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THE FIRST  
INTERNATIONAL  
SYMPOSIUM  
ON PEDAGOGIC  
FRAILTY AND  
RESILIENCE

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# SYMPOSIUM ABSTRACTS & TIMETABLE

- 9:30 am **Coffee & registration** (Lecture Theatre B)
- 10 am **“The origins and potential of pedagogic frailty”**  
Professor Ian Kinchin, University of Surrey, UK
- 10:30 am **“Safe spaces or strange places? Pedagogic frailty and the quality of learning in higher education”**  
Professor Ray Land, University of Durham, UK
- 11 am **BREAK**
- 11:30 am **“Do no harm: Risk aversion versus risk management in the context of pedagogic frailty”**  
Dr Julie Hulme, Keele University, UK
- 12 pm **“Dialogic Approaches to Frailty”**  
Dr Chris Wiley & Mrs Jo Franklin, University of Surrey, UK.
- 12:30 pm **LUNCH** and examination of maps
- 1:30 pm **“Profiling pedagogic frailty”**  
Professor Paulo Correia, University of São Paulo, Brazil
- 2:00 pm **“Bend or break? Dimensions of Intrapersonal and organizational resilience”**  
Dr Naomi Winstone, University of Surrey, UK
- 2:30 pm **“An exploration into pedagogic frailty: transitioning from offline to online.”**  
Miss Irina Niculescu, University of Surrey, UK
- 3:00 pm **Q+A** and general discussions - what next?
- 4:00 pm **END**

**Presentations will be in Lecture Theatre E**  
**Social events will be in Lecture Theatre B**

# THE ORIGINS AND POTENTIAL OF PEDAGOGIC FRAILTY



**Ian Kinchin**  
University of Surrey, UK

## **Abstract:**

The model of pedagogic frailty ‘came into view’ after several years’ work with university teachers to try to create some kind of coherence to their academic role and to the ways in which they might reflect upon their practice. The application of concept mapping was central to this endeavour, permitting reflection on the structure of knowledge and the interconnections between ideas. This helped me to appreciate the nature of powerful knowledge and to find parallels between the work of cognitive psychologists (such as David Ausubel) and sociologists of education (such as basil Bernstein and Karl Maton). The work took on a particular twist when, through personal circumstance, I immersed myself into the literature on clinical frailty. This presented an immediate link between the factors that can be identified in clinical frailty, and those which act upon university academics to reduce their innovative capacity and

resilience to environmental perturbations – pedagogic frailty. The synthesis of these ideas into the model of pedagogic frailty was then reinforced through a number of pilot studies with colleagues representing a diversity of academic disciplines (e.g. Kinchin et al., 2016; Kinchin & Francis, 2017), and by inviting colleagues from various research traditions to interrogate the idea from the perspective of their own research (Kinchin & Winstone, 2017). I have no doubt that the model is not perfect, and that it will need to undergo refinement as further research throws light on the applicability of the idea. However, current discussions appear to raise the possibility that the concept of pedagogic frailty may have the potential to support reflection on practice and the enhancement of teaching at the individual, departmental and institutional levels.

# SAFE SPACES OR STRANGE PLACES?

**Pedagogic frailty and the quality of learning in higher education.**



**Ray Land**  
Durham University UK

## **Abstract:**

In preparing to face a globalised society characterised by uncertainty, complexity, risk and speed, academics and students need to encounter a certain strangeness, and knowledge that is uncomfortable, challenging and troublesome. It would be irrational to approach such complexity through curricula emphasising only greater linearity and 'crystal clarity' (Ecclestone, 2012). What Shulman (2005 p.1) characterises as 'pedagogies of uncertainty' offer more fruitful ways to address the aetiology of pedagogic frailty. One framework of learning places encounters with difficulty, and the need for resilience at its centre. 'Threshold Concepts', advocates that, whatever the discipline, certain concepts

or practices act like a portal, opening up new conceptual terrain and previously inaccessible ways of thinking and practising. These conceptual gateways are often points of student difficulty requiring a letting go of customary ways of seeing. They provoke a state of 'liminality' – a space of transformation from an earlier understanding towards that which is required. This can be uncomfortable, and clearly does not sit easily with economic liberalist notions of students as consumers, or with notions of safe space. Rather, such work entails an ontological or affective shift in the learner, leading to changed subjectivity.

# DO NO HARM

**Risk aversion versus risk management in the context of pedagogic frailty**



**Julie A. Hulme**  
Keele University, UK

## **Abstract:**

Innovation in teaching ensures that education remains fit for purpose in a changing world. The model of pedagogic frailty proposes that educators may perceive innovation as risky, which may inhibit innovation, and thus reduce opportunities to update learning experiences. Within psychology, psychological literacy (the skills, knowledge and attributes acquired as outcomes of studying psychology) is becoming increasingly central to the curriculum. Educators are teaching more applied psychology, which requires new pedagogic approaches, and are adopting and modelling core professional values espoused as components of psychological literacy, including evidence-based practice, ethics, and professional competence.

We argue that psychology educators (and those from other disciplines) may assess the risk of innovation through the lenses of these professional values. The decision to maintain 'safe' practices may reflect a risk management approach, rather than frailty. We propose a model whereby frailty may depend on social context and risk in different educational circumstances. The professional values associated with psychological literacy and similar integrative disciplinary constructs, which at first seem to hinder innovation, may promote innovation which is creative and safe, and will facilitate the development of a rigorous evidence base to inform future practice.

# DIALOGIC APPROACHES TO PEDAGOGIC FRAILITY



**Christopher Wiley**  
University of Surrey, UK



**Jo Franklin**  
University of Surrey, UK

## Abstract:

In this interactive presentation, the authors discuss their endeavours to extend their explorations of pedagogic frailty (Wiley & Franklin, 2017) through comparative dialogue beyond the parameters of the original research projects within which their concept maps were formulated (Kinchin & Wiley, 2017; Kinchin, [Franklin,] et al., 2016). It will follow a tripartite structure:

1. The authors will outline their 'reciprocal autoethnography' approach (after Learmonth & Humphreys, 2011 and Chang et al., 2013), with a particular focus on their Research-Teaching nexus [RTN] concept maps as well as the analytical tables that facilitated their discussions.

2. Attendees will then be invited to explore points of similarity and convergence between

different concept maps (either their own or, where these do not exist, the authors' Regulative vs. Instructional discourse [RD] maps) through dialogue in pairs.

3. The ensuing feedback section will identify how the authors sought to transcend the perceived constraints of the original framed autoethnography process through a more holistic, comparative examination of pedagogic frailty.

In conclusion, the authors will consider how such dialogic approaches may generate an enhanced understanding of the different preoccupations, priorities and motivations between colleagues (irrespective of subject area or career stage), potentially leading to stronger collaborations and more resilient teams.

# PROFILING PEDAGOGIC FRAILITY



**Paulo Correia**  
University of São Paulo, Brazil

## Abstract:

Concept maps (Cmaps) are the best choice to frame and organise academics' narratives, making visible subtle conceptual relationships that trigger and sustain the reflective practice. However, the need of an expert interviewer who must combine a clear understanding of concept mapping and pedagogic frailty hinders the model's broad dissemination and use. This presentation will cover our current research efforts to design instructional activities to support academics to represent their pedagogic frailty profile without mastering the concept mapping technique. The aim is to foster knowledge representation, elicitation and reflective practice, mimicking the mediating actions

utilised by the expert during individual interviews. We ask academics to respond to simple questions that scaffold the Cmap creation and revision. After obtaining a high-quality representation of your mental models, a set of prompts promote reflective practice to put the academics into an internal dialogue to delve into the yet-to-be-known about their professional development. The creation of these instructional activities is the first step toward an on-line computer-based system capable of making the profiling task available around the clock to academics around the world.



# BEND OR BREAK?

## Dimensions of Intrapersonal and Organisational Resilience



Naomi Winstone  
University of Surrey, UK

### Abstract:

In a complex and challenging environment, the term 'resilience' is often used to represent the ability of an individual or system to weather the storm of adversity; however, the application of this term to educational contexts is potentially problematic. For example, in the context of education, Margolis et al. (2014) argue that a focus on resilience within institutional dialogue can normalise stress and difficulty in teaching, which can lead to a perpetuated sense of helplessness that is not conducive to innovation. In this talk, I attempt to give some clarity to the definition of resilience in the context of education, and to move beyond problematic associations with fragility and weakness. I draw upon two key arguments; the first is that the concept may be more applicable to the level of organisations and teams, rather than to individuals. Second, I return to the origins

of the term resilience in the natural sciences, where resilience represents properties that enable a material to bend and return to its original shape, not break, under pressure. I argue that this static conceptualisation contradicts many of the values underpinning education, and instead, I discuss a dynamic view which draws upon reconceptualization of resilience as 'adaptive capacity', or "the ability of a system to evolve in order to accommodate environmental threats or changes and the ability to expand the range of variability" (Bhamra, Dani, & Burnard, 2011, p. 5387). I will argue that a focus on adaptive capacity can potentially mitigate against problematisation of the term 'resilience', and promotes a proactive rather than reactive approach to managing change

# AN EXPLORATION INTO PEDAGOGIC FRAILITY

## Transitioning from offline to online



Irina Niculescu  
University of Surrey, UK

### Abstract:

Pedagogic frailty and concept mapping can simultaneously encourage personal and organisational change by supporting critical reflection and resilience. These ideas are nascent within higher education institutions and currently, at the University of Surrey, are only developed through face-to-face sessions. This revealed the need for a scalable intervention which engages academics with the discourse on introspective and

professional development practices. In response, we have created the design for a blended programme of online foundation for concept mapping leading to face-to-face workshops to explore the pedagogic frailty model. This session will discuss some significant challenges arising from transitioning self-reflective practices from offline to online spaces.

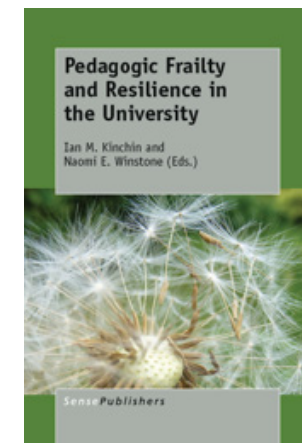
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# PEDAGOGIC FRAILITY AND RESILIENCE IN THE UNIVERSITY

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