**Transcript of an interview with Steve Morris, Colleges of Arts and Humanities, March 2019 about Why he sought HEA Fellowship recognition.**

**SoundCLoud Link to Interview:** [**https://soundcloud.com/user-320469767/why-i-applied-for-hea-fellowship**](https://soundcloud.com/user-320469767/why-i-applied-for-hea-fellowship)

**Steve –** I’m based in the department of Welsh, but my teaching is in the field of Applied Linguistics so I sit between the two in a way in what I do. Most of my teaching, at the moment, all of my teaching is through the medium of Welsh, but discipline wise I started full time here in 1991 and before then I’d worked as a part time tutor in what was then known as the department of Extra Mural studies since the ‘80s. So it’s a long career part time and full time at Swansea University

**Louise** – So, why did you apply for the Fellowship recognition?

**Steve –** I suppose having been here for a long period of time and undertaken different roles and when I was working for Extra Mural and DACE then, I suppose you’re teaching out in the community, it’s different to teaching full time undergraduates on campus. And after all that time I thought, well this will be a good moment in my career to pause, reflect on the kind of teaching that I’ve used throughout my career and it gives you the opportunity for a kind of sustained reflection on what you’ve been doing and also I think there can be a tendency to have got to that stage in your career and think “well its worked so far, I’m going to carry on doing it this way” which I don’t think in many aspects is a good way at looking at how we teach.

It doesn’t do anybody any harm just to sort of take stock, see where you are, see how you’re doing things, and maybe change the way you’re doing things or adapt the way you’re doing things to different circumstances and I thought doing the HEA would give me a chance to do that.

**Louise** – So is there something that you can think about that it did change your mind-set and your attitude? You mentioned teaching different types of students earlier in your career and now the undergrads. So was the Fellowship application process, did it have any of those ‘lightbulb’ moments where you went ‘aah - ’ I know now why I taught it in that way’ or ‘I now know that I’m challenged to look at something different’?

**Steve** – Absolutely, there were quite a few of them I would say (laughs). I don’t think on the whole we take enough time to sort of stand back and see those things that we’re doing well, and those things that maybe we could change and develop and adapt.

It made me think about a lot of the ways that I teach, methods that I use in the classroom. There are elements from the way I taught with the community when I was with DACE that I thought about now and I thought well yeah, actually may I was a bit reticent about using those for full-time students who’d come straight from school, but sometimes they can be just as useful with students like that as they can be with mature students in the community,

I suppose you engage with the students and the way you discuss things. I was probably a bit reticent or more reticent than I should have been about using things like working in pairs and in groups which have always worked well with adults, but applying those with full time students has worked well aswell. I’ve noticed that full time students are a bit more reticent to give their views which is why I think I talked about using Kahoot as a method of engaging them and making sure that you do get that kind of getting two way feedback – so I’m looking into that at the moment.

Another good thing is that often we see these lists of modules which are available, training, ongoing professional development and I think I look at those in a more critical sense – critical in the sense that I can see now how engaging with them would benefit certain areas, you don’t just at them and think “oh I don’t know”, I can look at them with a more critical eye and I think yeah actually that would benefit me to do that and could have an impact on my practice.

**Louise** - So part of being a fellow is this commitment to maintain your good standing – to continue to keep up to date, keep your topics up to date, keep your practice up to date. So you’ve mentioned Kahoot and if you like formal means of CPD – what other things do you use to keep yourself up to date?

**Steve -** Well I belong to professional associations, for example the British Association of Applied Linguistics. I always think that’s a good idea if there is one in your field because then you engage with other people who are working in the same field as you, you can share good practice, you can talk about some of the challenges, it makes you feel less isolated, so that is definitely something that I think is beneficial.

We’re all under pressure to do REF work but it would be good if we maybe had more time to sit down and think about contributions we could make to the teaching, stuff we could write. I’ve worked with somebody, a colleague in another institution to produce a volume of reflections on the way language is taught for example and I learnt a lot from that and also it’s a contribution to the field in that sense since other language tutors not necessarily working in HE, but there are principles there you can apply to all levels I think, particularly in my field of teaching language, which I would recommend definitely and I think there’s more recognition given to that kind of work than there was in the past which is a good thing too.

**Louise** – I can see from our discussions previously and down the corridor – you have a collegiate approach. How much store do you place on those corridor conversations or office conversations?

**Steve –** I think they are absolutely vital. Absolutely vital. That interaction, the ability of just being able to pop down the corridor – we do it all the time here – and say “I’ve been doing this, what do you think about that?” to get feedback, informal feedback when I suppose if you were going to ask for it on a formal level, you may be more reticent, this kind of arrangement allows you to do it an informal way in a kind of a “safe space” as it were where you’re not hopefully going to be met with derision or not a positive reaction. I really think it’s really, really beneficial and I think we should all take advantage – we can all learn from each another all the time, it doesn’t matter how long somebody’s been here.

**Louise -** I can see you’re keeping your topic up to date you have a number of articles – so where do you get this kind of literature?

**Steve** – Again, if you’re a member of professional association, like the British Association of Applied Linguistics then there are emails where you can send a message to everybody. So somebody will say, or on Twitter, Twitter is a good source aswell, Twitter is a really a good resource – if you follow the right people - make sure who you follow (chuckle). I get a lot, someone says I’ve just published this on such and such an area and then you think that sounds interesting and you go and look it up and then you find out about it in that way.

So being a member of a professional organisation is always a good idea, and I think they exist for most discipline areas these days. Twitter, and again conversations down the corridor, somebody will say “I read this, it was really good it told me a lot about ‘whatever’” I think I’ll have a little look at that or you can just borrow it off somebody. That’s a good way of finding out about what’s happening in your area. It’s vital that we all do that.

**Louise** – thank you very much. The UKPSF has these dimensions of practice, the 3 component parts, how would you see as the ones as the most relevant for you, which ones do you find the easiest to associate with?

**Steve -** Obviously they’re all there for a good reason. The Areas of Activity are the ones that really focus you because they are what you write about in your application.

But thinking of how the elements from Core knowledge and Professional Values tie in with those is in itself a really good exercise. So I suppose I would answer you by saying that they are all probably equally as important, because by looking at all of them, then it gives you a holistic idea of where you are. I found that really useful. That kind of idea of OK you have your Areas of Activity, but how does your Core Knowledge feed into that? Is it informed by professional values? How do they relate to one another? And by thinking about all of that in its totality, you get this holistic view and that to me is one of the really good things about this whole exercise

**Louise** - For somebody who’s not sure about applying, what words of encouragement?

**Steve** – OK first of all, go along to those initial meetings that you have. I’ll be completely honest, and you know this, I’m not hiding it from you, I went to one, I didn’t pursue it, I thought I haven’t got time, you put it off, you haven’t got time. Then I went to one again, another one and I thought, “no I’ve really got to engage with this.”

But don’t put it off that would be my advice.

Go along to that meeting and then think OK, It might look like a lot to do, to prepare, I wouldn’t say it doesn’t involve some work, but the benefits at the end it’s like a lot of stuff. The actual process of reflecting on it, on your practice is probably the best part of it for me.

Don’t think of it in a negative way. I’m going to go there and I’m going to have to find out all the things I haven’t been doing.

Also another part of the process is finding out those things you have been doing and you’ve been doing well, and that can be quite encouraging to know, that, aspects of your practice you’ve maybe haven’t thought about, you were doing well and that gives you a boost as well.

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