

There is an alternative

A report on an action research project to develop a framework for co-operative higher education

Mike Neary and Joss Winn

Keywords: co-operatives, higher education, action research, co-operative university

This report provides an interim account of a participatory action research project undertaken during 2015–16. The research brought together scholars, students and expert members of the co-operative movement to design a theoretically informed and practically grounded framework for co-operative higher education that activists, educators and the co-operative movement could take forward into implementation. Our dual roles in the research were as founding members of the Social Science Centre, Lincoln, an autonomous co-operative for higher education constituted in 2011 (Social Science Centre 2013), and as professional researchers working at the University of Lincoln. The immediate context for the research was, and remains, the ‘assault’ on universities in the U.K. (Bailey and Freedman 2011), the ‘gamble’ being taken with the future of higher education (McGettigan 2013), and the ‘pedagogy of debt’ (Williams 2006) that has been imposed through the removal of public funding of teaching and the concurrent tripling of tuition fees (Sutton Trust 2016).

We sought to develop a framework for higher education based on an existing alternative institutional form of co-operative association that attempts to address issues of ownership and control over the means of production through a radical form of democracy among those involved. Co-operatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. They are constituted through the principles of voluntary and open membership, democratic member control, member economic

participation, autonomy and independence, education, training and information, co-operation among co-operatives, and concern for community (MacPherson 2007). In many cases the assets of the co-operative are held under 'common ownership', a social form of property that goes beyond the distinction between private and public (Neary and Winn 2015).

Research towards a 'co-operative university' or co-operative forms of higher education has been the focus of a growing number of people in the last five years (Winn 2016). In the U.K., this has been, in part, motivated by the growth of co-operative schools (Woodin 2015) as well as a pivotal report commissioned by the Co-operative College, U.K. to investigate the possibility of 'realising the co-operative university' (Cook 2013). Our own earlier research, informed by critical political economy and critical pedagogy, had developed the concept of Student as Producer (Neary and Winn 2009), a concept that recognises that both academics and students are involved as academic workers in the production of critical-practical knowledge (Harney and Moten 1998). It is based on a radical, negative critique of the capitalist university as constituted on the basis of worker exploitation. It is an attempt to develop a pedagogical framework through which the organising principle for the university can be reconstituted as collaboration, sharing and commoning, already core academic values, against the exploitative values that characterise the capitalist business. This is achieved by connecting theory to an actually existing organisational form: the co-operative university (Winn 2015). Student as Producer sets out to reconstitute the ownership of the means of production so that academic workers own the means of production of the enterprises in which they are working. This is done by re-engineering the relationship between students and academics through the way in which the curriculum is arranged. The practical expression of this is research-engaged teaching where courses are designed in ways that students and teachers work collaboratively on research or research-like projects (Neary et al. 2015; Neary and Saunders 2016).

Research design

The research methodology for our project was participatory action research organised around a series of five workshops which took place in the city of Lincoln, U.K., over a period of one year. They were themed sequentially as follows:

- (1) Pedagogy for co-operative higher education
- (2) Governance models
- (3) Legal and regulatory considerations
- (4) Business models
- (5) Global solidarity and federated co-ordination of co-operative higher education

The workshops were intended to provide a critical forum to discuss, debate, deconstruct, detail and discover a new paradigm for co-operative higher education.

We understand the term ‘action research’ in its broadest meaning as ‘simply a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out’ (Carr and Kemmis 1986: 162). More specifically, we approached it as a ‘critical participatory action research’ project, which is defined (Kemmis 2008) as having the following six attributes:

- (1) Participatory and collective research to achieve effective historical consciousness in and of practice as praxis
- (2) Research for critical (self-)reflection
- (3) Research that opens communicative space
- (4) Research to transform reality
- (5) Research with a practical aim

(6) Research with emancipatory aims

The three research instruments were: face-to-face workshops, individual unstructured interviews and online focus groups taking place two weeks after the respective workshop. Each workshop constituted an iterative cycle of 'action' for this action research project and aimed to follow a 'spiral of self-reflective cycles' (Kemmis and McTaggart 2005: 563): planning, acting, reflecting, re-planning, acting and so on. These correspond to four cycles of: research design, data gathering, data analysis, communication, research design, and so on (Stringer 2004). In this way, each action informs and builds upon the last to achieve, through the praxis of action and research, the theoretical, practical and emancipatory aims of the project.

The research group comprised members of the Social Science Centre as well as others not directly involved with the SSC, including researchers of co-operative enterprise, historians, legal specialists, online educators, worker-members of co-operatives and academics and students involved in the free university movement, as well as supportive organisations, including the Co-operative College. The research attracted forty-eight different workshop participants, five online focus groups involving nineteen participants, and twelve interviews. The workshops and focus groups were open to anyone who wanted to participate and were advertised in advance on the SSC website¹ and social media. We also invited specific people to the workshops who we felt had valuable expertise to share on the given workshop theme (e.g. co-operative learning, co-operative governance, social enterprise, etc.). A project mailing list² was established and now has over 100 subscribers from England, Scotland, Wales, Sweden, Canada, U.S.A. and Greece. Interest in both the project and the idea of co-operative higher education continues to grow and inspire students, academics and co-operators around the world.

Summary of workshops

Pedagogy

Our first workshop sought to explore pedagogies for co-operative higher education, starting from the practices and principles of Student as Producer. This foundational pedagogy for the Social Science Centre, Lincoln, involves students working collaboratively with academics on research projects of academic value, but, more than that, it creates the space for a democratic relationship to emerge between students and their teachers in the classroom and at the level of the institution. Practically, this takes place through the co-design of the curriculum, engaging in joint research projects, and a recognition that teachers and students have much to learn from each other (Stanistreet 2012). The main themes for the workshop were the curriculum, assessment, the learning environment, technologies for teaching and co-operative learning.

Participants agreed that the relationships between students and academics as well as other members of the co-operative who undertake essential supportive and administrative work, is the central issue from which all other considerations arise. These relationships will be complex and fluid depending on the nature of activities, but should be grounded within a constitutional framework that confronts issues of power, difference and desire, as well as (in)equalities, while at the same time recognising the importance of deliberative leadership. Co-operative learning develops in a context within which the relationship between teacher and student is understood as part of a mutual pedagogical project which reflects the collaborative character of the institution as a whole and the desire to transform social relations beyond the institution (Breeze 2011).

The curriculum should be open and enquiring, based on outcomes that are not predetermined. At the same time there should be a sense of progress and structure. The curriculum should be embedded in the real lives of the members as well as the communities

within which the co-operative is situated. This community extends to the community of co-operatives engaged in related social and public issues: housing, health, employment and so on. The content of the curriculum should reflect the nature of co-operative society: critical political economy, the history of the workers' movement, working class intellectuality and philosophy, gender studies (co-operative women), making links between the natural and the social sciences and not merely as versions of interdisciplinarity but as 'troublesome', 'useful' and 'critical-practical' knowledges. This should be carried out in an environment that is full of care for one-another and joyfulness.

Governance

At the second workshop, among participants with experience in the co-operative movement, there was a strong sense that a 'co-operative' refers to an organisation that identifies with the International Co-operative Alliance's statement of identity, values and principles (ICA 1995): 'A co-operative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise'.

Co-operatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. The co-operative principles are guidelines by which co-operatives put their values into practice.

- (1) Voluntary and Open Membership
- (2) Democratic Member Control
- (3) Member Economic Participation
- (4) Autonomy and Independence
- (5) Education, Training and Information
- (6) Co-operation among Co-operatives

(7) Concern for Community

The co-operative movement is a social, historical and political movement that, beyond the identity statement, is not prescriptive. For some it is simply a better way of doing business; for others it is a radical social movement. When developing a framework for co-operative higher education, we need to be clear about what 'co-operative' means to us. For those at the workshop, there was general agreement that we wish to draw on the radical, social and political history of the co-operative movement.

We questioned what we mean by 'governance' and noted that it involves relationships of power and is politically situated. We discussed governance as:

- (1) The mechanisms through which an organisation is accountable to its stakeholders/members.
- (2) Systems and processes ensuring overall direction, effectiveness, supervision and accountability of an organisation.
- (3) Broader politics and social processes that define and organise individuals and groups, addressing issues of power.

Related to this, we questioned the difference between 'stakeholders' and 'members' and noted how we need to use language carefully and consciously to avoid reproducing the neoliberal status quo. We did not seek to design a governance structure in the workshop because of the different routes that a co-operative university might take. These routes are outlined later in this article. The governance workshop focused primarily on the *creation* of a new university, allowing participants to imagine co-operative higher education in an ideal democratic form. However, the question of *converting* an existing institution was not lost as we recognised the need to respond to the possibility of a worker takeover of a failing institution, as has often happened in other industries past and present in the U.K. and elsewhere.

Legal

At this workshop there was a strong sense that higher education needs to be embedded as a core value within the co-operative movement, not only to support commercial activities but because of higher education's critical and reflexive function in building a social movement – that is, a 'new co-operativism' (Vieta 2010). We discussed whether to use the title of 'university' or 'higher education' for our new institution and, in what was to become a main theme for the day, to what extent we work inside or outside national higher education regulatory frameworks. Working from documents recently published by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), we looked at the requirements in the U.K. to become a legally recognised university. At the time of the workshop, this route to becoming a 'university' required a threshold level of higher education students and already attained degree-awarding powers. The recent White Paper (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills 2016a) and associated Higher Education and Research Bill (Department for Education 2016a) propose removal of the threshold and a faster route to obtaining degree-awarding powers. The attraction of working within the regulatory framework is that funding is associated with the student numbers.

We thought about credible organisations deeply embedded within the co-operative movement, the Co-operative College and the International Co-operative Alliance, which might become primary coordinating institutions with responsibility for quality assurance and good governance, organised around a confederated secondary network of co-operative higher education centres/universities. We agreed that there was no legal reason why a co-operative university could not be established under the HEFCE regulations, via the established gateways (HEFCE n.d.). A constitutional framework could be created that would meet

HEFCE stipulations concerning quality, financial sustainability and good governance and subsequent legal consultation on the new Higher Education and Research Bill confirms this.

However, there was a greater interest in creating an alternative form of co-operative higher education that was not dependent on direct government validation and funding. We learned that there are many organisations through which courses and programmes of study could be validated (Ofqual n.d.). These alternative qualifications remain government-regulated and participants were interested in looking at the full range of possible awards, including diplomas and certificates.

All of this raises the question about the relationship of this new form of co-operative higher education to the local and national state as the main arbiter of legal matters and source of public provision. This is a highly practical matter but should also be considered as a form of intellectual inquiry through, for example, a critique of political economy and critical legal studies.

Business models

The fourth workshop focused on how to finance and resource a new co-operative university that did not rely on public funding. Participants found inspiration in Evergreen Co-operatives,³ as well as the growing ‘new co-operativism’ (Vieta 2010). One feature of the latter is ‘platform co-operativism’ (Scholz 2016), which proposes a democratic form of ownership and governance of online services. One important concept that emerged throughout the day was the idea of ‘social value’ as opposed to economic value, and how that might be generated and expanded.

There was a recognition of the need for different types of funding: seed funding and continuing funding. The co-operative might be financed by a members’ levy from co-operative enterprises to support education (Principle 5) as a contribution from the global co-

operative movement; or by operating a scheme of Community Shares, or FairShares (Ridley-Duff 2015) or investing through a Loanstock share offer. Another way of generating income could be by individual subscriptions or by setting up a Solidarity Fund. We discussed the possibility of approaching the Co-operative Bank as well as other philanthropic donors and Educational Trusts. Other income-generating ideas included publishing, consultancy, research contracts, residential courses – cooking, living and eating together – overcoming ‘community deficit’, doing foundation programmes and offering ‘edventures’ (educational adventures).

The co-operative might find another form of social wealth not based on money but on labour, as a form of labour bank, that could generate its own currency. Or, in the form of a barter/gift economy. Or through a scheme of co-operative work experience making links with local co-operative schools. It might also be that courses are donated by scholars for free. It was felt that these ideas to generate social wealth and work less are part of a much larger political project around the themes of Universal Basic Income and the Reduction of Working Hours that the new co-operative university should recognise and respond to. Some felt these ideas might be too utopian, while others felt a utopian frame of mind is what is required in the current crisis (Neary and Winn 2016b).

There were no firm conclusions about what the definitive output or product of this co-operative version of higher education would be, but it would involve being part of a radical democratic social experiment which enables members to be debt free, and that it should be for the production of social value in the form of knowledge and science. The co-operative should be embedded in and aware of its local context, responding to issues of local need and recognising the skills, knowledge and expertise that are present among its members. We struggled with the word ‘product’, suggesting as alternatives: ‘interactions’ or ‘experience’ or ‘curriculum’ or ‘pleasure’ as part of a ‘sensual’ and ‘intellectual life’ in a way that amplifies the intellectual and human/physical capabilities of each individual member and the collective

group. Members of the co-operative must have freedom to learn, freedom to create/critique – to create a way of living – or make a living: a ‘livelihood’, a concept that was preferred to business plan. Other concepts that could support this philosophy were ‘surviving well’, ‘*etre pour soi*’ (being-for-itself) and ‘*ubuntu*’ (humanity towards others).

Membership does not have to be time limited to three or four years, as in mainstream university programmes. It was felt that people most likely to be members of this new co-operative for higher education would be adult and mature, the group most disadvantaged by the current funding regimes in England, who want not only to gain a qualification, but be part of a meaningful social experiment. There was a consensus that the membership must be able to incorporate various needs and capacities of stakeholders while maintaining a sense of common purpose and solidarity. The co-operative does not need to be only locally focused and would make use of digital technologies, e.g., to operate as a platform co-operative, taking advantage of already existing co-operative protocols like Multi-stakeholder Somerset Rules.⁴ There was much support for the idea that the co-operative for higher learning would need to connect to a wider membership of co-operatives, for example, housing co-ops and food co-ops, and connect with other social movements around the world.

Transnational solidarity

The final workshop was concerned with ‘co-operation among co-operatives’ and other international organisations providing higher education. We sought to identify the features of a transnational network for co-operative higher education as well as acknowledge existing models and organisations to learn from. Not only were the well-established organisations such as the ICA, CICOPA and UNESCO mentioned, but also the various student co-operative groups in the U.K., U.S.A. and elsewhere, the national co-operative colleges that already undertake research and coordinate educational activities within the movement, like-minded

institutions such as Antioch College, the WEA, Northern College and other worker education initiatives, the Trade Unions, and national and international campaigns within higher education such as #RhodesMustFall. This activity highlighted how participants understood the role and purpose of co-operative higher education as connecting to and serving a broader concern with social, political, economic and ecological issues. It emphasised both the breadth of existing organisations and campaigns that share similar values and principles with the co-operative movement, as well as the need for the co-operative movement to address a long-standing need for higher education provided by and for its members.

This message came through too, when we discussed what the actual features of a transnational organisation for co-operative higher education might include. Participants felt that institutionally, it would be a ‘secondary co-operative’⁵ consisting of people who were elected by its member co-operatives to coordinate activities among members, promote its members’ interests and the overall idea and purposes of co-operative higher education. This facilitating organisation could exist virtually and take advantage of technologies to allow people from different countries to work together as part of the organisation. There was a strong sense that the transnational organisation would be driven by the active participation of its member co-operatives, rather than simply representing them from a distance. It was suggested that in countries where co-operative colleges already exist, such as the U.K., those colleges would also be members and continue to take a lead role in coordinating activities at the national level. Other forms of associate membership would be a way for non-educational co-operatives and like-minded organisations to play a part in the development and activities of the international co-operative higher education network. What was clear is the need to recognise the local character of co-operative universities, which reflect their members’ needs and capacities, while also having democratically-run organisations at both the national and

international levels, coordinating exchanges of students, academics, arranging events and representing their members both inside and outside the co-operative movement.

Out of these discussions, participants questioned what the purpose of co-operative higher education should be. There was a strong sense that it should primarily integrate into and serve the needs of the co-operative movement, rather than attempt to compete with mainstream universities. Both academics and student members would consciously choose a co-operative university because of its distinctive features as an organisation that is democratically owned and controlled by its members. It should focus on the identity, values and principles of the co-operative movement and the varieties of social concerns that members of the movement have. That is not to say it would be inward-looking, but seek to present co-operative higher education as a real alternative to the crisis of mainstream higher education, which is reflective of the broader crises in society. Significantly, it was felt that the international co-operative movement is lacking adequate research organisations that can offer the variety of critiques that the movement needs to ensure that the values and the principles of the movement are maintained and practiced. The role of education within the co-operative movement needs to be 'reconfigured' to establish clearly the role and purpose of higher education, and as such the development of a transnational solidarity for co-operative higher education would be to strengthen and reconfirm the movement's commitment to Principle 5 on Education, Training and Information.

Finally, it was suggested that the co-operative Mondragón University in Spain (Wright, Greenwood and Boden 2011) should be invited to play a key role in forming the network and also in helping establish new co-operative universities, perhaps by providing accreditation during their formative years. The question of whether a new co-operative university should seek to integrate itself into the national regulatory framework for higher

education or partner with an existing university elsewhere, such as Mondragón, remains a key issue for some participants in these workshops.

Interviews

As part of the project, ten individual interviews and three group discussions were conducted in order to draw on specific expertise as well as reach people who were unable to attend the workshops or focus groups. Individual participants were therefore either self-selecting, offering to be interviewed for the project, or selected because of their related experience. We interviewed researchers on pedagogy, co-operatives, social movements and alternative education. We also interviewed a lawyer specialising in U.K. higher education; someone involved in supporting the conversion of co-operative schools in the U.K.; a founding member of UniCoop, a new co-operative university in Mexico; a senior member of Mondragón University; members of the Social Science Centre, Lincoln; members of the Worker's College in South Africa; and members of the U.K. network, Students for Co-operation.

Discussions were wide-ranging. Most interview participants (and workshop participants, too) declined anonymity and are happy to be individually quoted. This suggests a high level of personal interest and engagement with the research; perhaps a sense of wanting to be identified as being part of something exciting.⁶ The interviews were sent for transcription and have been initially coded by ourselves. The most common themes are those of membership, pedagogy, the 'creation' route, size and scale of the co-operative and governance.

The first principle of a co-operative is 'voluntary and open membership'. Interviewees recognised that membership should be open to all staff (academic, non-academic and supporting services) and students. We were reminded that in the U.K., Chartered universities

such as Cambridge, have always been member organisations and this includes students, although the contractual relationship has since taken precedence as ‘the main route by which [students] exercise their rights’. The transiency of students was raised as a problem of active *participation* rather than *membership*, with one interviewee stating that ‘you have to figure out how they can have ... responsibility and at the same time pass it on’. The same interviewee thought that some of the most active members would be ‘middle to lower level staff’ who ‘keep the institution afloat ... under lousy conditions’. And another interviewee pointed to the same issue of encouraging active participation, which often becomes delegated to a ‘core’ of individuals. Participation among members is always a key issue for co-operatives and one of the current aims of the global co-operative movement is to ‘elevate participation within membership and governance to a new level’. (ICA 2013: 4) One interviewee told us that in schools that had converted to multi-stakeholder co-operatives, sometimes teaching staff were reluctant to become members at first, perhaps due to existing low morale, though, ‘in the best examples, staff are very active members’. Ideally, positions of responsibility in a co-operative university would be elected positions, including those of the governing body and ‘Vice Chancellor’ (were that position to exist). In the example of co-operative schools, they still maintain non-elected leadership posts, although trustees and governors are elected. We also heard how Mondragón University is a multi-stakeholder co-operative with three membership types: workers, students and ‘collaborators’ from the local community (parents, local authorities, businesses and so on), and through a system of representative democracy and one-member one-vote, the university is governed by a general assembly comprised of one-third of each membership type.

Interviewees spoke about pedagogy as a ‘social-human relationship’; that it should be understood as an ‘organisational pillar’; and that care for others can itself be pedagogic. This corresponds to one of the ethical values of the ‘co-operative identity’. Similarly, pedagogy

should not be knowledge-centred, nor student-centred, but focused on the relationship between teacher and student. One interviewee saw the role of teacher as ‘researchers with time for others’, inspiring students to undertake their own research. Another interviewee acknowledged the relative freedom they currently have to teach in innovative ways, but that while ‘almost anything is possible ... nothing has necessarily a great deal of significance’. All interviewees who discussed the theme of pedagogy made positive reference to the traditions of ‘critical’ and ‘popular’ pedagogy, but were also keen to go beyond and ‘revise’ these established progressive forms of teaching and learning. One interviewee spoke about their research into intentional communities which revealed that the process of consensus decision-making among members can be understood as a form of pedagogy. In the organisational context, the responsibility of active membership and participation is itself a form of pedagogy and ‘people have to enter the process with a willingness to be transformed and to change their attitudes and their beliefs’.

Interviewees expressed curiosity and excitement over the idea of creating a co-operative university, referring to it as both a ‘dream’ and driven by ‘discontent’. The national legal regulatory framework was identified as being a potential barrier to creating a co-operative university but also in the U.K.’s recently deregulated context, a legal expert told us that ‘it’s probably easier than it ever has been’.

Size, scale and governance were invariably discussed together, with most participants acknowledging that as the size of an organisation grows, its form of governance should change, too. Participants recognised the need for co-operative higher education to be open and inclusive yet retain small, democratic structures. Examples were given of co-operatives that had grown too large and collapsed or became ‘capitalist organisations’. Counter to this, we were given the example of the Italian Social Co-ops (Vanek 2001), where co-ops are split when they reach a certain size so as to maintain high levels of member participation and good

governance. One interviewee referred to ‘Dunbar’s number’ of 150 members for a stable and cohesive group, and this was repeated by workshop participants, too. In a university with potentially thousands of student and staff members, a ‘co-operative of co-operatives’ (along the lines of Mondragón), would be a way of maintaining local autonomy and high quality governance within Departments and Faculties, with delegated member representation at the level of the ‘secondary’ co-operative university. In one interviewee’s experience, consensual forms of decision-making can rarely exceed fifty members and should be ‘replicated’ and ‘networked’, responding to local need and capacities, rather than scaled up in size.

Conclusion

Data collection for the research was completed in February 2016 and our initial analysis forms the basis of this report. Following this, a proposed framework for co-operative higher education has been presented and discussed (Neary and Winn 2016a) at the Co-operative Education Conference, Manchester, U.K. (April 2016); the International Co-operative Association research conference, Almeria, Spain (June 2016); and the Universities in the Knowledge Economy conference, Copenhagen, Denmark (July 2016). The framework we have developed synthesises the theoretical and practical objectives in which the research is grounded and the themes which we have identified and discussed during the period of action research. A further short article has been published in the form of a series of letters from the University of Utopia, as a way of articulating some of the findings of the research (Neary and Winn 2016b). In addition to the dissemination of our research, we have begun further work, funded by the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education, to look specifically at the possibility of establishing co-operative leadership as a viable organisational form of governance and management for Higher Education.⁷

The context within which this work takes place continues to change, although it is following the trajectory outlined in the Browne Review (Browne Report 2010) and the HE Green Paper (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills 2015). The recent White Paper (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills 2016a) and accompanying Higher Education and Research Bill (Department for Education 2016a), currently under parliamentary consideration, aims to create a ‘competitive market’ of higher education in the U.K. and encourage greater ‘choice for students’. In practice, it has significant implications for the status of students as consumers, the independence and autonomy of universities and introduces a new national co-ordinating framework for the funding of research (Neary 2016). The new Bill also introduces a number of measures to ‘make it easier for “challenger institutions” to award their own degrees’ (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills 2016b), something which is likely to benefit the growth of alternate co-operative provision. However, what appears to be deregulation of the higher education market is, paradoxically, countered by stronger regulation through a greater reliance on teaching-related performance metrics linked to measures of ‘student satisfaction’ (Department for Education 2016b).

Despite the crisis of the higher education system that the new Bill represents, it is important to recognise that there is a clear synergy between established academic values and the values of the co-operative movement: sharing, education, collaboration, open membership, democratic member control, autonomy and independence and concern for community (Cook 2013). We can build on this synergy. What our research has shown so far is that co-operative models of association that have evolved since the nineteenth century offer a complementary framework for reorganising and reorienting higher education and the production of knowledge in a way that is radical, humane and more enduring.

Contributor details

Mike Neary is Professor of Sociology in the School of Political and Social Sciences, University of Lincoln. He was the Dean of Teaching and Learning at Lincoln, 2007–2014. Mike’s research is informed by Marxist value theory of labour. His current writing applies this theory to a higher education context, with a focus on student and academic labour. Mike was made an honorary life member of the University of Lincoln’s Students’ Union in 2014 for his work with students. He is a founding member of the Social Science Centre, Lincoln, a co-operative providing free public higher education since 2011.

Contact: mneary@lincoln.ac.uk

Joss Winn is Senior Lecturer and Programme Leader in Education at the University of Lincoln. His research focuses on co-operative education, workplace democracy, academic labour and alternative forms of higher education. In 2011, he co-founded the Social Science Centre, Lincoln, a co-operative for higher education and is a Director of the Lincolnshire Co-operative Development Agency.

Contact: jwinn@lincoln.ac.uk

References

Bailey, M. and Freedman, D. (2011) *The Assault on Universities: A Manifesto for Resistance*, London: Pluto Press.

Breeze, M. (2011) ‘Transforming education through co-operation – a force for change’, *Journal of Co-operative Studies* 44, no. 3: 2–4.

Browne Report (2010) ‘Securing a sustainable future for higher education: an independent review of higher education funding and student finance’, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-browne-report-higher-education-funding-and-student-finance> (accessed 20 April 2016).

- Carr, W. and Kemmis, S. (1986) *Becoming Critical: Education, Knowledge and Action Research*, London: Routledge.
- Cook, D. (2013) 'Realising the co-operative university: a consultancy report for the co-operative college', http://dbms.ilrt.bris.ac.uk/media/user/162789/Realising_the_co-operative_university_FOR_DISEMMINATION.pdf (accessed 20 April 2016).
- Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) (2015) 'Higher education: teaching excellence, social mobility and student choice', Higher Education Green Paper, <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/higher-education-teaching-excellence-social-mobility-and-student-choice> (accessed 20 April 2016).
- Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) (2016a) 'Success as a knowledge economy: teaching excellence, social mobility and student choice', Higher Education White Paper, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-success-as-a-knowledge-economy-white-paper> (accessed 7 October 2016).
- Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) (2016b) 'New universities to deliver choice and opportunity to students', Press release, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-universities-to-deliver-choice-and-opportunity-for-students> (accessed 18 November 2016).
- Department for Education (2016a) *Higher Education and Research Bill*, <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/highereducationandresearch.html> (accessed 7 October 2016).
- Department for Education (2016b) *Teaching Excellence Framework*, <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/teaching-excellence-framework> (accessed 14 October 2016).
- Harney, S. and Moten, F. (1998) 'Doing academic work', in M. Randy (ed.) *Chalk Lines. The Politics of Work in the Managed University*, Durham: Duke University Press, 154–180.

Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) (n.d.) Gateways for higher education providers, <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/reg/of/gateways/> (accessed 13 January 2017).

International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) (1995) 'Statement on co-operative identity, values and principles', <http://ica.coop/en/whats-co-op/co-operative-identity-values-principles> (accessed 20 April 2016).

International Co-operative Alliance (2013) 'Blueprint for a co-operative decade', <http://ica.coop/en/blueprint-co-op-decade> (accessed 20 April 2016).

Kemmis, S. (2008) 'Critical theory and participatory action research', in P. Reason and H. Bradbury (eds) *The SAGE Handbook of Action Research: Participative Inquiry and Practice*. London: Sage, 121-138.

Kemmis, S. and McTaggart, R. (2005) 'Participatory action research', in N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (eds) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 2nd ed., Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 559-604.

MacPherson, I. (2007) 'Speech Introducing the Co-operative Identity Statement to the 1995 Manchester Congress', in I. MacPherson, *One Path to Co-operative Studies*, Victoria: New Rochdale Press, 201–217.

McGettigan, A. (2013) *The Great University Gamble: Money, Markets and the Future of Higher Education*, London: Pluto Press.

Neary, M. (2016) 'Teaching Excellence Framework: a critical response and an alternative future', *Journal of Contemporary European Research* 12, no. 33: 690–695.

Neary, M. and Saunders, G. (2016) 'Student as producer and the politics of abolition: making a new form of dissident institution?' *Critical Education* 7, no. 5: 1–23.

Neary, M., Saunders, G., Haggard, A. and Derricott, D. (2015) *Student as Producer: Research engaged teaching, an institutional strategy*, York: Higher Education

- Academy, <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/project/student-producer-research-engaged-teaching-and-learning-institutional-strategy> (accessed 18 November 2016).
- Neary, M. and Winn, J. (2009) 'The student as producer: reinventing the student experience in higher education', in L. Bell, H. Stevenson and M. Neary (eds) *The Future of Higher Education: Policy, Pedagogy and the Student Experience*, London: Continuum, 126-138.
- Neary, M. and Winn, J. (2015) 'Beyond public and private: a model for co-operative higher education', *Krisis: Journal for Contemporary Philosophy* 2: 114–119.
- Neary, M. and Winn, J. (2016a) 'Beyond public and private: a framework for co-operative higher education', in Co-operative Education Conference 2016, 21–22 April, Manchester, <http://eprints.lincoln.ac.uk/23051/> (accessed 14 October 2016).
- Neary, M. and Winn, J. (2016b) 'The University of Utopia', *Post-16 Educator* 84: 13-15, <http://eprints.lincoln.ac.uk/23519/> (accessed 7 October 2016).
- Ofqual (n.d.) Register of Regulated Qualifications, <http://register.ofqual.gov.uk>
- Ridley-Duff, R. (2015) 'The case for fairshares: a new model for social enterprise development and the strengthening of the social and solidarity economy', Charleston, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, <http://shura.shu.ac.uk/10198/> (accessed 20 April 2016).
- Scholz, T. (2016) *Platform Cooperativism*, Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, <http://platformcoop.net/platform-cooperativism-by-trebor-scholz> (accessed 20 April 2016).
- Social Science Centre, Lincoln (2013) 'An experiment in free, co-operative higher education', *Radical Philosophy* 182: 66–67.
- Stanistreet, P. (2012) 'Anyone can teach, everyone can learn', *Adults Learning* 23, no. 3: 20–26,

http://www.learningandwork.org.uk/sites/niace_en/files/resources/Adults%20Learning%20Spring%202012.pdf (accessed 18 November 2016).

Stringer, E. (2004) *Action Research in Education*, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

Sutton Trust (2016) *Degrees of Debt*, <http://www.suttontrust.com/researcharchive/degrees-of-debt/> (accessed 14 October 2016).

Vanek, W.M. (2001) *Italian Social Cooperatives*, Geo Newsletter, <http://www.geo.coop/archives/vanek.htm> (accessed 14 October 2016).

Vieta, M. (2010) *The New Cooperativism*, Special issue of *Affinities* 4, no. 1.

Williams, J. (2006) 'The pedagogy of debt', *College Literature* 33, no. 4: 155–169.

Winn, J. (2015) 'The co-operative university: labour, property and pedagogy', *Power and Education* 7, no. 1: 39–55.

Winn, J. (2016) *Co-operative Higher Education Bibliography*, <http://josswinn.org/2013/11/21/co-operative-universities-a-bibliography/> (accessed 14 October 2016).

Woodin, T. (ed.) (2015) *Co-operation, Learning and Co-operative Values: Contemporary Issues in Education*, London: Routledge.

Wright, S., Greenwood, D. and Boden, R. (2011) 'Report on a field visit to Mondragón University: a cooperative experience/experiment', *Learning and Teaching: The International Journal of Higher Education in the Social Sciences* 4, no. 3: 38–56.

Notes

¹ <http://socialsciencecentre.org.uk/blog/2015/03/30/beyond-public-and-private-a-model-for-co-operative-higher-education/>

² <https://lists.mayfirst.org/mailman/listinfo/cooperative-higher-educaton>

³ For details, see <http://community-wealth.org/content/cleveland-model-how-evergreen-cooperatives-are-building-community-wealth>

⁴ For details, see <http://www.somerset.coop/p/somerset-rules-registrations.html>

⁵ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cooperative_federation for a definition.

⁶ Notes from each workshop were written up and published on the SSC website, including the names of all participants who declined anonymity.

<http://socialsciencecentre.org.uk/blog/category/projects/co-operative-university-projects/>

⁷ For details, see <http://coophe.blogs.lincoln.ac.uk>