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CONTENTS

The background of the page is an abstract, vibrant composition of flowing, curved lines and streaks. The primary colors are bright pink, magenta, and orange, which blend into each other in a dynamic, fluid manner. Interspersed among these warm tones are cooler shades of blue and teal, creating a sense of depth and movement. The overall effect is reminiscent of a nebula or a high-speed light trail, giving the page a modern, energetic feel.

Contents

Page 5 | Editorial

Tray Wilson

Page 6 | Gonzo, Dreams, Vampires and Trolls

Peter Shukie

Page 16 | End of year show

Digital Art for 3D Games and Media students

Page 19 | Medieval music for St. Magnus: from research to performance

Dr Ben Whitworth

Page 30 | End of year show

Photography students

Page 33 | Effective Transition for Students with Autistic Spectrum Conditions

Laura Macmillan

Page 39 | Call for papers

EDITORIAL



Editorial

Welcome to the 4th issue of Spark which provides an insight into some of the research and scholarly activities undertaken at University Campus Oldham (UCO) over the last academic year.

Within these pages you will find research carried out by staff and students at UCO as well as the work of visitors and contributors to our annual UCO Research Symposium. The papers, and photographic evidence of creative projects presented here cover a wide range of subject specialist areas.

In July 2020, we were joined by the wonderful Peter Shukie for our annual Teaching, Learning and Assessment Day. Peter has contributed a paper entitled 'Gonzo Dreams Vampires and Trolls' to remind us of his inspiring keynote and to instil in us the importance of dreaming.

During this difficult and extraordinary year, our annual Research Symposium had to be moved online as did many of our events throughout the year. The end of year shows by the Faculty of Digital and Creative Arts shared their work through many online platforms and some images of the work created by Photography and Digital Art for 3D Games and Media students are presented here.

Dr Ben Whitworth, one of our HE Library and Resource Centre Assistants has been researching medieval music and you can read his fascinating paper about the music of St. Magnus. Laura Macmillan, our Disability Support Officer has been carrying out some research into the effective transition for students with Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC) and she has provided us with a summary of this research. Ben and Laura originally presented their research as part of our UCO Research Symposium (July 2020).

We hope you enjoy having an insight into some of the research activities undertaken at University.

Campus Oldham and we hope you will join us at our next annual UCO Research Symposium. If you would like to present your own research for publication or would like to be involved in a research project, please get in touch.

Tray Wilson

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GONZO, DREAMS, VAMPIRES AND TROLLS



Peter Shukie, keynote speaker for the UCO Teaching, Learning and Assessment Day July 2020.

Gonzo, Dreams, Vampires and Trolls

What do we teach for and how does that impact the things we do? I return to a discussion I had at the Oldham Teaching, Learning and Assessment Day in July and some of the things that emerged from that.

Since that time, I have read a little more, experienced thoughts growing wild – and let them, no pruning. These thoughts went into the concerns of dreaming as a facet of learning and how these can be taught or discussed in places generally more formal in nature. The strip-lit, pine-coloured door enclosed, false ceiling spaces of the contemporary educational space.

Reading brought up Mark Fisher, aka K-Punk, and his description of Grey Vampires and Troll Masters (Fisher wrote this in 2009 but is published anew in 'K-Punk' by Ambrose & Reynolds, 2018. p.723)¹. These shadowy creatures he showed us are all too real, they bring that intangible darkness we too often experience and that menaces the dreamscape we seek to create in our educational pathways. Even now, writing this, I am reminded of journal editors who tell me my work is 'not what is expected, tries too hard, seeks something unconventional but is not that at all, simply not raw enough, ignores conventions of good writing' and all that dark-cloudy, energy sapping misery that make writing hard. I think of them, then consciously and purposefully murder those thoughts as they emerge from the grotty bedstead they constructed in my mind. How they got a room I do not know, but there they are, always ready to throw off the duvet, sniping, slaughtering dreams that are barely out of the nebula of my dream brain. We need to read to find some others that share our desire for bright skies and joyous steps, works like Gail Frampton, Hannah Seat's and Vikki Scholes' 'Power of Play' article (in Spark 2020, another Oldham based inspiration, for example. I read this paragraph in Fisher and thought of the power it holds for us all,

'The books that stir us most are not those with the fewest errors, but those that throw most light on unknown portions of the map. In the case of any author who interests us, we should not ask, 'where are the mistakes here?', as if we hoped of nothing more than being fooled. We should ask instead: 'what if this book, this thinker, were the most important of the century? How would things need to change? And in what ways would we feel both liberated and imprisoned? Such questions restore the proper scale of evaluation for intellectual work: demoting the careerist sandbagger who remains within the bounds of the currently plausible and prudent. And promoting the gambler who uncovers new worlds.'

¹ Throughout this written piece, I am going to reference in a way that will not past muster in an academic sense of the world of referencing. We might say I *dreamed* of this, of a referencing approach that made clear what was going on to someone not already entrenched in the codex of Harvard/ APA/ MLA/ Oxford/ Chicago referencing. Apologies to the apoplectic appreciators of appropriate appendages – I do have a reference list, I am not an anarchist!

This quote is from Graham Harman in his book 'Prince of Networks: Bruno Latour and Metaphysics' (Re-Press Books, 2009). I did not read that book but took the quote from K-Punk (2018), a collection of the writings of Mark Fisher by Ambrose & Reynolds.

I took this and changed the words **books/ thinker** and transformed into **educator**. A simple substitution but one that allowed me to write this article as a form of narrative, of how we might begin to use dreams as the start of our work as educators. 'Work' that does not feel like labour, not examined to death and stripped into spreadsheets, but that bounds up mountains, strides across dew-laden fields at dawn and orchestrates our primal scream of being and wonder into the world. That kind of work. Great work. The work that 'uncovers new worlds' but that we also know is encased in that eternal battle between liberation and imprisonment, potestas and potentia², yin and yang, driving change and staying same. We are all of us both of these elements, each polarity we carry in us. It seems often that potestas has many an adversary, legion are those that support centripetal concerns of maintaining the centre, defending the norm. Less visible are the advocates of change, and in the dream that helps us locate that art of ourselves. It can be challenging. There are few institutions of learning that will include '**make dreams tangible and attempt embedding into lived experience**' as a contractual requirement for educator roles, or student contracts. It seldom makes learning outcomes either. Maybe we could add that to as many modules as possible? Such an act, a contracting of dreams, already seems to be draining the beauty so perhaps we simply accept the dreaming educator of purpose, and their contracted alter-ego of compliance, exist in the same body but are fundamentally different beings.

So, what of vampires and trolls? How do they arrive in this imaginarium of any educators' dream spaces?

I am guided here by Mark Fisher and his discussion that comes straight after the Harman quote. What we are talking about here is the fear that the little niggling, sniping, dismissive comments bring. The ways our enthusiasm for a project, an idea, a practice or even a philosophy can be seen as a threat by others. The response, we must all have seen it or heard it, is that voluble but never quite stated murmur of discontented negativity. The snarky comment, snide and with a snigger perhaps, becoming more than just an unpleasant interlude and collectively these individuals become a dampening, deadening force. Mark Fisher likens these characters to vampires (Grey, the sucking of life kind of vampire that destroy the soul's desire to continue). Fisher says that,

² Rosi Braidotti writes in 'The Posthuman' (2013), that Potentia is 'the vital energy that propels the transmutation of values into affirmation...life as perpetual becoming that expresses itself through the chaotic and generative void of positivity' (page 137). Potestas is the stable, the power that keeps things the same. Neither should dominate while both are necessary, and Braidotti says we should aim for 2/3 potentia and 1/3 potestas for a positive, well-balanced academic life.

Vampires cannot see themselves in mirrors. In the case of Grey Vampires...this means both that they cannot recognise themselves as vampires and that their existence is entirely dependent upon the attention of the Other...they sincerely think that it is a duty to deflate enthusiasm and puncture projects'

(Mark Fisher (2009) 'Break Through the Grey Lair' was the original space this appeared. I took it from Ambrose & Reynolds, 2018 'K-Punk' on page 722).

What resonated with me was the observation that these vampires see the world that way, that,

'some teachers and lecturers do think that way, see it as their role duty to pass on the arid petrification which calcified their spirit, usually sometime during their postgraduate career'

It is not that this is all about seeking positivity where there is none, a laissez-faire acceptance of all as worthy and no critical edge. It is more that the critical edge that drains and belittles is not criticality, but brutal and blunt negativity. It is less critical, or even based on any academic value or intellectual curiosity, it is a form of character weakness in the vampire, who realise that they,

'lose all power when you cease to pay attention or think about them. That is why, when they feel that our attention is gone, Grey Vampires will try any trick to regain it - the appeal to 'democratic values' is a particularly scurrilous tactic (you must give me your attention, it's your duty). (Also from the K-Punk chapter, on page 723).

These vampires will kill the enthusiasm, make the thinker loath their own thoughts as these thoughts become symbolic of their inability to be like these dead-eyed, after-life dodging dullards. Once the enthusiasm is killed, the curiosity shackled and the student's excitement turned to stone, the Troll Master arrives. This loathsome educator (not really an educator, but works in education spaces), *'feeds on the crushed enthusiasm of belittled students'* (page 723 - it is a great page!). Fisher uses some wonderful imagery to describe these characters and I could do no better (and only lessen) so add these as extended descriptors you can reflect on:

Trolls adopt a

'nothing-can-impress-me hyper critical stance, doused in a cool weltanschmerz³, finding fault everywhere handing out praise and encouragement only very rarely; it's a transparent tactic, but one that works surprisingly well...not only on jejune⁴ students, but also on very accomplished people...Often, the troll masters own intellectual project will be mediocre and/or suspended - it's clear that all their libidinal energy is tied up in enslaving students into neurotic servitude...they

³ Weltschmerz, from the German meaning *world pain* or *world weary*.

⁴ From the French, meaning 'naïve, simplistic, superficial'

are village despots, whose charismatic tyranny seldom works outside their own turf. If they have a long-term effect, it is only to produce more grey vampires' (all on page 723, it really is a great page).

They are worth including at length because it is important that we recognise the value of dreams as the antidote to an often-depressing ecology of learning. It would be wonderful to think education is all about transformation, growth and positive change, and at its best it can be. We would be wild and off the mark to think that it is always this, it can be stressful, a theatre of bullying and intimidation, a place where compliance matters more than creativity. Before we dream, or at last alongside our dreaming, we must recognise these vampires and trolls. If we do not see them, we can internalise the dread and misery they generate and believe these come from us, that they are our fault. They are not, we must recognise these and ensure that dreams can still create a better world, even when set against a backdrop of cynicism and misery-inducing negativity.

More on Dreams and a little Deleuze

The power of dreams comes from their antidote to the increasingly anticipated response of educators; to simply reiterate what we ourselves have been told is important. This reiteration becomes bound up in a language of what 'should' be done, of 'best practice' (even 'best lives!'), of generalisable and evidence-based practices. All of which strip us of agency and move elsewhere any concepts knowing, creating of knowledge and forming what is known through our relationships and contexts. It is through dreams that we assert ourselves and ask others to develop equally affirmative places for themselves in the world. Dreams are no soft option and only through committed application of dream-to-new reality practices can we hope to make these tangible. Only once tangible can they be shared, and only once shared can they become powerful.

Gilles Deleuze (1987) said that dreams are dangerous because they are effectively a 'will to power'. This is complicated by the notion of the dreamer being most dangerous to those that do not dream, the non-dreamers are devoured by the dreamers. For Deleuze, this means that, '*Si vous êtes pris dans le rêve de l'autre, vous êtes foutou*' ('If you are caught in the dream of the other, then you're f*****! / screwed! / lost!'). I used this quote myself, in an article for FE News in 2015 entitled, '*I'll let you be in my dreams if I can be in yours*' (Shukie, 2015). The rationale for its inclusion was that only through using dreams could I introduce the idea of community open online courses (COOCS) to a wider FE readership. COOCs had been a project I had created, initially to have educators outside the institutions have access to technology and tools, such as Moodle. This access would be framed by a community of educators, formal and informal, experienced and emerging, who could come together to explore what worked online and what did not. This seemed essential as so much of what was being discussed about online learning was rooted in institutional practices. Of course, millions of people were using technology to educate each other in ways never possible a decade or two earlier, but we seemed caught up in the dreams of the institutions to formalise all of this. The

dream of the formal education sector was certainly a will to power. The only way to create alternatives was (and is) to have dreams ourselves. If we do not, then we are devoured by the dreams of others – and as Deleuze points out that is never a positive experience. Deleuze goes on to describe a concept named *Chaoids* (Deleuze and Guattari, in their book 'What is Philosophy' in 1994). I have previously discussed these as a way we might revisit how we create and innovate in education⁵. The chaoid is not really a tangible thing in itself, it is a quality we might say, an essence that we find in art, science and philosophy. It is a sense of opportunity that we can do things differently by recognising the chaos of the universe and responding creatively. It can get abstract, all this, and that can be unsettling, so let me summarise as this:

1. **Dreams** are where we visualise and encounter a new world of not-yet but that encapsulates strong elements of what we know and can make tangible. We might see them as authentic concepts of ourselves and our experiences before they are corrupted by policies and curricula.
2. **Chaoids** are the space in which we can begin these transformations from dreams to reality – and these are most recognisable in art, science and philosophy. I think these three because they are fluid, organic and tasked with always finding newness. They are also human and universal, not related to more base concerns of 'how much does it cost', 'what's in it for me', 'does it have employability impact' and other frameworks that pretty much kill the dream before it gets out of bed. Chaoids are the point that we cease seeing something only as dream, and start to see its viability in the real, the actual. It is a crucial relationship Deleuze and Guattari talk about as the relationship between the virtual and the actual, how one interplays with the other to generate newness, and necessary changes in the world.
3. **Dreamscapes** will be discussed in the next sections. They are the ways in which we have made dreams something new or alternate. These dreamscapes are crucial in moving from pure abstraction to visible assertion in the world around us. It is the dreamscape that we share with others and can grow and shape to affect a new way of being with each other.

It is in this passage between dreams and dreamscapes that we must encounter and overcome, the vampires and trolls. The building of active, participatory learning spaces, of projects that come for the students and the communities we serve collaboratively, these are the dreamscapes.

Gonzo Education

I talked about this in the keynote so worth repeating now to give the full reflective experience. Gonzo came to me as a term that was filled with life, that brought to mind the experiences of Hunter S Thompson, the journalist and writer. For HST, gonzo was the wildness of the self when faced with reality that preceded the expectations of a familiar and formulaic. In writing, that means taking the self as the starting point, embedding the life and the experience into what is produced. In education,

⁵ this is in a paper called *Connectivism, Chaos and Chaoids*, 2019, which is freely available to all, should you wish to know more about it – see the reference list below.

it can mean the same. To dismiss the conventions of the standard journalistic article rendered HST's work alive, vibrant and revelatory. It did more than that.

Finding fellow dreamers

Bell hooks (2003) says that the qualities of the educator that brings hope instead of fear, of creativity instead of compliance, of fostering community are, *'generosity and fidelity and mercy, a sympathetic imagination, a deep and abiding concern for others, a delight in nature and human company and all forms of beauty, a passion for justice, a sense of restraint and a sense of humour, a relish for skilful work, a willingness to negotiate differences, a readiness for cooperation and affection'* (hooks, 2003. p.197). There is nothing here that seems outlandish, they are familiar as the things we may hope to find in any educator we need to work with. There is nothing here that easily fits into the characteristics of job descriptions and standardised observations of the classroom practice, either. Dreams are not mere abandonment of the everyday to seek solace in an ethereal zone. Through dreams we challenge ourselves to see what might be possible and then work to make that happen. If we do not dream, and having dreamt do not act, then we become reliant on the processes and practices of others.

Dreamscapes

I have provided three dreamscapes⁶ of my own experiences that I think fit the remit of *Spark*, of each of us as we meet together in this space. Sylvia Plath (1958) wrote of *'sulforous dreamscapes'* that lay *'at this joint between two worlds and two incompatible modes of time'*. It is important that we get to the heart of how dreams are only the start and not the end of this process. Plath says it beautifully, of how

'our meat-and-potato thoughts assumes the nimbus

Of ambrosial revelation. And so departs' (Plath, *The Ghosts Leavetaking*, 1958).

It is important that we harness the dream before they depart, make real and tangible, part of our lived experiences before these ghosts take their leave. You have read enough of me now, so these examples are provided to show my contribution so far, to encourage you to share your dreamscapes with each other (if not built yet, then to encourage the dreams into chaotic states of becoming).

⁶ *Dream* as a noun and *scape* as used in 'landscape'.

⁷ Not the first ever use, it also appeared in a poem from 1878 and the Oxford English Dictionary has its etymology dated back to 1858.

Dreamscape #1 (Community Open Online Courses)

The COOCs project has been running 8 years and is a utopia-inspired attempt at creating a space to learn, utilising digital technologies, that is free and open to everyone. This was how it started, a desire to create something that at the time seemed difficult to imagine. We used Moodle, it involved emulation of some of the language of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and created a new network of people. To read more about this, you might visit the [PhD thesis](#) on this very subject (you needn't read it all, very few have - but it has sections that define the origin of COOCs and the conclusion is short enough to read in 15 minutes or less). As a dreamscape should, this project has altered how I see the original dream. The ways technology has altered, the relationship with education, what the theoretical and practical advances have been, each changes the dream and requires further work, even more dreams in some cases. We could not have envisaged algorithms that stratify exam results, welfare payments, social care responses based on social class for instance. They exist all the same (Eubanks, 2017; Shukie, 2020). The ways we see each other transform what is possible, if we see each other as educators that immediately transforms how we see education (a deficit model becomes impossible - or at least very difficult). We are currently revamping the COOCs site (January - April 2021) but the existing version is still alive and being used - go to www.coocs.co.uk to see that in action. Ideally, come after too and create in the new platform.

Dreamscape #2 (Technology Enhanced Learning community projects)

These take place as part of an Education Studies degree, Year three module in Technology. As we are creating our course in a similar sphere, that of college-based HE, it was important to dream about the ways we saw equity in our status. Too often, we become the *non-traditional* and somehow disadvantaged by not being 18-21 and moving to whatever city or other to do our degree. In the TEL project, we chose to look to our advantages, our immersion in community and ability to make a difference in our worlds. We begin with a mantra of '*avoiding design in isolation*' and ask students to look to their world, their community to identify what problems they see, what their community might respond to. In that way, we have technology involved and also central to design, but not central to purpose. A dream for meaningful engagement with technology, making a real difference, while still on a degree and achieving in that way, led this design. It has been often the most frustrating module, as students encounter unfamiliar assessments. Yet, it always has 100% success in what is produced and overall satisfaction. We must grow through challenge not by repetition. So far, we have had over 150 projects in diverse areas of interest (and location). They include: period poverty; home-schooling; drug and alcohol abuse recovery; synthetic phonics for diverse languages; language learning; community challenges to crime. The students become authentic educators and that has a direct impact on the way they engage with their work - it is not

just for the grade, they also have a community of participants they have linked with and must think of.

Dreamscape #3 (Working Class Academics Conference)

Some dreams come from a clear and identifiable catalyst. Mine came from listening to a podcast by Rachel Gibbons in which she talked about the issues of being a working class student in a middle class academy. While every word resonated, I also thought that something must be possible that gathers others with the same experiences. Within 4 months of the podcast, we had 500 delegates signed up before the pandemic caused chaos. Undeterred, that continued and moved online - 1000 delegates, 45 speakers and 5 continents involved. The first conference brought poetry, animation, film and many first-time speakers. We operated in small groups to allow pre-conference support and practice, this also allowed innovation in how we made presentations. What was most powerful about this conference was the recognition that other dreamers were gathering and making the dream stronger. This conference of dreamers is going on again this year and you all are encouraged to come and bring your dreams to what we might call a chaoid space? Together we can build a new dreamscape for the conference 2021. Visit <https://workingclass-academics.co.uk/conference-2020/> for last year's conference and see the website tabs to apply for this coming one.

Conclusion

If you have got this far, thank you. The purpose of the keynote and this follow-up is to encourage you to continue to create, engage and develop your practice unencumbered by the heavy weight of others' expectation. This maybe cannot be all the time, nor every time, but it can be sometimes. Making sure we dream and make those dreams part of the purpose of our lives is to transform the world. We will become more engaged in a world that does not begin and end with someone else's concern with a spreadsheet, league table or standardising criteria. It is through dreams we can become other, not always better, sometimes more complicated, but better because it is a world we are a part of and not one we are slaves in/ or to. This is not daydreaming, not idle speculation or fantasising. It is a recognition that we are educators, alive right now in a complex world. One that needs solutions and that we can either contribute or turn away. Dreams too often sound like the opposite of the 'hard-headed, employer-facing, business-model' language of education we often hear. Do not let that put you off, only dreamers make a difference, in the world of business and commerce as well as in education. Keep dreaming and you will be the change we all need.

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END OF YEAR SHOW DIGITAL ART

Digital Art for 3D Games and Media

End of year show 2020









MEDIEVAL MUSIC FOR SAINT MAGNUS

Medieval music for Saint Magnus: from research to performance

This paper is about a project I undertook to discover and recreate a body of lost medieval music, and how research and performance have fed into one another during this project – which is still ongoing. The music I want to talk about was created in honour of St Magnus of Orkney, so before going any further, I will introduce you to St Magnus, and explain a little bit about who he was (Pinkerton, 1895, pp. 323–65; Mooney, 1935; Hermann Pálsson and Edwards, 1981, pp. 76–97; Hermann Pálsson and Edwards, 1996; Thomson, 2008, pp. 88–100).

St Magnus Erlendsson

Magnus lived and died about 900 years ago. He was the son of a man called Erlend, so according to the naming conventions of the time, he was known as Magnus Erlendsson. He was extremely well-connected, and quite closely related to the Scottish, English and Norwegian royal families, as well as to some of the leading landowners and churchmen in Iceland.

He was born in the Orkney Islands, just off the north coast of Scotland. We think he was brought up in Birsay, which is on the Western edge of Orkney. In winter, fifty-foot Atlantic waves pound the sandstone cliffs, but in good weather, Birsay looks out over important shipping roads – and beyond that, the limitless ocean. Magnus's grandfather (Thorfinn the Mighty, Earl of Orkney) had built a cathedral in Birsay village, and something like a small palace on a nearby promontory.

Orkney has long had a tremendous strategic importance: it is like a crossroads for marine traffic travelling between Iceland, Scandinavia, Britain and Ireland, and it has several deep and sheltered harbours. Even during the First and Second World Wars, Orkney was the base for the British Fleet.

Orkney is now politically part of Scotland, and has been for more than 500 years; but in the days of the Viking longboats, it was possible to reach Orkney from Norway in a couple of days. Successive Norwegian kings took full advantage of this proximity; by the time of St Magnus, Orkney was effectively a Norwegian colony, and the kings of Norway were responsible for appointing an Earl to govern the islands. In fact, they had a habit of appointing two Earls to rule jointly, so that no one individual would become too powerful. When Magnus was appointed Earl, around the year 1105, his cousin Hakon was also appointed to rule with him. The two cousins worked well together for about ten years, ruling an earldom which included the Shetland islands and parts of mainland Scotland as well as Orkney itself. However Hakon was a jealous and ambitious character, who wanted all the power in his own hands, and war broke out between his men and Magnus's.

It was agreed that the two Earls would meet on the neutral island of Egilsay for a peace meeting. We know that this was scheduled for 16 April, but we are not entirely certain which year it was: probably 1117 (Whitworth, 2017). Magnus arrived first, with two boatloads of unarmed supporters, as agreed. Hakon then landed on the island with eight boats full of armed warriors. The outcome was inevitable. In the end it was Hakon's cook who dealt Magnus his death blow.

It was a political assassination, but to the people of Orkney, it seemed to have a deeper significance – because of the sort of man Magnus was. He had grown up a true Viking, taking part in violent raids and (at the very least) witnessing scenes of slaughter, but he had repented of all this; he became prayerful and self-denying in his personal life, and a generous but fair leader. He was popular and admired, and because it was

felt that he had given his life for the sake of his people's peace and security, he was even considered a martyr. Devotees soon flocked to his grave in Birsay, and reports spread that miracles had occurred there. Twenty years after his death, Magnus was declared a saint by the local bishop. His nephew, Earl Rognvald, built a magnificent cathedral to house his relics, in Kirkwall, which became the chief town of the Orkneys and a destination for pilgrims (Yeoman, 1999, pp. 93-100). The cathedral is still there, one of only two medieval cathedrals in Scotland to have survived more or less intact.

The 'cult' (which is the term historians use for the public veneration of a saint) of St Magnus took all the usual forms. Relics – his very bones – were sought after; altars and churches were dedicated in his name; he was depicted in carvings, paintings, embroidery; hills, bays and holy wells were named after him; books were written about him and songs sung. His cult spread throughout northern Europe – there is evidence that people venerated Magnus in Scotland, England, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, the Faroes, Iceland, Estonia, Germany, Russia and what is now the Czech Republic (Mooney, 1935; Háki Antonsson, 2007; Cormack, 2011; Lind, 2017; Mänd, 2018; Gibbon and Moore, 2019). Devotion to the saint clustered in three particular areas: the Earldom territory itself (Orkney, Shetland and Caithness); Iceland; and Denmark. The Danish connection, as we will see, was very important for my research.

Now that you have a sense of where Magnus fits in geographically, Table 1 gives some key dates so that you can put him in context chronologically; most of the dates are approximate, but you can see that his life straddles the end of the eleventh century, and the early years of the twelfth. This makes him contemporary with historical figures such as King Alexander I of Scotland, King Henry I of England, and King Magnus Barefoot of Norway. Indeed he could claim kinship with all three of those royal houses: he spent time at the Scottish and English courts, and as a young man he accompanied King Magnus Barefoot on a long raiding campaign, culminating in a sea battle off the coast of Anglesey.

c.1075 Magnus Erlendsson born in Orkney

1098-99	Magnus accompanies King Magnus Barefoot on raiding expeditions
c.1105	Magnus and his cousin Hakon become joint Earls of Orkney
c.1117	Hakon has Magnus killed on Egilsay, Orkney
c.1137	Magnus is declared a saint
c.1153	His remains are moved to the new cathedral in Kirkwall, Orkney

Table 1. Key dates in the life and cult of St Magnus.

The Magnus Office

I moved to Orkney in 2008, and started teaching an adult education class in Gregorian chant the following year. It was so successful that the students wanted to carry on, so we formed a choir, and called ourselves the Orkney Schola. At the same time, I was getting to know the story of St Magnus, and I realised that we were approaching the ninth centenary of his martyrdom. So the idea arose of trying to find the medieval music in honour of St

Magnus, and performing it to celebrate this anniversary. Medieval cathedrals had choral music in their services as a matter of course; and we know that by the sixteenth century St Magnus Cathedral had a major musical establishment, supporting three paid musicians: a choir director, an organist, and a music teacher to run the Cathedral's song school for boy choristers (Clouston, 1914, pp. 363-71). But what was their repertoire? Not a single music manuscript survives from medieval Orkney, so it was always going to require some research to answer this question.

A couple of medieval songs in honour of Saint Magnus were already known (De Geer, 1985, pp. 124-26, 143-211; De Geer, 1988). One is a two-part song called *Nobilis humilis*, probably written about a hundred years after Magnus's death. Several ensembles have recorded it; it is a very popular beginner's piece for people learning the harp; and it even pops up in a video game soundtrack (*Civilization V*). The other piece is a hymn called *Comitis generosi*, written about three hundred years after the martyrdom, and found in several Icelandic manuscripts. This is much less famous, and I think my choir may have been the first to perform it in modern times. That still gives us just two pieces of music, taking a total of about ten minutes to sing. I wanted to find more.

On the feast of their local saint, the Cathedral choir would certainly have sung the Divine Office in his honour. The Divine Office is a cycle of services, sung in Latin, which runs throughout the day, according to the pattern shown in Table 2. Every important saint had his or her own office; so there would have been a Magnus Office. This, then, is what I intended to find for the Orkney Schola to perform (Whitworth, 2019).

Name of hour	Time of celebration (approximate modern equivalent)
Matins	the eighth hour of the night (2 a.m.)
Lauds	daybreak (5.30 a.m.)
Prime	the first hour of the day (6 a.m.)
Terce	the third hour of the day (9 a.m.)
Sext	the sixth hour of the day (12 p.m.)
None	the ninth hour of the day (3 p.m.)
Vespers	before dark (5.30 p.m.)
Compline	before retiring

Table 2. The services ("hours") of the Divine Office, with approximate times of performance on a typical day, from Collamore (2000, p. 3); see also Macquarrie (2012, pp. xix-xxii).

Four things are necessary for any choral performance: words to sing; music to sing them to; some singers; and a venue, preferably one that is suitable to the intended performance. Without all four of these in place, a performance of the Magnus Office could not go ahead.

So the first thing I went looking for was the words of the Magnus Office; and here I was in luck: the words survived in several printed books from the first two decades of the sixteenth century. The particular kind of Catholic prayer book that contains the words of saints' offices is called a Breviary. Bearing in mind the regions where the popularity of St Magnus was clustered, it is not surprising that the Aberdeen Breviary, from Scotland,

was the earliest source for the Magnus Office, having been printed in 1509 (Aberdeen, 1509; Macquarrie, 2012); nor that the other sources came from Denmark – specifically, from the Danish towns of Roskilde and Lund (Roskilde, 1517; Lund, 1517). Roskilde, in particular, had strong trading links with Orkney and Shetland, and it seems to have been one of the main centres of devotion to Saint Magnus. Furthermore the Roskilde Breviary of 1517 seems to have fewer mistakes in it than any of the other versions, so I have taken this as the principal source for the words of the Office.

I will take one very short portion of the Office as a sort of “worked example”, to give a concrete idea of the sort of reconstruction I had to do.

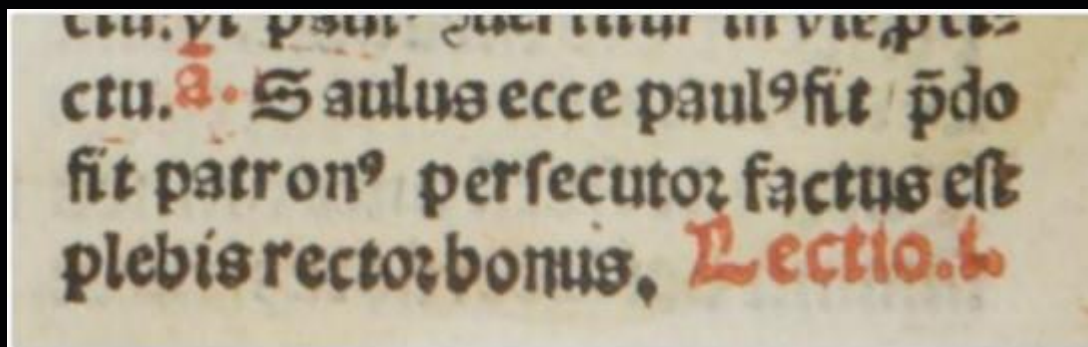


Figure 1. The antiphon *Saulus ecce*, from *Breviarium Roschildense* (Paris: Philippi, Johannes, 1517), p. ccclxii verso. The copy illustrated is from the collection of The Royal Danish Library; shelf number LN 032 8° Copy 2. Image produced by ProQuest as part of *Early European Books*. www.proquest.com. Image published with permission of ProQuest and The Royal Danish Library. Further reproduction is prohibited without permission.

Figure 1 shows one item from the long, early morning service of Matins. As indicated by the abbreviation “a” in red, it is an Antiphon: one of these is sung after each of the Biblical Psalms. Here is a transcription of the Latin text:

Saulus ecce Paulus fit;
 predo fit patronus;
 Persecutor factus est
 plebis rector bonus.

This is an elaborately wrought piece of poetry. It uses alliteration: *Paulus ... predo ... patronus ... Persecutor ... plebis*. There is also the rhyme of *patronus* and *bonus*. And all this fits within the framework of the rhythm, which might be clearer if the stressed syllables are marked:

Sáulus écce Páulus fít;
 prédo fít patrónus;
 Pérsecútor fáctus ést
 plébis réctor bónus.

That same rhythm (known as Goliardic metre) is carried through all of the dozen or so Antiphons in the Magnus Office.

What is this Antiphon saying? It concerns Magnus's conversion from being a typical violent young Viking, to becoming a just ruler later in life; and it makes a comparison with the Biblical story of Saul, the persecutor of Christians, who was converted on the road to Damascus and changed his name to Paul (Acts 9.1-19, 13.9). A translation of this Antiphon would be: "A Saul becomes a Paul; the plunderer becomes a patron; the persecutor is turned into a good ruler of the people."

The whole Magnus Office is like this: cleverly constructed, vivid, and full of Biblical allusions. Just as *words*, it is powerful; but it cannot be performed *just* as words – I needed the music as well. And here was the bad news. Previous scholarship has lamented the fact that the Magnus Office survived as text only (De Geer, 1985, p. 142; De Geer, 1988, p. 260). The music was gone forever; or so it was thought.

The Magnus Office is only one of hundreds of rhymed offices composed for different saints during the middle ages. The rhymed offices have tended to be neglected by musicologists until recently, but in the last thirty years or so, there has been an explosion of interest in them, led by a Canadian scholar, the late Andrew Hughes (Hughes, 1993).

Hughes was particularly interested in the Office of St Thomas Becket, the Archbishop who was murdered in Canterbury Cathedral in the year 1170 (Hughes, 1993; Slocum, 2003). The Becket Office was composed by a monk called Benedict of Peterborough, who knew St Thomas personally, and he wrote it very soon after his friend's death, within three or four years of the martyrdom.

The Becket Office spread very quickly, and very wide, and was by far the best known of all the rhymed offices. This has to do not only with the popularity of the saint, but also with the popularity of the music. Benedict of Peterborough, who, incidentally, is one of the earliest British composers who is known to us by name, had created a masterpiece. It was also some of the most *copied* music in the Western Church. People composing offices for other saints would take Antiphons or Responsories from the Becket Office, and simply add new words to Benedict's melody. It is like a serious version of the game, "One Song To The Tune Of Another" from the panel show *I'm Sorry I Haven't A Clue* on BBC Radio 4; or of the parodies of popular songs by "Weird Al" Yankovic. The term musicologists use for this kind of imitative composition is *contrafact*.

Out of curiosity, I started comparing the words of the Magnus Office with those of the Becket Office. I noticed that almost the entire Magnus Office was written in the same verse metre as the corresponding parts of the Becket Office. Not only that, but often a word, or the saint's name, would appear in *exactly* the same position in the two texts. It quickly became clear to me that the Magnus Office was one long *contrafact* on the music of the Becket Office; quite simply, it *could* be sung to the melodies written by Benedict of Peterborough, and in all likelihood, that is how it was sung

in medieval Orkney. This discovery finally made it possible to reconstruct the Magnus Office for performance.

So let us return to our example, the Antiphon *Saulus ecce*. This is the third Antiphon at Matins in the Magnus Office. The corresponding Antiphon in the Becket Office is *Cultor agri*. It reads:

Cultor agri Domini

tribulos avellit

Et vulpes a vineis

arcet et expellit. (Slocum, 2003, p. 171)

It means: "The cultivator of the field of the Lord removes the thistles, and wards off the foxes and drives them out from the vineyards."



Figure 2. The Antiphon *Cultor agri*, from the Sprouston Breviary (c. 1300), folios 20v-21r. Reproduced with permission from the National Library of Scotland.

A recording of *Cultor agri* has been made by Schola Hungarica, and it can be heard online (Schola Hungarica, 1983; Schola Hungarica, 2016). Figure 2 shows *Cultor agri*, with musical notation, as it appears in one of the Scottish manuscripts of the Becket Office, a book in the National Library of Scotland called the Sprouston Breviary (Sprouston, c. 1300). I decided to use this manuscript as my main musical source because of its Scottish origins.

All I had to do was to combine the words of the Magnus Office with the music of the Becket Office, and I had something that (a) was probably very close to what was actually sung in medieval Orkney; and (b) could be performed. Figure 3 shows my reconstruction of our sample Antiphon. Like the Sprouston Breviary itself, my edition uses the four-line stave and square notes that are traditional for notating plainsong.

ANTIPHON 3 (MATINS)

cf. Cultor agri AR

ANT. 3G

S Au- lus ecce Paulus fit; * pre-do fit

pa- trónus; Persecútor fa- ctus est plebis re-

ctor bo-nus. e-u-o-u-á- e

Figure 3. My edition of Saulus ecce.

From research to performance

Having established the words and the music, my next requirement was someone to sing it. As I have explained, the Orkney Schola already existed; and to my delight they were all very keen to learn this music, which was a rediscovered part of their Orcadian heritage.

Finally, we needed somewhere to sing the reconstructed Magnus Office. Here we were very fortunate, in that Orkney has stunning venues for choral singing, including some that have a historical connection with St Magnus and his cult. Over the first few years of the Orkney Schola's existence, we had already sung in some of these places, and built up a relationship with their custodians. Thus the performances of excerpts from the Magnus Office, which took place in 2016 and 2017, were presented in highly appropriate venues.

One of these was St Magnus Kirk in Birsay. Although this is a relatively modern building, dating from 1760, recent archaeological work has confirmed the local tradition that it was constructed on the foundations of a much older church; probably the one that was built by Magnus's grandfather. So here we were singing on the very spot where Magnus himself probably attended church services during his lifetime.

We also sang parts of the Office, twice, at the St Magnus Centre in Kirkwall. This is a Victorian church hall that has been refurbished as a venue for lectures, concerts and similar events. It lacks the atmosphere and historical resonance of some other venues, but it has a good acoustic; it is comfortable and accessible; it has toilets, a kitchen, a car park, and resources such as a data projector and screen; all of these amenities were very much appreciated by our audiences.

However, the perfect location to perform this music is in St Magnus Cathedral itself. This was the church built by Magnus's nephew in order to house the saint's remains - and remarkably, those relics survive in situ. And it was almost certainly here that the Magnus Office was written and first performed, seven or eight hundred years ago. So far, we have managed only one formal performance in the Cathedral: a small selection from the Magnus Office, as a curtain-raiser to a public lecture in 2016. The Orkney Schola, under the direction of my successor Dr Gemma McGregor, had planned to perform a longer portion of the Office here for St Magnus' Day on 16 April 2020, but lockdown intervened. The ideal would be to sing the whole Office in the Cathedral, in real time over the course of one day, but that is an undertaking for another year.

Who have we reached with these performances? I would say that several dozen, perhaps even hundreds, of local people have heard some part of the Magnus Office, at our various performances; and we have had wonderful feedback from people who appreciated this chance to re-experience a lost piece of Orcadian heritage. We also benefitted from the fact that Orkney as a whole - led by the local Council, with input from churches, museums and artists - staged a year of celebrations in 2017, to mark "Magnus 900", the probable nonacentenary of the saint's death. This meant that we were able to piggy-back on events other people were organising, such as the public lecture in the Cathedral, and a musical evening at Birsay Kirk. We could thus reach a wider audience than we might have attracted on our own.

The Magnus 900 events also brought people into the islands, so without having to get on a ferry ourselves, we were able to perform this music to people from far and wide. For example, a pilgrimage in July 2017 brought all the Catholic bishops of Scotland - and some from Scandinavia - and they became a captive audience for one of our performances at the St Magnus Centre. The year also saw the launch of a new walking pilgrimage route, the St Magnus Way, and I was able, in a very informal way, to sing some Antiphons from the Office as the first pilgrims arrived at St Magnus Cathedral, the end-point of the new route.

Finally, while there is no substitute for hearing sacred music in the flesh - lockdown has taught us that more clearly than ever before - technology does allow us to reach an even wider audience. So in October 2017, Gemma and I with a couple of other Schola members, went into the studios of BBC Radio Orkney, and recorded a small part of the Office in the context of a radio talk on music for St Magnus. This is now on the Radio Orkney Mixcloud page, and can be listened to anywhere in the world (Williams, 2017).

If there is a general conclusion to be drawn from this paper, it is that research and performance go hand in hand. Without the prospect of performance, I would have lacked the motivation to do this research; and if

the outcome had been only a paper edition that was never performed, it would have been a pretty sterile research project. On the other hand, without first doing the research that reconnected the words with the music, there would have been nothing to perform.

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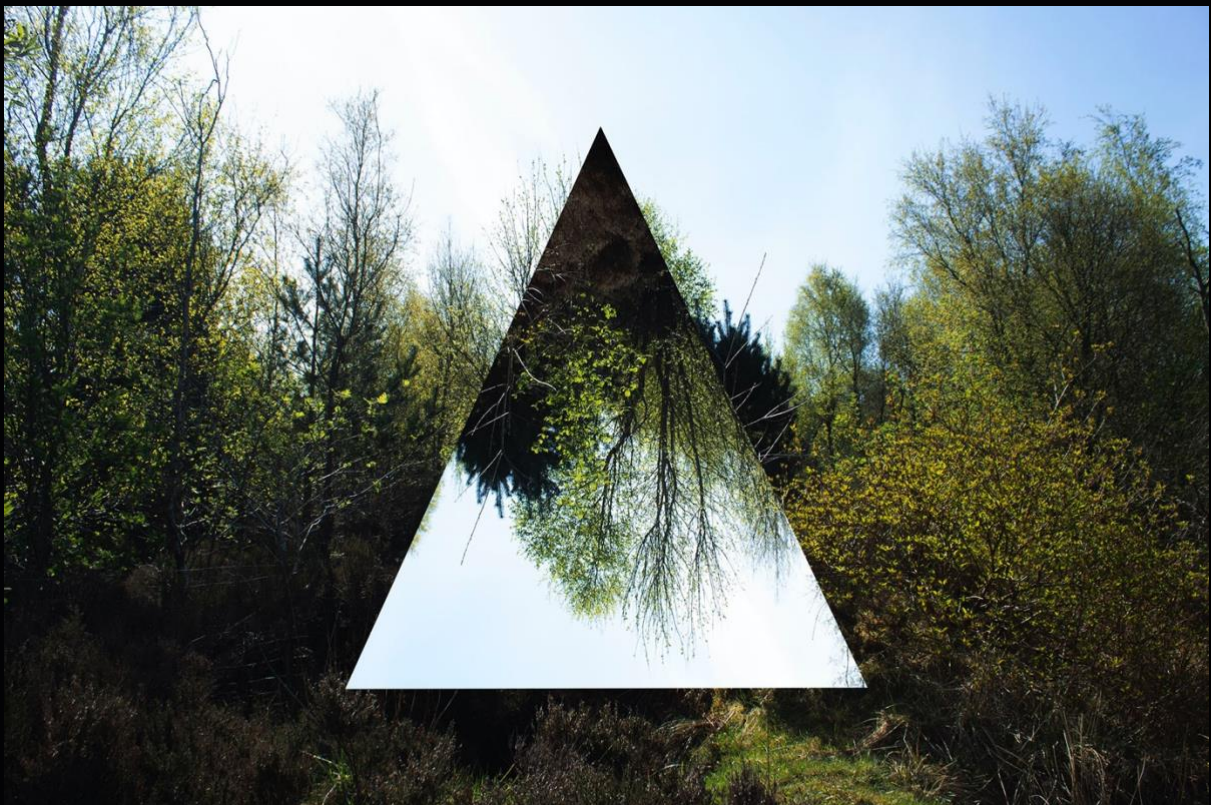
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END OF YEAR SHOW PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography – End of year show 2020









EFFECTIVE TRANSITIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH AUTISTIC SPECTRUM CONDITIONS

How and why robust transition plans are needed to facilitate the success of Autistic students achieving undergraduate study.

Aims and Objectives

Aim

To effectively support and build prospective students' confidence in transitioning through their educational life and feel more prepared for entering HE for those students with ASC.

This was a pilot transition plan to investigate whether a further plan should be implemented.

This research aims to examine the current process of transition for undergraduate students, with a diagnosis of Autism or Asperger's entering into higher education study at a small HE within FE establishment. Some students struggle with the transition to a more independent level of support usually implemented in HE. Consequently, this can result in withdrawal from education leading to social isolation and/ or mental health issues due to loss of confidence in their own abilities (Cage and Howes, 2020). Considering these issues, a pilot transition plan will be introduced which ultimately can be examined against success, retention and achievement alongside student's feelings of integration within the wider campus community. Overall, this research will investigate the benefits to the program and early intervention with students who are Autistic and Asperger's and how ongoing support throughout study can lead to overall successes both academically and socially.

Objectives

- To explore the impact of attending transition meetings prior to course commencement.
- To examine how a social group can develop independence and develop friendships within the Autism community on campus.
- To analyse the development of self-advocacy within the students, social, academic and emotional intelligence progress around key transition points.

Introduction

Transition from Further Education (FE) to Higher Education (HE) can be difficult for some students but when considering students who have a diagnosis of Autism or Asperger's, the difficulty may increase. Through implementing a robust, holistic and person-centered transition plan, devising social opportunities and offering highly structured support, allows a review of the impact on student success, retention and confidence of students with Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC).

The outcomes of the research would hopefully instill a level of confidence and self-advocacy in ASC students, prior to the commencement of their studies. By allowing students to build their self-advocacy skills through managing their own support, students could already begin acquiring skills which can be built upon for later life and increasing their independence. In addition to improved outcomes, supporting autistic people in developing their self-advocacy abilities, opens doors to learning more accurate information about their needs and aspirations. Moreover, as the ability to identify, communicate, and autonomously address everyday needs and long-term goals increases, deferring to others (who only can attempt to interpret them) diminishes. In this way, self-advocacy requires that young autistic people develop awareness of their needs, preferences, interests, and rights and build competence in implementing strategies to attain them. Learning self-advocacy skills increases the possibility that they will communicate effectively with others, and in turn, positively affect interpersonal relationships (Paradiz; Kelso; Nelson; Earl, 2018).

Traditionally, students with ASC diagnosis may have received a high level of support during their previous educational experiences such as school or college, including, those who have Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP). However, the support ceases once a student enters study at HE level. The SEND Code of Practice (2015) states; 'The local authority must make young people aware through their local offer of the support available to them in higher education and how to claim it, including the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA)'. However, the uptake of DSA by disabled students remains low. When questioned, 87% of UK disabled students had heard of DSA's, with 40% only being made aware of the funding once they had started their degree and 58% going on to claim through Student Finance England (Johnson et al., 2019). There is a clear disparity between those knowing about the grant and those accessing DSA during their HE experience. Due to delays in claiming DSA the transition process for ASC applicants could be affected, therefore allowing students to be unprepared for undergraduate study (Lambe; Russell; Butler; Fletcher; Ashwin & Brosnan, 2019).

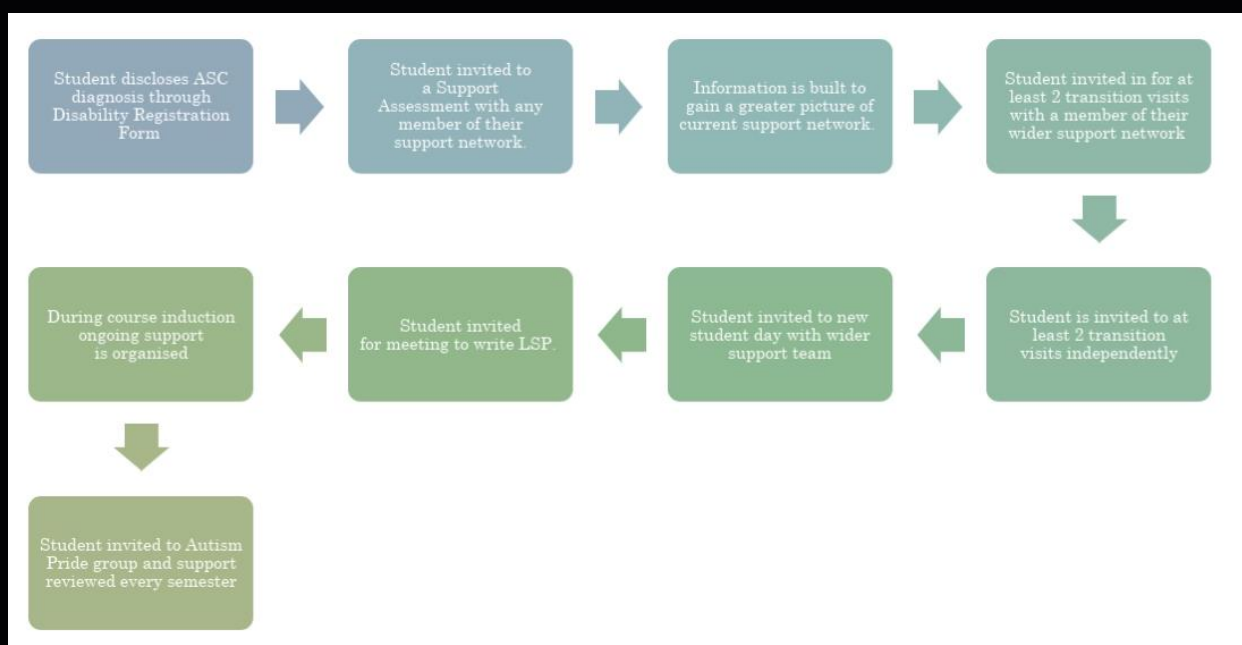
Disability disclosures at application announced 7% of students applying to UCO identify as being Autistic or Asperger's. Therefore, a significant number of students, within a small institution of approximately 600 students. HESA (2019) showed an increase of 150% since 2014/15 in disability disclosure in Higher Education (Hubble & Bolton, 2020) highlighting the significance of quality disability provision.

Not only can the transition process affect students from post-16 education, it can be as traumatic a period for the parents and carers of autistic adults. For the most part, parents can become extremely anxious about their, and their children's future lives, and feel that 'ongoing support' is fundamental to student success despite this contradicting the student's wishes in some cases (Crib; Kenny; Pellicano 2018). Therefore, it is vital to manage the expectations and aspirations of both parents and students during this transitional time.

Trial Transition Pathway

The transition plan was designed to benefit those students with ASC but it also encompasses other students who would benefit from a transition period.

Figure 1 depicts the transition process implemented at UCO.



Through following these steps, students participate in a highly structured pathway of support before starting upon their chosen course. Students could also anticipate steps coming up by being given a visual guide of what was to come, which they could then discuss beforehand to alleviate any concerns and to limit the occurrences of stressful situations arising during transition. (Baron, 2006)

Students would complete an initial Disability Registration Form upon applying. Within this form students are asked to disclose any diagnosis of Autism or Asperger's whereupon they are invited to a meeting with the Disability Officer and they can discuss their current levels of support. Attending this meeting with key staff, enables opportunities for applicants and their support network to also ask questions and build a working relationship. This facilitates allaying any fears they may have around the transition process. Consequently, a greater picture of a student's support needs, concerns, and personal traits in relation to ASC are built to inform staff of the adjustments required for a student. As an institution, we can then assess whether we are able to meet a student's needs within the framework of reasonable adjustments (Equality Act, 2010).

Students are then invited to at least two transition visits where they get the opportunity to explore the campus during quiet periods so that they can familiarise themselves with facilities and learn where key staff are based. Students are given the opportunity to go around the campus both with and/or without a member of their support network. This helps to build self-

advocacy for students and construct suitable relationships with staff in accordance with the setting.

Subsequently, meetings and transition visits are key in helping both students and their support network understand the differences in support from FE to HE, in addition to managing expectations in regards to the level of support which will be made available to students. Support at HE is often very different to what the students are used too. This is reinforced through the next stage of writing the learning support plan (LSP) and ensuring students have applied for Disabled Students' Allowance. Through the LSP, this student led meeting allows them to take charge of their own support and the information they want the wider staff community to know about them as an individual. This can be quite a daunting experience for both the student and their support network. This is, in some cases the first self-advocacy based task which the student will have taken part in as discussed by Anderson, Sosnowy, Kuo and Shattuck, (2018).

Students are then invited to a day where they will meet other new students with similar disabilities and experiences of the transition process. However, this is the first session where members of the support network are not invited, so it is imperative for students to have started to build good relationships up with key support staff who will be visible on the day. Subsequently, this marks the end of the initial transition plan, to allow students time within their subject areas and to build relationships with their peers and lecturers. Ultimately, this is supported by weekly 1:1 support sessions which allow the student to discuss their thoughts and concerns in a holistic environment. In addition, students are then invited to an autism social group which allows them to meet peers not just from their academic year but across the campus. Furthermore, these interactions are key in assisting students in managing their expectations of their time in higher education and allows for peer-to-peer support to flourish (McCurdy and Cole, 2013).

Initial Findings

Through initial feedback compiled through an optional questionnaire and verbal feedback session during the Autism Pride social group the following findings have been compiled.

100% of attendees of the pilot transition programme, who participated in the questionnaire/feedback session felt that they had received enough support in transitioning from FE to HE. In comparison, the students who didn't participate in the pilot, but participated in the questionnaire/feedback session, 33% felt they had received enough support in transitioning from FE to HE

Additionally, 100% of applicants who disclosed Autism or Asperger's and participated in the transition pilot, have successfully progressed to their second year of study. 70% have passed their first year at first class level.

Next Steps

Following this initial trial, a formal transition plan will be formulated which will draw upon research from Leeds Beckett University's 'Autism and Uni' programme (Fabri, Andrews and Pukki, 2016) as well as the National Autistic Society's SPELL framework (Beadle-Brown, Roberts and Mills, 2009).

Students taking part in this more formal transition plan will complete a series of questionnaires and focus groups throughout their journey through HE which will link to their career aspirations and outcomes through widening participation. The aim would be to enable ASC students to achieve their full potential both academically and socially within their own parameters and to employ a person-centered approach in HE support.

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Legislation

Equality Act. 98.

SEND Code of Practice. 8.44

Call for Papers – UCO Research Symposium, June 2021

This year, our 6th UCO Research Symposium will take place on 30th June 2021 and as in previous years, we are looking for contributions from staff and final year students in order to share and showcase their research and scholarly activity. If you would like to take part, your contribution could be based on a professional activity or output, a published paper or a project in which you were recently involved.

Final year students are encouraged to present research from their dissertations or final year projects. You will benefit from sharing your research in a supportive environment with academic staff members and invited guests, gaining valuable experience of a symposium environment. This is a great opportunity to hone your presentation skills for higher levels of study and in preparation for the professional arena. Your work could also feature in the next edition of *Spark*.

Please submit a proposal which includes the format through which you would like to present from the following options:

- A 5-minute/5-slide presentation as a snapshot of your work
- A 20-minute research paper
- A poster presentation
- Performance / media or visual presentation
- Workshop or interactive session (30 mins max.)

Following Oldham College's strategic plan 2019-24, we encourage contributions falling under the following headings:

- Specialism and reputation - where research focusses on subject specialist knowledge and development
- High performance - in terms of student engagement, pedagogical practices and curriculum development
- Digitalisation and technology - exploring the use and impact of digitalisation and technology
- Community - where research and scholarly activity has taken place with, or has had an impact on the local community of Oldham

Please send your idea/proposal to tray.wilson@oldham.ac.uk



