Introduction: Teaching in Turbulent Times

As many colleagues working in higher education (HE) and Further Education (FE) will attest, we currently live and work in turbulent times. Old certainties about the purpose and value of universities continue to evaporate as we shift and lurch towards increasingly unpredictable futures. Many scholars have commented on the nuances of this process in relation to the neo-liberalisation of education (Meyer, 2014; Peters, 2011; Roberts, 2007). For instance, recently there has been an emergence and increasing prominence of objectifying performance metrics of teaching in HE, such as the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) in the UK, along with the gradual privatisation of educational institutions (Ball & Youdell, 2008). The controversies surrounding these debates often hinge on what can and cannot be measured in teaching and learning, and what interpretations of any such measurement outcomes can mean respective to the assumed quality of the 'product' that universities 'sell' to their 'consumers' (Avis, 1996).

While much can be said about the macro-political, social, cultural and economic consequences of these shifts in the direction of contemporary HE, the drive behind this book is to focus attention on the importance of learning and teaching within changing landscapes. As early-career academics, together we share insights that come from working for a number of years at the 'sharp end' of student facing HE. During our university careers we have seen, felt and lived elements of HE's turbulence as we have sought out and worked on temporary and sometimes part-time contracts, attempted to keep up with the shifting skill sets that are often required of academics and watched as senior university management teams devised and implemented reorganisation strategies, often with mixed success.

We therefore understand in the most personal ways the challenges of getting one's first academic position, and what pithy catch-phrases like 'publish or perish' can mean in different contexts for attempts to gain a healthy work/life balance – particularly in environments where teaching, and not research, dominates the economic reality and day-to-day routines of our work. In such contexts, we have developed relationships with many students and watched proudly as they have progressed. We have experienced the importance of high quality teaching and learning

for ensuring such development. And we have seen first-hand the manner in which pressures from digital transformations, student evaluation surveys, employability agendas and other shifts in education have reshaped the daily practices of academic life, with their attendant impacts on students' experiences and wellbeing.

Often, it is the seminal sociological texts that we return to with renewed interest to help interpret such developments, and understand how best to shape our academic work in relation to them. One such text is Mills' (1959) book *The Sociological Imagination*. In the following section we explain why the concept of the sociological imagination has served as a guide for this book, and where Mills' work intersects with the various teaching and learning experiences and philosophies that are brought to life in the chapters which follow.

Drawing on the Sociological Imagination

It is widely recognised in educational scholarship that the transformational power of knowledge forms the foundation of the philosophy of lifelong learning (Brookfield, 1986; Freire, 1970; Illeris, 2002). More specifically, Mills (1959) believed that those with adequate, reflective knowledge and critical thinking skills could disrupt the domination of society's power elites and work towards modules of social justice. It's a key point of departure for much discussion of the transformational and liberatory power of education itself.

The concept of the sociological imagination offers a lens with which to consider the qualities of mind that enable individuals to grasp the interconnected nature of wider social processes and the lived realities of one's own life, in other words, to understand how 'personal troubles' are inextricably linked to 'public issues' (Mills, 1959). A reflexive understanding of how one's lifecourse is shaped by social forces beyond one's immediate ability to perceive – but, crucially, not outside of one's ability to influence, react to, or resist – is a key task for anyone hoping to thrive in an increasingly fragmented, fast-paced, globalised world. The pedagogical possibilities for applying Mills' observations thereby centre on the importance of empowering students with skills of reflexivity and criticality. And of course, realising such a goal is not possible without shaping our pedagogical approaches consistently around the specific needs of our students. But what do we actually mean by a pedagogy which embraces a sociological imagination?

Pedagogy can be broadly defined as the methods and practice of teaching and learning, more specifically as an academic subject or theoretical concept. However, as we would argue, teaching is more than the didactic approach of an educator; it's about facilitating processes of individuals' learning experiences in meaningful ways, through the art, science and craft of pedagogy (Armitage et al., 1999; Avis, 2009; Hargreaves, 1998). And these learning processes cannot be meaningful without the emotional aspects of socio-cultural and historical contexts, which effectively bring learning to life (Bantock, 1967; Duckworth, 2013; Palmer, 1998). So, whilst the practical methods of pedagogy consist of scaffolded learning

tasks and culturally relevant assessments (Ladson-Billings, 1995), they also should not avoid a strong awareness and engagement with value-judgements that form an intrinsic part of every curriculum and educator's teaching philosophy (Ade-Ojo & Duckworth, 2015; Biesta, 2011).

In this way, we argue that pedagogical methods, course content, and one's overarching philosophy cannot be separated, and instead consist of a careful balance between eliciting students' experiences whilst responding to students' feedback. Drawing pedagogical tools together with the sociological imagination is a meaningful way of combining practical methods of intervention with robust academic theory; it is then possible to interpret various aspects of our labour as an expression of a larger social struggle for emancipation on behalf of the students we work with. In this sense, the complex ways teachers' identities and emotions are embodied through emotional labour within the wider context of ever-shifting working environments, as well as the more specific classroom dynamics comprising the everyday experience of teaching, become prominent aspects of analysis (Constanti & Gibbs, 2004; Palmer, 1998; Rogers, 1986). As such, this book presents a number of ideas about how the sociological imagination might develop theorisations around this and other elements of HE and FE work today, and in the process draws out practical and meaningful ways to enhance teaching and learning towards the holistic ambitions outlined above.

Indeed, while we appreciate and support the importance of turning the sociological imagination to focus critically on the political, economic and other meta-level shifts in the HE sector, we have found ourselves at the centre of these debates with jobs to do and students to teach. The chapters drawn together here contribute to ongoing discussions about 'turbulent times' in academia, in the sense that they are informed by the contributors' positions at the 'coal-face' of learning and teaching. As such, our way of understanding and navigating the pressures shaping contemporary HE comes in the form of an exploration of the importance of *teaching with sociological imagination*, derived from a critical, reflexive engagement with our own situated practices, theorisations and professional identities. In this sense, rather than focusing on discursive or political moves to challenge neoliberal policies affecting academia, our approach here can be conceptualised as a form of 'resistance from within'. To put it metaphorically, as academia changes around us and we increasingly find ourselves trapped inside 'the belly of the beast', we need to find ways to support our students cutting their way out.

To that end, we have sought out contributions from social-science scholars who we argue are managing to tread the difficult path between being critical of potentially harmful changes in academia, while also pragmatically adjusting to the realities of this ongoing process. In exploring and marking out these paths we argue that the following chapters represent theoretical and practical ways to consider, challenge and critique the contemporary and future shape of learning and teaching, whilst also endeavouring to do our best possible work in spite of institutional, sector-wide changes raging around us.

To further contextualise the aims of this book, we begin by drawing on some personal reflections from our careers in academia to date. While we have taken

three different paths, we have each arrived at similar positions in how we think about learning and teaching. It is this practically developed, shared understanding of pedagogy, aligned with the sociological imagination that underpins this book and what we argue is our genuinely student-centred approach. And building on this we hope to provide colleagues with a resource for plotting paths through the 'turbulent times' we work in and that undoubtedly still lie ahead.

Becoming 'Genuinely Student-Centred'

During our meetings to discuss the proposal for this book and throughout the editorial process we have repeatedly drawn on a variety of personal experiences to help us think through our orientations to teaching and learning. While we adopt different styles and prefer different pedagogical tools, where all three of us share common ground is in our passion for achieving a genuinely student-centred approach. We use the word 'genuine' here as a means of marking out the difference between the often marketised, PR rhetoric of student-centredness and the reality of holding such an orientation as a central feature of one's day-to-day practices in HE. In the following three accounts, we outline significant lessons that shaped our development in this regard. They are intended to provide colleagues with an insight into key ways to consider student-centred pedagogy as well as indicating the tone and aims of this book. In sharing these stories with you we also hope to mirror the dialogue we aim to create when teaching in a democratic and student-centred environment.

Christopher's Account: 'Yes, but What Are YOU Going to Do?'

My first official lecturing post outside of assisting my PhD supervisor with his teaching was at a college in Nottingham, UK. During this time I was fortunate enough to be given the freedom to lead a module largely based on my area of research, and over three years I was provided with enough space to refine the curricular content while at the same time developing my teaching ability. I had some great feedback from staff and students alike and looking back I see some of the formative steps that I was taking in developing my own pedagogical philosophy and style. One moment in this process still stands out to me, and I have drawn on this experience throughout my career to help work through some of the more challenging issues I have faced in terms of learning and teaching.

The programme's external examiner was visiting to ratify the marks we had awarded. At this time I had no clue that such meetings even existed, let alone how seriously institutions took them. I rolled into the meeting wearing shorts and a t-shirt (it was summer after all) to find my colleagues all in formal work wear. I remember thinking that I'd not grasped the importance of this event and while I could not

sharpen my clothing I certainly tried to sharpen my mind. So, I set about taking in as much information as possible to help me prepare for what might lie ahead.

The day played out much like all the external examiner events that I have been involved in since; a positive and encouraging process of reflecting on the critical commentary of a senior colleague who shares a passion for educating. I learned a lot that day, although the most crucial of these lessons came when I was asked to describe how my module had gone. I'd considered the individual lectures and made notes on how they could be improved next year, but I had not at that point thought about the module as a whole. I suggested that it had gone well, but that 'some of the students didn't quite get all of the theory' I was delivering to them. My focus when explaining this was on the students who had poor attendance, or had not kept up with the assigned readings, yet the external examiner pulled me up on my comment; 'well yes, students don't always attend and they often won't do all the readings, but what are *you* going to do?' Initially this struck me as a little odd. What am I going to do to make them attend? What am I going to do to make them read? Surely it was the students who had not held up their side of the teaching and learning relationship?

Through pushing me to reconsider my role in this relationship the external examiner flicked a pedagogical switch for me. While it is certainly necessary for students to understand and fulfil their side of the teaching interactions, I now understood the central role that I occupied in enabling them to do this. Furthermore, I was now armed with a way of understanding teaching and learning which, rather than accepting certain factors as outside of my control, focuses on understanding and developing the various ways that I can have positive impacts on students' behaviours. With hindsight, informed by years of teaching and a more formal education in pedagogy, this seems obvious now. Of course I should be concerned with the manner in which my actions can help students make the correct choices, even if those choices are not directly under my control. Because of this early lesson in pedagogical orientation I have a 'go to' position when issues arise with student attendance, engagement, or attainment: what can I do better to help them?

This simple way of considering teaching and learning has led to me solving and managing a variety of pedagogical problems that others had considered to be outside of their control. I find this orientation provides me with an almost endless supply of energy with which to confront the hurdles and stumbling blocks that our students face. It might seem obvious that someone involved in education might adopt such a stance. But my experience in various HE institutions has demonstrated that this is often not the case.

In my current position as a senior lecturer and undergraduate course leader at the University of Brighton (at the time of writing) I am able to ensure that this pedagogical orientation is employed across the learning and teaching on my degree programme. I have seen first-hand the positive manner in which students respond when one's focus is shifted in this way. I have also seen similar good practice during my own experiences of being an external examiner at the University of Bedford and Sheffield Hallam University. And I still draw on this pedagogical moment to help guide colleagues in reorienting themselves to what I believe to be a more positive manner of conceptualising the lecturer's role in genuinely student-centred learning and teaching.

Ursula's Account: 'My Student-Centred World Shifted on Its Axis'

Like many mature students, my own learning journey has been 'colourful' and might not be defined as traditional. After a 15-year career in various commercial-sector jobs (in England) I pursued my passion to teach. My jobs included sales insurance, call-centres, merchandising, accountancy, hospitality and many others; none were rewarding and often I wouldn't stay long before moving on, hopeful of 'greener grass'. Inevitably, this didn't appear and having left school with few qualifications, options were limited. Like many adult learners, my learning evolved: an informal evening-class led to an undergraduate degree, Diploma in teaching, Masters and eventually a PhD in Education. Despite the financial and emotional challenges of being a mature, female student in an environment not yet 'ready' for me, learning about learning became my obsession.

Throughout this journey, inequalities I witness (and experience) strengthen my belief in the transformative power of learning. My use of the sociological imagination provides new insights into past workplace experiences as a tertiary teacher and adds new meaning to the processes of lifelong learning. Over the past 10 years I have facilitated diverse types of adult learning – in large lecture auditoriums, smaller groups and individually. These include English language courses for vulnerable young people at immigration centres, practical workshops at Adult Education Centres, psychology and sociology at vocational colleges, and research methodology and writing courses within teacher-educator programmes at universities. Whether paid or voluntary, virtual or face-to-face, my teaching and research is fused with, and motivated by a sense of social justice and student-centredness.

After completing my PhD, I moved to New Zealand and for two years I taught part-time as a University Lecturer in teacher-education. Here, my student-centred world shifted on its axis. Compared to my experiences in the UK, quality control mechanisms set up to refine student-centred data outcomes like external examiner's meetings and other surveillance strategies were underdeveloped. Student evaluation questionnaires had only recently been employed and in this context seen mainly as a method of lecturers seeking recognition for pedagogical 'success'. My new perspective changed my perception of student-centredness – bringing it onto a continuum with educational cultures positioned along a pathway arguably driven by a global competitive market.

I realised how I had previously taken student-centredness for granted, along with the community of practice that often goes alongside it. As an independent scholar, I now have freedom to pursue freelance research projects which explore and encourage a focus on university teaching quality – and share my social justice objectives. I continue to teach technology and writing at local adult education centres and engage in volunteer teaching for adult literacy charities. In practical ways I incorporate the sociological imagination into my teaching by encouraging my students to draw on their personal contexts and backgrounds for successful learning; by choosing topics for their assignments, engaging in peer-review and

by co-writing scholarly work together. Overall, my teaching philosophy centres on my students' needs, but balancing such complexities with institutional and economic objectives can be challenging.

My years of different types of teaching have encouraged me to pay attention to different kinds of interpretations because by mixing and representing numerous learning theories, emotional complexities that are often hidden can be illuminated. For me, this is what student-centredness is all about; reflecting on this emotional dimension within the learning-teaching exchange is valuable in pursing student-centred strategies because as my research suggests, our emotions are intrinsically linked to learning outcomes.

Teaching in New Zealand brought into sharp contrast aspects of my UK teaching that I had previously taken for granted. Ironically, it was only in its absence that I recognised I had become desensitised to the constant pressures from a student-centredness that exists within a society of consumerism with responsibilities of quality, accountability and risks of litigation that go alongside these burdens. Undoubtedly, an increasing awareness of consumer rights in New Zealand is slowly changing the balance of empowerment, but my research indicates significant challenges lay ahead.

One example of how Aotearoa New Zealand might address these challenges is through research-informed, practical applications that embrace Māori philosophy *ako* – which means both to learn and to teach. The student/teacher relationship is interpreted not as hierarchical, but symbiotic. If my UK teaching experience offers some insights into the future of New Zealand's education systems, this culturally sensitive approach could be a valuable focus for comparative research.

Alex's Account: Questioning the Centrality of My Own Knowledge

Immediately upon completing my PhD, and bringing to an end 20 years of formal, full-time education, I began working at a higher education institution in South London. I moved to the borough of Lewisham to take up this, my first full-time teaching post, which concurrently gave me my first experience of what life was like in a multi-ethnic urban community. While I'd lived in a fairly diverse area while studying in Leicestershire in the East Midlands over the previous few years, this had largely been a function of the cosmopolitan, (mostly) middle-class student body I was part of. Life in Lewisham was a far cry from Leicestershire; as with many areas of London, its diversity was shot through with economic deprivation, such that ethnicity overlapped visibly with social class. In the immediate aftermath of the 2011 UK-wide summer riots, and with the slow but unmistakable gentrification of this and other boroughs underway, I soon became aware of the unique perspective that my life as a socially mobile, middle-class, professionally employed, white man moving into such an urban space afforded me, vis-à-vis the vastly different life experiences of many of my neighbours.

While this dislocating transition offered many opportunities for critical self-reflection, it would impact on my ontological position in a particularly profound way when I was eventually forced to 'confront my whiteness' in the context of my job. As one of two sociologists lecturing on the multi-disciplinary degree I was employed to teach, it eventually fell to me to deliver lectures on the subject of race and ethnicity. Here, I remember feeling like a great imposter as I prepared to lecture (particularly) working-class, black and minority ethnic students about race and racism. What could I, from my position of significant social privilege, teach these young men and women about a social problem they may very well have struggled with daily for their entire lives, which quite likely could carry the direst of consequences for them, and of which I had literally no personal understanding?

Engaging with the facts of my whiteness in this way was unsettling on two fronts. Firstly, it involved a more honest, critical reflection on my personal privilege, and the lack of understanding this afforded me, than I'd experienced before. As such, I found that I could not teach lessons on race without overtly foregrounding the incomplete nature of my own knowledge about the topic in question. Rather than continue to trust in my ability to intellectualise and communicate abstract academic ideas, as I had been trained to do during my doctoral program, I found that instead I needed to build my pedagogical approach upon a dialogue between a critique of my own limited subjectivity and an effort to prioritise students' voices in the classroom, coupled with a more reflective reading of critical social theory and research. This made for a clear departure from the more depersonalised, wholly 'research-informed' approach to teaching I was otherwise given to using and with which I felt most comfortable.

While there is much that could be said about such methods (see Webb & Ukoumunne, this volume, for a detailed account of a similar, yet more robustly conceptualised approach to teaching about race and racism), for the purposes of this vignette I focus instead on the second, wider effect of this experience. That is, in a more general sense it led me to question the centrality of my own knowledge, expertise and status as the basis for my authority as a lecturer altogether. Unlike most other intellectual challenges I'd faced in my life to date, teaching on this topic required a self-conscious decision to centralise my students' perspectives in what I delivered in the classroom, which would soon become a regular feature of the rest of my teaching. In doing so, I began to ask myself a series of questions. How might students' specific experiences help them understand or recognise the issues I was trying to teach them about? What intellectual tools would be helpful to them in grappling with the specific effects these phenomena had on their own lives? And how could I, as their lecturer, create opportunities for students to develop such critical competencies in ways that would be most useful for them moving forward?

As I have come to understand it, answering these types of questions – whether one is teaching across a social divide involving one's own embodied privilege or not – requires greater attention to one's skills as a lecturer than one's grasp of subject knowledge. Specifically, these skills involve listening to, empathising with, and knowing when and how to prioritise the subjectivity of one's students in

lesson delivery and curriculum design. They include reflexivity and flexibility, and a degree of humility that is not always compatible with the classic, hierarchal model of teacher–student relationships that prioritise formal markers of academic expertise. But when they are implemented effectively, to me these skills become the most practical manifestation of the occupational reflexivity often discussed in professional accreditation criteria, or taught to us when studying for our own vocational qualifications. By meeting students 'where they are' with lessons that fit 'what they need', lecturing becomes, in my view, truly student-centred.

We include our three stories in the belief that they will resonate with many readers' experiences of teaching and learning. Each of us articulates a particularly important situation that triggered a reflection upon who we are as teachers and where our teaching philosophies began to be formed. For Christopher it was entering the room for a formal meeting unexpectedly feeling literally and emotionally 'under-dressed'; for Ursula it was a move to an overseas position that brought into sharp contrast the absence of an audit culture so embedded in her previous roles in the UK education system; and for Alex, it was the challenges he overcame after feeling like an 'imposter' teaching about racism in a multicultural classroom. To us, these types of experiences, and our critical reflections upon them, sit at the foundations of good HE pedagogy. In exploring similar teaching and learning stories with our colleagues and students, we have found the antecedents of what we consider genuinely student-centred teaching, curriculum development, and support.

In the face of profound, unsettling, and in many cases rapid change to the conditions within which many of us now work, we argue that there is much that can be learned by considering and exploring the experiences of lecturers when they explicitly adopt such positions. Thus, it is in the contexts that academics find themselves, the pedagogies that they adopt within those contexts, and the reflections that they make on the process of doing so, that we can discover some powerful and progressive ways to plot a path through some of shifts and changes that face academia today. We consider this a profoundly important result of teaching with sociological imagination. Thus, our goal with this book is to bring together a series of essays addressing the interconnected and overlapping themes of context, pedagogy and reflection.

Overview of Chapters

Each of the following chapters explores these themes with respect to a range of topical foci. Written as scholarly essays, each chapter explores a different aspect of teaching and learning in HE, providing practical examples of pedagogical strategies used to engage, enthuse or otherwise enhance students' experiences. Additionally, each concludes with some 'suggested discussion questions' which the author(s) provided to help inspire readers' reflection upon the issues raised in their chapter. We encourage readers to draw upon their own sociological imagination when considering these, so that the authors' ideas can contribute towards

creating new and exciting teaching and learning experiences in various different HE contexts.

Our first chapter discusses students' conceptualisations of social class. The authors, Professor Patrick Ainley and Dr Maria Papapolydorou, draw on the outcomes of a qualitative study of 120 final-year undergraduates from the UK. Views of class and classlessness are contrasted among students whose perspectives have been shaped around different class realities, with debate over class of origin and class of destination highlighting how a context shaped by a prevailing ideology of social mobility through education can be problematized in the HE classroom. The chapter builds towards the authors' advocacy of a 'logical approach to teaching about social class'.

Following on from this idea in terms of the importance of education equality, Dr James Arkwright writes about the meanings of inclusion as an education provider – both for individuals and institutions. As a lecturer who is also a wheelchair user, he draws on stories from his own experience to explore on whose terms we define inclusion and how outcomes towards goals of being an inclusive school or higher education institute are measured. Dr Arkwright draws on Foucauldian and Freirean concepts to make sense of the kinds of systemic actions that enable education to be experienced as equitable and supportive.

Professor David James draws on the work of Pierre Bourdieu in the third chapter, suggesting how in the case of social science, teaching 'is something good and worthwhile'. Discussing the merits of a 'learning cultures approach', he argues that the 'best' teaching is dependent on the capacity and willingness of the teacher to help their students unpack 'what normally goes without saying' in terms of both the substance and the processes involved in educational practices. Stressing the value of empowering students and teachers alike to engage in 'creative subversion', James concludes that sociologically informed teaching can challenge the individualism enshrined within many educational orthodoxies.

Next, Mark Webb and Caroline Ukoumunne address the issue of problematizing race, racism(s) and post-colonial subjectivity within the UK HE context, outlining a method for putting critical race theory into practice in the classroom. Their chapter elucidates the authors' 'eye of discourse' practice model to explore opportunities to transform the complexity of counter-hegemonic theoretical knowledge into a practical pedagogical device. They argue how 'race' and 'racisms' can be re-examined in Higher Education by racialising our understanding of neoliberalism and academic methodology, in order to develop a liberatory pedagogy that embraces the sociological imagination.

In the fifth chapter, Dr Tamsin Hinton-Smith writes about the often-unspoken value-orientation of knowledge in HE teaching, and the mechanisms of power and privilege of which we are all part. Set within the UK, but highly relevant to the global context in which we teach, she argues that we need to locate a particular responsibility not only to remain attuned in our own practice but also to take an active role in our institutional cultures.

Next, in moving to a virtual classroom environment, Dr Ursula Edgington co-authors a chapter with student-teacher Jade Wilton, drawing on the authors' two

individual perspectives as lecturer and student-teacher. They reflect on the experience of using Twitter to support teaching and learning within the context of New Zealand HE, and explain how a 'learning cultures approach' resonates with Māori philosophy while illuminating how the social media platform Twitter can be an empowering 'third space' to give voice to students and encourage connected, multicultural learning.

Dr Pam Lowe's chapter explores how students consider the connections between private troubles and public issues. Topics such as discrimination and inequality are a constant in most sociology curricula, and in many cases degree studies often cover emotionally challenging topics such as rape, abortion and death. She argues that whilst teaching and learning can be discomforting or distressing, this does not mean we should aim to eliminate negative emotions from students' learning. She offers some practical suggestions for coping with the constant balance between academic activities and the emotional aspects of teaching and learning on sensitive issues.

On a similar theme, Dr Laura L. Ellingson then discusses how the strategic use of laughter in the classroom can aid the processes of learning in HE. She argues that respectful, appropriate humour can uplift and engage students and teachers alike, whilst also highlighting how it is crucial to avoid hurtful, denigrating humour, which is likely to have the opposite effect. More specifically, Ellingson demonstrates how humour can be used to help students reflect on topics about which they may feel defensive, whilst also foster more open communication between students and their teachers.

In Chapter 9, Drs Alex Channon, Christopher R. Matthews and Anastasiya Khomutova present a case for incorporating physical movement into sociological teaching. Through the use of photos and reflective vignettes, they recount three practical lessons used to teach sociological theory and academic skills in novel, memorable ways. Developing the concept of the 'physical metaphor', the authors argue that students' capacity to learn through embodied experiences can add depth and vibrancy to classroom teaching, animating lessons on abstract concepts through the use of games, sports, dances, and other types of physical activity.

In the penultimate chapter, Professor Gayle Letherby argues that research, and the teaching related to this, like life, is itself political and that it is important to reflect on this significance in all the work that we do. She reflects on how her teaching, which is always informed by her research endeavours, has attempted to engage students in the exciting, messy world of research through a consideration of the feminist auto/biographical contention that feminist social research is in fact feminist theory in action.

Finally, Dr Christopher R. Matthews explores the doing of public sociology in the classroom. Based on a consideration of Burawoy's (2004) discussion of public sociology he suggests a re-orientation of teaching that centralises students' experiences by 'starting from where they are'. Matthews then illustrates several ways in which such an 'engaged' or 'active' pedagogy might be developed with students through a constructively aligned curricular approach, bridging content and assessment strategies with students' personal interests and potential careers objectives.

He considers this as a useful way in which sociology as a discipline can take advantage of shifts and changes in academia.

Te Awamutu, New Zealand Dr Ursula Edgington, Independent Scholar

Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham, UK Dr Christopher R. Matthews

University of Brighton, Brighton, UK Dr Alex Channon

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