

SUPPORTING DIVERSITY IN THE CLASSROOM

STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND STUDENT LEARNING

Alvin Birdi, University of Bristol and Sunniva Braaten, HIOA





TPG 3 Diversity, inclusivity and large groups

University College Dublin, Ireland

University of Bristol, UK

Ruhr University Bochum, Germany

Leopold-Franzens Universität
Innsbruck

Oslo and Akershus University
College of Applied Sciences

University of Antwerp, Belgium

Masaryk University, Czech Republic

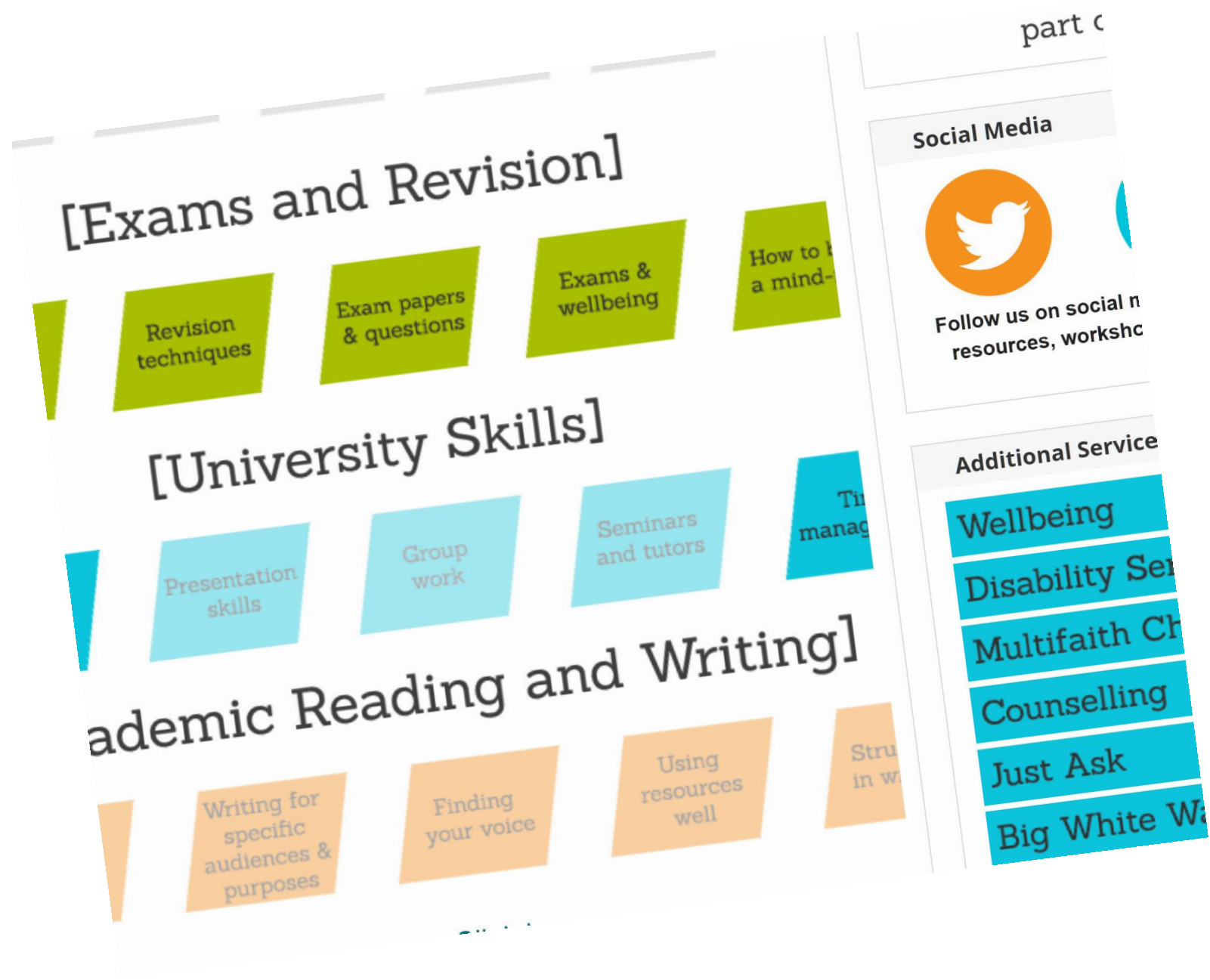
Diversity

- Problems: retention, attainment, non-participation
- Selective and non-selective institutions are becoming more diverse
- Diversity is open-ended, multi-level and not easy to map onto learning “styles” or “needs”
- Diversity requires a continuously evolving process not a “fix” – it is “anticipatory”
- Continually reflective practice (staff and students) and agility (university)



Personalising the Learning Experience

- good pedagogy and inclusivity are inter-related
- active and student-centred pedagogies allow students to actively construct meaning and knowledge (Mayer 1994, Prince 1994, Freeman *et al* 2014)
- active and student-centred pedagogies, **suitably supported**, give students control to personalise their learning experience so it works for them
- teacher becomes a “guide on the side” – what does this involve? (Alison King, 1993, *College Teaching* 41:1 pp.30-35)
- what does “suitably supported” involve?

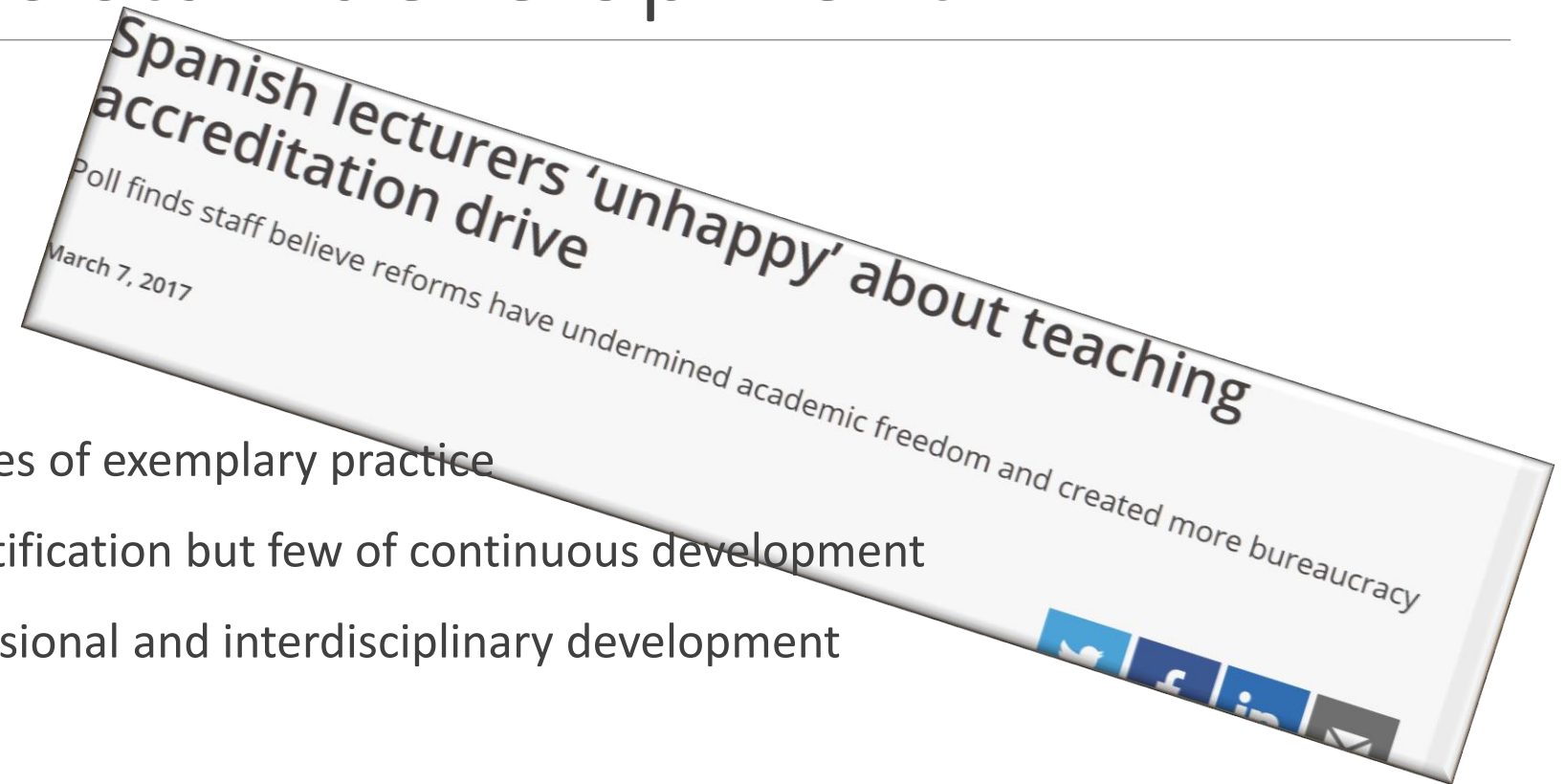


Support

- e.g. linguistic, writing, numeracy, study skills
- Should be **responsive and flexible** rather than directive
- Should be **holistic** (and based on critical self-reflection) rather than **selective**
- Clear benefits to an institutional approach
- Cases: personal development planning, diagnostic testing, personal tutoring, peer to peer support.

Continuous staff development

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- harder to find examples of exemplary practice
 - Many examples of certification but few of continuous development
 - benefits to interprofessional and interdisciplinary development





The University in the Eyes of its Pupils

“the institution is ‘on the blink’ ”

“What is terrifying about an animal with hard eyes and a dry glance is that it always sees. Man can lower the sheath, adjust the diaphragm, narrow his sight, the better to listen, remember, and learn”

“reflection is unavoidable. It is no longer an external complement to teaching and research; it must make its way through the very objects we work with, shaping them as it goes, along with our norms, procedures, and aims”

(Diacritics 1983 13:3, pp2, 5 and 20)

(Two of) The (Four) Principles

- Student-centred, practice-based and flexible teaching approaches encourage active and personalised learning suitable for diverse student bodies
- Continual inter-professional practice-based education for university staff

Group discussions

- One table – one group
- Choose one group leader
- 20 minute discussion
- Write down the key points of the discussion
- Aim for the discussion: Exchange experiences, draw out good practice examples and barriers to success.

Group work

GROUP A – STUDENT CENTRED AND LEARNER-CENTRED BASED TEACHING

- How do you work with this in your institution?
- What are the barriers and opportunities for staff using these techniques in your institution?
- What kind of inclusive learning activity do we want to encourage?

GROUP B – INTERDISCIPLINARY TRAINING AND CONTINUOUS STAFF DEVELOPMENT

- How do you work with this in your institution?
- What are the barriers and opportunities for staff engagement in your institution?
- How can we ensure that the entire staff of the institution works towards providing an inclusive learning environment?

Some examples

Bristol – PDP, personal academic tutors, Peer Assisted Study Scheme, Online Study Skills, accreditation programme for new staff

Bochum – writing centre, student tutors programme with training

Oslo – student ambassadors

UCD: Writing and Maths Support Centre, Curriculum Review of all programmes, support for using learning technologies, Teaching and Learning Symposia, “teaching strategies” video series, Funded “learning through research” initiative

Innsbruck: time/location flexible courses, Language Centre

Antwerp: Drop-in maths/stats classes, Centre for Working Students, study counsellors,