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Learning and Teaching in Politics and International Studies

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The joy of the teaching track: Learning and Teaching in Politics and International Studies

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Abstract

In recent years, the number of academic jobs in research-intensive universities that are described as 'academic education route', 'teaching and scholarship', or 'teaching track' has grown. While some of these jobs emerged out of the regularisation of formerly casual posts, we have also witnessed the creation of specialised education-focused roles and academic promotion frameworks that offer education-focused career paths. In this article, a group of education-focused academics write about our joyful experiences of taking up the opportunities created by the 'teaching track' and celebrate the way that education-focused jobs have opened up careers for scholars who have a passion and vocation for education and who wish to put their time and effort (in a world of limited resources) into the work of education and educational leadership. We note some downsides, but here we focus on the joys and opportunities created by working on the teaching track,

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including meaningful and impactful work, career progression, productive relationships, creative and scholarly research, and routes into university leadership that it produces. We also discuss how we might support each other to create worthwhile education-focused careers, make good on the opportunities offered by the teaching track, and work together to mitigate any disadvantages.

Keywords
careers, education, pedagogy, teaching, the profession

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Introduction by Cathy Elliott

In April 2023, in my role as one of the co-Convenors of the Political Studies Association's Teaching and Learning Network, I put together a roundtable on 'the joy of the teaching track' featuring most of the authors of this article, who are all in education-focused roles. Excitingly, and as a good sign that these issues are important for the discipline as a whole, there was standing room only in the large-ish classroom we were speaking in, and a vibrant discussion started up about what many may have felt is a bit of a taboo subject: whether or not a life in an education-focused role might be a great and joyful thing in and of itself for an academic, rather than a stepping stone to the 'real thing' of a research-and-teaching contract, preferably in a research-intensive university. Later in the conference, I addressed an Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion panel to make the same case and was approached afterwards by a Head of Department who was intrigued about what this discussion might mean for staff in her own department who were on these contracts. She said it had never occurred to her that such jobs might be careers and an end in themselves, and therefore had not really considered her own role in supporting staff in them. Through both these events, I also met one of the convenors of the Early Career Network, who asked me to give a talk later in the year about education-focused careers to their membership. Again, this conversation caused much intrigue, among PhD students who might not even have been aware that permanent, secure, (relatively) well paid jobs increasingly exist for education-focused academics in our discipline and beyond, and offer security, opportunities for promotion and personal development, and a growing supportive community. A quick 'before and after' Menti survey with an admittedly small and self-selecting audience suggested that these jobs are rather attractive to early career researchers, once they are explained. What is not to like? We have the opportunity to work with students who have opted to study in the discipline we are passionate about to an advanced level; to inhabit the university and participate in conversations about the research and scholarship that we love; to continue reading and staying on top of the latest developments in our chosen field and perhaps continuing to contribute to those conversations; to support students to read, understand, and undertake such research; to be part of a community that loves teaching and wants to reflect, write about, and develop cutting-edge, inclusive, and transformational pedagogies: these are all practices at the heart of academic life.

This article grew out of the conversations that we had previously been having in whispers and on the sidelines, and which we dared to voice out loud in one of our discipline's pre-eminent conferences that day. There are lots of colleagues who, in all good faith and with the best interests of the profession in mind, would not have invented education-focused routes in academia and might even abolish them if they could. This is because

they believe that in a world of entirely free choices, anyone would *choose* to have more time for research and less teaching, and/or that it is not really possible to do a good job of teaching the latest research without being a productive, serious, active researcher. They therefore believe that anyone who ends up on an education-focused contract must be there because they did not or could not get the job and career they would have preferred, and they are consigned to a second-class status in which there is less and less chance of emerging into the 'real thing' of a research-and-teaching track career because of the time demands of all that teaching. The more education-focused roles exist, the argument goes, the fewer resources there will be to create already-scarce entry-level research-and-teaching academic jobs. The conflation, in recent history, of very poor contractual conditions with 'teaching only' roles has compounded this sense that it was not a rational career choice to make. Therefore, well-intentioned anxieties that scholars from already-marginalised groups would (as I have heard it put) 'fall into' the education track for want of a good alternative were genuine, sincere and not without merit.

We do not, of course, live in a world of entirely free choices. As we go on to explore below in more detail, decisions about how academics spend their time and the sorts of jobs they apply for are circumscribed in different ways for different people in ways that are not separate from broader power relations. Nevertheless, it is instructive to note that in a lecture originally delivered back in 1918, Max Weber (2004 [1922]) was very worried that academics might *prefer* to spend time teaching rather focus solely on research. It is not inevitable, or even particularly logical, that academics would rather spend more time on research than education, although that is what many people say they prefer these days. Our motivations and desires are shaped by the incentives, social and emotional, as well as financial, that surround us and the implicit signals that we pick up from our mentors and peers. There is a politics to this signalling. If everyone around us devalues education, then there will be an emotional price to pay in taking up these roles, regardless of how well they are compensated in other respects. Meanwhile, if educational work is understood not to contribute towards career prospects (Graham, 2022), if education-focused jobs are insecure and paid less, then it is not surprising if a majority of academic workers focus their efforts elsewhere. As Ellen Watts explains in more detail below, some of us have a freer choice than others: groups who are already marginalised or minoritised end up being over-represented in these lower-status, less well compensated and emotionally complicated jobs, and this matters. However, it does not follow that because it matters, we should therefore abolish education-focused roles. The other possibility that exists is to engage in both the material politics and politics of the emotions that devalue what, we argue, should be considered important and desirable work. It is political work to ensure that these jobs are properly compensated. It is also political work to ensure that the people doing them can enjoy them, feel valued, and not endure constant envy, anxiety, or shame. If we were successful in doing so, we might reasonably hope that people from all backgrounds would be equally attracted to education-focused roles and everyone would be better placed to benefit from them.

The following sections take part in that political work and demonstrate that even in a world where an education-focused career is still undervalued and misunderstood, there is a growing group of us who have enthusiastically chosen it. Once these roles exist in the world, inevitably they will be filled with people who chose to apply for them, who make them their own, and who innovate within them to create meaningful lives and careers that would not otherwise have existed. We make the argument that there are many joys to being in secure education-focused roles, that these roles are worthwhile to us, and those

around us, especially students, and that they, and we, have a lot to offer. We are not complacent about or blind to their disadvantages (which all jobs have), but we advocate for them, nevertheless. In doing so, we take a political stand and we enlist the emotions of joy and pride in that work.

This article is composed of a number of standalone sections which together make an argument for the joy of education-focused roles. The first section following this introduction is by Ellen Watts who describes the joy and relief of choosing an education-focused role in the early years of a career and discusses the role of advice in how career paths are valued. The following section is by Kalina Zhekova who argues that education-focused academics (regardless of contractual status) form a community of practice (CoP) which offers a sense of identity and belonging that can in turn foster the positive emotions associated with a fulfilling career path. Next, Keith Smith writes about the career pathways and promotion opportunities that are becoming available for education-focused academics, arguing that only as we walk those paths will the routes become clearer and more obvious for others. The final two sections examine the role of scholarship and research within academic education-focused careers. Rose Gann explains the importance of scholarship and the ways in which it has been defined across the HE Sector and within the discipline of Politics and IR. Drawing upon Boyer's (1990) influential intervention regarding scholarship, she advocates for scholarly careers that are not focused on a 'deficit model', with the sole purpose of trying to 'fix' problems that crop up in education, but rather on a dynamic and creative approach in which we bring our skills as educators and researchers to bear on the intellectually fascinating challenges of understanding how students learn and how Higher Education (HE) might support them. The final section by Madeleine Le Bourdon suggests that, given the role of power in classrooms and educational institutions, our backgrounds as Politics researchers give a particular advantage in doing this work. She suggests that education-focused roles are a means to transforming the academy through teaching and leadership. I will return to this theme of transformation in the concluding section.

'So, you've ruined your career': Reflections on choosing the teaching track by Ellen Watts

There is a file on my computer where I talk my future self through a new research idea. It largely sits gathering digital dust, but I come back to it from time to time. The idea is more meaningful to me for its context than content: it came to me in the middle of the night after accepting my first permanent job, as an Assistant Professor on a Teaching and Curriculum Leadership pathway.

This potential project came to me as I accepted a job that would give me less research time than some others would. It gives me a sense of optimism, however, as it was the first idea that had really interested me since completing my PhD. It was an idea released from the mind-set of 'should' or 'must', which had seen me half-heartedly attempting to reshape work that felt stale to feel more hireable.

It took a while for me to realise that these feelings were not only the result of relief, but also a valuable insight into why I wanted to continue working at universities. I found this idea interesting but had no interest in scaling it up, scaffolding money and people into it to meet the expectations of a grant-focused research culture. I could now recognise my reluctance to apply for long postdoctoral research fellowships not simply as procrastination or imposter syndrome, but as an understanding that previous periods without teaching had also been periods without much motivation.

I recognised that teaching, and talking about how and what we teach, was what I wanted to spend most of my time doing. This conflicted with messages received in formal careers advice and informal conversations, that the 'best' lectureship is one that minimises teaching and administration while maximising time and resources for research.

Research as our primary purpose?

This advice makes sense when, for most permanent academic jobs, publications are the primary thing used to evaluate your potential as a candidate and performance if hired. It is also rooted in a broader assumption that an academic's primary purpose is to produce research. While this may be true for many, it means PhD candidates are socialised in a setting where 'we speak of "research opportunities" but of "teaching loads"' (Keohane, 2009: 359).

While there is increasing pushback against assumptions that completing a PhD will 'lead automatically to a faculty position' (Curtin et al., 2016: 715), mentors may still assume that candidates re-enter University primarily to pursue research careers. While Curtin et al. (2016: 734) perceive a good mentor as one who will support the student in 'any career path', they measure 'career mentoring' mostly as training in research skills, and 'career self-efficacy' in terms of a person's confidence that 'I can become a professor in a top research university'.

Initial motivations aside, people come to and through PhD programmes on many pathways. They will hopefully do many new things and develop multiple skills, some of these gained through (potentially) first experiences of teaching. These are all valuable points for reflection on how someone might like their career to look. As well as discussing which sector(s) someone might be interested in working in, conversations about careers could be reflections on new experiences and skills. This requires academics to reflect on their own assumptions, and the language of career success they reproduce. While this is not the sole responsibility of any individual supervisor or mentor, it can be hard to consider what your priorities are or have good-faith conversations about teaching-focused careers in an environment where research is constantly centred.

Those currently having conversations about careers can also greatly benefit from thinking beyond institutions and job titles when discussing jobs with peers and alumni. What are they *actually* doing on a day-to-day basis? How does that compare with what you would choose to do, if you could choose? Friends from my PhD programme, for example, do interesting jobs where they (with apologies to them for oversimplification) plan and produce research projects, and/or design and deliver training. When I considered what I might do 'outside' of academia, it was clear that the latter interested me much more. It took a while to realise this lesson applied to a potential academic career too.

When you are working temporary jobs post-PhD, as many do, the need to constantly look for the next thing makes it difficult to assess how you feel about what you are doing now. Even thinking about choice in this context feels laughable. Still, it is useful to think about what you would do if you *had* the choice. What would you keep, expand on, develop from your current and past jobs regardless of what or where they were? What would you gleefully abandon if you could, without consequence for yourself or colleagues? In its entirety that 'ideal' job probably does not exist, but it is valuable to rank and reflect on the parts which make the sum.

Is it possible to 'choose'?

Thinking about 'choice' within the academic job market is loaded when we have no control over what jobs are advertised, and little over whether we get them. There is additional

complication for teaching-focused roles. While I am advocating that these should be framed as a valid choice, it is unrealistic to think that all who have these roles chose them. We need to consider what it means to 'choose' the teaching track in a sector where roles – and people – are unequally valued and rewarded.

I described my own choice in terms of a realisation that I wanted to spend more of my time on teaching-related tasks, but also that my interests do not mesh comfortably with the grant-focused research culture of UK institutions. I do not want to see the teaching track become a get-out clause for fixing the inequities of how we support and recognise research. As well as bringing personal disappointments, this would only construct teaching-focused careers as a consolation prize.

I am also aware as I talk about choice that I risk reproducing the 'strong narrative of individualism' present in discourses of career development (Briscoe-Palmer and Mattocks, 2021: 43). In academia, this ignores the unequal status attributed to roles and tasks which intersects with broader inequities. Thomson and Kenny (2021: 8) note that the current 'impact agenda' reinforces the privileging of 'traditional academic elites' as 'research stars'.

At the same time, women report performing a greater proportion of tasks related to teaching, administration, and pastoral care (Allen and Savigny, 2016: 1004). Rickett and Morris (2021) argue working class women are expected to provide more pastoral care and emotional labour to students, and their interviewees reported doing so as a path to feeling 'worthy' as 'valuable citizens'. This is short-lived and superficial, as while these tasks are viewed as essential, they are also 'undervalued and unrewarded', with a 'lack of respect' for those who primarily perform them (Rickett and Morris, 2021: 96).

These biases not only shape our institutions and the creation and distribution of jobs, but 'are also likely to shape the career aspirations and choice of scholars' (Allen and Savigny, 2016 1001). In addition to being less likely to 'see themselves' as researchers, women – particularly women of colour – are less likely to receive mentoring and access networks to support their research and career development (Curtin et al., 2016).

In this context there is a danger that an expansion of teaching-focused roles will simply formalise these biases, becoming a form of 'ivory basement' where less valued tasks are performed by more marginalised people who have limited opportunity for promotion (Allen and Savigny, 2016). This is why we need to advocate for meaningful teaching *tracks*, rather than simply individual teaching-focused job roles, and for a parity of esteem across the essential tasks of academia. Two-track does not have to mean two-tier.

Valuing (those on) the teaching track

Briscoe-Palmer and Mattocks (2021: 50) note that many doctoral students see the 'ideal' supervisor as one who acts as a mentor for personal and career development, but not all participants in their study described their supervisors as mentors. While many do take on a broader mentoring role, ultimately the PhD supervisor is there to support the candidate to develop their research and complete their project. This makes the ability for all doctoral students to discuss their goals with a wider pool of mentors ideal. However academic staff providing mentorship should consider whether they have a fixed view of 'ideal' career trajectories for all. While there is increasing awareness that this does not support doctoral researchers who go on to work in other sectors, focusing on skills and self-reflection would also benefit those who see a potential future in HE that looks different to their mentors'.

The title of this piece is tongue in cheek. Nobody has told me I have ruined my career by taking a job on the teaching track. Some assume, however, that this is simply a more stable version of the 'stepping stone' previously provided by fixed-term contracts. I am frequently asked whether I am applying to jobs at other institutions, or seeking to switch to the Research and Teaching track. Clearly career development does not stop on acceptance of a permanent job, and it is good to keep talking about goals. The problem with these questions is that they often seem to come with a presumed correct answer.

I am not suggesting that anyone in a teaching-focused role who would rather have a more research-oriented one should alter their ambitions, simply that not everyone will share this ambition. It benefits all of us to advocate for teaching, and work towards the parity of status needed to craft a teaching track where many can create meaning.

As a Teaching Fellow I hated the insecurity but resented what felt like a requirement to 'move on' to a post that prioritised research. I started to think about what, beyond job security, would make a role that centred teaching the foundation for a fulfilling career. It would be varied. I would have some say over what I teach, and my other roles. It would include space beyond the day-to-day of teaching and admin to work on longer-term projects. It would come with genuine opportunity to progress, and be promoted on different terms to a 'traditional' lectureship. The role would not simply exist to plug gaps in the curriculum, but for its holder to contribute something different to their department and beyond.

I am grateful to those – present company in this special issue included – committed to discussing what a meaningful teaching track looks like and advocating for it.

The Education Track as a CoP: Professional identities, leadership and collective emotions by Kalina Zhekova

The Education Track in HE has in recent years developed as a career pathway with distinctive significance, rising status and opportunities for progression to full professorial grade. In the UK, there has been a remarkable increase in the number of staff in teaching-focused roles by more than 80 per cent between 2005/06 and 2018/19, with this upwards tendency continuing in the following years, particularly within research-intensive Russell Group universities (Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), 2024; Jenkins and Wolf, 2023; Whitchurch, 2023, see the section by Keith Smith below for more details). Despite the fact that the Education Track – and the pedagogical expertise it brings – has become a permanent feature of academic life, with no indications that the growth in teaching-focused roles can be reversed (Jenkins and Wolf, 2023), there is still little discussion about precisely how educational roles can be successfully integrated into the broader academic community. There is even less attention to the way these roles have been, can, and should be, associated with positive emotions such as recognition, fulfilment, joy, accomplishment and an overall sense of belonging. This does not imply ignoring existing challenges and areas for development such as widespread precarity and job insecurity, or continued inequalities among staff on the basis of gender, race, social class, sexuality or disability (Arday, 2022). Such issues have already been the subject of much debate and merit further, separate discussion. In this section, I call for incorporating a strong focus on the value and significance of the Education Track – the positive, fulfilling aspects of the profession, and what it means to work collectively, from within the HE sector, against the existing institutional challenges, to enhance the recognition, status and respect for educational roles.

Education transcends the transfer or retention of knowledge – rather, it involves the cultivation of multi-layered relationships and the formation of communities bound up with collective emotions, collaboratively produced identities and joint activities. Yet how do these emotions, identities, and practices interrelate to (re)shape education-intensive roles and their value in the HE sector? I argue that the Education Track is an emerging community of practice (CoP) that has two important constitutive effects for the emotions and everyday actions that frame its role in HE. First, it provides a shared space for building and negotiating identities which produces a sense of group belonging and professional significance. Second, the Education Track community opens space, and growing necessity, for pedagogical leadership that can translate into recognition, feelings of fulfilment and professional accomplishment. Taken together, group belonging and institutional leadership can have a positive transformational effect on the material and emotional conditions underpinning educational roles to reframe them from transitional moments on the path to research-and-teaching careers to valued and valuable careers that bring a sense of purpose and pride.

Lave and Wenger (1991) have popularly established the term CoPs to capture the multitude of activities that bind individuals together as part of a community sharing collectively defined values, beliefs, and a repertoire of practices in the pursuit of a joint enterprise (Wenger, 1998). This does not suggest a monolithic group with fixed boundaries. Rather, a CoP is a collective of participants in an activity system that share understandings about the meaning of what they are doing and its significance in the lives of individuals and the community (Lave and Wenger, 1991: 98). Following from this definition, the central features of a CoP are: (a) a collective idea of purpose, a joint enterprise which recognises the practices of the community as significant; (b) shared, collectively (re)negotiated meanings and regular practices; (c) an interdependent system; (d) a cycle of reproduction, welcoming and integrating 'newcomers' (Barab and Duffy, 2012: 41). These are not pre-existing criteria that a CoP needs to meet in order to exist – they are distinctive features shared by organically emerging communities organised around regularised activities and a sense of purpose.

But why is the Education Track an emerging CoP, one might ask? It is not because it can be conceived of as a single, fixed, or homogeneous community granting 'membership' to teaching-intensive scholars, but because it has organically formed over time (and is continuously developing) as a collective that: (a) works towards the common and negotiated purpose of teaching, learning and pedagogical development; (b) engages in everyday pedagogical activities that have become a common repertoire of practice; (c) is situated within the broader system of HE which it (re)shapes through joint action and negotiated meanings – from micro-level classroom experiences to macro-level practices of institutional leadership. Notably, the Education Track CoP is also: (d) rapidly expanding and particularly open to integrating 'new' educators, supported by others in gaining skills, experience and recognition to form professional identities.

It is important to clarify here that the Education Track community is not restricted to individuals on pedagogical career paths or teaching-focused contracts. Scholars associated with this community can and do participate in multiple other CoPs such as teaching teams, research groups, committees and so on across departments and universities. In other words, the educational CoP is not exclusionary, nor is it solely based on the career orientation of its members. Simply put, what brings people together within this CoP are everyday pedagogical practices. However, the effects of this community are far from simple. It provides an opportunity for reshaping the meaning of educational work, the

emotions attached to it and, gradually, the very institutions within which the CoP functions. Ellen Watts above presents commonly held ideas associated with teaching-focused roles – as 'stepping stones' on the road to research-and-teaching contracts. She notes that teaching tends to be described as a burden while research is seen as a treasured opportunity or the ultimate purpose of academic careers. Educational CoPs provide spaces for challenging the preference and superiority inherent in the binary opposition between research and teaching that has been perpetuated in HE. They can, and must, reframe educational work from a burden to a mission, to a fulfilling career on its own.

In this sense, group belonging and institutional leadership are at the heart of the CoP's transformational potential. As Wenger (1998: 149) argues, there is a 'profound connection between identity and practice'. Since identities are relational, they are actively constructed and negotiated through participation in the community, as part of group-level activities and interactions within the CoP and the organisational context (Blum et al., 2021; Campbell et al., 2022; Wenger, 1998). Given that the Education Track community is still in the process of formation, recognition by others is particularly important in order to form and sustain a sense of belonging to a collective where pedagogical contributions are recognised and appreciated. Continued participation in this community hence reaffirms certain identities and intensifies a sense of recognition and commitment to the joint pedagogical enterprise. As Zorn and Boler (2007: 142) note, the emotional experiences of educators and learners are 'neither private nor public, but rather must be understood as collaboratively formed'. This approach emphasises our mutual responsibility for one another and the interpretative terrain of emotions which are embedded in relations of power and privilege. Consequently, individual experiences within a CoP would vary. Understanding emotions and professional identities as collaboratively produced requires actively challenging one's own world views (Boler, 1999; Zorn and Boler, 2007). For instance, the experiences of those in permanent educational roles, the kinds of jobs that are the main focus of this article, would certainly differ from the experiences of academics in precarious positions, not least because women and staff of colour are disproportionately affected by job insecurity (Arday, 2022).

At times, the difficulties that affect educational work, such as inequal career pathways or difficult workloads that need much improvement in terms of time for pedagogical research – are products of policies designed outside of classrooms and without in-depth knowledge of the everyday practices of pedagogy. The point is not to ignore these challenges but to work together, as a dynamic CoP within HE, to address them through institutional leadership. In addition, leadership and visibility are inseparable from a sense of professional accomplishment. It is therefore vital that CoP members occupy leading, policy-defining roles, at all levels of seniority, with strategic orientation towards reshaping pedagogical roles towards ones that educators want to do. Jobs that place teaching and educational quality at the centre of respected and desirable academic careers, instead of treating teaching practices as secondary to research objectives. This can translate into recruiting for teaching-focused roles as standalone careers rather than transitional moments on the path to research-and-teaching contracts – as a move towards greater parity of esteem and mutual recognition. It can also mean growth in promotions to professorial grades and normalising this career progression for education-intensive roles across HE. In any case, the visible presence of more education-intensive academics in leadership would enhance the recognition for these roles. This would better align with the broader tendencies in the HE sector that produce a growing demand for teaching-focused contracts in the first place (HESA, 2024) whether these have to do with increasing student

numbers, a justified emphasis on research excellence and related needs for teaching buy-outs, or other factors.

Crucially, educational leadership is inseparable from the politics of emotions. For example, broader policy changes or everyday contributions that do not resonate with the values of the community in which they are situated, and do not gain recognition, may in fact produce negative responses such as alienation, detachment, resentment or an overall feeling of being unappreciated. However, the shared pedagogical focus of the Education Track CoP can add recognition to educational leadership which does, in fact, bring many positive emotions including joy, fulfilment and professional accomplishment. Occupying a leading role could also take the form of engagement in micro-level interactions – informal conversations, hallway exchanges and seemingly random emails are all opportunities for rethinking how we speak of, and practise, teaching. How we value the teaching of others, and our own, the way we treat and talk about our students (as reminders of our former 'selves'): all matter for bottom-up change. This is not to suggest that leadership is equally accessible to everyone within universities. Such an argument would ignore the play of power and privilege embedded in university institutions and would overlook questions about inclusivity such as whose voice is heard, who speaks in a way that excludes the other's experience (Zorn and Boler, 2007: 148; see Blackmore, 2013). While the educational CoP is embedded in pervasive and unequal power relations, it contains transformative potential. As a community still in formation, it is not tied to fixed notions of history and tradition – its meanings, purposes and identities are in the process of being negotiated and collectively reformed. This opens space for reflecting on socially just ways of achieving greater diversity, representation, and recognition through leadership.

Finally, I see the Education Track as more than a career development path – it is a community bound together by collaboratively produced meanings, identities, emotions and values on the significance of pedagogy and its central place in HE. As a community, it constitutes professional identities which bring a sense of belonging and group attachment. Through opportunities for leadership, whatever forms they may take, the Education Track adds value to teaching-focused contracts and pedagogical work more broadly, producing a sense of professional accomplishment. It is a fluid space with transformative potential for greater inclusivity in leadership. What we make of it is a matter of shared responsibility.

We can make the road by walking by Keith Smith

The title of this section is drawn from Bell et al. (1990)'s edited collection, *We Make the Road by Walking*. The book is a recording of a long discussion between Myles Horton and Paulo Freire about their ideas about, and experiences of, pedagogy. The title comes from the following Spanish proverb: you make the way as you go. As Freire explains, 'in order to start [something], it should be necessary to start' (Bell et al., 1990: 6). This section, which is concerned primarily with leadership and promotion with regards teaching-focused contracts, makes the case that in order to achieve parity between education and research, and to realise the aims of a first-class education, then it is necessary to start walking the road, primarily by having more of those on teaching or education contracts in positions of leadership within the university.

The education-focused pathway is indicative of the differentiation and unbundling of academic work (Locke, 2014: 11). This is perhaps most evident with teaching-focused contracts. According to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) (2024), the

percentage of teaching-focused contracts has risen from 30% of academic staff in 2018/19% to 36% in 2022/23. Often, these are part-time and fixed-term posts, and hence very insecure. The University College Union (2021: 7) reports that 44% of the teaching-only contracts in British universities are fixed-term as opposed to ongoing contracts. More than half of these contracts are held by women (Baker, 2021), illustrating the gender divide in terms of research and teaching (Denney, 2021: 3–5). It is unclear what other inequalities exist between teaching-focused and teaching-and-research contracts in terms of ethnicity, class and known disability. Moreover, the use of teaching-focused contracts has been on the increase over the last decade (University College Union, 2021: 53–61). From one standpoint, this endangers the holistic academic and the teaching and research nexus (McIntosh and McKinley, 2021: 31–32). Yet, from another standpoint, teaching-focused roles may be understood more positively or joyfully in Ahmed's (2017: 15) terms as desire lines. These are the less travelled roads. They may, to borrow from and repackage Ahmed's (2017: 15) suggestion regarding citing alternative literatures, 'have become fainter from not being traveled upon; so we might work harder to find them'. As the road less travelled, teaching-focused roles may engender creativity and innovation across the sector. For sure, that *hope* has to be balanced against the realities of the sector. Teaching-and-research contracts still account for the largest share of academic contracts in British universities at 43% (HESA, 2024). Within Politics and International Relations departments in Britain specifically, structural inequalities persist. An individual's gender and ethnicity will affect their role expectations and career prospects (Hanretty, 2021; Pflaeger Young et al., 2021; see also the section by Ellen Watts above). Moreover, evidence indicates that teaching-focused academics may find it difficult to attain appropriate reward and recognition in terms of promotion (McIntosh and McKinley, 2021). Despite significant growth in academic staff on teaching-focused contracts, a much smaller ratio of staff on such contracts are in senior positions/academic leadership positions (HESA, 2024) Having more education-focused colleagues in positions of leadership might make the teaching-focused road less faint and more travelled in the future. This will also help universities to signal more concretely the value they place on teaching, learning and education. Clear criteria and appropriate incentives are necessary for that hope to be realised in the long-term. This will require effort – or political work in the terms of Cathy Elliott above. It will require institutional, structural and sector-wide change. There are no guarantees. Through, in Kalina Zhekova's terms, a CoP – a supportive and joyful network of education-contract holders – that political work can be realised.

Our business in a university, as I often tell my students, is to produce knowledge. Knowledge extending our specific disciplines, otherwise known as research, and knowledge in the minds of our student body, otherwise known as teaching and learning. We also do service, through extra-curricular activities (students) and administrative and support roles (staff). Teaching and learning are part of the university's *raison d'être*. HE is, however, in a state of flux. Britain, at least since the publication in 1997 of the Dearing Report, has been adopting various methods to bring some sort of equality between research and teaching in British universities. The latest of these being the Teaching Excellence Framework (Eales-Reynolds and Westwood, 2018: 11–13), paralleling the Research Excellent Framework. Yet, there is still a sense that teaching is undervalued in the profession, especially in terms of recognition. The Teaching Cultures Survey reports that almost half of the participants in the survey disagreed or strongly disagreed with the idea that teaching had a positive impact on career progression (Graham, 2022: 3).

Before turning to the question of promotion and reward, let me provide a bit of personal context. I am employed on the teaching track. I am a Lecturer (Education) with King's College London (KCL). At KCL, we call the teaching track the Academic Education Pathway. One of the foibles of the teaching track is the proliferation of titles used to describe it. I was appointed in September 2021 after four years on temporary contracts at the same institution. Prior to that, for one year I worked as a University Teacher, on a very fractional contract, teaching ten modules over the academic year. Before that, I cobbled together multiple marginal salaries – mainly from seminar teaching – in the years between 2013 and 2016. I completed my PhD in 2012. I love research. I love reading, writing, discovering, thinking. What I did not like was how competitive it all seemed. As someone who struggles to 'sell themselves' (I use the scare quotes because I even find the saying makes me cringe) or even speak loudly and authoritatively (my auld granny used to say 'it's the emptiest pails that make the most noise') it was not the world I was expecting or a world for me.

Teaching was something else, though. I had been teaching since the first year of my PhD, largely in undergraduate seminars. Naturally shy and withdrawn, I came alive in the classroom in ways I did not think were possible. I loved seeing the penny drop when understanding – learning – took place. I loved the buzz and energy of lively debates. I loved the interaction and discussion about a subject matter I was passionate about. Even on those days when no-one had done the reading, I could still find ways to get them talking about the subject matter. This is what being an academic was to me. I did not mind the marking. I did not mind the constant email. I did not mind supporting students through difficult times, academically and not. In fact, I seemed to thrive on it. I had found a purpose. I had found my passion. I had found my joy. Now, at the time of writing venturing towards my eighth academic year at King's College London, I have found my place.

The Higher Education Academy report notes that, 'improving the quality of teaching in higher education is now high on the agenda . . . but without appropriate recognition and reward for those involved in teaching this will be hard to achieve' (Cashmore et al., 2013: 6). While some universities, specifically the more prestigious ones (Ambler et al., 2023), are taking steps in this direction, there does not seem to be an agreed sector-wide approach yet. There are evident challenges. It is often assumed that recognition of teaching excellence in terms of promotion criteria is less easy to measure than the metrics for research. The criteria for research excellence are well-established: high quality publications and grant income. In contrast, the criteria for teaching excellence are assumed to be filled with uncertainty. Teaching effectiveness is argued to be difficult to measure, student evaluations to be loaded with subjectivity and there is a general sense that teaching excellence is not accounted for in terms of promotion, especially in terms of promotion to the highest level (Subbaye, 2018: 246–247). Moreover, although the scholarship of teaching and learning is a contested terrain (Myers, 2008: 39–40), pedagogical research is often seen as 'less rigorous, easier to perform, and easier to publish than disciplinary research' (Asarta et al., 2018: 735). However, while research metrics may be less objective than some suppose, there is no particular reason why criteria for educational promotion could not be developed in ways that allow for challenging yet achievable career routes that are comparable across institutions. For example, as Rose Gann compellingly suggests below, there is no reason as to why pedagogical research cannot have its own metrics of rigorous, robust and excellent research (see also Evans et al., 2021: 527–528, 537–539.)

In expanding further on how a challenging but realistic career path for education might be designed, let me turn to my current institution for the simple reason that I know the

promotion criteria there. The number one strategic priority of KCL in its 2029 vision is excellence in teaching and learning (KCL, 2016). For sure, this document is dripping in the type of management speak you would expect (Leyva, 2018). Nevertheless, it probably played a role in the development of career progression in the Academic Education Pathway as a means to incentivise and motivate excellence in teaching. Promotion on the Academic Education Pathway at KCL is grouped into four categories: teaching and student support; leadership in teaching and curriculum development; scholarship, knowledge exchange and impact; and esteem and recognition. In each these categories, there are clear examples of attainment for promotion to Senior Lecturer, Reader and Professor. For brevity, I shall concentrate on two of these categories. For Senior Lecturer, the criteria include things like supporting others' teaching. For Professor, the candidate needs to evidence major initiatives to support student attainment and engagement and contribute to the university's international teaching profile. For leadership in teaching and curriculum development, promotion to Senior Lecturer requires development of new educational initiatives among others. For Professor level, the candidate needs to demonstrate significant strategic leadership in the management of educational initiatives and projects among others. The creation of clear and identifiable promotion criteria on the education pathway sends a signal that KCL at least recognises and values the importance of teaching and is willing to reward and recognise individuals committed to excellence in teaching. KCL is for sure not alone in this approach.

Having measurable criteria for recognition is only part of the story. Processes need to be in place to support professional development. These include institutions ensuring that support is in place for pedagogical research, that appropriate training and leadership development programmes exist and are actively monitored, that teaching excellence through awards is recognised and celebrated and that scaffolded mentoring programmes are in place to support staff on the educational pathway (Zhou and Schofield, 2024). I count myself as lucky because my employer has these processes in place. I have faith that my work in teaching and learning is valued and recognised and that my employer supports me on this journey. I am blessed that I can avoid the 'ivory basement' that Ellen Watts speaks of above. As of yet, the same may not be true across the sector. I remain hopeful that as our, in Kalina Zhekova's terms, CoP grows and flourishes, that this vision will disseminate more widely.

As I said earlier, I count myself exceptionally lucky. I have 'made it' onto an ongoing career path in HE that suits my specific skillset. I ply my trade in a department that is going from strength to strength, despite sometimes feeling like we are lurching from crisis to crisis. I work in a university that places emphasis on teaching and excellence and, more importantly, has a progression path all the way to full professor, with identifiable metrics for promotion. I get to work with some of the brightest students and probable future leaders in their fields. I get to work directly on areas that I am passionate about, such as supporting widening participation efforts at the ground level, embedding academic literacy in the curriculum, and inclusive education. When I am down or work is stressing me out, as it is wont to do, I have a litany of thank you cards and a special inbox folder I can turn to for cheering up. I am lucky because the teaching track *is* joyful for me. It is not like that for everyone; I recognise that. Yet, earlier this year, King's held its Academic and Education Pathway townhall meeting. It was a joyful event. Colleagues were warm and inviting. Discussions were positive and fulfilling. Despite coming from different backgrounds and disciplines, we all shared a passion for teaching and education. I felt at home. I had found my tribe. The keynote was given by a Professor on the Academic

and Education Pathway. It was inspirational, joyful even. There was a concrete example of teaching and educational leadership being rewarded and recognised. With work, effort and a little sprinkling of luck, I remain hopeful that that could be me one day giving that keynote speech. At the very least, concrete examples such as these and potential role models mitigate against the presumed lack of guidance from senior teaching track mentors, which has been argued to make it feel like a lonely path to walk (Karlsson, 2021). This is why it is important that more individuals on teaching–focused posts are promoted into positions of leadership. Mentorship on the education pathway is necessary to ensure its continued vitality and success. Moreover, the visibility of the education pathway is crucial to keeping that pathway on the HE agenda. The path has not necessarily been trodden fully yet, but we can walk it.

Changing embedded culture is difficult but not impossible. While teaching, learning and pastoral care may increasingly be stressed as priorities, the lived experience of many in British HE is that research is still the principal priority, especially when it comes to career advancement (Locke et al., 2016: 5). If more teaching track colleagues can break through the 'classroom ceiling' and accept positions of leadership whether formal or informal, then greater strides towards equivalence between teaching and research may be made. This will require institutions to ensure processes in place to facilitate this, including mentoring schemes and organisation-wide teaching and education workgroups to facilitate continuing development with a specific focus on education-only roles (Bull et al., 2025). To return to the title of this section, we *can* make that road by walking. It is a hope, for sure. Even from that hope, though, there is joy.

The importance of scholarship by Rose Gann

One of the joys of being on the education or teaching track is engaging with and developing an understanding of scholarship. Developing an area of scholarship expertise and disseminating scholarly work is increasingly expected of academics on the teaching track and often leads to another joy–that of becoming part of a growing disciplinary community of scholars with a common interest and passion in exploring and understanding the teaching and learning of politics. But what do we mean when we talk about scholarship?

Understanding and defining scholarship within HE has been, and continues to be, the subject of much debate, both here in the UK and also more broadly across the HE sectors in Europe, North America and Australia. A number of distinct scholarship traditions have evolved in recent decades, one of which is that of SOTL – the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. SOTL has origins in Ernest Boyer's (1990) influential work 'Scholarship reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate'. Boyer (1990: xii) called for universities to break out of the 'tired old teaching versus research debate and define, in more creative ways, what it means to be a scholar', advocating for a more expansive understanding of scholarship – one which encompassed the scholarship of discovery (research), the scholarship of integration (drawing on different types of knowledge and interdisciplinary perspectives), the scholarship of application (putting knowledge to practical use) and the scholarship of teaching (Boyer 1990: 16). Boyer's desire for a more expansive understanding of scholarship – incorporating both teaching and research – has yet to come to fruition within the Academy. Focus has turned instead to Boyer's latter category–the scholarship of teaching – which has spawned a growing body of literature and international movements now commonly referred to as the scholarship of teaching and learning (SOTL). Notwithstanding this growth in attention and discussion around Boyer's idea of

the scholarship of teaching, SOTL has remained peripheral to many academics and disciplines within HE and hard to sell to HE communities, (Boshier, 2009; Boshier and Huang, 2008), in part because of a lack of clarity around what scholarship/SOTL entails.

Trigwell et al. (2000: 167) provide a multi-dimensional model of the scholarship of teaching which involves academics engaging with existing knowledge about teaching and learning, self-reflection on this knowledge in relation to their discipline, focus on a particular teaching approach and the public sharing or communication of this work within and across the academy. Twenty-five years after Boyer, Kern et al.'s (2015: 5) 'Dimensions of Activities Relating to Teaching' or 'DART' model also emphasises the public aspect of scholarship, setting out different dimensions of activities related to teaching according to horizontal and vertical axes. The horizontal axis identifies the extent to which activities relating to teaching are public (as opposed to private) and the vertical axis identifies the extent to which activities relating to teaching are systematic (as opposed to informal). Activities that can be classified as SOTL activities are, according to Kern et al.'s (2015: 5) DART model, characterised by involving both systematic inquiry and public facing dissemination, such as 'textbooks, peer-reviewed presented or published empirical research, published essays on teaching with references'. Felten (2013) takes a different tack. Seeking to address the question of how to ensure the quality of scholarship while also recognising global diversity of approaches, Felten provides a set of 'principles of good practice in SOTL'. For Felten (2013: 122), SOTL should involve 'inquiry focused on student learning, (be) grounded in context, methodologically sound, conducted in partnership with students and appropriately public'.

Scholarship, however, might be approached in a different way by academics who identify with other traditions. Some academics, for example, refer to scholarship as pedagogic research, or PedR, and understand scholarship as 'evidence-based investigation into teaching practice, often with the aim of improving the quality of education and the student learning experience' (UCL Arena Centre for Research-Based Education, 2017). This has led to discussion on the place of pedagogic research (and SOTL) in the UK's Research Excellence Framework (REF) (Tierney, 2020). The differences in these approaches to scholarship might seem small–there is an ongoing conversation around a 'big tent' approach to SOTL (Chick, 2014)–but it is important to note that not all teaching-focused academics see their work as fitting into a SOTL framework or draw upon Boyer's model of scholarship. The range and diversity of meaning and approaches to scholarship, while in many ways exciting and open, can also be problematic for staff on the teaching track as it can be hard for staff to position and make sense of their own work – so much so that academics sometimes fail to even recognise or acknowledge that their practice and/or inquiry into teaching and learning *is* scholarship (Gann and Hulme, 2023).

For many academics, the route into scholarship is not through a conscious engagement with literature and debates around scholarship in HE at all, but through engagement with teaching and learning activities within their subject area or discipline – often at a local, department, or modular level. This was certainly true in my case. Having secured a lectureship in Politics, it was questions arising from my teaching practice, teaching politics and political ideas, that led me to pursue teaching and learning projects rather than further develop the research area of my PhD. As a new Politics lecturer, I would often share my enthusiasm for teaching political ideas and political ideologies, but as I did so, especially with colleagues and friends outside of academia, I became aware of a growing disconnect between what I was teaching and what other people thought I was teaching. If I mentioned that I was a Politics lecturer, I would often get a question about British politics or

the Prime Minister or political parties. While understandable, this got me thinking about how the discipline is perceived and the stereotyping of the discipline. I successfully applied for funding to lead a large multi-institution project, 'Developing pre-entry guidance for the study of Politics and International Relations at University' (PREPOL), that enabled me to explore how young people perceived and understood the study of politics and international relations in HE. I realised that I enjoyed exploring questions related to how we teach politics and what teaching politics and international relations at university entails. This interest subsequently led to consultancy work with government bodies and awarding boards reviewing and shaping the new subject criteria for A-level politics. Back within HE, it led to my involvement with research projects, at institutional and national level, exploring how best to internationalise the (Politics and IR) curriculum (Gann, 2016; Kirk et al., 2018; Newstead et al., 2016). More recently, as a member of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA, 2023) advisory group reviewing the subject benchmark statement for Politics and IR, I have reflected on what defines our discipline and how we teach and study it and contributed towards the production of the fifth edition of the Politics and International Relations subject benchmark statement.

Looking back, at different stages, this work involved engagement with all four aspects of Boyer's understanding of scholarship, but what helped me most in developing my scholarship and furthering my career development, was identifying and articulating the guiding thread that underpins my scholarship and informs my scholarship identity. Through scholarship projects and membership of scholarship communities, I have come to identify and understand my own area of scholarship expertise as being located around curriculum development, pedagogy and Politics education – with a more recent focus on scholarship and recognition and reward for teaching-focused academics. In doing this, I have come to recognise that curriculum development is just one of many distinct areas of expertise within Politics and International Relations scholarship. My 'Developing Pre-entry Guidance for the study of Politics and International Relations at University' project, for example, was one of five Politics and International Relations teaching and learning projects funded by the government through the fund for developing teaching and learning (FDTL5). The other projects explored topics such as Case-Based Learning in Politics, The Scholarship of Engagement for Politics, Politics On-Line Learning and Citizenship Skills, and Politics Active Research Learning Environment (Political Studies Association (PSA) News, 2004: 4). This introduced me to another joy of being on the teaching track – the realisation that within scholarship there are many discrete areas of focus and specialisms, often containing their own CoPs. How these areas of scholarship are explained or described varies. Advance HE's (2024) UK Professional Standards Framework 2023–that underpins the Higher Education Academy recognition scheme–sets out five areas of activity which academics focus on in fellowship applications. These are 'designing and planning learning activities and or programmes', delivering teaching, assessment and feedback, support and guidance, and professional development (Advance Higher Education, 2024). While some engagement with all areas of activity is necessary for HEA Fellowship recognition, teaching track academics might specialise and develop their expertise in one or two of these areas. Developing a sense of my own scholarship expertise and specialisms was liberating – as I did not feel I had to cover all bases or know everything about all of these areas of scholarship, and I was able to focus on certain areas to develop my scholarship identity, reach and impact. It was useful – in that it gave clarity, helping me to identify my next steps, develop my expertise and in time my career progression.

Involvement with other Politics and International Relations teaching and learning projects has had another additional benefit, that of providing me with a disciplinary-focused community with a shared passion for teaching and learning. Arising out of the Politics and International Relations projects funded by FDTL5, members of the 5 project teams came together to establish a Political Studies Association (PSA) specialist group for teaching and learning – now the PSA's teaching and learning network – which continues to provide a forum for debate and discussion on teaching and learning within the discipline as well as being a valuable network for Politics and International Relations teaching track academics and a vibrant example of an Education Track CoP.

Notwithstanding debates regarding the meaning(s) of scholarship, SOTL and the characteristics or principles of good practice that (should) underpin scholarship, it is important that there is space within the discipline for organic, self-identified, bottom-up scholarly enquiry undertaken out of curiosity by individual staff or teaching teams and that this is supported through departments or through disciplinary scholarship communities such as the PSA's Teaching and Learning Network. This type of scholarship activity can act as an important catalyst for developing and re-energising teaching and learning – in all its aspects–across the discipline. There is a danger, however, that two different types of deficit thinking can (and do) at times eclipse this type of activity. First, despite Boyer's intervention, teaching and scholarship continue to be considered as less important to, and of less value than, research and research culture, and less well recognised and rewarded as a result (Chalmers, 2011; Fanghanel et al., 2016; Smith and Walker, 2021; Tierney, 2020). Second, the growth of top-down policies on teaching and learning and an increased focus on addressing metrics can overlay and/or displace organic scholarship activity and give rise to a reduced sense of scholarship–as simply a tool or means to fix problems or a deficit in teaching (Bass, 1999; McCarthy, 2008). In a recent update on his work, Bass (2020) picks up on the tendency for scholarship to be subsumed into deficit thinking and calls for a re-framing of how we might conceptualise the role of scholarship (SOTL) in HE. 'What if', he suggests, 'we consider [..] higher education and more broadly, human learning as a wicked problem and a grand challenge to be addressed rather than a problem to be fixed?' (Bass 2020: 11). Such a shift in perspective would not only open up and give space to the creative and dynamic potential of scholarship to innovate, redesign and rethink learning and teaching, it might also elevate the importance of activities related to teaching and learning (scholarship) in such a way that these activities are (finally) given equal value and status to that of research. Scholarship then, is important not only because of its ability to enrich the educational experience of students and the personal and professional development of academics, it is also important because of its potential to address and investigate existential questions surrounding the role of learning and teaching as well as the role of HE in contemporary society. Viewed in this way, it is perhaps fitting to finish with a quote that resonates as much today as it did over 30 years ago, when Boyer (1990: 1) asserted that 'scholarship is not an esoteric appendage: it is at the at the heart of what the profession is all about.'

Opportunities to (un)learn and (re)shape the discipline by Madeleine Le Bourdon

'*The classroom remains the most radical space of possibility in the academy*' (hooks, 1994: 12)

hooks' statement rings as true in 2023 as it did in 1994. Against the backdrop of multiple global crises, the neoliberalisation of HE in the UK increasingly restricts freedom of

thought. From REF cycles and University rankings to precarious contracts and commodification of HE, it feels at times that the only place of salvation is our classrooms. Though we are seeing an increasing marketisation of the curriculum, teaching and learning remains a space of hope for transformative change. At the root of many pedagogical practices are epistemologies and methodologies that seek to cut through hegemonic knowledge systems and disrupt the status quo. For hooks (1994: 12), this means viewing teaching as a 'movement' that seeks to confront imposed frontiers, create 'new visions' and make 'education the practice of freedom'.

The Teaching and Scholarship track provides me with the opportunity to be closer to the forefront of this movement. As an educator and pedagogical researcher, my continuous journey of (un)learning alongside my students constantly (re)shapes my ideas of knowledge. Having the time and space to reflect, research and innovate pushes me to look beyond the systems and structures that have framed my own subjectivity as I have travelled through the UK education system. From the Eurocentric history I was taught in school to the absence of non-western theory in my undergraduate degree. As both a political scholar and educator, understanding the politics behind education policy and the impact it has had on my own understanding of the world is invaluable for unrooting hierarchies of knowledge. In doing so, it forces me to practice the very reflexivity we ask of our students, to question the sources of my own understandings, the systems that uphold these knowledges, and my own positionality within them (see Le Bourdon, 2022).

Reflecting upon rather than pursuing the accumulation of 'knowledge' goes against the grain of many university policies that seek to pursue 'research-led teaching'. This framing further justifies the economic model where research endeavours are prioritised through funding with the idea they will eventually trickle down to our teaching by adding to existing content. Instead, the scholarship side of my role flips this to ask what we can learn from 'teaching-led research'. By going back to the roots of what education we are providing, we ask ourselves, what do we think we know? What do we count as knowledge? Why do we see knowledge in this way? This cuts through the hierarchy of knowledge that has come to shape the framing of academia and seeks to practice 'knowledge cultivation' rather than 'knowledge production' (Chatterjee, 1998; Shilliam, 2015). Building on Chatterjee, Shilliam (2015: 24–25) argues that the latter offers simply an accumulation or extension of someone else's knowledge, while the former asks the educator to 'turn over and oxygenate the past' in a continuous processes of inquiry. Through this open-ended reflection and questioning we allow for alternative understandings to grow (Rutazibwa, 2023). In short, rather than simply adding to Political Studies, pedagogical scholarship critically questions the discipline itself, providing space for 'a matrix of alternatives' from universal to a pluriverse of understandings (Kothari et al., 2019: xxvvii); but it also forces institutions to reflect on the efficiency of its funding models and the structural inequalities that both shape and are enacted by the sector.

The practice of cultivation allows for the demystification of academia and allows us to journey with our students to the roots of Political Science. Recognising the different foundations of knowledge our students arrive with is essential, enabling us to build a more accessible, learner-centred pedagogical experience. Adequate investment in Teaching and Scholarship roles supports this more considered approach to curriculum orientation, by connecting pedagogical research to our teaching. My own research on informal learning for global challenges has had a direct impact on the development of a core first year module (Le Bourdon, 2018, 2020), which supports students to foster critical skills directly for a Political and International Studies degree. At the same time, my

teaching on youth activism has led me to pursue research on social media as an informal space for political pedagogy (Le Bourdon, 2018, 2020) . If teaching and scholarship contracts are given the funding and time for conducting and connecting pedagogical research, we can actively move away from 'banking concepts' where chosen knowledge is simple deposited to perceived 'passive' learners (Friere, 1990 [1970]). Instead, acknowledging learners as active agents in their own education, and the wider discipline, creates an opportunity for transformative learning that both shape and are reshaped by political research and pedagogy.

The joy of these processes has been to learn with and from my students. As Freire (1990 [1970]: 31) states, 'whoever teaches learns in the act of teaching, and whoever learns teaches in the act of learning'. Opening up my teaching and research as simultaneous spaces for continuous reflexivity and enquiry with students has led to avenues of debate and discussion I would not have found through conferences or peer-review. Many of our students are at the forefront of the many of the topics we explore in Political Studies. From the climate crisis to cyber-terrorism, fake news to global health, the many walks of life our students come from provide a pluriverse of opinions and ideas themselves. In encountering these discussions in classrooms, I myself have come to understand the field more holistically. Creating spaces for uncomfortable or courageous conversations in my teaching has allowed the class, as a community, to reflect, challenge and conceive of global challenges through alternative perspectives. The educational focus of my role gives me such privileges, to listen to those who will shape the future of our research: our students.

Alongside students, pedagogical scholarship allows academics to look beyond the silos of our research, creating opportunity for creative collaboration in ways that are not, by nature, competitive or target driven. As co-Director of a research centre dedicated to pedagogical scholarship (The Centre for Teaching Innovation and Scholarship at the University of Leeds) we have started the *Politics and Pedagogy* podcast bringing scholars across our discipline into conversations; funded research into the role of social media as a space for learning about global challenges; and held faculty workshops to critically reflect on what 'Decolonial Pedagogy' looks like at our university. If funded and supported equally to research contracts, the teaching track offers an opportunity for the sector to critically reflect on its structural inequalities, foster a community of learning in our institutions and nurture a wiser landscape for research. Thus, in a cycle of scarce funding, excellence frameworks and university ranking, Teaching and Scholarship roles opens a radical space to transform the future of the academy together.

Conclusion by Cathy Elliott

Various common joyful themes shine forth from the reflections in this article, including pride, community and transformation. I want, in conclusion, to reflect briefly on these three themes as well as offering some suggestions about how we might, as practitioners and students of politics, develop and nurture the 'teaching track' for the future.

It is one thing to be able to earn a living in a job but always feel slightly embarrassed or ashamed, undervalued or unimportant, consigned to second-class citizenship, on the end of thoughtless, unintended micro-aggressions about who might have 'potential' to join the research-and-teaching track and who has 'fallen' irredeemably into an educational role. It is another thing entirely to be able to take pride in your work because it matters and you are good at it, because you are devoting your life to the service of others,

advancing the mission of your institution and contributing to a scholarly, academic life. Taking pride in what you do makes a professional life worth living. Given that it is countercultural to focus primarily on education in academic life, it is not always easy for everyone proudly to declare that they have chosen to work in education-focused roles, but the evident pride that my co-authors take in their work is inspiring. Whether it is enabling students to reach the moment where they 'get it', supporting colleagues to forge new career paths, developing research that will enable the curriculum of the future to be more inclusive, or leading transformation in the classroom or the institution, we should be proud of doing important work and focusing our time on it.

Pride is relational: it is a function of how we are viewed by others and how that mediates the ways we view ourselves. Pride is therefore a political emotion that exerts a demand to be seen, respected and celebrated. Pride begins from a community that decides it will stop speaking in whispers and loudly, joyfully declares that there are other ways to live and that we delight in them. The community of scholars who have actively chosen education-focused roles is growing and it is only through supporting one another, taking pride in our work and forging those desire paths for others to follow that we will flourish. All of the sections above speak to this sense of being a member of a growing community and the importance of working together to understand how we can best develop our own skills, induct new members, and transform the institutions we work in for the better. This is political work and therefore an area where scholars from our discipline are particularly well qualified to intervene. As Keith Smith suggests, no-one can do this work alone and we will need many feet to tread the new paths. Kalina Zhekova offers us theoretically rigorous and challenging ways to think about the role of community for education-focused academics that require emotional investment and care, as well as professional expertise and dedication. The CoP that she identifies as beginning to come to life will need its members to take on leadership roles, including at the highest levels, and work together to build coalitions, and campaign and advocate for material and emotional transformation, in a context of scarcity and uncertainty for the whole sector.

All the authors argue that the work we do in this domain requires time, expertise and focus, as any political work does, and therefore requires transformation to the material and emotional conditions under which we do our work. The politics of such a transformation is difficult and needs to take place at multiple levels. Many of the decisions that affect us are taken by people who are not involved in the everyday practices of the classrooms, and under political and financial pressures that are increasingly difficult to contemplate. The argument that funding and public support for the sector comes significantly from students, particularly in the case of the Social Sciences and Humanities, will not be lost on senior leaders. For all the short-term temptations of the fixed term contract and poorer pay and conditions, it should not be all that difficult to make an argument that it is a false economy to fail to invest in educational professionals in HE. However, politics is not always, or even usually, 'top-down': developing the teaching track to its full potential will require a strength of purpose and a set of strategic alliances that can only come from the deep relationships and shared understandings forged in a CoP.

For the Heads of Department, Deans and other University leaders who may be reading, as well as anyone who sits on recruitment and promotion panels, advises colleagues about their careers, or talks casually about the state of the discipline and sector, our suggestions for what can be done to nurture and develop a thriving, joyful, productive teaching track, at this variety of levels, are as follows:

Recruitment: As Ellen Watts argues, too often we see people recruited to education-focused jobs as a 'stepping stone' to the promised land of a research-and-teaching role. This creates a sense from the inside that education-focused careers are not a good and valid choice in and of themselves. It is absolutely commonplace and unproblematic for people to change focus more than once during a long career, but we suggest that when hiring for education-focused jobs, we start by asking whether the candidates want and are well qualified for such jobs, not whether they have potential to do a different one. It should be just as demanding to get an education-focused role as a research-focused one, but the demands should be different ones, with a focus squarely upon education.

Careers Advice: As Ellen Watts eloquently explains, through the advice we give, we produce and legitimise particular emotional responses (joy, disappointment, and so on), and this, too, is a political act. There is sometimes an atmosphere of envy, resentment and shame among those in education-focused roles and this is pernicious and bad for everyone involved. We sympathise: it is heartbreaking for people who have spent many years working towards a research-and-teaching job not to get one, especially when we all know that this is often a matter of luck. It is even worse to have to acknowledge that we live in a world where that luck is deeply unevenly distributed on a systematic and structural basis. However, while it is not unusual in any walk of life for people not to be able to get the job they would ideally like – and there is nothing wrong with feeling grief, sadness, anger and so on in this situation – this does not make it OK to look down on people doing a different job. For an analogy, how do you feel about the school Drama teacher who focuses more emotional energy on their thwarted dream of being a Hollywood actor than on teaching the children who need them, bringing their colleagues down in the process? (For the avoidance of doubt, it is not a perfect analogy given that Hollywood actors are generally both better compensated *and* more precariously employed than Drama teachers, despite both types of work being deeply and incomparably valuable to our minds.) Ellen Watts rightly argues that we need to advise our PhD students and early career colleagues in an even-handed way about the range of roles available in HE. Someone who really does not want an education-focused role, probably should be advised not apply for, or stay in, one. We understand that, for structural reasons, it will be more difficult for some people to take this advice than others: the point is not to deny that successful careers are often not a question of individual choices but rather structural constraints. Rather, we are arguing for the permission and space for those of us who would rather be on the teaching track than in the REF, and are lucky enough to have jobs that suit us well, to be allowed to take pleasure in its joy, and treated as though that were the good, worthwhile and meaningful path that it undoubtedly is. We suggest that this advice can be offered open-heartedly, however: people can be happy in their second or third choice of job and life is full of unexpected twists and turns. I did not know myself how much I would love an education-focused role until I had one.

Terms and conditions: We have focused here on permanent, secure jobs with their own promotion and development opportunities, but it is crucial to continue challenging the precarity that mars academic lives and imperils the quality of the education we provide. If, as Ellen Watts suggests, less advantaged groups are over-represented in education-focused roles because of poor terms and conditions, then the imperative to equalise the tracks is all the more pressing. We think this goes without saying.

Time: Good education and educational leadership require time for thought, reflection, reading, writing and discussion with a wider community. While colleagues in education-focused roles may spend more time teaching over the course of a career than an equivalent research-and-teaching colleague, it benefits everyone to ensure that they have the space and time to pursue self-directed agendas of their own, as Rose Gann persuasively suggests. There is no reason why this should not include dedicated research time to pursue scholarly agendas, pedagogical or otherwise, including access to sabbatical leave, as relevant.

Autonomy: Teachers do a better job when they are treated as autonomous professionals who have the freedom to develop their own practice and creativity and are responsible for the outcome. Education-focused academics need to have a meaningful say over what and how they teach and the direction their careers will go in.

Scholarship: Institutions and individuals define pedagogical research, or scholarship of teaching and learning, in many different ways. There is nothing wrong with this, but a lack of a common understanding of what scholarship is combines with negative stereotypes about the education track and can lead to this work being un(der)valued. As Rose Gann argues, institutions need to build in time for scholarly work in education-focused contracts, and education-track staff need to be supported in developing positive scholarly cultures across departments and institutions. As Rose Gann also explains, this may mean that academic leaders need to think about how to re-position scholarship, so that it is not only understood as part of quality assurance and enhancement regimes but also has room to develop autonomously. Scholarly CoPs likewise need space and recognition to thrive. Great examples of this include the Centre for Teaching Innovation and Scholarship at the University of Leeds, mentioned by Madeleine Le Bourdon above, as well as the UCL Centre for the Pedagogy of Politics (run jointly by me,Kalina Zhekova, and two other colleagues) and, of course, the Political Studies Association's own Teaching and Learning Network. With our backgrounds as Politics experts and social scientists we have a particular contribution to make to the field of pedagogical research as a whole and this is something to be developed and valued.

Promotion: The best institutions now have clear career pathways laid out for education-focused professionals. Where these do not exist, they need to be created, and where they do, they need to stay under review to make sure that they are still meeting the needs of individuals and institutions. More subtly, we need to check the ways we talk about promotion and achievement. Too many colleagues (often wrongly) believe that work on education, educational projects and educational leadership is not valued by institutions and will not lead to career advancement. Talking in this way leads to self-deselection from the process and can readily become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Discourses: No-one should feel, as Ellen Watts says with her tongue only slightly in cheek, that they have ruined their career because they want to focus their time and effort on education ahead of the myriad other things that form part of academic life. When I teach discourse analysis, I encourage students to consider the proposition that discourses are 'practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak' (Foucault, 2002: 49). In this vein, we contend that if we stop talking about education-focused roles as somehow lesser or second class, they will stop being so because it will become nonsensical, even incomprehensible, to value them differentially. In various places in my introduction and conclusion, I have made a distinction of convenience

between material politics and the politics of the emotions. However, as discourse analysts know, the material and the emotional are not really separable, but rather interact and co-constitute one another. We can all take part in challenging both material and emotional hierarchies simply by thinking carefully about how we talk about, and to, our colleagues, how we back each other up and respect each other's work.

Leadership: The transformation we have advocated for in this article can only be achieved through leadership. Colleagues in education-focused roles need to be encouraged and enabled to take on leadership roles at all levels of the institution, and in our disciplinary organisations and networks, both in order to promote good practice and innovation in education, but also to enhance feelings of belonging and recognition. We need to support one another to lead on promoting the sorts of material, emotional and discursive changes we envisage in this article. Leadership is not only about taking on administrative or managerial roles – although it can and should be those things – but also about everyday micro-interactions at the level of the emotions, as discussed by Kalina Zhekova. We show political leadership when we encourage and incite joy and pride in educational work in our everyday interactions; when we argue in a recruitment exercise that the 'right person' for an educational role is the one who is more committed to, and skilled in, teaching; when we support colleagues to make the right career choices for them; and when we challenge deficit discourses, micro-aggressions and hierarchies. Finally, leadership is intellectual. In developing scholarship, ideas, CoPs and creative collaboration, education-focused academics can, and must, lead in our field of expertise in our institutions, in our discipline, and in the sector.

Madeleine Le Bourdon suggests that the work we do in the classroom is a challenge to the narrowness of horizons sometimes produced by exercises like the REF, and that teaching and educational leadership are ways of transforming the world. Rose Gann echoes this with a call for a more expansive understanding of scholarship–which goes beyond responding to and 'fixing' problems arising from teaching audits and metrics and provides a space to explore the purpose and role of HE and knowledge production in a complex society. This article, then, is not just a call for better working conditions or more transparent promotion criteria. Rather, it is a radical invitation to rethink the purpose of our universities as places that do not just generate peer-reviewed articles read by small numbers of colleagues, but, rather, are vibrant environments that reproduce and transform wider society and enable young (and not-so-young) people to engage in research, critical thinking, difficult conversations and the wisdom they will need to live in a hard and changing world. This is skilled work requiring its own expertise and can readily be the focus of a whole, joyful, fulfilling career. We suggest that this is happening already and it would be better to celebrate and enjoy it, rather than wish it away.

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