

KING'S  
*College*

LONDON



Teacher Development:  
*‘Creating Asynchronous Discussions  
Across Differing Disciplines’*

Presenter: Clive Shaw

King’s Foundations, Kings College London

# Aim of Presentation

- **Explanation** of the teacher development initiative using MS Teams to create an **asynchronous discussion thread** to across different disciplines (i.e. EAP, business, social sciences and liberal arts).
- **Description of findings** from data from an example discussion thread (Teachers' Beliefs and Identities)
- **Evaluation of the merits** of MS Teams discussion threads as a means of teacher development delivery.

# Context and Problem

- Work in a university department with 80 teaching staff.
- Teaching staff consist of option module tutors (mainly Politics, Liberal Arts, Social Sciences and Business Management) and EAP teaching staff.
- Interest in HEA fellowship and progression onto academic pathway.
- Less participation in face-to-face teacher development since Covid pandemic.
- Need for teacher development with a more bottom-up approach that creates collegiality and communication between different disciplines.
- Themes that interest all different teaching disciplines.

# Teacher Development Thread - Spotlight Series

## **Task type**

- Short 3–4-minute video serving as a stimuli for a discussion thread.
- End of video includes a question for staff to discuss within the thread.
- Thread is an asynchronous discussion, but presenter responds and @mentions others to maintain thread discussion.

## **Structuring the video:**

- Videos made in MS Stream as easy to record and edit.
- Content of videos is focused on being anecdotal (focusing on teaching context), rather than being instructional / content laden.
- Monologues favoured over dialogues as tend to provide a clearer context with fewer topic shifts

# Appearance of thread

2. Instructions

4. Written contribution to thread

## Spotlight on teacher beliefs & identities

This is the third Asynchronous CPD Forum, entitled '**Spotlight on teacher beliefs and identities**'. In this video, I reflect upon the extent to which teachers share their personal beliefs and identities with their students.

### Instructions:

Play this 4-minute video to establish the context. Having watched the video, please post your response, reflecting on all or any of these questions:

- 1) How much of your beliefs and identity do you share with your students? Why?
- 2) What aspects of your identity and beliefs are you willing (or unwilling) to share?
- 3) To what extent is this affected by teaching different subjects and by teaching international students?



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personal > k2150389\_kci\_bc\_uk

1. Title and subject of thread

3. Link to video.



Robin Yu 21/10/2022 11:34

I took away from your video the importance of teachers providing pertinent information, helpful feedback and showing awareness of you as an individual - and how that fed into intrinsic motivation. When I think of one of my favourite teachers, Mr Wheeler, it was probably that sense of them knowing you - comments like "I thought it'd be you who picked up on that" - rather than praise per se that made me feel my presence was important and my performance noticed. Yesterday a student sent me the introduction to his UG essay for me to display there and then in front of 60 other students and I commented on his bravery before providing feedback on the distance of his intro from the metaphorical finishing line, with positive comments about how much he'd got right. When I see him again next week, I'll show I remember and appreciated his contribution.

See less



21/10/2022 12:13

Yu, Robin Yes, I can identify with your comment about the UG essay. For expediency, there is a temptation to jump straight into correcting / commenting on his essay without first acknowledging his bravery / willingness to contribute.



Robert Turner 21/10/2022 12:15

This looks a great idea Clive! Can't remember a teacher standing out for me in my childhood, but I definitely know one who has influenced my son - his rugby coach for two years while he was around 12-13 years old. He was thinking of giving it up as he couldn't play at the level of a number of his friends but this coach put him in the second team with a few of his mates and turned them into

5. @mention contributions

# Thread 1 – Teacher’s beliefs and identities (instructions)

## **Instructions:**

Play [this 4-minute video](#) to establish the context. Having watched the video, please post your response, reflecting on all or any of these questions:

- 1) How much of your beliefs and identity do you share with your students? Why?
- 2) What aspects of your identity and beliefs are you willing (or unwilling) to share?
- 3) To what extent is this affected by teaching different subjects and by teaching international students?

[See less](#)

How much of your own beliefs and opinions are you willing to share with students?

Join at [menti.com](https://menti.com) | use code 5748 6988

## Task 1: How much of your own beliefs do you share with your own students?



- I will only share things about myself that don't make me feel vulnerable.
- I often share my views with my students as it is only fair.
- I want to be impartial and objective so rarely share my views with my students.
- I share my views with student's to be provocative in discussions.
- Something else (i.e. an opinion not given here)



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Responding is off

# Thread 1 – Teacher’s beliefs and identities (video with context)

NB: a special thanks you to Barney Samson-Ledger (Liberal Arts Tutor, King’s Foundations, KCL) for use of this video.



Based on this context, what did we learn about **teacher's beliefs and identities** from others' contributions to the thread?

# Findings – How much of my own attitudes and opinions should I reveal to my students?

## Hesitant

In class, I would facilitate discussions rather than give my opinions right away. I feel as an educator I need to respect students and not stifle discussion. If they openly ask me, I will share when it is an appropriate time.

- **EAP tutor**

## Authoritative Figure

I do think it's a folly to pretend that there isn't an inherent power imbalance in teacher-learner relations. Rather, it's important to openly acknowledge and even use it as a learning opportunity by criticising it. .... That's why it's important to remind learners periodically that our views can be challenged and that they are always open to revision.

- **Programme Lead**

# Findings – What much should I reveal about my own identity?

## Dilemma

I struggled with the idea of exposing things about myself that would make me feel vulnerable. I also aspired **to show proximity** and care to students but **maintain a clear distance** and leadership.

- **Business Management Tutor**

## Reciprocal

Looking through this thread it has made me realise that sometimes, especially when students are asked to perform some form of personalised discussion task, they are **being asked to reveal something of themselves**. Therefore, surely it is only fair that the teacher is willing to reveal something of themselves too.

- **EAP Tutor**

# Findings – Why (why not) share with my students?

## Being Honest

As you may know, I am open about my sexuality and the fact that I am married to a woman and have two children, but I have indeed question over the years whether or not I should tell my students this information. I found myself in a quandary - if I told my students, it made me feel very vulnerable, but if I didn't tell them, then I felt that I was **continuing to live the unnecessary lie** that had plagued me for so long.

- **EAP tutor (and lesbian mother)**

## Safe Space

I feel that revealing this (*my sexuality*) about me emphasises that it is a **safe space** in which people can talk about themselves and perhaps talk about things which they may have questioned for a long time. I do also think that since we are asking them to express their opinions on many issues and ones that are challenging to them - **EAP tutor**

## Oversharing

Having said all of this, there is also the risk of **becoming too familiar** with our students, which can lead to **lack of respect** or a dynamic that is not conducive to learning.

- **EAP tutor**

# Findings – How can sharing enable me to process my thoughts?

## Process of Learning

I am someone who does a lot of processing aloud. But sharing things (with students, for example) could also be (perceived as) a way of fixing one's identity – saying it out a loud makes it real or makes it somehow permanent. And there is a vulnerability about this. That's why I don't really post on social media – what if I believe something different tomorrow?!

- **Liberal Arts Tutor**

# Thread 2 – Instructions at beginning of the thread (1 of 2)

## Spotlight on Motivation and Praise

As Suzie has explained, this is the first asynchronous CPD Forum, entitled '**Spotlight on Motivation and Praise**'. In this video, I reflect upon a secondary school teacher that has inspired me. In particular, I comment on how he motivated me.

### **Suggested instructions:**

1. Watch the video by clicking on the link below.
2. Having watched the video, please post a comment on any of the issues mentioned in the video, namely:
  - Is there a teacher that has inspired you? If so, how have they informed your teaching?
  - What is your attitude towards praise in motivating your students?
  - Do you agree (or not) with any comments that I have made in the video?

Click [HERE](#) to play my video.

# Thread 2 – Instructions only (2of 2)

## **Suggested instructions:**

1. Watch the video by clicking on the link below.
2. Having watched the video, please post a comment on any of the issues mentioned in the video, namely:
  - Is there a teacher that has inspired you? If so, how have they informed your teaching?
  - What is your attitude towards praise in motivating your students?
  - Do you agree (or not) with any comments that I have made in the video?

Join at [menti.com](https://menti.com) | use code 5748 6988



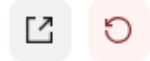
## Task 2: Which view on **teacher praise** do you most share?

- Without constructive feedback, praise is arbitrary..
- The function of praise is simply create a warm classroom environment.
- Something else.

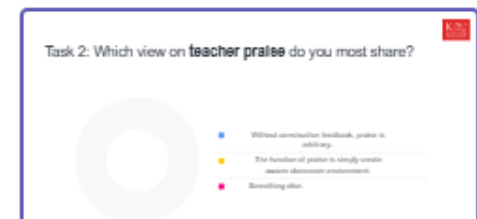
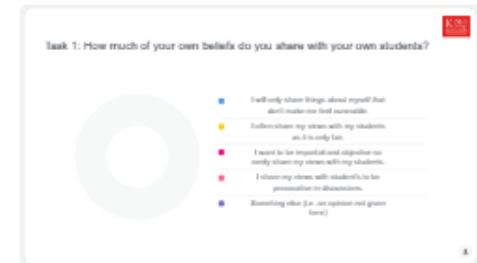
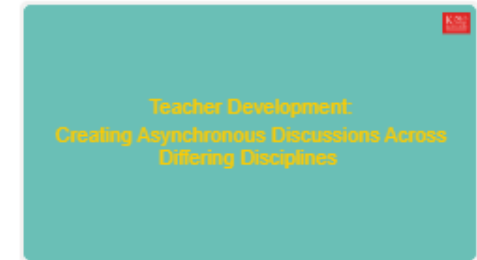


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Teacher Development: ...



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# Thread 2 – Motivation and Praise (video with context)



Play only 0.48 to 2.17

[https://media.kcl.ac.uk/media/Spotlight+1+Praise+and+Motivation+-20221019\\_042054/1\\_3mxtnvvv](https://media.kcl.ac.uk/media/Spotlight+1+Praise+and+Motivation+-20221019_042054/1_3mxtnvvv)

# Thread 2 – Motivation and Praise (video with context)



Based on this context, what did we learn about **Motivation and Praise** from others' contributions to the thread?

# Findings - Who should be praised?

## Rewarding Ability

In school, I felt that being always average at everything meant I was left behind whilst **those who were more intelligent received all the attention and praise** (that's private schooling for you). - EAP tutor

## Rewarding Effort

He (the teacher) spent a lot of time understanding his students' needs, skills and desires. He worked on setting high expectations and praising performance **(even when things went wrong, he always found a good thing to focus on)**. -EAP Tutor

## Differentiation

If a student is struggling with concepts in class, it can be challenging to praise them without being for something easy. I have been reflecting on how addressing this might involve adapting my teaching more widely than the praise itself. How can I set my students up in situations that allow me to give them **meaningful praise**? In other words, I have reflected on thinking carefully about the questions that I asked different students, maybe I can **avoid situations where praise is patronising** and increase occasions when it's **meaningful**.  
- Liberal Arts Tutor

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# Findings - How should praise be given?

## Spoken v Written

I feel that spoken praise is different from **written feedback** because it is a **public acknowledgment** of what they have achieved. - **EAP tutor**

## Tone of Voice

I always praise my students, but I was once told by a student that I sounded surprised that she got the answer 'right'. Therefore, whilst being encouraging is great, I am also wary of **sounding patronising** which I think I did in this instance. - **Social Sciences Tutor**

## Competition

I think the idea of praise with the **aim of helping a student compete with themselves** is so important. I think teachers can sometimes try and use **competitiveness** between students to motivate less active students. Although this might work sometimes, it doesn't work for learners who are already trying their hardest. - **EAP Tutor**

# Findings - Besides praise, what else is important to motivate students?

## Informative Feedback

Telling a student that they're great might not be enough as they also need to know **what it is there doing right.**

- EAP Tutor

## Teacher Enthusiasm

(describing her maths teacher) His **enthusiasm** for a subject that I thoroughly despised was infectious and he never stopped smiling and laughing. He **was a whirlwind of energy.**

- Senior Tutor (Personal Tutoring)

## Individual Recognition

My favourite teacher was my English teacher Ms Biddens. I had just arrived in UK from Iraq aged 14 and my English was very much a second language. She recognised potential in me and always motivated me to succeed. More importantly, she **showed interest in me as a person** as opposed to just another student in her class. It was probably **her sense of knowing me** - comments like: 'I thought it be you who picked up on that point'.

- EAP Tutor (and first-generation Iraqi immigrant)

# Final thoughts

The thread with accompanying video **widens participation** in teacher development because of:

- **bottom-up:** not only speaker's contributions (52 of 70 teaching staff contributed to the last thread).
- **augmented learning:** on thread concerning praise and motivation, there were 126 separate contributions, which helps to see an issue from a wide perspective.
- **asynchronous thread:** this means staff have more time to contribute and think about what they are going to write.
- **quality of data:** as well as being a source of valuable content, the discussion thread is a useful source of data. [- See example thread for qualitative data](#)

# Examples of Topics

**Teacher identity** - How much of myself do I reveal to my students?

**Motivation and Praise** -How have I been motivated by a particular teacher?

**Managing behaviour:** How strict do I feel I need to be with my teenaged students?

**Learning Styles:** How does my way of learning influence my teaching?

That's the END of my presentation.  
Do you have any QUESTIONS?

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