Report - Table 9

Chair: Joe Trimmer (USA); Reporter: Ana Baptista (Portugal); Table members: Angela Brew (Australia), Anton Havnes (Norway), Adrian Hawksworth (UK), Philippa Levy (UK).

As it happened in other groups, the discussion in table 9 occurred within the diversity of countries and experiences. However, it was commonly assumed the pertinence of this subject for all involved in this workshop. Particularly, the opportunity to share ideas and experiences, and above all to continue questioning several issues, was a very enriching process.

Since the beginning, it was assumed the need of embracing the complexity of undergraduate research (UR) initiatives (because there are different ways of engaging in UR inside and outside the curriculum), as well as the need of assuming and reinforcing the core values of teaching, learning and research (particularly when facing several competing agendas nowadays).

Apart from these first remarks, from the discussion it must be highlighted three aspects which can be continuously discussed:

1. Thinking creatively

The first topic for discussion was triggered by Tom Wenzel's talk. Considering the CUR definition of UR, it was questioned: (i) can an undergraduate student make an original contribution to the discipline? Following this idea, how or what can be understood as originality? And in this sense, what is UR for: for the faculty, for the students? What are the UR purposes? It was commonly accepted that the great value for students to be engaged in inquiry and research is the development of their understanding and of new knowledge for themselves (which may not be necessarily new for the discipline and society). Additionally, the development of the ability of thinking creatively is one of the most important features of UR experiences. Students need to develop creative ways of thinking and this is more important than produce an original output of their UR experience, since it is acknowledged that this ability will have a great impact when solving multidisciplinary problems and also for professional life. Also, the opportunity for students to think about their own skills within their discipline or department but also in an interdisciplinary point of view is extremely important to be tackled and enhanced.

2. A vision of a different kind of university

After Angela Brew's talk, it was emphasised some challenges and concerns particularly related with financial issues as well as the different drivers at a governmental level related with teaching and research agendas. But particularly, the discussion was more focused on the question: are universities preparing students for today's society? Where does UR fit? It was emphasised that universities must be able to create several opportunities for students to grow and learn to deal with complexity. Thus, it was also unanimous the importance of developing different forms of UR: not only it is a pedagogical imperative, but mainly an institutional one,

so a meaningful Higher Education can be created, where students must be engaged and must be considered part of the community. Following these ideas and reflection about a vision of a different kind of university, three important questions were raised: (i) are students curious, creative and engaged (so they could be actively involved in that community and UR)?, (ii) are faculty members (particularly those who support students in their UR experiences) also curious, creative and engaged?, and finally (iii) how can we inspire our colleagues to develop their thinking, discourse and actions about scholarly communities where students move as colleagues?

3. The creation of communities of researchers

Following the previous discussion and after Sue Vajoczki's talk, a main question was raised: whose research is the student doing? Consequently, another emerged: whose community is the student participating in (when doing that research)? It was stressed that the student and the teacher/supervisor/mentor (need to) share the ownership of the research project. Nevertheless, it is essential to understand and discuss what faculty members think of students' participation in a common community of researchers, as well as what students think and how the act regarding the creation of community of themselves, young researchers who actively participate and are involved in a broad research community.

By Ana Vitória Baptista, University of Aveiro – Portugal

http://www.ua.pt/cidtff/laqe/ (website of the Research Centre and the Laboratory of Evaluation of Educational Quality – however, it is in Portuguese and not updated. But soon, it will be updated and will have a page in English.)

http://anavbaptista.weebly.com/index.html (personal website - CV)