Calling Students to Adventure
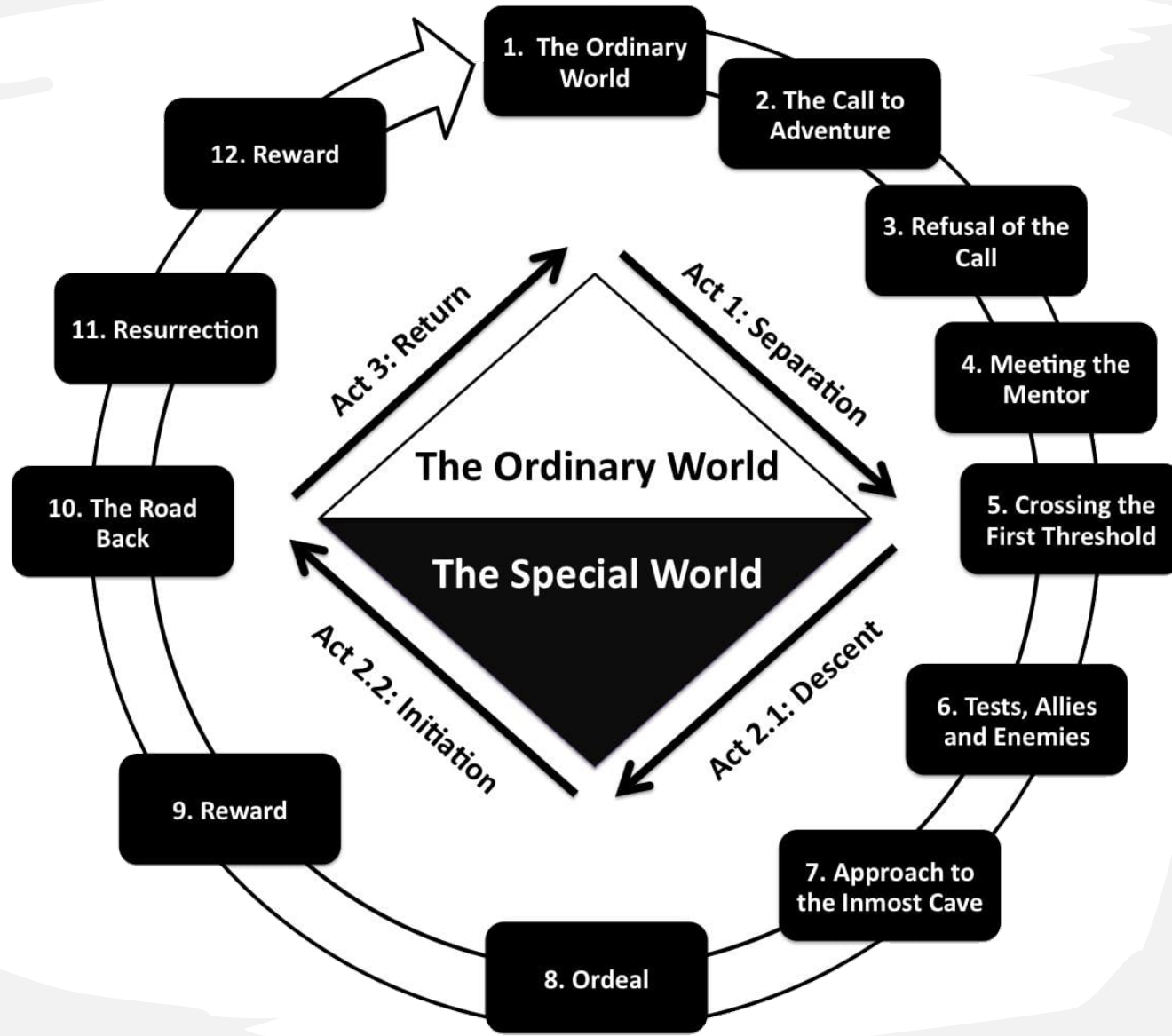
Using the hero's journey as a tool for curriculum planning and reviewing course design

Dr Alke Gröppel-Wegener (Staffordshire University)
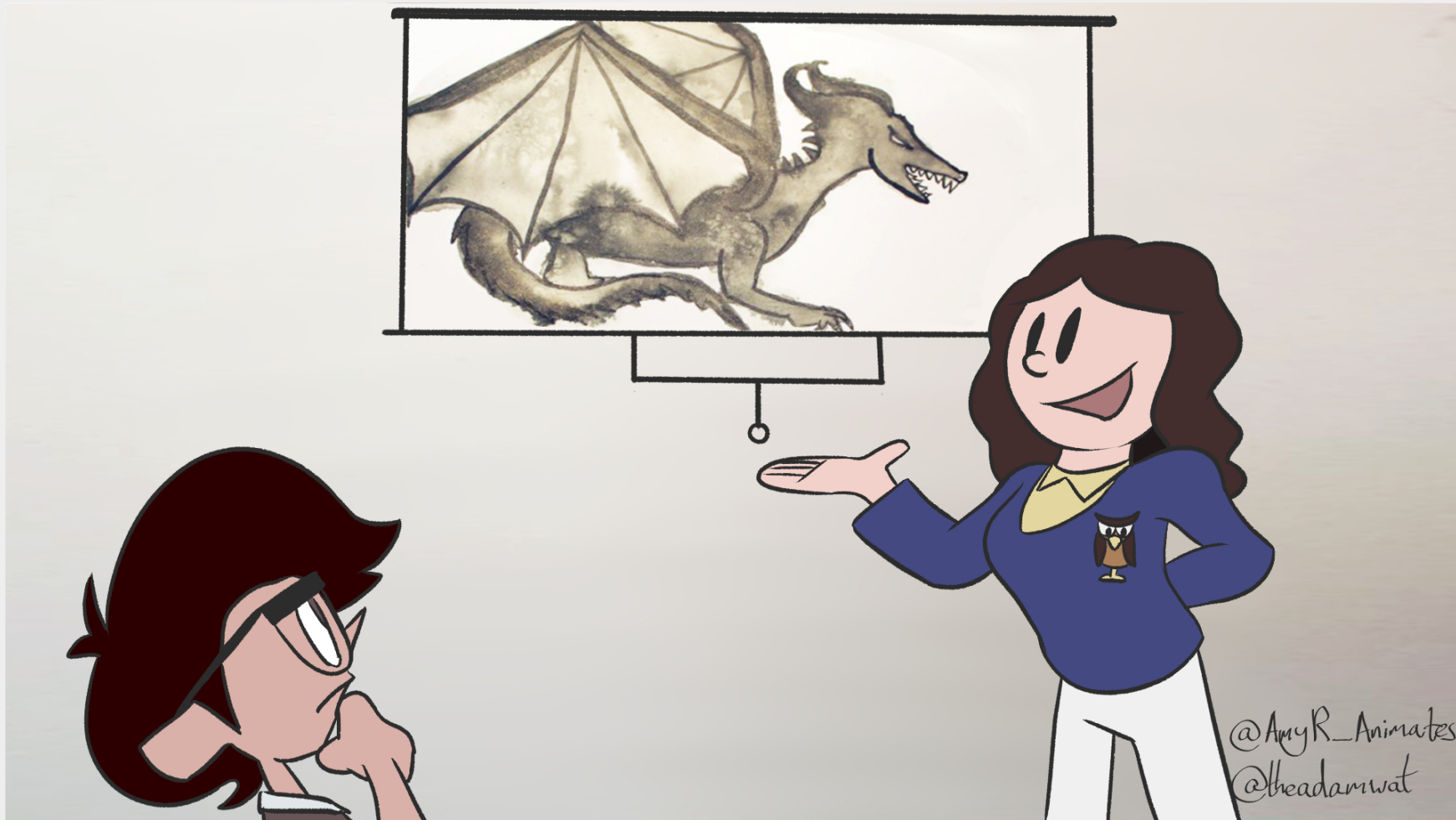Robert Farmer (University of Northampton)

Images by Amy Rose and Adam Watkins (Staffordshire University)

The Stages of the Hero's Journey

Stage i) The hero is introduced in their ORDINARY WORLD

Stage ii) The CALL TO ADVENTURE

Stage iii) The hero is reluctant at first (REFUSAL OF THE CALL)

Stage iv) The hero is encouraged by the Wise Old Man or Woman (MEETING WITH THE MENTOR(S))

Stage v) The hero passes the first threshold (CROSSING THE THRESHOLD)

Stage vi) The hero encounters tests and helpers (TESTS, ALLIES, ENEMIES)

**Stage vii) The hero reaches the inmost cave
(APPROACH TO THE INMOST CAVE)**

Stage viii) The hero endures the supreme ORDEAL

Stage ix) The hero seizes the sword (SEIZING THE SWORD, REWARD)

Stage x) THE ROAD BACK

Stage xi) RESURRECTION

Stage xii) RETURN WITH THE ELIXIR

Scavenger Hunt

You have 15 minutes to represent as many things on List A using List B as a method.

How you combine them is up to you.

List A

Things to represent

- The ordinary world
- The special world
- Hero/student
- Mentor
- Allies
- Enemy
- Monster/Ordeal
- Reward/Elixir

List B

Media to present them in

- Film still
- Book
- Go outside and take a photograph
- Food or drink stuff
- Garment/something from your wardrobe
- Something that makes sound/music
- Souvenir/memento from somewhere else
- Everyday household item
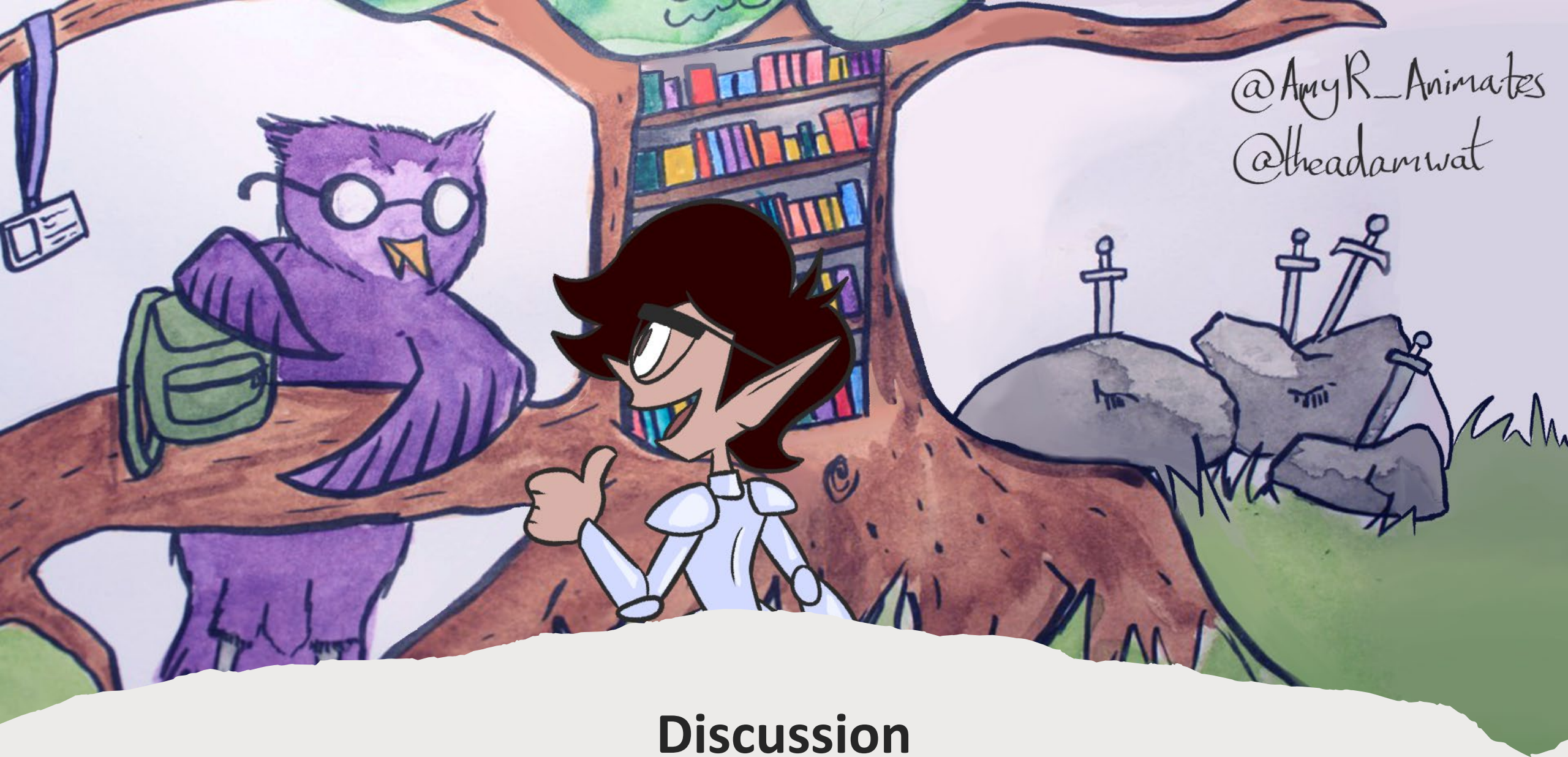
Discussion

Calling Students to Adventure

Using the hero's journey as a tool for curriculum planning and reviewing course design

THE HERO'S JOURNEY   CREDITS & FURTHER READING

Introduction

"Is your course like a journey, a parable, a game, a museum, a romance, a concerto, an Aristotelian tragedy, an obstacle course, one or all or some of the above?"*

The 'student experience' and the 'student journey' are at the forefront of contemporary Higher Education, which is much more seen as an individually transformational endeavour than the simple collection of knowledge it once was. In this context it has become more and more important to consider the role and agency of students as part of learning and teaching planning, rather than just focus on content that is to be mysteriously transmitted. We suggest that it is worth considering the framework provided by the hero's journey, a model coming out of scriptwriting, as a guiding principle behind planning new and reflecting on old learning and teaching design. In so doing, educators can provide a fresh look at their courses and modules and truly put the individual student front and centre of their own learning journey, by casting them in the role of hero. The somewhat simple formula of the hero who encounters many obstacles on their journey, and returns to the ordinary world transformed, and often with some kind of magical boon, can easily be read as the student who encounters many obstacles and tests on their journey through university (but more specifically through subject knowledge/content/skills), and (hopefully) returns to the ordinary world (or the 'real world' outside of the realm of academia) transformed, with the 'magical' boon of subject knowledge and relevant skills to their chosen discipline.

https://mypad.northampton.ac.uk/hero/