th October 2019)

Conole, G. (2013) Designing for Learning in an Open World, New York: Springer-Verlag

Cramp, A. (2016) 'Enhancing school leadership through an international study visit', *Professional Development in Education*, Vol 42 No 5, pp. 787-800,

Cross, S., Galley, R., Brasher, A., and Weller, M. (2012) *Final project report of the OULDI-JISC project: Challenge and change in curriculum design process, Communities, Visualisation and*

Practice, York: JISC [Online]. Available at: http://www.open.ac.uk/blogs/OULDI/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/OULDI_Final_Report_Final.pdf   (Accessed 15th August 2019)

Daiwa Foundation (2019) 'About us', [Online]. Available at: http://dajf.org.uk/about (Accessed 9th October 2019)

De Beukelaer, C. (2016) 'Toward an "African" take on the cultural and creative industries?', *Media, Culture & Society*, Vol. 39, No. 4, pp. 582–591

De Gruyter, J., Achten, M., Op De Beeck, I. & Van Petegem, W. (2011) 'Virtual Mobility: Definition and Types', in M. Achten, I. Op De Beeck, & W. Van Petegem, (eds.) (2011) *Home & Away Forum. Conference Proceedings*. Leuven: EuroPACE ivzw, pp. 17 - 36 [Online]. Available at: https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/34563398.pdf   (Accessed 11th October 2019)

ECA (n.d.) 'The Fulbright Program', Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State, [Online]. Available at: https://eca.state.gov/fulbright (Accessed 18th October 2019)

The Economist (2019) 'A higher challenge', *The Economist*, Vol. 432, Iss. 9155, Aug 10, pp. 38-39.

European Council (2017) 'Celebrating 30 years of the Erasmus Programme', Library Blog, 15 June [Online]. Available at: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/documents-publications/library/library-blog/posts/celebrating-30-years-of-the-erasmus-programme/ (Accessed 18th October 2019)

Fallon, G. and Paquette, J. (2015) 'Rethinking Conceptions of First Nations Educational Leadership and Ethics', Chapter 13 in Burgess, D. and Newton, P. (eds.) *Educational Administration and Leadership: Theoretical Foundations*, Abingdon, Routledge Academic Research, pp.218 – 239

Flecknoe, M. and O'Sullivan, C. (1997) 'Transitions: The Experience of Professionals Studying in another Country', *University Council for Educational Administration*, Orlando Florida, 1 November.

Gastinger, A. (2011) 'Innovation Through Internationalisation -- Barriers for going abroad and actions to overcome them' (poster), August, [Online]. Available at:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237065721_Innovation_Through_Internationalisation_Barriers_for_going_abroad_and_actions_to_overcome_them_poster (Accessed 15 August 2019)

GBSN (n.d.) 'About', Global Business School Network, [Online]. Available at:

https://gbsn.org/about/ (Accessed 15th October 2019)

Maranzan, K. , Sabourin, A. , Simard-Chicago, C. (2013) 'A Community-Based Leadership Development Program for First Nations Women: Revaluing and Honoring Women's Strengths', *The International Indigenous Policy Journal,* Vol. 4, No. 2. Available at:

http://ir.lib.uwo.ca/iipj/vol4/iss2/5 (Accessed 15 August 2019)

Martin, F. and Griffiths, H. (2012) 'Power and representation: a postcolonial reading of global partnerships and teacher development through North–South study visits', *British Educational Research Journal,* Vol. 38, No. 6, pp. 907–927

McInnes, A., Goss, J.M., Fisher, H., Brockman, R. (2019) 'Learning from others: A critical reflection on an international study programme', *International Social Work,* Vol. 62, No. 1, pp. 337–350.

Open University (2016a) 'Learning to teach: becoming a reflective practitioner', OpenLearn course [Online]. Available at:

www.open.edu/openlearn/education/learning-teach-becoming-reflective-practitioner/content-section-0 (Accessed 15th October 2019)

Open University (2016b) 'Planning a Project', OpenLearn course [Online]. Available at: www.open.edu/openlearn/money-management/management/business-studies/planning-project/content-section-0 (Accessed 15th October 2019)

O'Sullivan, C. (2018) 'Leading and managing the marketing function', Chapter 10 in Hill, L., O'Sullivan, C., O'Sullivan, T., and Whitehead, B. (2018) *Creative Arts Marketing* (3rd edition), Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 255 – 286.

O'Sullivan, C. and Flecknoe, M. (2000) 'An Evaluation of Continuing Professional Development for Overseas Students visiting the UK: Should we take CPD to them instead?', *International Studies in Educational Administration*, Vol 28, No 1, pp. 28 - 47

O'Sullivan, T. and O'Sullivan, C. (2018) '*Creative Arts Marketing* Third Edition: Using Cases and Content Face to Face and Online', in Johansson, T. ed., (2018) *Beyond EYCH2018. What is the cultural horizon? Opening up perspectives to face ongoing transformations, A compilation of papers presented in the framework of the 9th Annual ENCATC Education and Research Session and published by ENCATC*, ENCATC (European network on cultural management and policy), Brussels, pp. 195–208.

Peters, M. A. (2012) 'Neoliberalism, Education and the Crisis of Western Capitalism', *Policy Futures in Education*, Vol 10 No 2, pp. 134 – 141

Raelin, Joseph A., (2002) 'I Don't Have Time to Think!' (vs. The Art of Reflective Practice)' *Reflections,* Vol 4, No. 1, Fall 2002, pp. 66-79.

Rientes, B. and Toetenel, L. (2016) 'The impact of learning design on student behavior, satisfaction and performance: A cross-institutional comparison across 151 modules', *Computers in Human Behavior*, 60, 333 - 341

MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

Catherine O'Sullivan – personal biography

Dr. Catherine O'Sullivan works at Leeds University, supporting the formation of young professionals; and at York University in employability. She was Chief Executive of the Thames Valley Health and Innovation Cluster, from 2010-2015. Previously, Cathy was the Chief Operating Officer of the School of Community and Health Sciences, City University London, with responsibility for the smooth running of all the School's present and future business.

Cathy came to the University from the National Health Service where she was a commissioner of education and learning in the West Midlands.

Cathy is currently researching business networking activity and is very keen to talk to other conference delegates about this subject from an African perspective.