

Treasure Island Pedagogies: Episode 7

Podcast Transcript

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Tünde Varga-Atkins

Hello everyone, this is the Liverpool University's Centre for Innovation Education podcasts. We have Treasure Island pedagogies episode Seven with Educational Developers. It's very exciting to have you all here, thank you very much for coming.

The idea is that we are going to talk about our Treasure Island: it's where you spend precious contact time with students and what you might do there. We've all asked you to think about a light bulb moment, a teaching prop or pedagogy that you might bring to this island, and also a luxury item. Let's hear what you all have to say.

Louise, can I call on you first? Could you please introduce yourself?

Louise Drumm

Hi thanks Tunde. My name is Louise Drumm. I am a lecturer in Edinburgh Napier University, just a bit about my background. My home discipline. I suppose if you call it, that was English literature as my first degree, but but actually my home culture is more based in Theatre and I was doing more Theatre during my undergraduate degree that I was doing studying. So that might account for the fact that I spent a few years out of academia after that point and I worked in Theatre, but I was also thinking

along with computers as well and I went back about 10 years later and did it computing MSE in Glasgow and from that.

I ended up working in universities mainly as a learning technologist and spent many years doing that, supporting lecturers and their use of technology and through other things like doing so. Comments as an academic developer and doing a little bit of lecturing. I ended up doing a PhD in education technology and somehow I have ended up back at Edward Napier University where I worked for a number of years as a lecturer and I'm working in the Department of Learning and Teaching Enhancement. So that's my role at the moment.

Tünde Varga-Atkins

Thanks Louise, that's a wonderful journey.

Michael?

Michael Flavin

Hello everybody, I'm Michael Flavin and I'm a senior lecturer at Kings College London in common with Louise. I was originally an English lit student. I did a degree Masters and PhD. An was lecturing first at a post 92 universities and then at the Open University while working at the Open University, I became interested in education because of the very distinctive nature of the Open University as an institution.

So I did a second Masters in Online and distance education with OU [Open University]. Really got into it. Much to my own surprise and therefore ended up doing a second doctorate in technology enhanced learning in higher education or went to Kings College London in 2007. Do a lot of interesting things around innovation there, developing both new modules and programmes and looking at innovative pedagogies modes of delivery

to learn and teach within those programmes and now publish as well in predominantly in technology enhanced learning the occasional bit in English lit as I still keep my hand into a minor extent. Thank you.

Tünde Varga-Atkins

Yeah, that's great. Thank you Michael. I love these backpacks that just keep filling with all the journeys on the different disciplines and ideas. Thank you. Okay, we have another Michael yes.

Michael Kozakowski

Very good afternoon Michael Kozakowski is my name and I'm the director of the Centre for Teaching and Learning at the Central European University of the CEU, which is formerly of Budapest and is now predominantly in Vienna, although we still have a presence in Hungary and I guess my own disciplinary background is that of historian and I sort of rose up through the ranks of historians. I did a little bit of work in the history of education, but I'll be honest that was only part of it, and so actually it was just as much my work on issues of race and class that brought me to an education Department in the UK together with having worked at several institutions.

Across the world, and so I think I really that diversity of teaching experience has gotten me to think about. What is it that we do as educate?

Leaders and so that was a really rewarding experience in the Education Department, also had an opportunity to work with initial teacher training and that's what brought me sort of that combination over to the CEU where I'm currently serving as director. So we are a small units, but we have a robust postgraduate certificate programme, mostly for PhD

students. We support faculty an, we mentor postdocs and then do some research as well.

Tünde Varga-Atkins

Lovely to have you here Michael as well.

Indiana Okay Vicky, so I'm pretty.

Vicki Dale

Lamar senior academic and Digital development Advisor at the University of Glasgow, and I think I follow on quite nicely there from Michael because I change is an archaeologist originally graduated from the University of Glasgow and then I did a Masters at the University of Southampton where specialise in multimedia. This sort of design and theory of multimedia and that led me into the coming and educational technologist. First briefly at Uclan research Assistant, I created some materials.

Then at Costco Vet School, it's a school event, new medicine.

And I did my PhD there and better education. Looking at the wider learning and teaching methods. And then after that I managed to get a post at the Royal Veterinary College where I taught on the PG surfer, Veterinary education and then obviously coming back to Glasgow, which was lovely. I might teach on the PG cap, postgraduate certificate and academic practise. So like other people, it's a bit of a multidisciplinary journey. Anne and I think quite often people don't intend to become academic developers, it's just something that happens. You bring your different skills and explore Dance is an, but it's a nice job to.

Tünde Varga-Atkins

Have, yeah, I'm fascinated by all these journeys for that reason is I think it's so interesting. Okay, so thank you for for the introduction. Let's go over to our Treasure Islands. So what would be I know? Especially in the jobs and all these projectors that you just explained there will be and there would have been lots of light bulb moments already for you, but can you just pick out one and tell us you know the libel moments we mean when you fed the students? Whether they go learners, whether they were other staff party.

Tünde Varga-Atkins

Depends when they felt they were getting it and can you describe that in a what made that happen?

Louise Drumm

I think am for my light bulb moment I can only describe it as a very slow burning light bulb and I think that's the nature of the kind of teaching that I do. I really Don RM SC and blended in on line education and a lot of the concepts and ideas are quite slow burn because people are applying what they're doing to their practise and Ann and oftentimes many of my students are also my colleagues as well.

Am and I think what happens if I can identify any any number of things. I think there's been a number of times in the past year where things that I have been teaching for a long time have suddenly come back, and I've seen my former students or my current students speaking in the language of maybe critically thinking about digital.

Who's thinking about relationships that we have with technology and through technology and at the kind of the opposite of the quick shiny tool fixing a problem as another way of teaching with digital technologies? And

I think there's been a number of times where those very slow conceptual changes have sort of come back and and you realise the impact that the language which we use when we talk about edge.

Nation teaching through technology, higher education and the importance of centering people, humans, and the importance of centering Keran. I think that's one thing in particular in in my institution I've seen coming to the four days here is is primarily after, for example, block down thinking about the care and the pastoral aspects of students. And that has to be very explicitly done in an on line situation where it might have been a lot softer and more around the edges within a face to face situation. But the situation people find themselves in.

Meant that it had to be much more explicit.

Tünde Varga-Atkins

Great, I mean I love. So did you have these moments in in yourself? And yes, when you had those slowed when you recognise those slow burning moments, but that's a lovely metaphor. Innocence, it's a bit like gardening, isn't it? When you saw the sea then you slowly you know, seeing the results of it. I love the idea of the slow burning any other, either reflections, anything resonates or anyone wants to have a go with your light bulb moment, yeah?

Vicki Dale

Yeah, I'm just following on from what Louise said there about a slow burning light bulb.

I'm not resonates very much with me as well, so my light bulb moment I think I'm going to talk about RPG cap Corse sandwiches, created pedagogies for active learning, and Doctor Natalie Sheridan and I run that

course. We deliberately designed it to to create some dissonance to introduce people to unfamiliar pedagogies. So object based learning, digital storytelling and learning landscapes, and we designed the course so that it's underpinned by narrative storytelling arc. So where we sort of designed that moment of dissonance or confusion as people are introduced to unfamiliar pedagogies and think, how can we apply this to apply?

Just, but what happens if students are participants? The teachers, you know, but there are students as well. They have their light bulb moment when they're doing their assessment, particularly when they get feedback on the assessment from their peers. And we do the final showcase event because that's when things start to slot into place. And as Louise said, that's where people realise how they can apply these pedagogies and their own disciplinary context.

Tünde Varga-Atkins

Can you give an example of that kind of feedback that really then transforms their understanding or?

Vicki Dale

I think it's it's not a specific example of feedback. As such, I mean pure feedback. Please overall in terms of students are going through the same journey so they can give each other helpful feedback and see things from a different parts. Different disciplinary perspective, but I think it's what's involved.

Time time is needed for people to just get that feedback and then reflect on it, particularly when they are engaged in writing the critical reflections. That's when things come together, and I think when you're learning

anything, you are you applying and you pedagogy. You need time. Don't you need feedback and you need time. So I think these are really important things.

Tünde Varga-Atkins

That's great, thanks. We can. I think that's the idea of the time and space for learning that you can't just hurry up. There is no. What is the opposite of slow cooker?

The Wonder High Pressure Cooker 11 pothole. There's not no shortcut for learning unless you watch the Matrix. Okay, yeah, that's really useful.

Thanks Mike.

What about Michael? And I don't know if Michael was about your slide by moments.

Michael Flavin

The one I thought of him tickler was during my time at the Open University. I did quite a lot of work with students in prison and students in secure psychiatric institutions.

And since I've come to Kings, I've continued to do a little bit of that work on behalf of the Open University.

Just got both very selfish reasons. I mean, you really do feel like you're making a difference to someone's life. The recent light bulb as students have been working with who in his teenage years was convicted of a crime at the very severe end of the judicial spectrum and his most recent piece of work on page one knowingly referenced ***** Derrida Lacan can pair with one another.

Can you just skip the light bulb is more mine than the students because you just get the sense of how thin the line is between that world in your world. I could write TripAdvisor reviews for prisons in London and the South East of England and I still find it into this day. Having done it for about 15 years, you still get a kind of a free sauna, not a comfortable one. When you enter some of these established.

Sense, But also you just think as teachers. All you really need to do is just how do you create the supportive structure. Students can have light bulb moments all the time and I think it's I don't think it's a correct conception to think that somehow is teachers with the necessary catalyst for this, because I think there's a kind of a vertical assumption about the learning relationship in that I'm not comfortable with.

I think students can have brilliant light bulb moments all the time. All we need to do is to create the supportive structures in which people can flourish. And when I see, I mean I've given one instance there of a particularly precocious student, but that's not the only time that I've worked with a student in prison whose who's showing that they can do that and just get a sense if that human being, which is what they are, had had different support structures at an early stage. It's a trite comment, but I don't think it's an invalid one.

They really could have had very different outcomes without all that much having changed in the supports of structures, and I see the absence of the support structures as a contributory factor for why they went the other side of the line. So my my most important light bulb moments. As an educator, I think of having working with students in prison and secure psychiatric units.

Tünde Varga-Atkins

I mean, you gave me goosebumps when you were describing that you know that student and and the journey. And yeah, it must be rewarding. And I suppose that what you're what you were talking conjured up images. You know, if you. Prepare the room with a lightbulb, let's say or put the switch is there for the students and let them you know. Let them discovery I guess. Could be probably a nice analogue for what you were saying. It says that putting the support structure in and this idea that you can prepare two same rooms but the light bulb might be quite different for students as well. Thank you. Thanks for sharing that Michael.

Michael Kozakowski

I don't have anything quite as inspirational to follow up on that, but something that perhaps resonates with some of the points that have been made by you know about sort of student-centred learning about assessment about support.

And you know, sort of its own way. I used to in the US sort of a one man show I was sort of the module lead for all modules, even when that you know, even when they were served several of us, I was really sort of, you know, on my own I should say in many good ways. And so one of the things I always prided myself was giving very detailed instructions on my assessment and trying to make clear to students what I expected of them.

In that when I moved to the UK and was no longer the module lead or even in instances where I was, but it was, you know, a different sort of cultural context. I found that I lost control over that assessment piece and many of the instructions were not how I would formulate them. We were grading holistically rather than via a rule.

Rick and I still got the question Michael. What do I need to do for a first and I realised that all this time I had been sort of relying on assessment design and trying to be explicit, but to try to answer that question even as I assuaged fears that I'm really not here for the mark, I'm here for your learning. And when I lost control of that assessment piece.

And but still really cared about that social inclusivity piece. I found that I focused. I still focus on trying to make explicit those hidden assumptions, but even more than that, I started to explore what are the skills that we want students to develop, and what do I need to do to support students in developing those skills, because that's what we were promising that we were promising that we would help people, not just be more knowledgeable, but you know, better in analysing and better in supporting those arguments better in researching, better and communicating.

And what did that actually mean? And what did that mean for me as a support and the facilitator in that process? So not having those training wheels not having those props actually made me. I think a better educate are at that moment.

Tünde Varga-Atkins

Yeah, that's that's it. Again, thank you for sharing that Michael. So in terms of the next question, I don't know if you if you wanted to say anything about it cause I I really like that move away as you said from assessment driven too.

Do you know working about how the learning happens? And then I think there is a lot that would resonate with that as well, especially independent Mick when we had to rethink the assessment and how students are assessed as well. So if we what are on this island now and if you know that

this podcast format has been very much influenced by Desert Island, this where people can choose eight discs. So slightly unfairly we've asked you to just choose one teaching Pro poor pedagogy to take with you to this island.

The Treasure Island with the students. So can I ask you all of you what? What would your teaching proper pedagogy be?

Louise Drumm

Well, I suppose mine would be a technology that's pretty old, but it makes me think about how we think and how we learn and it is it's paper and pencils and lots of paper. And I think it's interesting in the way that we have a narrative at the moment around how you know we are responding to technology and how information you remember the information superhighway. Anyway, things like that and how our understanding of knowledge is and where education sits now within this this infrastructure we now have. But of course there probably was.

A you know a shift from Memorising storytelling songs, poetry into writing things down of course. And I can't imagine not having the ability to scribble stuff down or asking students to scribble stuff down and an I'm an adherence to dual coding theory in that, you know, we have the ability to communicate via both visual and verbal means and it the inputs and outputs are different and that when they're working.

Beautifully together that just the right amount of verbal stimulation along with the right amount of visual stimulation that it can bring about effective long term memory at retention, both in terms of I suppose producing if we think about students producing something, but also in

terms of communicating. So things like sketch noting and so on South. It's one of the things I try to encourage. My students is about.

Taking notes, an writing notes, doodling, scribbling, and as a means for processing information. And then how would you then communicate that to someone else using not just text or or a single medium? Finding ways to do use the dual coding and ways of communicating so it's it's both inwards and outwards I suppose.

Tünde Varga-Atkins

Really, and I like that you are making use of technology in multitude of ways already.

I mean it's interesting, isn't it comes as you say, it could be that in the future we might have situations where there is the paper and pencil will be the be on a special shelf, not necessarily available that easily, whereas you gonna you have your mobile phone you when you wearing your technology and things like that.

Louise Drumm

Well, I'm just waiting for that. You know, the injection of my Silicon chip into my arms or my brain so won't need to go anymore.

Tünde Varga-Atkins

Yeah, anyone else?

Michael Kozakowski

Apps also thinking about sort of ways to get beyond text because I think we're so trained both as students, academics too to really prize are texture or written expressions as the ultimate proof of what we know and what we

learn. And when did the things I like to do and I have no artistic skills whatsoever, but I like to use art images and just visual images, Jenna.

Really, and I find that students jump first to the interpretive question. They think that what I'm asking of them is to find out what the secret meaning is and tell me what the right meaning is. And actually the question that I ask first is much simpler, and that is, what do you see?

And it begins partly with. Either way, what we know already and what we start observing, but I think it's enough that sort of that close observation.

And it's not just a sort of a more Democratic form of participation.

Everyone can tell me what they see in a painting, right? It's red, it's large.

It's you know, it's you know it's triangular in shape, but we need to first start gathering the evidence and just hold off on those bigger questions.

We will get to all these debates and interpretations, but the first that there is something about this world that you know, I think it's really precious and that all of us have the ability to start observing and then slowly.

You know, in a guided process, start making some conclusions or at least.

Some analysis of and so I like this idea that Louise was talking about thinking about different media and what by playing around with them and just holding off with the you know the type written assessment. What do we get by that space? I think Vicky you described it as of dissonance and that in between this and so I really like this sort of this combination of things that we've been surfacing so far in this conversation.

Tünde Varga-Atkins

And another thing I think that you touched on is echoing what you said earlier about that slowing the process down and really taking notes and observing and understanding so that that's interesting. Yeah, Vicky.

Vicki Dale

Yes, I think what I have to say follows on quite nicely, but Michael was saying there when you said what do you see? Slow down and start observing because the pedagogy that I take em to Treasure Island is object based learning.

And I might not even have to take any objects because I'm an archaeologist. I might discover some of them.

Take object-based Learning lends itself to inquiry based learning, so Michael saying what do you see? You know we might say, what does it look and feel like? Um, what made up is it man made you who made it when? What was it for? How we interpret that object from different parts?

Actives and this is our methods that I came across when I was at UCL and Helen Chatterjee and colleagues were working in this area at the innovative. Really a lot in this area in their museum where the museums there and we've worked with our colleagues at University of Glasgow's Hunterian Museum and they've been really helpful in previous years and what they did was they looked at various objects from their collections. So we had art. We had scientific objects we had.

You know anatomical specimens were hit with allsorts of things, and people would come with their different disciplinary ranges and kind of almost interview the object.

So that works really nicely obviously. Last year because of the pandemic that's being done virtually, so we've linked to virtual objects and and Luckily a lot of museums now have their collections online. It's not as tangible, but it is more accessible.

Tünde Varga-Atkins

I love the what you said about the different disciplines than questioning the same objects. Or was that then other students or other people were there at the same time. Learning from those conversations.

Vicki Dale

Exactly, so one of the sort of conversations we had, and this was led by our colleagues at the Hunterian Museum, largely was how can you take an everyday object. So for example, a packet of crisps and how can you look at that through death?

Vicki Dale

I am disciplinary lenses, so packet crisps is not exactly historical artefact. It's not very valuable, but you know you've got the nutrition values of the food. Not very much but will like crisps. Let's face it. But the design aspects for the marketing you've got the distribution there's so many different angles you can take when looking at objects.

But it is quite exciting. And also if you have a collection of objects you could perhaps do a group or project where each student perhaps takes A at one of the objects, researchers it, and then they combine the outcomes of that research so it's very versatile. We just have to think about how we make that accessible cause if we're dealing with physical objects, we might have visually impaired learners. And how do we support that as well? You know we have to, we have to convey that information or that experience in a different way that sequence.

Louise Drumm

Able, I think one of the things that's just striking me as we speak there Vicky and from what Michael said as well is that I think we're talking around divergent thinking as opposed to convergent thinking. So that

idea of moving outwards from a central point rather than a diverging on to the correct answer, for example. So it's about giving students a lot of agency and creativity around where they're going what they're bringing with them.

Louise Drumm

And where they then take that and it's quite. It's quite constructive when you look at it that way, but but it sounds great, sounds great.

Tünde Varga-Atkins

And I think it's very topical in today's interdisciplinary, you know, with the world like complex problems and trying to solve huge issues like climate change. And I think it's definitely reflecting that as well. That is probably what is needed at the moment. Thanks, Louise. Yeah, that's good to make their point.

Tünde Varga-Atkins

Michael Bibi, you're teaching proper pedagogy.

Michael Flavin

I have a teaching prop. It's but it's closest aligned to what Louise said and that she said pen and paper. What occurred to me was a book as it could be. Any book, though I have there is one in particular that I think I used for the purposes of this exercise. Why I think looked up positively. I think a book is still the magnificent springboard to learning, you know, no matter what you reading, whether you agree with it or disagree with it. It's just such a catalyst in your hands that can lead you to the production of new thoughts. New ID.

Is I also think it's a good way on a structural level of articulating the limits of what technology enhanced learning has done. If you think about the rooms we teach in and then think about what the what lecture theatres looked like. There's an infamous mediaeval painting which shows a male professor with a book in his hand. Some keen students at the front, disengage ones at the back, but the architecture of the lecture room was obviously before the printing press. The professor, invariably, a man would read from the book to the assembled audience.

And you think, well, that was then this is now. But the rooms we teaching at universities are perfectly well positioned to facilitate that kind of teaching, and haven't radically changed in. So on that structural level, the book as a teaching tool actually exposes how little we've done with technology to actually transform learning. And it will be interesting to see Post Covid, whether we regress back to the mean or genuinely treat this experience as a springboard to do something else. And I can't say I'm entirely optimistic on that. But let's wait and see.

This specific book I thought of that I think everyone should take a quick look at is an ABC for Baby Patriots, written by Mrs Frances ??? and published in 1899 by publisher on The Strand in London, which is where my University is based in there. And let's hope the similarities end there. The first thing to say about it: it's an alphabet book for little children. If you have little children and you want to teach them the alphabet, this book will do a really good job.

It's got big 'A' and little 'a' literally on every page in both print and handwriting. In each case there's a drawing to illustrate A, B and so on and a verse, too. So if I give you a A is the army that dies for the Queen, it's the very best army that ever was seen be, has a picture of a black person on

their knees holding an umbrella over a white person eating a pleasant meal.

And B stands for 'Battles by which England's name has forever been covered with glory and fame'. Now, depending on where you stood in relation to British militarism, you may have a very different perspective on the experience of it, so I think you've got its primary utilitarian function. I promise you, if you want to teach a small child the alphabet, this book will do the job.

But yet, beneath that surface level, if you look at it ideologically and you look at the pictures that accompany these texts as well. And there's a couple of digitised editions online, one hosted by the University of Florida so you can see the whole thing for free. As you flicking through the pages, and you're going. 'Oh my God' and you reach a point by the time you get about even the letter E, you're thinking, well, at least he can't get any worse...

And then you turn the page and go, 'No, I was wrong'. And you just have this experience throughout. I think it's a fascinating ideological text. This, you know, we're looking at 1899 here. The Scramble for Africa has happened quite possibly a high, you know, Treaty of Berlin has happened, the scramble for Africa has happened. High watermark for British Imperialism.

And what that means for consciousness and perception. I do not think that the writer set out to write a consciously political book. Yet if we bring a fairly standard set of analytical tools to it, we can find things in that text that I think genuinely illuminate a worldview that was prevalent in 1899 at the high watermark of the British Empire. So you can teach a child the alphabet and the high watermark of British colonialism at the same time.

And that's going to occupy the long winter evenings, no matter who you are, really.

Vicki Dale

I think that's an interesting example for me. I'm thinking about object-based learning again, and the idea that objects, even a book, is very much a product of its own time and the factors that influence it. And I think what's enlightening about what Michael said there was that we bring a different lens to it; we bring a different perspective, and that's what object-based learning is about. We see things from a different perspective. Every student will look at an object in a different way.

That's the power of an object. So for example another course or our museum and colleagues will bring out perhaps ethnographic collection material, which is very contentious as you know. There's a lot of debate about you know who should own this material. It should really be repatriated to the people sent back to people in, and you know where that is from rather than Britain owning all the stuff, but we are able to bring these viewpoints to it and be more critical of how things were done previously. I think that nicely dovetails with the example of object based learning and with the book that you were talking about, Michael.

Tünde Varga-Atkins

And I think part threat again, what seems to be a common theme with within your what you said, what you are teaching proper languages is that critical academic literacies development. So in fact you know there is the object, but how you approach it is very much dependent on let's say either your discipline or but it is developing in students that critical analysis of that. How you go about it.

So yeah, that that's great. So now we've got our islands, and obviously we've been very busy teaching and getting students to have their light bulb moments and working with lots of lovely objects and approaches. And it's time now to have a bit of relaxation and off time of teaching time, duty. So what would be your luxury item to take to your island to help you with that? Michael, you obviously enjoying that moment.

Michael Kozakowski

I'm just thinking I did my sort of indulgence with does not easily fit on the island. It has to be my piano but I really can't imagine other than sort of with parachutes or with boats. I'm not quite sure how it comes to the island, so I might content myself with a pair of trainers.

Tünde Varga-Atkins

Trainers Bobby might I don't know. With three branches with some, I don't know whether you might find some engineers on the island or some music makers, but yeah, so is there piano or running? Yes not.

Louise Drumm

Too dissimilar to Michael and I'm quite handy, as in, you know DIY and building things and repurposing things. If I have the right tools. So one of the things I quite like is the materials to build a ukulele. Because I run a course in my University last year and for staff where we sent out ukulele's and we did an online course for teaching ukulele's and we're going to, we're going to open it up this year and we're going to have run it again in the summer. So watch this space if you want to join in and learn how to play Ukulele E, But I'd quite like to have something I can imagine myself sitting under a palm tree whittling away at bits of beautiful words and

shaping them meaningfully into something that then could I could actually practically use and practise my ukulele playing on.

Tünde Varga-Atkins

Lovely, that's brilliant. And then so other people can enjoy that as well, yeah.

Vicki Dale

Yep, so I think last year I probably would have said or the year before last. I probably would have said in an art kit of brushes and paper and so on because I think art is so relaxing. It's just therapeutic really and I really enjoy Community art classes.

But of late the thing I'm more involved in for relaxation is playing board games, and particularly of the Sherlock Holmes type genre 221B, Baker St San. Then got another game there that's a got lots of long cases. I'm gearing myself up for that one, but I tend to play those collaboratively with people rather than competitively. So yeah, after we've listened to Michael playing the piano Louise as she has done her DIY and built a shelter and an built as you can release. And we can also have a game of 21B Baker Street.

Tünde Varga-Atkins

Wow, brilliant. I love Cluedo and include offence. So yeah that's yeah great thanks. We keep up? Michael (Flavin)?

Michael Flavin

Yeah, I mean look I'm. I'm a classical guitarist and I'm phenomenally bad at it. I really don't like to boast, but I think London and the South East has very few guitarists who are worse than me and I think that if I got logged

on to a desert island with no other distractions, I would have no choice other than to start practising more conscientiously.

And he told me that with other Michael's piano, Louise's ukulele, we could be the start of something quite remarkable. And if Vicky would take on the Simon Cowell Brian Epstein, role of piloting our careers.

Tünde Varga-Atkins

And the band was born!

Michael Flavin

There you have it.

Michael Kozakowski

Coming here to ask Louise. So what was the uptake of what was surprising about the ukulele mean? Did you get the Vice Chancellor to partake or who all was part of the Ukulele Class?

Louise Drumm

So originally the idea was conceived as, we would run workshops which was around the idea of being a novice learner. So any member of staff could come along and pick up ukulele yeah and to understand actually how hard it is to learn something from scratch and hopefully think about how their own students are approaching, approaching, learning and what it's like not to know what you're doing and so from that point of view after lockdown happened, we then sent sent them out to members of staff who applied. So I think we had nearly twenty people who got ukulele's and we've got people from both all actually part of the University and not just academics but professional service staff as well.

One of our our longest and most hard-core ukulele players came from the library.

And we've had a number of reunions over over Christmas and Saint Patrick's Day as well to have a little jam together on zoom, but we've never actually met, but I'm looking forward to the day when we could all come back together player Ukulele's and bring our kazoos action and have a good or sing song.

Tünde Varga-Atkins

Is there any particular song that you've played?

Louise Drumm

Oh, we did a whole three months of going through various songs and trying different ways to do YouTube videos through following tabs through gently sharing of what people are doing, so. So yeah, I couldn't pick out a particular one. I think The Cure was quite a big hit actually: Friday, I'm in Love.

Tünde Varga-Atkins

Love it, because we can attach it to this podcast as well as a link.

Is there anything? I think that there has been some subtle bartering because you had lots of ideas that then resonated with each other, but I'm just gonna ask anyway. Is there any bartering that you can imagine doing with any of the props or pedagogies or light bulb moments that you discuss?

I see Michael, you might be interested in the you clearly idea for your Institute maybe?

Louise Drumm

I'm really keen on Vicky's an object-based learning. I think it sounds really interesting and what I like about it is that sometimes that an object takes the focus away from yourself and from yourself as a student, what it brings. It doesn't mean you're starting with a blank page, you actually got something to start with, and so it can be. It can be really nice, so I'm definitely interested if it goes up for a swap.

Vicki Dale

Sounds good, I think. My observation was that you know we're here and we've come in the context of talking about academic development, but there's a kind of undercurrent of you know, learning technology, and we're all very much proponents of technology-enhanced learning, but I think it's really interesting that nobody actually suggested a sophisticated piece of technology, so Louise suggested pen and paper, and Michael also suggested getting away from text and maybe art images on my lap and Michael (Flavin) suggested a book and I suggested an object so none of us actually.

I think and think that reflects the fact that learning is not just about technology. Technology can help mediate that learning, but it's how you use the technology and I think what's come across very clearly and everybody's account is that emphasis on critical thinking and engagement. And actually that constructivist idea of learning that you're, you're so yeah, you're engaging with the objects with the paper, and perhaps in discussion with other people, and you're generating you meaning through that discussion, so it's good old fashioned learning and teaching, without the technology, I think.

Tünde Varga-Atkins

Brilliant, I think that's a lovely closure. Vicky. Thank you so much. Really enjoyed today's talk and thank you Louise, Vicky and the two Michaels for coming on the podcast and sharing your light bulb moments. I see your Treasure Island, playing ukulele, playing, reading, running and listening to music. Bye for now!