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Beyond Teaching and Learning - Rethinking Academic Development in Relation to Quality Enhancement

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Abstract

Higher education (HE) today is a diversified area which has grown expansively in response to a rapidly changing educational and political climate over the past decades. In this age of complexity, development and change are omnipresent and intrinsic parts of the university teacher's practice, from the development of the teachers' individual practice at micro-level to the collaborative development of scholarly practice at the meso-level of the department and to the strategic institutional approach at macro-level, which links to employment and promotion frameworks and the recognition of teaching quality. As requirements for pedagogical competence have been built into career structures and criteria for promotion, academic developers have become central to the implementation of these strategies. This development goes hand in hand with the shift in focus from quality assurance to quality enhancement, which has extended the range of professional activities for academic developers. The allowing of the universities to develop their own quality assurance systems, signals a heightened awareness of the importance of ownership and the possibility of influencing quality processes, which in turn relates to national governance strategies of teaching and learning. As the changing educational and political demands on higher education have deeply affected the professional activities of the academic developer and the academic teacher, this article addresses the changes and challenges faced. The aim is to discuss these implications particularly for academic development in this diversified context and to contribute with further knowledge and understanding of structural and organizational prerequisites for the advancement of teaching in higher education.

Keywords: academic development, academic development hubs, Agency, Change, Higher education, Quality assurance, Quality enhancement

1. Introduction

Higher education (HE) today is a diversified area which has grown expansively in response to a changing educational and political climate over the past decades (Saroyan & Trigwell, 2015; Henkel, 2016; Englund, 2018). External pressures include a diverse student population, increasing use of educational technologies, the marketization of higher education and the demand for accountability (D'Andrea & Gosling, 2005; Hornsby & Osman, 2014), which requires a clearer agency on the part of the teachers, so called teacher agency (Haapasaari et al., 2016; Sannino et al., 2016; Englund & Price, 2018). In this, what Englund calls "the age of complexity," development and change are omnipresent and intrinsic parts of the university teacher's practice, from the development of the teachers' individual practice at micro-level to the collaborative development of scholarly practice at the meso-level of the department and to the strategic institutional approach at macro-level, which links to employment and promotion frameworks and the recognition of teaching quality (Englund, 2018; Leibowitz, 2015; Leibowitz et al., 2015). These developments are common across Europe, and Swedish higher education is no exception. The literature on academic development echoes these shifts. Already in 2013 Gibbs notes that academic development activities have changed from focusing merely on the individual teacher to an emphasis on course teams, departments and leadership. In the process, he argues, "small, single, separate tactics have been replaced by large, complex, integrated, aligned and multiple tactics" (pp. 5-9). These changes, Gibbs argues, highlightinternational trends that "involve increased sophistication and understanding of the way change comes about and how it becomes embedded and secure within organizations" (pp. 5-9).

Echoing this development, learning and teaching has become a central topic of discussion when looking towards the future of the European Higher Education Area (Gaebel et al., 2018; Maquire et al., 2020). While the early phases of the Bologna Process focused on structural reforms and increasing mobility and collaboration, today there

is a strong emphasis on learning and teaching. With the 2015 Yerevan Communiqué marking a shift in recognizing the importance of learning and teaching, the 2018 Paris Communiniqué gave prominence to the ongoing areas of transformation of learning and teaching, especially pedagogical enhancement and digitally enhanced learning (Gaebel et al., 2018). Gathering data from more than 300 higher education institutions in 42 European countries, Gaebel et al. (2018) examines how teaching and learning at European higher education institutions evolve in the context of changing demands, technological and societal development, and European- and national-level policies and reforms. Their report confirms and complements the Yerevan and the Paris communiqués by providing an institutional perspective on the development in the European Higher Education Area, which includes focus areas such as teaching and learning strategies, national steering of learning and teaching, teaching approaches, pedagogy, methodology and teaching staff.

As changing demands has placed focus on learning and teaching, higher education in Sweden has followed the European development from quality assurance towards quality enhancement (Stensaker, 2008b; Segerholm, 2012; Schwandt, 2012; Elassy, 2015; Williams, 2016; Pelik, 2016; Nygren, 2018). The universities are now responsible for developing their own quality assurance systems and more emphasis has been placed on ownership and the possibilities of influencing the process (Report 2016:15, The Swedish Higher Education Authority). In the process, a more complex view on quality has emerged. What we are witnessing is a more mature quality assurance work which is characterized by increased trust in the universities themselves and the ways in which they choose to organize their quality work (Pelik, 2016).

In this article we ponder the effects that an increasingly complex HE environment has had on academic development in HE institutions and its implications for the future. The aim is to discuss the implications this has had for academic development, specifically in connection with quality work, and to contribute with further knowledge and understanding of structural and organizational prerequisites. By drawing on studies which discuss the developments of both academic development and quality work, this article ponders parallels and axes of mutual growth and development. Combined with the authors' previous scholarship and proven experiences from both fields, the article offers a unique perspective which sheds light on how universities as organizations may prepare for academic development as inextricably tied to career structures and quality work.

2. The Changing Nature of Academic Development

The expansion of higher education changed the terms for and missions of the universities (Government proposition, 2001/02:15; Edgren & Stigmar, 2014). Increasing demands on pedagogical competence and renewal resulted in the establishing of higher education development units. At Swedish universities it expedited the introduction of higher education development along with national demands for higher education pedagogy (Åkesson & Falk Nilsson, 2010; Edgren & Stigmar, 2014). A similar development may be seen on the international arena as academic development arose out of a need to respond to a changing and growing student population and to create accessible learning environments and improve the learning experience of all students (Gosling, 2009; Grant et al., 2009; Holt et al., 2011; Henkel, 2016;).

The early phases of the Bologna process focused more on structural reforms and increasing mobility and collaboration than on teaching and learning strategies and approaches. As a result, academic development initially focused on higher education pedagogy courses and support for the individual teacher. When the 2005[4], recommendations issued by SUHF[5] (Dnr 0024-16) in the form of learning objectives for higher education pedagogical education, this micro-level focus for higher education development was further established in Swedish HE. Besides formulating learning objectives, the recommendations stipulate that you must have 15 credits in higher education pedagogy, or the equivalent, to be employed and/or active as a university teacher. This requirement means that teachers, albeit reluctantly at times, participate in pedagogical competence development in the form of qualifying courses in higher education pedagogy corresponding to 15 credits.

With the 2011 autonomy reform (Government proposition, 2009/10:149), universities were granted autonomy with regard to higher education pedagogical education, which means that it is up to each higher education institution to decide which requirements for teachers' higher education pedagogical competence are to be set. Paradoxically, this meant that the position of SUHF:s recommendations was further strengthened as they now formed a focal point for the continued higher education development work. This position was aided by the 2015 Yerevan Communiqué which emphasized the importance of learning and teaching, and a few years later by the 2018 Paris Communiniqué which gave prominence to the ongoing areas of transformation of learning and teaching, especially pedagogical enhancement and digitally-enhanced learning (Gaebel et al., 2018). In Sweden, the united student unions' report *Studentens lärande i centrum [Student-centered learning]* (2013) further strengthened the position/status of higher education pedagogy at Swedish higher education institutions. The report, which has carried much weight in

political and strategic discussions nationally and locally, recognizes several key areas, including ten (10) weeks of higher education pedagogical training as a requirement for academic teachers, allocated time for pedagogical development and a push for reward systems for pedagogical skills.

Although universities have offered training for teachers since the 1960s (Bolander Laksov, 2007; Gibbs, 2013), the focus of academic development is hard to pin down, in terms of its functions, methodologies and epistemological values (Debowski, 2014). As noted by Cruz (2021), despite various efforts to describe the scholarship of academic development (Amundsen & Wilson, 2012; Little, 2014; Mårtensson, 2014; Sutherland & Grant, 2016), there is still no consensus about what it constitutes. For most, academic development implies the enhancement of all dimensions of teaching and learning in higher education by means of planned activities involving academic and professional staff. Despite the focus on teaching and learning, it is often referred to as educational or professional development. Barrow & Grant (2012) suggest that academic development is an applied science that draws from the fields of education, sociology, psychology, organizational and change management, and applied linguistics. To complicate matters, the focus and purpose of academic development is highly influenced by the policy and cultural environment in which it functions (Leibowitz, 2014). From within the context of Sweden, Mårtensson (2014) has suggested that the term 'academic development' is used synonymously with the terms 'educational' or 'faculty' development, which mainly refers to various activities aiming for the development of teaching (including supervision), curricula, and leadership of teaching, in turn with the aim of supporting high quality student learning.

As a professional practice, 'academic development' has since its introduction been mainly 'about the creation of conditions supportive of teaching and learning' (Leibowitz, 2014, p. 359; Sutherland, 2016). This is supported by the literature on academic development which describes its main task to be the support of academics in their teaching endeavors with the aim of enhancing student learning (Baume, 1996; Hicks, 1999; Steinert et al., 2006; Barrow & Grant, 2012; Geertsema, 2016; Sugrue et al., 2017). But although the core of academic development has remained intact, its scope has continued to grow, adding to its heightened complexity (Lindström & Maurits, 2014). When Edgren and Stigmar investigated the areas of responsibilities for academic development at Swedish universitites at about the same time (Edgren & Stigmar, 2014), they noted that these varied greatly in ambition and breadth. While the main task was to organize courses and offer consultative development support, responsibilities on meso-level had grown considerably as supporting development with the arranging of seminars and workshops for collegial exchange, best practice and academic teachership as a concept was now well established (Edgren och Stigmar, 2014: 53). Other areas of responsibility on the rise included the support for flexible, online courses and for university management in the form of external reviews and monitoring as well as research in higher education pedagogy (Edgren och Stigmar, 2014: 54). A few years earlier, Edström (2010) had identified four different aspects as integral parts of education development today: identity development, course development, organizational learning and meeting arenas.

The expansion of academic teachership and higher education pedagogy units at Swedish universities mirrors the shift that Gibbs highlights, whose characteristics include "increased sophistication and understanding of the way change comes about and how it becomes embedded and secure within organizations" (Gibbs, 2013, p.5). As its very focus has moved from classroom to learning environment, from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning, higher education pedagogy has moved "from small, single, separate tactics to large, complex, integrated, aligned, multiple tactics" (Gibbs, 2013, p.8). As noted by Bolander Laksov and Scheja (2020), the various dimensions of higher education development today include individual dimensions at micro-level, collegial dimensions on meso-level and institutional dimensions on macro-level.

The establishment of academic teachership and higher education pedagogy units originated in the discussion about how different academic tasks are and should be prioritized and valued in relation to career paths (Bolander Laksov & Scheja, 2020). This issue was raised by Ernest Boyer in his 1990 article *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate* (Boyer, 1990), where he distinguishes between four scholarships – the scholarship of discovery, the scholarship of integration, the scholarship of application and the scholarship of teaching. By foregrounding various dimensions of scientific activity, Boyer expands the very idea of scholarship and is part of the ignition of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) movement.

The SoTL movement has since then taken on a variety of directions in different parts of the world. While reward structures, systematic reflections and development among academics as well as the preparation of students for working life and/or citizenship has been more in focus in Europe and Australasia, in the United States and Canada there is a stronger focus on individual teaching practices, particularly in publishing systematic exploratory studies on teacher's teaching practices (Bolander Laksov & Scheja, 2020). Common to the different directions that SoTL has taken, Bolander Laksov and Scheja point out, there is "a strong emphasis on the importance of developing a

professional approach to university teaching" and "ways of stimulating student learning, using approaches to teaching based on research and proven experience" (2020, p.13). But especially in the last decade, SoTL has come to be used as a strategic framework for bridging the divide between teaching and learning and for giving teaching a higher status. In Sweden, we have seen a trend in policy documents and regulations in the form of quality systems, formulations of employment schemes, expert reviews and promotion models (Fjellström & Wester, 2019). Higher education institutions have developed different models and frameworks for assessing and rewarding teacher's pedagogical qualifications (Bolander Laksov & Scheja, 2020).

With the rise of pedagogical qualification systems and its links to employment and promotion frameworks and the recognition of teaching quality, academic development has further extended to included strategic institutional approaches at macro-level (Ryegård & Winka, 2021; Karlsson et al., 2017). A 2018 survey shows that a few higher education pedagogy units at Swedish universities were even organizationally connected to the systematic quality work (Nygren, 2018). As teaching concerns have been built into career structures and the criteria for promotion, academic development units have become central agents in the implementation of these strategies, which has extended the range of their activities beyond teaching and learning. These activities include individual support for documenting pedagogical competence (such as seminars on how to write teaching portfolios), strategic work (such as revising central documents and processes like for example the university employment orders and criteria for pedagogical competence)and supporting educational leaders (such as program directors with regards to educational progression and alignment). This development goes hand in hand with the shift in focus from quality assurance to quality enhancement, a shift which has also engaged academic development units in activities previously beyond its bounds.

3. From Quality Assurance to Quality Enhancement

As they have matured, most national quality assurance systems have shifted their focus from assurance to enhancement. Rather than focusing primarily on monitoring and evaluations of past quality, there has been more focus on aspects that have been identified and acted upon since the last review as well as on plans for future development.

The idea that quality in education can be obtained through comparison gained strength as the first international measurements were introduced in the 1990s (Segerholm & Amaral, 2014; Segerholm, 2012). A gradual shift in the view on knowledge began already during the economic recession in the 1980s and its policy shift towards neoliberal agendas, which introduced a logic ("rationale") from the private sector aimed at securing production processes and products of high quality (Segerholm, 2012). This view on knowledge was based on the underlying assumption that education is a goal-oriented process whose aim is economic growth and that quality equals results (Popkewitz, 2011). This reductive view on education and quality, argues Haakstad, escalated with the Bologna process and its demands on transparency and clarity on all levels (2001), which, in turn, opened up for accreditation models such as "quality management". The year after the EU ministers gathered in Bologna in 1999, Nilsson and Wahlén (2000) suggested that a more limited results-oriented evaluation system should replace that full-scale improvement-focused evaluation system which had earlier been used in Sweden. Only two years after that Franke (2002) suggests a shift of systems.

The 2003 Berlin communiqué, wherein European education ministers expressed the need for criteria and methodologies for the quality work, led to the introduction of joint standards and guidelines (Kivistö & Pekkola, 2017) and a number of evaluation activities whose main aim was to measure quality had preceded the communiqué, and with that other changes in higher education, which increased the need to increased quality - massification, internationalization and market adjustments. During the early period of what has often been called the quality turn, normative questions about what constitutes good education has made way to control and risk-reducing measurements (Segerholm, 2012; Schwandt, 2012). Quality, which is in itself a complex concept (Tam, 2001) which includes systems, management and culture (Pelik, 2016) was reduced to mostly focusing on accountability-related questions concerning organization and management (Pelik, 2016). This reduced idea of quality, which can be translated as quality assurance, is associated with inspection, regulation and control, and goes against many of the core values of the university and has therefore been viewed negatively (Pelik, 2016; Williams, 2016). Shah & Nair (2013) describe how the European quality assurance system for a long time has focused primarily on the central leadership and institutional management structures, while current systems have gradually come to combine a strong institutional focus with various forms of deep analyses of the academic standard (Shah & Nair, 2013).

As quality enhancement has gradually come more into focus, quality work has merged closer to the institutional microcultures (Mårtensson & Roxå, 2013) and to what Trowler (2008) calls "teaching and learning regimes" (Nygren, 2018). Empirical studies had previously shown that quality assurance work has mainly had effects on

management level (Stensaker 2008b; Harvey & Newton, 2004; Rosa et al., 2006; Stensaker and Harvey, 2011) and that it has remained disconnected from the everyday work of the university teacher (Newton 1999; Stensaker, 2008b; Stensaker et al., 2011; Ozga et al., 2011), something which has negatively affected the legitimacy for quality development of teaching and learning (Mårtensson et al., 2014).

When addressing the question why quality assurance had failed in showing qualitative improvements in learning and teaching, Stensaker points at methodological deficiencies and to a series of assumptions which he claims have governed quality assurance worldwide (2008b). These assumptions include the idea that quality is a well-defined and measurable problem which can be solved and that aims and goals in quality policies are easily agreed upon. They include the belief that organizational change can take place as a result of hierarchical control, application and technical support (Stensaker, 2008b). This top-down implementation of a quality assurance with its strong focus on bureaucratic processes and routine technicalities is a rational process where results should match policy goals and indicators (Stensaker, 2008b). Such a system is built on the assumption that its stakeholders (i.e. academics and students) does not affect the process (Stensaker, 2008b) by engaging in interpretation and translation of concepts and contexts. A study of the Norwegian quality assurance systems presented by Stensaker et al (2011) also show that it is not the quality assurance system per se which seems to have an effect, but rather how the university works with their system and how they organize the work around it (also see Stensaker, 2008a). There is yet another aspect in this, which Westerheijden et al (2007) and Harvey and Williams (2010) emphasize, namely that the impact of quality work to a large extent depends on how academics accept the process and how they choose to actively participate and contribute to it. On the same note, Hopbach argues that ownership and trust are central to the implementation of a quality system (Hopbach, 2012; 2014).

The shift from quality assurance to quality enhancement in Sweden is perhaps most evidently manifested in Swedish Higher Education Authority's (UKÄ) latest quality evaluation model (*Government promemoria 2015/16:76* and Swedish Higher Education Authority *report, 2016:15)*. This new model, which was introduced in 2018 (2018-2022), includes some of these aspects by allowing the universities to form their own evaluation systems. It was developed in dialogue with the universities and takes as its starting point the accountability of the universities themselves. The strong connection between UKÄ's evaluations and the local quality work at the universities is in fact a guiding principle. Moreover, even if UKÄ continues to formulate the criteria which should be met in the evaluations, these remain open and do not control how the universities structure their quality work. Spanning over four relatively large areas – management and organization; environment, resources, and scope; design, implementation, and results; evaluation, measures and feedback -- the scope is also wider than the previous quality evaluation model. What is more, it does not only include educational evaluations but thematic evaluations and evaluations of the university's own quality work.

By allowing the universities to develop their own quality assurance systems, the new quality assurance system signals a heightened awareness of the importance of ownership and th possibility of influencing the process. It also shows a more complex view on quality, mirroring the change from quality assurance to quality enhancement (Kastelliz et al., 2014; Williams, 2016). This change has formed new collaborations and working relationships between those who are being assessed and those who are administrating and interpreting the assessment process.

4. Academic Development - a Hub for University Quality Work

The forging of new kinds of collaborations and working relationships between quality coordinators, academic developers and university teachers is particularly visible when it comes to promotion frameworks and the recognition of teaching skills. As teachers are expected to contribute to the strengthening of a pedagogical quality culture, as part of their academic teachership (Bolander & Laksov, 2020) the link between educational quality and the recognition of teaching skills becomes evident (Mårtensson et al., 2014; Elken & Stensaker, 2018; Nygren & Sjöberg, 2022). In fact, Graham argues (2018), in order for teaching skills and pedagogical excellence to have strategic meaning a structure or an organizational framework is needed which gives these qualifications value. As pointed out by Ryegård & Winka (2021), this close connection between promotion structures, academic development and educational quality has also been emphasized by the Swedish National Union of Students (SFS, 2013) and The Swedish Higher Education Authority (Report 2016) (Larsson, Anderberg & Olsson, 2015; Bjernestedt & Lundh, 2019).

When revising the national recommendations for authorizing higher education courses (SUHF, 2016), an overarching principle in the ensuing report is that higher education pedagogy and promotion structures are central aspects of academic teachership (Karlsson et al., 2017). It follows, the report concludes, that academic development is an inevitable part of a university's quality work and as such it *must be* recurring and long-term. Moreover, in order to strengthen educational quality and pedagogical excellence, quality work must be both

systematic *and* be characterized by an interplay between various systems, such as higher education pedagogy, competence development and promotion systems (Karlsson et al., 2017). This line of argumentation follows that of Stensaker et al (2011) whose study of the Norwegian quality assurance systems that was mentioned earlier in this article shows that it is not the quality assurance system per se which seems to have an effect, but rather how the university works with their system and how they organize the work around it (Stensaker, 2008a).

In light of this, pedagogical promotion structures are not individual concerns but ways in which higher education institutes can further academic development and educational quality (Graham, 2018). Furthermore, because academic developers are involved not only in educating for teaching skills but in the building of qualifications structures, the formulation of criteria for teaching skills and in educating teachers in how to present their qualifications, academic development is already well on its way to become a hub for quality work. At many universities, academic developers are also involved on every level - from individual support to teachers in the form of courses and seminars, to best practice on departmental level, to strategic work with recruitment, career structures and employment orders. As they examine the various dimensions that contribute to forming the framework of fruitful teachership, Bolander & Laksov (2020) argue that academic teachership is characterized by the individual teacher's personal reflections and how these form a platform for the development of her/his pedagogical practice as a professional university teacher (the individual dimension) and the ways in which university teachers present reflections and arguments concerning their own pedagogical practice in a dialogue with their colleagues (the collegial dimension). But academic teachership is also characterized by the institutional frameworks that a department, institute or colleague creates to stimulate the continuous and systematic examination of educational activities (Bolander & Laksov, 2020). For the academic developer this may be translated into the dimensions of faculty development, instructional development and organizational development (Felten et al., 2007; Amundsen & Wilson, 2012; Sorcinelli et al., 2005).

Academic development today includes a focus on the individual teacher, which includes consultation on teaching and the advising of instructors on other aspects of teacher/student interaction and a focus on the course, the curriculum and student learning. In this second level of approach, teachers and education developers work in teams to identify appropriate course structures and teaching strategies. Thirdly, academic development includes a focus on the organizational structure of an institution, including more strategic and visionary questions. This means that the academic developer works strategically on different levels simultaneously: upwards towards the upper management and at the same time towards the teachers and the middle management on both collegial level and individual level. While some describe this expansion of academic development as simply a shift towards organizational higher education agendas (Beach, et al., 2016; Fraser & Ling, 2014), Sugrue et al argue that academic developers now require the "exciting and frightening" ability to serve as activist-advocates within universities, "to model leadership, to advocate for sustainable innovations, to be strategic, to be politically aware, aware of values, of power and positioning within the organization" (2017, p.11). In this landscape, academic developers act as "brokers of change" that both assist educational leaders in identifying strategies for change initiatives and guide leaders in mobilizing theory when engaging in change practices (McGrath, 2019). But academic developers are also important distributors of knowledge as they redirect and spread knowledge from local microcultures across the university (Taylor et al., 2021). To further academic development and educational quality, the roles of change agent and distributor of knowledge are two of the most important tasks for the academic developer.

5. Implications for the Future

The changing educational and political demands on higher education over the last two decades (Saroyan & Trigwell, 2015; Englund, 2018; Maguire, 2018) have deeply affected the professional areas of academic development and the university teacher. In their overview of trends in the practices of the academic developer, Sugrue et al (2017) note that although the position of the academic developer remains highly dependent on their institutional contexts, there is evidence of a "maturing" of the field and a "coming of age" of academic developers' work (p.2340-2). This has not only resulted in the attainment of a certain status for the field of professional practice in HE but it also reflects a more active and interactive learning environment.

The increasingly complex HE environment places new demands on academic developers and has direct implications on the everyday practices of the academic teacher who needs to work in close cooperation. The parallel development of quality work in higher education and the axes of mutual engagement provide a productive platform to analyze the conditions and demands for the changing professional field of academic development. For academic teachers, the increasingly complex HE environment suggests that development and change are integral parts of every university teacher's everyday practice, from the development of the teacher's individual practice at the micro-level to the collaborative development of scientific practice at the meso-level at the departments to the

strategic work at the macro-level, which links to recruitment and qualification issues. This implies a strong focus on collaborative and collegial learning which, in turn, raises discussions about how and in which ways teachers can develop the ability to question, analyze and create their own practice, how they can guide personal and professional development and contribute to increasing the quality of education, so called teacher agency (Haapasaari et al., 2016; Sannino et al., 2016; Englund & Price, 2018). For academic developers this implies a formative way of working which focuses on setting processes in motion and creating long-term networks and structures at the same time as they must work on a strategic and systematic level. It is in fact on the level of strategic and systematic work that academic development and quality work most often intersect.

Working in what Gibbs refers to as "large, complex, integrated, aligned, multiple tactics" (Gibbs, 2013, p.8) place great demands on academic developers as they must be firmly grounded in both organizational change and strategic work at the same time as they must engage actively in both teaching and research. Their range of activities goes beyond supporting academics in their teaching endeavors to enhance student learning and includes the development of a wide frame of references when it comes to the conditions of university teaching and learning, the providing of a basis for development of teachers' didactic and pedagogical knowledge and skills and the facilitation of contact surfaces over organizational and academic frontiers within the university. Acting as "brokers of change" (McGrath, 2019) and distributors of local knowledge from departmental microcultures (Taylor, 2021), academic developers fill an important function in quality enhancement.

As noted by Bolander Laksov & Tomson, academic leadership involves processes on the levels of students, teachers as community and at the organizational level (2016). When practiced by the academic developer, academic leadership should include the ability to create 'back-stage' conversations to develop thinking, the breaking in of new ideas in communities of practice, a systematic view for effective implementation and the ability to interact and communicate within various communities of practice (Bolander Laksov & Tomson, 2016). The professional academic developer must, in other words, be versatile in navigating these various levels and dimensions as they exercise their pedagogical leadership. As academic development in that leadership has an exploratory role, or as Baume and Popovic puts it, a reconnaissance function (Baume & Popovic, 2016), where part of the mission consists of investigating what is at the forefront and trying out new things, another important part of being an academic developer is the ability to work with a future orientation. This so-called 'horizon scanning' is vital for the role of an academic developer (Baume & Popovic, 2016).

For the university, this raises important questions concerning the ways in which the organization provides the necessary conditions for exploratory and strategic leadership such as that of the academic developer and for academic development to be fully embedded in the university organization on all levels. In urging that we must think more broadly about the academic development project. Sutherland (2018) argues for a more holistic and multi-level approach to learning and teaching and for both short term and long-term strategic views of educational quality. In referring to Golding's (2014) critically asked question of whether we may 'constrain ourselves – and ultimately the potential of the academic development project – by cleaving to too narrow a conception' (pp. 261), Sutherland argues that we must broaden our focus beyond learning and teaching to pay attention to 'the whole of the academic role', 'the whole institution' and 'the whole person' (pp. 261-262). In doing so, Sutherland explains, other aspects of academic careers would be taken into account (research, service, administration, leadership, etc.) and would include not just academic staff but the professional and support staff, and the students, who support the development of teaching, learning, and research. Finally, such a holistic and multi-level approach 'would embrace the ontologies, epistemologies, and emotions, intellectual and personal, of the academics that we support, serve, and develop.' This would entail, Sutherland concludes, that the academic developer serves in what has become an expected role as 'brokers' between 'disciplines, departments, leaders and managers on the development of, and strategic imperatives around, learning and teaching' (pp. 270).

To become a hub for quality work, academic developers need to view themselves as such brokers or agents of change and they need to work actively on building strategic connections between micro-, meso-, and macro-levels of academic development work and microcultures. In doing so, academic developers will connect quality work – which is often carried out on strategic level – with local microcultures. But it also requires academic development as a professional field to broaden its competence base to include not only experts on the scholarship of teaching and learning, but to also include experts on the scholarship of educational development (Taylor et al., 2021). This is, we argue, a prerequisite for the professional field of academic development to truly "embrace complexity" (Cruz et al., 2021) and become a hub for quality work to reach its full potential.

Academic development is, to use the words of Wenger, a joint enterprise (1998) between academic developers and other members of the university communities. The forging of new connections between academic development and quality work illustrates that such a joint enterprise is already in place and in the making. The critical

conversation about advancing practice in academic development should then include ways of moving forward in this joint enterprise. How do we navigate the complexity of organizational structures and the tensions in academic work, which are often fuelled by disciplinary differences? How do we encourage collaboration with other development fields? And how do we, despite the 'complexity and diffusion' of academic development (Sugrue et al., 2017), remain coherent? How do we, in other words, move beyond teaching and learning to rethink academic development? These are vital questions in a conversation about the present and future of academic development that need to be discussed further.

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