Keynote for the ‘Rethinking Learning and Teaching Together’ PTAS Forum, 15 June 2016

Why would going to university change anyone? The challenges of capturing the transformative power of undergraduate degrees in comparisons of quality

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Paul’s research focuses on teaching-learning and knowledge-curriculum practices in higher education and their relations to higher education policies. Paul’s book *Analysing Teaching-Learning Interactions in Higher Education* (2009, Continuum) critically examined different approaches to conceptualizing teaching–learning interactions in higher education. He is the lead author of *Reflective Teaching in Higher Education* (2015, Bloomsbury), which is designed for all of those working in higher education who are interested in further developing research-informed approaches to university teaching. Paul is a co-investigator in the ESRC/HEFCE Centre for Global Higher Education (CGHE), a partnership of three UK universities and eight international universities led by the UCL Institute of Education in London.

Abstract
In this presentation I examine the tensions between the transformational potential undergraduate degrees and the ways we have of measuring and comparing the quality of those degrees nationally and internationally. I argue that what makes higher education a higher form of education is the relations that students develop to knowledge through the study of particular bodies of disciplinary and professional knowledge. Given this, I argue that this needs to be central to the ways in which we understand and measure the quality of an undergraduate education. I review current ways of measuring quality and argue that they do not capture these aspects of an undergraduate education and so are not fit for purpose. In conclusion I argue that higher education practitioners have a responsibility to develop more valid ways of comparing the quality of undergraduate degrees.