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iPED RESEARCH NETWORK

4th International Conference

iPED 2009

Proceedings

'Researching Beyond Boundaries', Academic Communities without Borders

14 - 15 September 2009

Coventry University TechnoCentre, UK

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iPED 2009

'Researching Beyond Boundaries', Academic Communities without Borders

The conference archived website may be found at www.coventry.ac.uk/iped2009

Overview

iPED 2009, hosted by the iPED Research Network (www.coventry.ac.uk/iPED), offers delegates the opportunity to explore the myriad of ways in which they, their colleagues, institutions and students negotiate boundaries and borders of the learning environment. One response which is of particular interest is through the creation of collaborative virtual and/or physical communities to support research, practice, learning and academic exchange.

Boundaries can be both real and perceived. They might be of a structural nature, embodied in policies and strategies; they might lie in student or staff expectations, assumptions, skills and capabilities. Contemporary boundaries are ever shifting, dissolving and reforming in response to political, economic and social discourse. They require negotiating and renegotiating in response to the fast-changing world of academia. Boundaries can both help by providing structure within which staff and students may work, or they can constrain creativity and collaboration.

Borders are transcended through the use of technologies such as email, video conferencing and podcasting, making it easier for academic staff to work with colleagues across borders with regard to teaching, learning, research and income generation. It is now possible to work and be in regular contact with colleagues from across the world, to exchange views and to learn from each other's practice. Whilst encouraging inter-organisational cooperation this has implications for individual's work-life balance and academic identity.

Themes

Leadership Perspectives

- How can we achieve research-led learning beyond borders?
- What issues of leadership and engagement arise in peer-led virtual communities?
- What does 'leading research' in a 'borderless' world feel like and how is it best achieved?
- How is research leadership and research team membership changing in the context of multi-institutional and inter-cultural collaborations?
- What leadership challenges arise as distributed and borderless research and teaching relationships are developed?
- How is disciplinary leadership, curriculum team development and student support influenced by the development of blended, virtual and distance-based provision, whether teaching or research supervision (PhD etc)
- Can - and does - 'borderless' education empower students and peers as leaders - in research, learning, teaching?
- How can institutional leadership, course leadership, or student/peer leadership in Academic Writing be enacted?

Staff Perspectives

- Staff as students, as collaborators, as competitors, as mentors, as entrepreneurs
- Academic staff exchanges and their impact on curriculum design and/or academic practice
- International academic staff experiences in higher education
- International collaboration on higher education staff development
- Supervising research students across borders
- Interdisciplinary curriculum design in higher education
- Internationalisation of higher education and its impact on academic practice

- How do academics engage with 21st-century genres and technologies of Academic Writing and how can these areas be developed to meet pedagogical needs?

Student Perspectives

- How do real and perceived boundaries impact on the student experience?
- In what ways do students 'bound' their own learning experience?
- What are the implications for inclusion and exclusion of students?
- How can we dismantle real and perceived boundaries that inhibit student engagement?
- To what extent do strategies designed to enhance student learning meet students' needs?
- To what extent can web 2.0 social networking solutions promote collaborative learning?
- How might pedagogical approaches at institutional or programme level underpin a positive student experience?
- How can our research approaches adequately capture the student experience?
- How do students engage with 21st-century genres and technologies of Academic Writing and how can these areas be developed to meet students' needs?

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iPED 2009 Conference Peer Reviewer Panel

All submissions to the conference were subject to double-blind peer review.
We would like to thank all of our reviewers for their help and hard work.

The Conference Peer Reviewers:

Dr Margo Blythman, University of the Arts London, UK
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Dr Davina Calbraith, Independent Consultant, UK
Denise Chalmers, University of Western Australia, Australia
Heather Conboy, De Montfort University, UK
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Dr Lynn Clouder, Co-Theme Leader: Student Perspectives
Dr Lisa Ganobscik-Williams, Academic Writing
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Professor Sue Law, Co-Theme Leader: Leadership Perspectives
Professor David Morris
Jannie Roed, Co-Theme Leader: Staff Perspectives
Dr Andrew Rothwell, Co-Theme Leader: Leadership Perspectives
Dr Andrew Turner, Co-Theme Leader: Staff Perspectives
Kate Watson, Conference Administrator

Keynote Speakers

Dr Etienne Wenger

Etienne Wenger is a globally recognized thought leader in the field of communities of practice and their application to organizations. He was featured by Training Magazine in their "A new Breed of Visionaries" series. A pioneer of the "community of practice" research, he is author and co-author of seminal articles and books on the topic, including Situated Learning (Cambridge University Press, 1991), where the term was coined, Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity (Cambridge University Press, 1998), where he lays out a theory of learning based on the concept of communities of practice, and Cultivating Communities of Practice: a Guide to Managing Knowledge (Harvard Business School Press, 2002), addressed to practitioners in organizations. Etienne is also a founder of CPsquare, a cross-organizational, cross-sector community of practice on communities of practice. His work is influencing a growing number of organizations in the private and public sectors. Indeed, cultivating communities of practice is increasingly recognized as the most effective way for organizations to address the knowledge challenges they face. Etienne helps organizations apply these ideas through consulting, public speaking, and workshops, both online and face-to-face. His new research project, "Learning for a small planet," is a broad, cross-sectoral investigation of the nature of learning and learning institutions at the dawn of the new millennium.

Keynote; Learning in a Landscape of Practice: Communities and Boundaries

Monday 14 September, 10:15-11:00, Room 1.3

Many institutions of learning proceed from a similar set of assumptions: that a body of knowledge is a curriculum, that learning depends on teaching, that the classroom is the locus of learning, and that the rest of life is application. But in practice, a body of knowledge is really a constellation of communities of practice that contribute in various ways to the constitution of a field of inquiry. The boundaries between these communities can be quite problematic, and at the same time rich learning opportunities. What are the implications of this assumption for institutions of learning? How do we conceptualize the questions to be addressed? One approach is to view learning, not primarily as the acquisition of a curriculum but as the negotiation of an identity with respect to a landscape of practice—with a complex interplay of communities and boundaries. From this perspective, learning is a transformation of our identity. And teaching is not merely the transmission of a curriculum, but an invitation to a journey of the self.

Workshop; Communities of Practice: a Social Discipline of Learning

Monday 14 September, 16:00-18:00, Room 1.3

The complex challenges we face today urgently call for new models of how we can learn individually and collectively. We have quite rigorous models to consider the informational and cognitive aspects of learning, but we need to become more disciplined about considering its social dimensions. One model with the potential to do this is provided by communities of practice and the attendant learning theory. These communities are as ancient as human kind. Yet they represent a model of learning that is extraordinarily aligned with the new geographies of connectivity and identity emerging at the dawn of the 21st century. This workshop explores some dimensions of this social discipline of learning, as well as new approaches to learning challenges in business, government, education, and world development.

Professor Maggi Savin-Baden

Maggi Savin-Baden is Professor of Higher Education Research at Coventry University and Director of the Learning Innovation Group. Maggi's current research is exploring the impact of innovative forms of learning in new spaces such as Second Life and new learning spaces, with funding from the JISC and Leverhulme Trust. To date she has published six books on problem-based learning, her seventh book entitled Learning Spaces was published in December 2007. In her spare time she is studying for an MSc in e-learning and learning to snowboard.

Keynote; Researching on the Edge: Working at the Borders of 'Real' and 'Immersive' Spaces

Tuesday 15 September, 09:30-10:10, Room 1.3

This paper presents a challenge to the higher education community about the possibilities for reinventing higher education curricula by living on the edge. It will suggest that the current state of play has a sense of discomfort between our values as teachers and an (often) outcome-based agenda for learning, and emerging technologies which seem to interrupt both. For example learning and researching in immersive worlds seems to result in a sense of multiple identities and disembodiment, or even different forms of embodiment. Further, the sense of anonymity and the assumption that this was what was understood through one's words rather than one's bodily presence, is becoming increasingly unmasked through worlds such as Second Life. The bodily markers that are used to present ourselves in life (clothes, ethnicity, gender and speech) may be re-presented (differently) in Second Life, but they also indicate choices about how we wish to be seen or the ways in which we might like to feel differently – in real and immersive spaces.

Undertaking research in such in-between spaces has certain edge about it. This is perhaps promoted by the constant juxtaposition of real life (RL) and Second Life (SL), and the extent to which one feels more 'real' in SL than in online discussion forums. Further in research and in Second Life it would seem that language and speech are not representations that mirror experience, but instead create it, thus the meanings ascribed and inscribed in and through avatars are always on the move. Although issues of embodiment and identity are often raised in relation to teaching in immersive worlds, to date there is little research that has explored debates in this area. This paper begins by exploring reasons why there has been a growth in the use of such liquid spaces and suggests that one of the reasons might be a desire to create 'learning risk'. Beck (1999) has suggested there is an increasing desire to manufacture risk and it might be that the shift to the use of immersive worlds is seen by some academics as space of risk and as stance against imposed performative practices. The complexity of using immersive worlds as sites of resistance against objectification and surveillance is both interesting and problematic.

This paper therefore outlines different forms of learning spaces that will help us to intersect real world and immersive world research in ways that improve student learning and engage with new learning spaces. It will suggest that the idea of 'learning spaces' both face to face and virtual may offer some purchase on the questions and issues we face as a community. It also suggests that there is value in not knowing, and that spaces of not knowing are exciting spaces on the edge that can help us to consider new ways of engaging with pedagogical research in higher education. Such 'not knowing' is perhaps best captured in the reflections of one of Faulks' characters, Sonia, at the end of his novel:

> There were questions to which her husband and brother had bent their minds – had sent themselves as good as mad trying to answer; but it seemed to Sonia at that moment, drenched and tired as she was, that, perhaps for quite simple reasons connected to the limits of their ability to reason, human beings could live out their whole life long without ever knowing what sort of creatures they really were. Perhaps it did not matter; perhaps what was important was to find serenity in not knowing.
>
> (Faulks, 2005: 609)

Faulks, S. (2005) Human Traces. London: Vintage

Professor David Young

I've been a teacher for a long time – nearly 39 years in fact. During this time I've taught literally thousands of learners, from Reception Class infants to doctoral candidates and I've always been interested in what they thought about their learning - my PhD was about pupils' perspectives on the curriculum they were offered. Another career-long interest has been trying to get learners to write for real audiences, not just to do exercises.

After working in schools and a local authority advisory service, I joined the University of Derby, then Derbyshire College of Higher Education, in 1991, where I'm now Professor of Work-based Learning. I've been engaged in the development of award-bearing work based learning in higher education since the mid-1990s and I've done lots of external examining, staff development and consultancy in the field in the UK and internationally. This is all interesting stuff, of course, but still the most exciting part of my professional life is working alongside work based learners - many of whom are as new to academic ways as they are skilled and experienced at work – as they begin to discover the real excellence of which many of them are capable.

I led the University of Derby team which won the Times Higher Education Award in 2006 for Most Imaginative Use of Distance Learning and I was awarded a National Teaching Fellowship in 2007.

Keynote; More Than 'Delivery': Transformative learning in the workplace

Tuesday 15 September, 15:30-16:15, Room 1.3

I distrust deficit models of skills gaps which are to be filled by the "delivery" of parcels of discrete curriculum content, as if learning were a straightforward process of knowledge transmission. For me, the term "delivery" when applied to work-based higher education is conceptually inappropriate because learning is not a commodity to be parcelled up by providers and presented to learners, but rather a process of change and transformation as learners, at the heart of the process, become involved in designing and managing their own programmes.

It's not at all that I disagree with the notion of a shift away from a supply side approach to higher learning in the workplace, just that I think that to try to replace "provider-led" with "employer demand" is a potentially dangerous over-simplification which fails to take into account or automatically assumes the commitment, enthusiasm and engagement of learners in the workplace.

This paper will focus on the voices of individual learners who have engaged with higher education study based in their workplaces. While I don't want to romanticise their experiences, I hope to present a positive message that work-based learners are willing and capable of taking responsibility for shaping and managing their own learning, that they can initiate and sustain academic discourse on-line and at a distance and that they feel a sense of pride and achievement in doing so.

Monday
14 September 2009
Parallel Session 1:
11:30-13:00

Cath Lambert; The Ignorant Lecturer: Reinventing student and staff roles and relations through collaborative research

University of Warwick, United Kingdom

Corresponding author: Cath.Lambert@warwick.ac.uk

Keywords & Précis:

intellectual equality	collaboration	undergraduate research

This paper draws together educational theory and practice, using empirical examples of staff/student collaborative research in order to examine staff and student roles within HE. The discussion provides illustration and interrogation of the idea that intellectual equality should be a starting point rather than an aspiration in our pedagogical endeavours.

Short biography of the author:

Cath Lambert is Lecturer in Sociology and Academic Coordinator for the Reinvention Centre for Undergraduate Research, at the University of Warwick. Her research and teaching activities reflect her longstanding interest in education, and include the development of critical methods for researching, writing and teaching. She also works in the areas of gender and sexuality. Her role within the Reinvention Centre involves the support and implementation of research based learning and teaching across the undergraduate curriculum. She is involved in a number of diverse collaborative staff/student research projects.

Abstract:

In this paper I draw on the theoretical framework provided by Jacques Rancière (1991) in order to explore some of the different ways in which we might radically rethink the roles and relations between students and staff in contemporary higher education. Rancière tells the story of a French schoolteacher, Joseph Jacotot, who in 1818 had a chance "intellectual adventure" which led to his discovery that teaching is not necessary in order for students to learn. Rather, students need to believe in their own intelligence, from which point they can teach themselves. Rancière's argument takes intellectual equality as a starting point rather than a goal in relation to teaching, a shift which challenges the traditional and progressive idea(l)s of educational development on which the unequal power relations and boundaries between students and staff are dependent. In this paper, I present an overview of Rancière's theoretical arguments and suggest their relevance to our current educational system where a deficit model constructs undergraduate students as lacking knowledge and capability. I then investigate the possibility of emancipation from this model by means of diverse empirical examples of collaborative and student-led research. These examples present recent and ongoing intellectual adventures involving students and staff from the Reinvention Centre for Undergraduate Research at the University of Warwick. The work includes formal curricula experiments, undergraduate publishing, documentary film-making and a range of research collaborations. Although these projects are successful and often produce inspiring and challenging outcomes, I do not suggest they offer utopian solutions to the problems of educational inequalities. Nor indeed do they succeed in radically redefining the entrenched boundaries between students and staff. Instead, I argue that the most important work they do is to draw attention to the complexity, contradiction and dissensus which is at the heart of engaged and critical educational practice. Such dissensus is, I suggest, essential for thinking and working together in order to ask necessary critical questions, and for maintaining the possibility of further intellectual adventures, both now and in the future.

References

Rancière, J. (1991) *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five lessons in intellectual emancipation*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Teresa Swirski, Leigh Wood & Ian Solomonides; Learning, Living and Working in a Globalized Society: Accounting students' conceptions of creativity

Macquarie University, Australia

Corresponding author: teresa.swirski@efs.mq.edu.au

Keywords & Précis:

creativity and lifelong learning	global knowledge economy	reflexivity

A study of Australian undergraduate accounting students and their perceptions of creativity. This is related to the changing nature of the accounting profession and the need for reflexivity within a global knowledge economy. How students can overcome their real and perceived boundaries is explored.

Short biography of lead author:

Teresa Swirski is a PhD student completing her PhD in the Department of Business at Macquarie University, Sydney. She tutors Business Communication Skills, Learning Support and lectures in Education. She has a keen interest in the sociology and philosophy of education

Abstract:

In the midst of our post-modern society, the expectations and demands of both life and the workforce are continually subject to change. Within higher education, there is a need to evolve beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries and stereotypes towards more "reflexive" learning and teaching approaches. Accounting has traditionally been viewed as a non-creative subject, leading to a predictable career. This is despite the range of contexts and roles that a graduate may prospectively meet within our globalized society. Students "bound" their own learning experience and future potential when they do not engage in higher-order skills, such as creativity. We can potentially dismantle real and perceived boundaries that inhibit student engagement and understanding by adopting strategies that allow students to participate in active learning experiences. Approaches that encourage students to engage, challenge and apply their knowledge at different levels nourishes their efficacy and enriches their capabilities to face opportunities and challenges in learning, life and work.

For this study, twelve students from an undergraduate accounting degree (all from non-English speaking backgrounds) at an Australian university were interviewed. They were also asked to share their experiences and conceptions about the development of creativity, as well as their perceptions of its value in relation to learning, work and life. Findings from the research illuminate students' perspectives about learning and teaching approaches utilized within their discipline area. The study also highlights students' thoughts about how these strategies meet their needs: both currently, as learners, and in their future life and work within our globalized society.

Theoretical implications of this study include gauging more about: cultural and disciplinary paradigms; how students view and value learning and teaching experiences; and the development of creativity. Highlighting the learning experiences of non-English speaking background pupils from an undergraduate accounting degree adds to our knowledge of a specific student cohort experience and discipline; increasing awareness and understanding about the development of creativity may assist in deconstructing students' perceived boundaries; and, informing the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning helps to broaden the pedagogical frame of academic awareness. The practical implications of this study have the potential to affect academics, the curriculum and the student learning experience: firstly, inviting academics to discuss, design and compare similar studies in light of their own pedagogy, discipline and student cohorts; secondly, choosing and utilizing learning and teaching approaches that promote student engagement and deep learning; and, finally, facilitating and fostering creativity so as to add both intrinsic and extrinsic value to the student learning experience.

Paul Lowe; Surfing the Long Tail of Education Online: Building a community of practice with mid-career professional creative postgraduate students

University of the Arts, United Kingdom

Corresponding author: p.lowe@lcc.arts.ac.uk

Keywords & Précis:

CoP collaboration	Web 2.0	webconferencing

The long tail of education online allows a course to appeal to creative professionals seeking to deepen their understanding of specialised domain. The beauty of synchronous online communication means that a global virtual community of practice can be built using a variety of web 2.0 platforms in a collaborative learning community.

Short biography of the author:

Paul is the Course Director of the Masters programme in Photojournalism and Documentary Photography at the London College of Communication, University of the Arts London, where he developed and lead the validation team for the upgrading of the PG diploma to a full Masters in 2004. He was responsible for the development and launch of a new part time mode of the course delivered entirely online using web conferencing, blogs and the VLE, launched in 2008.

Abstract:

The long tail of education online allows a focused and targeted course to appeal to mid-career creative professionals seeking to deepen their understanding of specialized domain. Finding an audience for such a distinct course is near impossible in conventional F2F environments, but the beauty of synchronous online communication means that a community of practice can be formed on a global basis, attracting participants seeking to study from their “studio” and connecting them with established professionals as mentors. This approach has implications for any practice-led education where the emphasis is on solving real world problems and developing professional experience.

This paper outlines how the postgraduate programme in the Media School at LCC/UAL uses web 2.0 tools on the online Masters in Photojournalism and Documentary Photography to develop a collaborative virtual community of practice, drawing on Schon’s (1983, 1987) concept of the “practicum” as a “virtual world” between the realities of business and the rarefied atmosphere of the academic world. This provides a “sandbox” in which the students can develop their professional practice in a controlled environment. This in turn correlates with Eskow’s concept of e e learning (2007), combining experience with technology so that the students become “scholar practitioners”, and, in our reworking of Schon’s idea, “eflective practitioners”. The course is influenced by the pedagogic approach of Mike Wesch at Kansas, who emphasizes that we need to move from producing students who are “knowledgeable” to those who are “knowledge-able” (Wesch 2008), by setting them authentic, purpose-driven research.

The course design philosophy is organic, and operates as a “living curriculum” in collaboration with the student body, with an “edupunk” approach to finding the best currently available tool to solve the pedagogic problem at that point, abandoning it in the future if a better alternative emerges, and the ideas of the “edupunk” movement in adopting a tool for a specific purpose when it is needed rather than from a predetermined VLE. This approach acknowledges the concept that the world is in “perpetual beta” (Boyd 2008).

In particular the combination of blogs, social networking using Ning, synchronous web-conferencing with Wimba live classroom, and live IM with Pronto, creates a powerful alliance that supports the participants in their learning journey. Blogs act as the “glue” that holds the rest of the individual’s e-learning experience together, connecting them to the collaborative community through the synchronous spaces for lectures and tutorials and the asynchronous VLE and social network.

The world requires a range of skills and attributes from those in the creative industries; not just technical skills, but also an aesthetic and creative sensibility, an understanding of ethical issues in a professional context and the capacity to network and market their work.

How do we prepare our students for this education and this world? A social constructivist view of education leads us to recognize the importance of dialogue and story-telling in learning. Wimba is particularly effective in this, allowing mentors to contribute their expertise from their workplaces as well, negating the need to travel physically to meet the students. A professional in New York can coach a group of students spread all over the globe without ever visiting the university campus.

What follows from this is the potential of peer and collaborative learning amongst the student group, staff and visiting faculty, collectively generating an online "community of practice" with learning involving "legitimate peripheral participation" (Lave and Wenger 1991).

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Gert Young; The Symbolic Dimension of Academic Support Programmes

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Keywords & Précis:

symbolic perspective	academic support	student identities

This paper focuses on the understanding of the symbolic dimension of academic support programmes. Proper understanding of this perspective is required in order to understand resistance to or support of these programmes.

Short biography of the author:

After teaching Classical Greek and Political Science I moved to Stellenbosch University's Centre for Teaching and Learning where I focus on coordinating the University's academic support programmes. Of particular interest to me is the role of identities and the influence of symbols in student success.

Abstract:

As part of the transformation of South African higher education in particular and the South African social organization in general, the South African Department of Education (DoE) has instituted a programmatic approach to address both the country's need for increased graduate output and increased diversification of output. In order to achieve these goals the DoE has taken on the challenge of inadequate school preparation by creating financially viable options for higher education institutions to accommodate under prepared students. This option has come in the form of Foundation Provision Programmes. These programmes allow institutions to offer students Foundation support as an integral part of regular degree programmes. In order to allow for this Foundation support, the degree programmes that incorporate the support have to be extended by at least one year. This results in a situation where a faculty offers most of its programmes in at least two different forms, the one being the regular three-year programme and the other being the extended programme with Foundation support. Both, however, lead to exactly the same qualification. In some instances there has been significant resistance to the programmes by both academics and students. Resistance is related to understandings of the university's relationship to society, notions of academic autonomy and excellence, and individual self conceptions. In order to better understand the affective and cognitive associations with these programmes (and how these differ to associations with regular programmes), a symbolic framework, as employed in political analyses by Elder and Cobb (1983) and Edelman (1971) is suggested. This analytic framework offers insight into the origin and nature of associations as well as a typology of the possible interactions between groups (government, management, lecturers and students) that attach symbolic significance to these programmes. The application of this framework is demonstrated through the analysis of interviews with eight lecturers as well as focus group interviews with students enrolled in these programmes.

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Anna Crouch; Needs and Experiences of Nursing and Midwifery Dyslexic Students in Clinical Practice and How Best They Could Be Supported

(Funded by the Higher Education Academy for Health Sciences and Practice)

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Keywords & Précis:

short term memory	literacy and numeracy difficulties	speech problems

This study, funded by the UK Higher Education Academy for Health Sciences and Practice, explored and identified impact of dyslexia on students, their needs and how best they could be supported in clinical practice. This led to recommendations and the development of guidelines for mentors supporting dyslexic students in clinical practice, in the form of a poster, to help give better support. The poster has now been disseminated to mentors to help them give appropriate support to dyslexic students in clinical practice.

Short biography of the author:

Anna Crouch is a senior lecturer at the University of Northampton, School of Health, nursing division. She is the co-editor and author of four chapters of the book entitled 'Vital notes for nurses: health assessment' by Blackwell publishers in 2005. She won the Northampton learning and teaching enhancement award and received the title 'University Teaching Fellow' in March 2009 after developing a poster -'Guidelines for supporting dyslexic students in clinical practice', as a result of the findings of her research entitled 'the experiences and needs of dyslexic nursing and midwifery student and how best they could supported in clinical practice' (Crouch,2008).

Crouch (2008) Needs/experiences of dyslexic students + support in clinical practice
http://www.health.heacademy.ac.uk/projects/miniprojects/projectdocs2008/acrouch

Abstract:

This paper aims to give an overview of the method and the findings of a study which explored the needs and experiences of nursing and midwifery dyslexic students in clinical practice and how best they could be supported.

Background

Until recently, dyslexia may have prevented potential students from enrolling on nursing and or midwifery education programmes. However, the need for the promotion of equity has been highlighted (DoH 2000, DRC 2004, NMC 2006). The NMC (2006) also requires evidence on how disabled people, including those with dyslexia, are supported.

Good knowledge of the needs and experiences of dyslexic nursing and midwifery students and how best to support them is thus necessary but there is limited evidence in the nursing and midwifery fields to inform such practice. The study was therefore needed to identify the needs of dyslexic students, and how best to provide them with support.

Method

A qualitative study was carried out to explore the experiences and the needs of 16 nursing and midwifery dyslexic students, and how they could be supported most effectively in clinical practice, following approval of proposal by various research ethics committees. Three mentors also took part in this funded study.

Data was collected by one-to-one tape recorded interviews and then transcribed anonymously using numbers rather than real names in order to maintain confidentiality. The constant comparative method (Glaser 1998) was used to analyse the data, with the help of the NUDiST software to generate, categorize and group themes under three main headings.

Findings

The study showed that most of the problems encountered by dyslexic students related to short-term memory, literacy, numeracy, speech and the pace at which procedures are carried out (Crouch 2008). Such problems impacted on the students' clinical practice in different ways, which in turn determined their needs. Difficulties with writing, for instance, meant that completion of care plans proved challenging in the clinical areas for many of the students in this study. These findings concur with those of Reid and Kirk (2001) and McCandless *et al*. (2006). Having short-term memory also meant that some of the students forgot not only trivial but other important issues including information about patients, which could have put the patients at risk (Crouch 2008). Having recognized safety as a major issue, many of the students developed coping strategies to help avoid errors. Research findings by Bell (2002), Illingworth (2005) and by Morris and Turnbull (2006) seem to validate this. Many of the students found their experience emotionally draining and they lacked confidence, findings which are congruent with those of Morris and Turnbull (2006). Positive mentoring was seen as important for safe clinical practice. Mentors' lack of knowledge about dyslexia, and the students' failure to disclose their disability for various reasons meant they did not get the necessary support.

Conclusion

The training of mentors for dyslexic students, its possible impact on the students, and how they could best be supported in clinical practice is of great importance to help ensure safe practice. A poster with guidelines for supporting dyslexic nursing and midwifery students, based on the students' needs, has been developed to help mentors give better support.

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Andrew Edwards & Karen Gresty; Exploring Both Sides of an Undergraduate E-journal: Celebrating excellence and supporting academic writing

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Keywords & Précis:

undergraduate research	journal	teaching and research

A surge in interest regarding how to effectively link teaching and research from both a staff and student perspective has resulted in several institutions developing e-journals to publish undergraduate work. This paper presents the results of an action research study that assesses stakeholder perceptions when engaging in such an initiative.

Short biography of lead author:

Andrew Edwards is a Research Assistant at the University of Plymouth. Following a career change and a return to Higher Education to complete a science-based Masters course, his interest in expanding his research skills and experience has led him to several pedagogic research projects covering topics such as the development, management and evaluation of undergraduate research journals, and stakeholder perceptions of science graduate employability skills.

Abstract:

The value of new technologies and e-journals to raise the profile of student research and effectively link teaching with research has been highlighted by Jenkins *et al.* (2007), with the typical emphasis on dissemination and celebration of student work rather than directly supporting teaching activities. It is therefore not surprising to note that there has been a recent surge in the appearance of new institutional e-journals in the UK, several of these with a science focus (see Walkington and Jenkins 2008 for a recent list). However, the development and embedding of a new e-journal in an undergraduate curriculum carries with it considerable costs (particularly regarding staff time, editorial support and hosting issues): so the opportunity to maximise any teaching benefits must not be wasted. It is therefore important to assess the potential or tangible benefits that an e-journal can offer to different stakeholders.

This presentation explores both qualitative and quantitative results obtained from an action research study at the University of Plymouth, to evaluate the development, embedding and impact of "The Plymouth Student Scientist" on students and academic staff. The journal can be freely accessed at: http://www.theplymouthstudentscientist.org.uk/

The e-journal is the main output of a HEFCE-funded project to support and develop research-informed teaching. It seeks to make the research process more accessible and explicit, by highlighting examples of excellent student research from across the Faculty of Science. It also aims to support both staff and student involvement, by acting as a teaching tool for staff regarding academic writing and as a vehicle to promote and share student research skills and activities.

From online tracking data, our publication received 2.2 million hits and just over 220,000 individual visits in the twelve months since its launch in January 2008, considerably exceeding our own modest expectations for its first year. From interview data, students who published in the e-journal were extremely positive about its perceived benefits to themselves and others. Academic staff were also supportive in respect of its benefit to students, but less clear about the enterprise's pedagogic value for a variety of reasons. This presentation will explore the boundary between student and staff use of an e-journal and evaluate whether a single resource can effectively meet a dual pedagogic purpose.

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Bernadette Blair; Lost in Translation: The understanding and interpretation of verbal feedback by international art and design students in the UK

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Keywords & Précis:

communicating to international students	verbal feedback	project centred learning feedback	art and design

Formative verbal dialogue and feedback is a critical and integral part of practice-based subject areas. This paper discusses, from a student perspective, possible influencing factors such as cultural shock, stress and linguistic understanding which may result in especially international students being excluded from complete involvement in these practices.

Short biography of the author:

Dr Bernadette Blair has an academic career spanning over thirty years. Currently she is Acting Head in the School of Communication Design in Faculty of Art, Design & Architecture. She was educated as a fine art printmaker and continues her professional practice alongside her studio-based pedagogic practice. Her pioneering work around the studio critique and feedback to students has informed her own and her colleagues' learning and teaching practice. Interested in assessment and how ipsative assessment is a major part of art and design disciplines, she has promoted and applied models of student-centred learning extending the dialogue and responsibility of students' involvement in assessment and feedback.

A development from her research has been the development of the MA Design in Learning & Teaching in Higher Education at Kingston, of which she is also the course director.

Abstract:

Formative verbal dialogue and feedback is an important and integral part of practice-based subject areas. Within Art and Design pedagogy, feedback is regarded as an ongoing developmental process that assists students in developing self-critical evaluation skills and an ability to communicate thoughts and concepts to an audience in preparation for the professional context in which they will work in the future. In Art and Design, traditionally this feedback can be received by students formally in seminars, tutorials and crits and also informally through studio one-to-one discussions with teachers or in conversations with student peers. The findings of research carried out both in architecture (Austerlitz 2002, Austerlitz and Aravots 2007, Cuff 2000, Webster 2006) and in art and design (Blair 2006, 2007, Blair, Blythman and Orr 2007, Oak 1998, Percy 2004) provides evidence that this feedback can be both instrumental and detrimental in influencing students' interpretation of the information received; the students' perception of self and factors such as the power position (Devas 2004), the stress factor (Pope 2005) and what Kluger and DeNisi (1996) refer to as the "meta factor", can also impact on this learning experience.

This paper will report back on the findings of a two-year University Teaching Fellowship Scheme (TFS) project informed by a one-year HEA - Art, Design & Media subject centre-funded project. Prior research suggested that students' and teachers' understanding and interpretation of verbal feedback given during practice-based sessions is often not the same (Blair 2004). Studies have also shown that students often misinterpret what is being said to them (Blair 2006, 2007, Blair, Blythman and Orr 2007) and feel excluded. The paper will argue that inclusion is a crucial element in these sessions and it is critical that any dialogue or feedback that students receive should be fully understood and utilized so that students can progress their studies positively.

This TFS project considers further influencing factors such as culture shock (Radclyffe-Thomas, 2007), linguistic proficiency and knowledge of the education system students now find themselves in. The researchers asked international students to share examples of what they have found to be good useable feedback and where feedback had not been of constructive value and why. Student opinion

was sought through semi-structured interviews and questionnaires on clarity of verbal feedback, preparation for presentation events and any cultural differences that students thought could impact on these events. The findings found that international students often misunderstand the meaning of what is being said to them in feedback, i.e., that critical studies for a Japanese student translates as "saying nasty things about your friend's work studies".

Education is about communication and the proceeds of this research contribute to minimizing the "communicative distance" between multi-cultural participants (Bassnett 2007) and encourage "mutual understanding and adaptation by choice rather than assimilation" (Dillon and Howe 2003).

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Amani Bell & Gayle Morris; 'The Trading Zone': An online space for exchanging good teaching practice*

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Keywords & Précis:

academic development	online learning	sessional staff

Part-time academics play a crucial role in contributing to the quality of the student learning experience, yet are often at the fringes of academia, excluded from fully participating in their disciplinary cultures and professional development. In this presentation we explore a virtual space created to support their ongoing development needs.

Short biography of lead author:

Dr Amani Bell is a lecturer at the Institute for Teaching and Learning at the University of Sydney and was previously at the University's Office of Learning and Teaching in Economics and Business, where she managed the Faculty's tutor development program. Amani provides support for mentoring programs and is working on a project on ways individual academics can respond to students regarding their feedback on teaching.

Abstract:

Part-time academics, what we will refer to as tutors[1], play a crucial role in contributing to the quality of the learning experience for students, yet tutors are often at the fringes of academia, excluded from full participation in the culture of their disciplines (e.g., Marginson 2000). While professional development of tutors is a priority, accessing tutors and supporting their development in pedagogically robust ways can be challenging. Consistent with the finding of Beckett and Hager (2002), Fenwick (2001) and Lave and Wenger (1991), we strive for professional development that is highly situated, incorporates a social dimension, and is based on authentic practice.

Within the context of the scholarship of teaching and learning, Huber and Morreale (2002) have appropriated the notion of a trading zone (Gallison 1997) to argue that developing an interdisciplinary perspective and approach to teaching and learning is akin to entering another culture. Gallison first used the analogy of a "trading zone" to map the interactions of the rich and diverse traditions of twentieth-century physics, noting that "within a certain cultural arena – what I call in … the 'trading zone' – two dissimilar groups can find common ground" (p.46). For academic developers, this metaphor is generative; it provides the possibility for an open exchange of multiple and differing perspectives on approaches to teaching and learning, while opening up the possibility of enhancing teaching practices. Gallison's "trading zone" reminds us that if we wish to encourage change, professional development must address context-specific issues, and must speak in a language that can be understood.

In the disembodied training environment of virtual space, the context of this presentation, such exchange is provoked through exposure to teaching practice across a range of disciplines. The online professional learning space responds to some of the limitations of traditional views of learning and professional development, and builds from a serious consideration of practice in several important ways. First, the design reflects the context in which the tutor is actively participating and includes a bank of visual representations in the form of video clips. Second, tutors are encouraged to engage in a reflective dialogue through a series of reflective triggers, and through the possibility of connection with peers. Third, while the resource attempts to ground itself in good practice, the theoretical

[1] Note: In other countries "tutors" are referred to as casual tutors, casual academics, part-time academics, teaching assistants, graduate teaching assistants, adjunct faculty and sessional staff.

framing of teaching and learning and the use of the reflective triggers open up possibilities of alternative approaches.

In this presentation we will explore the online space by watching one of the short video clips of authentic discipline-specific practice and then using the reflective triggers to consider our own teaching. We will invite discussion and feedback on how best to support the professional development of tutors.

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Ian Frank & Malcolm Field; Creating Meaningful Learning

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Keywords & Précis:

meta-skills	transfer	technological thinking, with no technology

We describe an implemented example of an interdisciplinary higher education curriculum design that privileges meta-skills as a common goal for all first-year classes. We then discuss how the challenge of "teaching technological thinking without technology" can allow students to reinforce appropriate competencies across a curriculum.

Short biography of lead author:

Professor Ian Frank graduated from the Department of Artificial Intelligence at Edinburgh University, where his PhD research was on computer game playing and how to automatically explain a computer's "thinking" to humans. "The understanding and explanation of the complex" is a good summary not just of his research interests in science, but also of his experience in teaching. He became a faculty of Future University-Hakodate in 2001, and has been experimenting with educational practices and workshops over several years. More information on his workshops and teaching can be found at www.koto-tsukuri.org .

Abstract:

Higher education in Japan is facing an identity crisis: on the one hand, university education is generally essential to attain employment in most white collar jobs, while on the other hand, fiscal support for higher education is being reduced.

Resource limitations are particularly evident in the public sector where national and public universities are being required to rethink their position in society, and in some cases, are being required to become semi-autonomous organizations (Monbukagakusho 1997).

This paper describes our experiences of working within the contradictions of the Japanese system, and draws concrete and general lessons for both theory and practice. First, we describe an implemented example of interdisciplinary higher education curriculum design that we have successfully introduced in our home institution. A key educational feature of the design is the privileging of meta-skills as a common goal for all first-year classes. This approach was especially important in our institution since although it is primarily a science and technology school, it also has significant components of design and communication education. For students in Japan, meta-skills do not fit easily within their learned educational experience. Students can acquire knowledge, and can demonstrate some level of comprehension of that knowledge, but they are unused to questioning, comparing, contrasting, or creating new outcomes that have been based on decisions and information gathered from alternative criteria. We describe our experience of initiating a "Center for Meta-Learning" (CML) and the challenges it faces in crossing academic paradigms, and reconciling mindsets of different cultures.

We ourselves follow Salomon and Perkins (1989: 7) in the belief that the transfer of knowledge or skills from one situation to another "is not easy and it does not happen on its own; it requires the mindful abstraction of a principle…". Especially, there is a growing worldwide body of evidence that the introduction of technology into classrooms often does not produce anticipated improvements in learning. For instance, the report by Pegg *et al*. (2007) on ICT learning in Australia concluded that "Most state and territory projects are yet to see the rewards of their efforts". We have been working towards addressing this issue by developing a framework that can support learners' thinking, both with and without technology, even before they actually encounter computers. In particular, we have used the notion of *koto* from Japanese philosophy to develop a series of workshops that target an understanding of how people interact with their environment. By maximally reducing the technology in our workshops, we have arrived at the original research challenge: "How can technological thinking

be taught without technology?" This has led us to the ongoing formalization of technological thinking primitives, with accompanying teaching practices and workshop activities. This formalization raises the possibility of the reinforcement of technological thinking in classes other than those directly related to technology. We discuss how, through a clear and concise formalisation of what it actually means to think in a technological way, appropriate competencies can be reinforced not only in classes that use technology, but also across a curriculum.

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Rachel Frampton; Borderless or Bound? Exploring students' perceptions of HE in FE learning spaces

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Keywords & Précis:

Higher Education in Further Education	student experience	learning environment

Higher education (HE) delivered in further education colleges (FECS) offers the potential to realise aspirations for expansion, inclusion, diversity and differentiation by blurring the boundaries between the further and higher education sectors. This paper explores the ways students perceive and experience HE learning and teaching in four FECs.

Short biography of the author:

Rachel Frampton is a Research Assistant in the Centre for Learning & Quality Enhancement at the University of Teesside. Her research interests span issues of the higher education student experience relating to widening participation, first-year experience, and learning, teaching and assessment strategies.

Abstract:

In England, the role and importance of higher education (HE) delivered in FE colleges (FECs) is a significant feature of the Government's drive to achieve 50 per cent participation in HE by 2010 (DfES 2003). It is argued that such provision offers the potential to realise aspirations for expansion, inclusion, diversity and differentiation by blurring the historical boundaries between further and higher education to create a seamless tertiary system that is more attuned to contemporary needs (Young 2006, DfES 2005, 2006a, 2006b, DIUS 2007). Consequently, there is a growing body of scholarly literature devoted to the study of HE in FE and, in particular, how best to address the academic and cultural differences between further and higher education institutions to ensure this provision offers an equivalent, though not necessarily identical, learning experience to university-based HE (e.g. Bathmaker and Thomas 2007, Burns 2007, Gallacher 2006, Parry *et al*. 2004, Temple 2001). However, much of this work neglects the student perspective and their experiences of being positioned within the boundaries of both further and higher education.

To contribute to research in this area, this paper presents findings from research undertaken in 2008 investigating the ways students perceive and experience higher-level learning and teaching in four FECs. Data collected from one-to-one and group interviews provide the evidence base for the discussion. In total, 66 learners from across a range of disciplines were interviewed to gain an in-depth understanding of what they consider to be the positive and negative aspects of their HE in FE experience, and the extent to which that experience met their needs, expectations and aspirations. The focus here is on what it means to be a HE learner positioned within the shared boundaries of further and higher education.

Drawing upon Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field and capital (e.g. Bourdieu and Passeron 1977, Bourdieu 1997, 1999), this paper explores, from the student perspective, Young's (2006: 3) assertion that: "Both the terms 'further' and 'higher' and the distinction between… sustain identities and boundaries for both students and teachers and at the same time limit as well as enhance people's expectations and possibilities." Specifically, the paper offers insights into some of the academic, social and cultural boundaries of HE in FE learning, and also explores the ways in which students engage with, and negotiate, them. For example, one of the issues the paper examines is the permeability of boundaries between HE in FE learning and the personal and work-related aspects of students' lives. Consideration is also given to the ways HE in FE students attempt to distance themselves from FE students by creating their own boundaries. In doing so, this paper highlights that, for many students, such behaviour is part of the process of constructing a socially acceptable identity or a way of reducing their sense of liminality.

Implications of these issues for policy and practice will be discussed. It is argued that while HE in FE learning offers significant benefits to students, the drawbacks might extend beyond the boundaries of education.

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Chris Turnock, Erik Bohemia, Jed Woodhouse, Neil Smith & Ben Lovatt; Opening ICT Boundaries

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Keywords & Précis:

global studio	distributed collaboration	university and industry collaboration

The paper will introduce a project titled the 'Open ICT Tools' which aims to explore and trial out ICT tools to facilitate a global collaborative and secured engagement with external business and community partners

Short biography of lead author:

Chris Turnock is Head of LTech at Northumbria University with responsibility for enhancing the pedagogical use of technology within the university. He is currently leading the university's participation in the HEA Enhancement Academy initiative and manages several projects including ones to enhance assessment feedback, online assessment completion and marking. Chris is a member of a team involved in the UK JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee) funded Global Studio project.

Abstract:

The paper will introduce a project entitled "Open ICT Tools" which aims to explore and trial out ICT tools to facilitate a global collaborative and secured engagement with external business and community partners. The challenge is to facilitate a communication and multimedia data exchange between Northumbria University and participating external educational and business organisations without compromising the security of either Northumbria University IT infrastructure or that of the partner organizations. This is one of eight projects funded by the JISC infoNet from across the country under its Trialling of Online Collaborative Tools for Business and Community Engagement programme.

The Open ICT Tools project is directly connected with the Global Studio, an innovative model of research-informed teaching and learning. The Global Studio is a cross-institutional collaboration between Northumbria University and international universities based in the USA, Australia, the UK and Korea, as well as industry partners such as Intel, Motorola and Inverness Medical. The Global Studio was initiated by the School of Design three years ago and since then it included nearly 300 students from six international universities such as Hong-ik in Korea and RMIT in Australia. The aim of the Global Studio is to equip design students with skills for working in globally networked organizations, particularly the development of skills in intercultural communication and collaboration. To achieve this aim, students from the participating universities work together on industry-led projects.

This paper explores how various ICTs being trialled in the Global Studio facilitate information and data exchange between students, teachers and industry partners, and how this enables/constrains collaboration.

Sue Rivers; Virtual auto-ethnography: exploring the boundaries of student experience or bordering on self-indulgence?

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Keywords & Précis:

virtual auto-ethnography	student experience	methodology

This paper examines the value of virtual auto-ethnography (being an online student/researcher) as a way of exploring the student experience of online learning. The paper explores the benefits and challenges of using this methodology and concludes that this is a valuable way of increasing our understanding of the student experience.

Short biography of the author:

Dr Sue Rivers is Acting Dean of the School of Lifelong Learning at Coventry University. She is a Barrister, Chartered Surveyor and Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. Her research interests are centred on the student experience of learning. Her Doctorate in Education was successfully completed at the University of Sheffield in 2008.

Full Paper:

Virtual Auto-Ethnography: Exploring the boundaries of student experience or bordering on self-indulgence?

Abstract

This paper examines the value of being an online student/researcher, as a way of exploring the student experience of online learning. The study's virtual auto-ethnographic approach, in which the researcher experienced online learning first-hand as a student, aimed to put the learner's perspective at the centre of the research. The research examined an online programme for educational professionals who were, or would be, implementing e-learning in their institutions in the United Kingdom. Its focus was a series of online collaborative discussions about aspects of e-learning. The particular issues arising from this methodology are examined, including the benefits and challenges. The conclusion is that there are ethical issues which must always be addressed in pursuing this methodology but that this is a useful and valuable way of increasing our understanding of the student experience.

1. Introduction

There is much emphasis on student-centred approaches to learning, and the student experience is high on political and institutional policy agendas. This doctoral research used virtual auto-ethnography to explore the experience of a student/researcher who studied an online learning programme *about* online learning. The research questions were: how and what do people learn through online "conversations" and what is the significance for learning of (a) online "lurking" and (b) the use of metaphor in online "conversations".

The aim of this paper is to discuss the potential of using virtual auto-ethnography to explore the student experience of online learning. The paper gives details of the researched programme and what was entailed in the methodology, then discusses some of the benefits and challenges of this approach.

2. Background

Students on the researched programme were educational professionals implementing e-learning projects in their institutions. The programme was available worldwide, but, in the cohort studied, all students came from the United Kingdom. The 9-month programme was at honours degree level (Level 6). Students had either previously completed an online programme or had equivalent e-learning experience. The researcher was a fully active student on this programme and simultaneously researched it.

The programme used minimal online learning materials and the main focus was on seven tutor-facilitated asynchronous conferences. There were originally seven students in the cohort but one withdrew, leaving three women and three men; there was one male tutor. The programme used proprietary computer conferencing including a discussion board and a separate social area. Students were required at minimum to post one message per month and to lead one conference. The discussions were about e-learning, with specific topics chosen by each conference leader. Students were required to keep a peer-reviewed log recording progress on their implementation project. Assessment was by portfolio.

3. Virtual auto-ethnography

3.1 Definitions

Ethnography is a way of studying cultures in their natural state by participating in peoples' daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions, in fact collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the focus of the research (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995: 1).

'Virtual ethnography' indicates that fieldwork was conducted online. A virtual ethnography can be used to develop an enriched sense of the meanings of technology and the cultures which enable it and are enabled by it (Hine 2000: 8). The ethnography of the Internet does not involve physical travel, or face-to-face contact with the other subjects of the study, but the ethnographer is still uniquely placed to give an account of the field site, based on their experience of it and their interaction with it (*ibid.*: 45–6).

Auto-ethnography has been defined as:

> An autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural… autoethnographers gaze first through an ethnographic wide-angle lens, focussing outward on social and cultural aspects of their personal experience; then they look inward exposing a vulnerable self… (Ellis and Bochner 2000: 739).

In this context, auto-ethnography refers to the fact that I enrolled on the researched programme in order to experience this learning from the perspective of myself as a student and that, in writing up my thesis, I set this experience in the context of various other educational experiences I have had in my life.

3.2 What was involved?

I participated fully in the online programme researched, including taking the assessment. I took part in all online conferences, posting messages either of my own accord or in response to postings made by others. I also led a conference. In classic anthropological ethnographic studies (such as Malinowski, 1922) the researcher is a stranger who studies a "foreign" culture by observing and taking part in its rituals with the aim of "making the strange familiar". This is often referred to as "participant observation". However, I used the term "participant *participation*" for my approach in order to emphasize the active role I played in the researched programme.

My methods included interviewing the tutor and my fellow-students (apart from one who had withdrawn from the programme and one who could not be contacted). In keeping with my virtual auto-ethnographic approach, I felt it was important for my voice as a student, rather than just as a researcher, to be heard, and I therefore arranged be interviewed myself. It felt democratic and

equitable: otherwise I would have been the only student who took part in the conferencing and completed the programme who was not interviewed. It also allowed me time for reflection and fitted in with the need for me to make sense of what had happened.

My thesis itself was mainly written in the first person but included a prologue in the form of a short story in the third person. The prologue relates real events, educational experiences that happened but expressed as a story, in the style of an ethnographic novel. It provides an autobiographical account of some of the defining educational experiences of my life as a personal context for the thesis. It also introduces two key questions (which became research questions) which have been important in my life: how and what do people learn?

> In September 1962 a small girl approached the Victorian infants' school building… After a morning devoted to the basics of English… the girl looked forward to a more stimulating, more challenging afternoon… The afternoon began with the form teacher opening a large cupboard… crammed full of toys… The girl could not hide her astonishment and disappointment… the teacher asked her, quite insistently, why she looked so dismayed. She replied, honestly, "I came here to learn, not to play." The teacher… took out a blue and brown wooden 12-inch ruler and hit her several times across her small, white outstretched hands… So ended the first lesson: but what was learned, and how?
> (Rivers 2008: 7)

3.3 Rationale and justification

Early research into online learning was often conducted from a teacher's perspective (for example, Henri 1992, Garrison and Anderson 2003). Despite the movement towards acknowledging the active role of students in learning (such as Dewey 1897 and 1916, Vygotsky 1986, Piaget 1928, 1959, 1969 and 1971) and thus towards student-centred learning (Laurillard 2002) there appeared to be further room for expressing the student's voice and for research which took the learner's perspective, putting the learner's experience at the centre of the research (Goodyear *et al*. 2005, Light and Light 1999). One way to do this in my research was to experience online learning first-hand as a student and to pursue the idea of the student as researcher.

Ethnography is well-established within educational settings and is acknowledged as an appropriate approach for social scientific research of the online world (Kendall 1999: 57). There are precedents for this in important studies of cyberspace (such as Turkle 1995, Hine 2000). My primary object was to collect data that would convey the subjective reality and lived experience of this particular group of student/educators (Pole and Morrison 2003). As Hammersley (1992: 43–4) points out, by entering into close and relatively prolonged interaction with people in their ordinary lives, we can understand their behaviours more accurately than by any other approach.

Ethnography was appropriate to address my first research question (about how people learn online). As Steinberg and Kincheloe (1998: 2–3) put it, students as researchers gain new ways of knowing and producing knowledge (power literacy and critical literacy) that challenge the commonsense views of reality with which most individuals have grown so comfortable. The anthropological roots of ethnography made it particularly appropriate for my second research question, about the significance for learning of online lurking, as this has cultural overtones.

There has been a move away from strongly authored narratives in ethnography (Atkinson and Coffey 1995). More modern writing styles make the author visible and bring the perspectives of all participants to the foreground (Hertz 1997). Mine belongs to the genre of narrative ethnographies, in that I included my own experiences in the text (Tedlock 2000: 460). My fieldwork was concerned with my own experiences as well as those of the other learners. It may be more common, if not better practice, to separate the narratives of the field and the self. However, Atkinson (1990) feels that the two can be intertwined without adversely affecting the purity or conviction of the text. It is a way of giving the researcher a voice and acknowledges that all ethnographic writing is to some extent autobiographical (Coffey 1999: 119). Recent trends have been to locate the self more centrally not just in the fieldwork but in the analysis and the written account (*ibid.*: 125).

I was enrolled on the programme as a learner; it was not possible or, arguably, desirable, for me to adopt the model of stranger or peripheral observer in my research. I was actively contributing to creating the online culture; there was no question of distancing myself from it:

> I really felt that that I lived in that world; that was my world. I felt confident enough to put up messages which… I was not totally sure what the reaction would be… Almost like when you come in from work and you need someone or somewhere to offload what has happened in the day and you tend to do that to people who are close to you, not necessarily your husband or friends but someone you feel comfortable with, even your neighbours… or your staff room…
> (Sue, interview 4.3).

4. Boundaries and borders

4.1 Exploring the boundaries

I was able to experience first-hand what it is like to be an online student and to engage in this in a highly reflective way (Markham 1998). I was both active and visible; as Hine (2000: 23) points out, making the shift from analysis of passive discourse to being an active participant in its creation allows for a deeper sense of understanding of meaning creation. Instead of being a detached and invisible analyst, the ethnographer becomes visible and active within the field setting.

Learning and emotion are closely related and students invest emotional as well as financial capital in their learning. By active participation I had a deeper emotional engagement than a researcher would get by simply analysing transcripts of a programme s/he had not been part of. For example, at one point I received an email from the tutor informing me that I was not contributing enough. I was extremely upset and angered by the tone and content of this email but the effect was that I learned to increase my contributions:

> I tried to do a short message, very general not too wonderful. I felt better putting something on. A few hours later the same day I put another message on. I felt the tone of the email from tutor was affecting me – the quantity of my contributions went into a frenzy of putting as much on as I possibly can…
> (Sue, interview).

I learned to be aware of the emotions of others and how these could be roused by seemingly innocuous choice of words:

> Websites with all the flash etc would be very nice if I had time to play but mostly I just want to get to the point!
> (Sue, posting 7.2.5).

> Flash, etc has its place and it is not "to play" but generally Flash is employed badly or just because they can.
> (Male 3, posting 7.2.6).

> Thanks for those points… Having read what you say I have a feeling that I'd like to actually see some examples. Do you have any examples of good and bad use of technology that we could all look at…?
> (Sue, posting 7.2.7).

I had challenged the status of “Flash” by associating it with play. The response (which was typed in Bold font style) was to refute my claim by making a statement that brooked no contradiction and seemed designed to end further discussion on this issue. I was aware of the possible anger here and diffused the situation by saying thanks and turning the conversation back onto the possible applications for learning.

I originally trained to use the computer programme NVivo for data analysis but abandoned this as it moved me too far away from my data and the actual experiences and emotions of being a learner/researcher. Instead I immersed myself in my data, analysed and re-analysed this in the light of my research questions. I was able to capitalize on the fact that I was present and took part in the online conferences from which much of the data were derived. It was a real advantage to be able to

link threads from different conferences just because I had taken part and knew who had said what and when. I was able to form my own interpretation of what was going on and then compare this with established theories derived from the literature.

4.2 Issues and challenges

Identity

I was registered on this programme and took the full assessment along with my fellow students. It is important to stress that I was not a double agent content to be a member until I had got my data but then happy to depart (Tedlock 2000). However, a possible result was the potential for developing a blurring of identity: I acted online variously as student, educator, manager or researcher.

I acknowledge that being a researcher added to my motivation as a student. I was sometimes conscious of trying to encourage people to contribute. One example was when I used a rather shocking headline ("Car Crash due to Joyriders") which I hoped would engage people and encourage them to post. I was a frustrated student wanting others to participate in the discussions but conscious that anything I did was also part of my research. Coffey (1999: 22–3) acknowledges this to an extent, suggesting that oversimplification of the "ethnographic stranger" may be misleading and may render mute the ethnographic process.

Self-indulgent?

A key focus of my research was the learner's experience of online education, with myself as one of the learners. I did not just want to learn how others learn; I wanted to know and reflect on how I learned: a kind of auto-metacognition. Lofland and Lofland (1995) acknowledge that fieldwork is likely to involve a topic you care enough about to study but nevertheless caution the researcher against what might amount to "autobiographical sociology", or which might give rise to criticism as being self-indulgent, narcissist, exhibitionist or just plain uninteresting.

Coffey (1999: 5) suggests that if we simply see the "self" in fieldwork in terms of getting the job done we may ignore that the notion of self includes an emotional as well as a physical self. However, while Lofland and Lofland (1995) acknowledge that the best work in the field of sociology/social sciences is grounded in the biography of its author(s), they do not encourage researchers to write themselves into the resulting product. In my case my research is openly auto-biographical and I would justify this in stating that this research and thesis are not just theoretically but actually and tangibly built on the basis of the knowledge and experience(s) I have had in education so far.

Ethics

My position and identity as both researcher and participant in the programme led to some complex ethical issues. Whilst I was comfortable with wearing a number of different hats (such as student, teacher, lawyer, manager and researcher) during the programme and when conducting the interviews, it became clear that this was confusing for others. For me these were all simply different aspects of myself but my fellow students saw me as a fully involved student (with views and opinions to discuss freely) rather than a neutral researcher:

> I tried to form an impression of what people were like. I did with you. I saw people walking down the corridor and I thought "No that can't be her". You're not quite what I thought. I was thinking you would be more robust and more opinionated… 'cos on the [discussion board] you were more opinionated.
> (Male 3, interview, 9.9).

I therefore revised my interview style from detached questioning (researcher), as in my original research design, to discussion (student). As Hammersley and Atkinson (1995: 265) put it, participants may forget that research is taking place once they come to know the ethnographer as a person, and it would be disruptive for the researcher continually to issue the equivalent of a police caution.

Conducting research of this kind inevitably raises issues around informed consent. From the outset I obtained permission from the providing institution and undertook to abide by the conditions it imposed on this, including obtaining the consent of my fellow students in the way that the institution prescribed. In addition, before each interview I explained more about my research and again sought

consent. Although my fellow students knew that I was a researcher and a student from the outset and consented, they (and I) did not know at the time exactly how I would interpret what was said and what happened or how I would write it up. A similar example is Burgess's study (1989) of school teachers which involved observing behaviour in the staff common room. He could not predict that racist remarks would be made during the course of a social gathering. Staff knew he was there to conduct research, but could not be told, at the time, how his notes would eventually be used since he, himself, did not know.

Eisenhart (2001) suggests that collaborative relationships between the researcher and the researched, and a commitment to representing multiple "voices", including the researcher's, is a good approach to dealing with the potential danger to others when intimate details of their lives are revealed in ethnographic accounts. In order to address this, I gave participants a voice by showing them extracts from the conference transcripts, enabling them to give their interpretation of them before I conducted the analysis.

5. Conclusions

One of the strengths of being a student/researcher was that it put the students at the centre of the study, enabling all learners' voices, including my own, to be heard. I had a deeper understanding of events than if I had simply analysed transcripts of conferences that I had not taken part in. This enabled me to go to the boundaries of the student experience being very much in touch with the culture of the group and experiencing first hand the emotions involved, not just the words, and knowing how it felt when certain things happened.

My methodology also enabled me to put myself in the centre of my research, via my persona as an online learner. I was able to fulfil my personal objective of finding out more about myself, particularly myself as a learner, and to put the thesis and the research into the context of myself as a lifelong learner.

Being both student and researcher gave rise to a number of ethical issues. Blurring of my identity led me to change the style of my interviews, for example. Obtaining informed consent was a particular issue but was overcome by my commitment to representing multiple "voices" and practical measures such as showing interviewees extracts from the conference transcripts.

Becoming a student/researcher may not be practical for all researchers because of the amount of time involved, and accessibility issues, but, if we are committed to improving the student experience, we should seek ways of overcoming the barriers to this valuable first hand experience of the student's perspective and virtual auto-ethnography may be one such way.

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Mike Smith, Valerie Cox & Kathryn Cook; Are Student Perceptions of Satisfaction with and Importance of Problem-Based Learning in Sport and Exercise Psychology an Accurate Indicator of Academic Performance?

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Keywords & Précis:

PBL	student satisfaction, importance	Sport and Exercise Science

It may be suggested that problem-based learning challenges the traditional boundaries of lecture-based curriculum delivery. So it is extremely important to understand the process from the student perspective. This study will present student feedback regarding their perceived satisfaction and importance with various aspects of the PBL process.

Short biography of the authors:

Mike Smith and Kathryn Cook have been at Coventry University for six years and it is their first academic position within higher education, where they are responsible for the delivery and development of the Undergraduate Sport and Exercise Psychology programme. Since being at Coventry University they have continued to develop the curriculum and are committed to providing the best possible student experience. This has led to them introducing problem-based learning into the curriculum for the first time in the 2007-08 academic year. Also, both are BASES Accredited Sport Psychologists and currently responsible for providing psychological support to the Coventry University Scholarship students. In their spare time Mike likes to play snooker and Kathryn likes to play tennis. Dr Valerie Cox is Head of Department for Biomolecular and Sport Sciences and for a number of years has been a keen rower.

Abstract:

According to Savin-Baden (2000), problem-based learning (PBL) is an approach that is increasing in higher education which may challenge the traditional boundaries of lecture-based curriculum delivery. Therefore, from a practitioner's point of view it makes sense to investigate whether or not participating students find PBL satisfactory in relation to the more traditional approach.

In an attempt to address this question Rideout *et al.* (2002) investigated student satisfaction of PBL compared with a traditional nursing programme. Findings indicated that PBL students were more satisfied with their educational experience than traditionally taught counterparts. Also, Johnson *et al.* (2002) introduced a short PBL programme into a third-year nutrition module and reported a high degree of satisfaction with several students expressing an interest in extending the PBL programme throughout the year.

However, measuring student satisfaction alone may not fully indicate the overall effectiveness of a PBL programme. Support for this proposal was found in a study by Patel *et al.* (1998) who discovered that, although PBL contributed to student satisfaction for acquiring theoretical knowledge, PBL could not replace the importance of acquiring clinical skills through the "real patient experience" thus indicating that the importance of PBL to the student should also be included in any investigation.

Based on the findings of Patel *et al.* (1998), the aim of the present study was to measure student perceptions of their satisfaction with and importance of the PBL programme. A second aim was to examine the effect of a PBL approach on academic performance. To achieve this a Student Survey Questionnaire (SSQ) was devised with three main categories (Teaching and Learning; Organization and Assessment; The PBL Experience) and 54 questions overall, with each question having a Likert scale (1 = very dissatisfied/important, to 5 = very satisfied/important) to distinguish the level of satisfaction and importance.

Early indications show that students score importance 0.5 out of 5 higher than satisfaction (n=98). Responses to “would like to see more of this type of learning" are extremely positive for level 1 (n = 36; 52%) and level 2 (n = 37; 68%), although level 3 are disappointing (n = 25; 9%). For the question "would you recommend this type of learning to others?" a similar response is found with level 1 (59%); level 2 (71%) and level 3 (9%). However, when academic performance is analysed, results show a significant increase across all three levels from the traditional lecture-based delivery in 2006–7 to the present PBL approach in 2008–9 (See Table 1).

LEVEL 1								
Lab report 06-07	Lab report 07-08	Lab report 08-09	Oral pres 06-07	Oral pres 07-08	Oral pres 08-09	Exam 06-07	Exam 07-08	Exam 08-09
48±12	50±11	52±12	57±6	61±8	69±10	52±12	47±14	52±15
LEVEL 2								
Lab report 06-07	Lab report 07-08	Lab report 08-09	Oral pres 06-07	Oral pres 07-08	Oral pres 08-09	Exam 06-07	Exam 07-08	Exam 08-09
53±9	52±10	58±9	55±9	65±7	70±7	44±14	53±12	57±11
LEVEL 3								
Case Study 06-07	Case Study 07-08	Case Study 08-09				Exam 06-07	Exam 07-08	Exam 08-09
51±16	57±14	60±14				46±11	51±9	55±9

Table 1: Coursework and exam pass rate for all three levels of the Sport and Exercise Psychology Programme

To discuss the contrasting results in more detail a more in-depth analysis of the SSQ will be presented, with a discussion of whether student perceptions are an accurate predictor of academic performance.

Finally, time will be left at the end of the presentation to allow for discussion and recommendations for future practice in the area of PBL.

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Kerry Cook, Mark Garratt; Pete Gregory & Imran Ali; Traversing the Boundaries and Borders Experienced by Learning Communities within Online Problem Based Learning

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Keywords & Précis:

online problem based learning	interprofessional learning	learning communities

This presentation explores leadership, staff and student perspectives relating to boundaries and borders of a blended approach to CPD. The module 'assessing the ill and injured child/ young person' is delivered via 50% e-learning and 50% face to face. It incorporates online problem based learning, which fosters interprofessional learning communities.

Short biography of lead author:

Kerry Cook is a Senior Lecturer in the Children and Young People's Nursing Team at Coventry University. Kerry has an MSc in Advanced Nursing Practice and is an Advanced Paediatric Life Support Instructor. Her clinical background spans congenital cardiothoracic care, predominantly within the intensive care environment. Kerry is the chair of the Congenital Cardiac Nurses Association and Pathway Leader for the MSc in Contemporary Health Care (Congenital Cardiothoracic Care).

Abstract:

In June 2008 the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences at Coventry University, a UK university situated in the West Midlands, was funded by the West Midlands NHS Deanery to develop an academic module in response to changes in contemporary healthcare (specifically the Darzi Report), in order to enhance practitioners' skills in the 'assessment of ill/injured children and young people'.

Attracting health care practitioners from around the West Midlands, a blended approach to delivery was deemed most suitable. The first half of the module is delivered online, followed by 5 clinical days at the university. The e-learning element reduces the number of hours spent in the university, subsequently reducing travelling times and expenses, and enhancing accessibility and flexibility of the programme.

Employing an online element required careful thought to ensure that the students gained clinically and educationally from the experience. Pedagogically, problem based learning (PBL) was employed and offered an excellent opportunity for the students to locate gaps in their knowledge, identify how and what is required to close those gaps, whilst simultaneously encouraging independent thinking (Savin-Baden and Wilkie, 2006).

This paper considers the leadership and engagement issues that arose for the peer-led virtual 'learning community' (Lewis and Allan, 2005); such as technological confidence and competence, maintaining motivation, securing dedicated study time and inter-institutional access to the online learning platform. Moreover, the implications for inclusion and exclusion of students from real and perceived boundaries are discussed with the aim of identifying ways in which students 'bound' their own learning experience.

Additionally, issues arising from the strategies designed to enhance student learning are explored, including the variations in individual knowledge and expertise in relation to assessing ill/injured children and young people. Santy and Smith (2007) suggest that this approach offers advantages for the individual through access to the knowledge and expertise of others. The enhancement of professional identity, and the alleviation of isolation (*ibid.*) is discussed. Furthermore the benefits of a "learning community" for employing organisations and for potential patients are outlined, including the creation of a network for information exchange, and having more knowledgeable practitioners who have a greater educational commonality with fellow professionals.

The transition from disciplinary to cross-disciplinary leadership and simultaneous curriculum team development through influence and inspiration is explored; whilst considering how academic staff exchanges (interdepartmental) and interdisciplinary curriculum design impact on curriculum design and academic practice.

Specifically the paper will discuss the acquisition of transferable technological and curriculum development skills, such as how weekly activities (or "triggers") can be designed to span inter-professional boundaries and encourage students to become part of a problem solving learning community.

The student support, influenced by the development of this blended, virtual and distance-based provision will be summarised. The role of the group facilitator (as disciplinary leader); the chair and scribe (student roles) are described to demonstrate the support mechanisms employed. The benefits of this approach being reflected by Biggs (2003:24), who suggests that the creation of a context for engagement through tailored learning activities represents the very best standard of teaching and learning. Ultimately, the satisfaction of the 'learning community' and therefore the engagement of students with 21st-century genres and technologies was evident in the enthusiasm with which students completed the weekly tasks, and posted their findings for the larger group to read.

Finally we ask how our research approaches can adequately capture the staff and student experience.

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Valerie Cox, Kathryn Cook & Mike Smith; Is Using Problem-Based Learning the Solution to the "Graveyard Slot"?

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Keywords & Précis:

problem based learning	student attendance

Course teams are facing increasing pressure to use unpopular timetable slots, such as Monday morning and Friday afternoon to improve facility usage data. We show that Problem Based Learning may help to reduce the attendance problems this can cause.

Short biography of lead author:

Dr Valerie Cox is Head of Biomolecular and Sport Sciences and has research interests in skeletal muscle adaptations in response to exercise and disease. She has taught research methods and physiology based subjects for nearly 15 years in Russell Group and post 1992 Universities. She has been keen to support and participate in the introduction of novel teaching methods to allow greater academic success in our extremely diverse student body.

Abstract:

Increased pressure on academic resources has led most universities to try to increase the proportion of the week during which lecture theatres/classrooms etc. are in use. This may have unintended consequences on achievement since student attendance first thing in the morning (especially on a Monday) and on Friday afternoons may be lower. Having to use these time slots can be seen by students and a course team as a barrier to student success.

Problem-based learning (PBL) has been shown to improve attendance in science-based courses (e.g. Major and Palmer 2001, Walker *et al*. 2008), although this is not always one of the benefits that is stressed in the literature. In this study we report how the adoption of PBL (while keeping the same tutor, subject matter and written case-study format) improved both attendance and student attainment in a traditionally unpopular time slot.

In the 2008–9 academic year, PBL was used in the first half of the delivery of the final-year physiology module in a Sport and Exercise Science course, which ran at 9–11am on Monday morning. In 2007–8 equivalent modules had been delivered by the same member of staff using a traditional lecture and tutorial approach. Data for both attendance and coursework marks for the two academic years were compared. Extensive student feedback on their perceptions of and experience of PBL was also obtained via questionnaire, including specific questions asking if they felt it had helped to improve their marks and their attendance.

	Mean coursework mark (%)	% of students with 2/1 or 1st class mark	Mean attendance (%)	% late submissions of individual coursework	% of students who failed coursework
2007–8	50±11	14	60%	25	12
2008–9	58±9	57	96%	9	0

Table 1 Data for marks (mean ± standard deviation) attendance and submissions for 2007-8 (traditional teaching n = 49), and 2008-9 (n = 26, PBL).

There was a statistically significant increase (student's t-test) in mean coursework mark of 9% and the percentage of students achieving 2/1 and 1st class marks rose dramatically (Table 1). No students failed the coursework in 2008–9, partly due to the fact that a higher percentage of students submitted their individual coursework items on time (Table 1). However, only 41% of the students felt that PBL had improved their mark (data not shown).

There was almost 100% attendance for the sessions, compared to only 60% in previous years. Attendance for the rest of this module, which was delivered using traditional methods, did decrease. When students were asked if PBL had improved their attendance, 30% of them felt it had (data not shown).

Overall the attendance data and the student perceptions suggest that PBL can improve attendance in an unpopular timetable slot, in addition to improving achievement. This knowledge could be used by course teams when scheduling and designing their programmes.

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Monday
14 September 2009
Parallel Session 2:
14:00-15:30

Paula Hodgson; Designing and Implementing Learning-Centred Blogs for University Teaching: Two cases

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Keywords & Précis:

blog	learning community	peer assessment

There is now increasing interest among educators in schools and universities in engaging learners through the use of web logs (blogs), which enable learners to articulate ideas readily and also to publish reflections on their learning experiences. They also have the potential to facilitate collaboration and peer interactions, so they can become a breeding ground for the development of an effective learning community. However, a problem is that learners tend to use blogs mostly for entertainment purposes. This paper will discuss two cases of implementing learning-centred blogs in a university in Hong Kong on how educators can design structured learning tasks and other ways to motivate learners to participate in learning-centred blogs and how to create a supportive learning culture.

Short biography of lead author:

Paula, was a graduate of the University of South Australia interested in supporting academics to integrate learning technologies into learning and teaching in higher education. She worked in the Educational Development Centre of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University in the late nineties for nearly 10 years. Her main role was to consult with academics to identify their needs and assisted them in the design of action plans for integrating technology into their learning and teaching programmes. Her research interests lie in the fields of pedagogical applications of learning technologies in conventional and blending online component to university study, and their evaluation. Her work involved a number of projects funded by Hong Kong's University Grants Committee, including Action Learning Project (http://www.acad.polyu.edu.hk/~etwalp/index.htm), Megaweb (http://megaweb.polyu.edu.hk/) and e3Learning (http://e3learning.edc.polyu.edu.hk/). Now working in University of Hong Kong as Research Assistant Professor, her recent research focuses on blended mode of learning and assessment experiences in university study.

Full Paper:

Designing and Implementing Learning-Centred Blogs for University Teaching: Two cases

Abstract

There is now increasing interest among educators in schools and universities in engaging learners through the use of web logs (blogs), which enable learners to articulate ideas readily and also to publish reflections on their learning experiences. Blogs also have the potential to facilitate collaboration and peer interactions, so they can become a breeding ground for the development of an effective learning community. However, a problem is that learners tend to use blogs mostly for entertainment purposes. This paper will discuss two cases of implementing learning-centred blogs in a university in Hong Kong, considering how educators can design structured learning tasks and other procedures through which learners can be motivated to participate in learning-centred blogs, and how to encourage a supportive learning culture.

1. Introduction

The World Wide Web has gradually been adopted and adapted for educational purposes since the 1990s, to a point where the physical boundaries of the learning space have now merged seamlessly with the Web, whatever learning management system (LMS) individual schools and universities have chosen to adopt. The networked environment can potentially extend the opportunities for learning

both beyond the physical classroom and in interactions between learners, most of whom can (via the Web) easily access the multimedia resources and other information that has been prepared by their teachers for reference during a course of study. However, one result of this practice has been that a habit of dependence has become entrenched, with many learners continuing to expect teachers to provide such resources; increasingly, they also expect these resources to be attractive.

Nevertheless, despite this dependence, educators can reshape the learning culture. Instead of preparing more resources, some educators in Hong Kong have extended the use of LMS and have designed learning-centred tasks that stimulate student engagement in active learning through deploying new Web applications. The bundle of applications that are available in Web 2.0 provides greater opportunities for learners to be networked and to interact with peers and professionals. Both educators and learners can produce creative resources by choosing tools that are available in these applications. In this paper, I will discuss how educators have adapted one such application, the web log, which is commonly used for social networking, to an educational context, and how educators can encourage learners to engage in tasks for learning.

2. Features and potential of blogs

A web log ("blog") is a dynamic web environment in which information, experience and news can be written up by a subscribing author and published instantly, with subsequent contributions presented in reverse chronological order. Technically, blogs are perceived as easy to use once prospective authors have been shown how to create and edit their entries (West *et al.* 2006); blogs are thus widely used in social networking because any user can contribute easily and thereby connect with people who share a common interest.

The dynamic knowledge generated in blogs provides an advantage over many websites, which impart information that is not updated regularly (Quible 2005); when the material on a website needs to be updated, only the webmaster or a site administrator has the requisite access to carry out this work. A blog, on the other hand, allows an author to publish work creatively using multimedia but requires no special web publishing skills. Audiences can make comments, and the author can read "up-to-the-minute posts" (Nardi *et al.* 2004). As with any other asynchronous communication tool, learners can contribute to blogs in their own time and at their own pace (*ibid.*), and potentially this allows them to contribute more than they might in a conventional face-to-face context (McConnell 2006).

Although information is updated continuously, learners can browse these changes using Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feeds, a blog tool that allows learners to subscribe to current information from one or more sources. Content can be aggregated for reading in "one convenient and coherent view" (Martindale and Wiley 2005).

Blogs can also provide a new learning experience because readership can be extended beyond those persons attending a given course, although, typically, the communication tools available in LMS are accessed by course members only. However, educators can now choose to allow a non-course audience access through subscription or by invitation (Tryon 2006). By building up a stock of shared knowledge, blogs can be deployed in such a way that they become a breeding ground for the development of an effective learning community that encompasses both meaning and quality interactions between participants (Wenger 1998).

Despite the advantage that blog features have over conventional websites, students tend to use blogs more for entertainment and social purposes; they are not accustomed to responding to non-social blogs (Davidson 2008). Besides, although some students post regularly to their personal blogs for social networking purposes, the majority may not voluntarily add postings because they do not perceive the value of doing so in an educational context. In addition, because many learners can now communicate directly via mobile phone, they do not see the need to interact through blogs. Therefore, educators need to be aware of the challenge of how to reorient learners towards making educational use of a blog.

3. Setting up course-based and community-based blogs

In designing a learning-centred blog, an educator can consider different ways of setting it up. Conservatively, a course-based blog can be set up to provide course information and resources, and

links to online discipline-related practice or journals. To make the course content dynamic, the teacher can subscribe to high-quality articles with RSS feeds to the blog. This type of content-rich blog is useful for learners who are new to the discipline and need more guidance and resources when they study. Students can access and review current resources more directly from a course-based blog, spending less time searching for information. Most post-class activities can be centralized in a course-based blog, and students can easily post and reflect on recent learning tasks and postings by peers. However, most of the educational activities inherent in course-based blogs are likely to become less frequent by the end of a course.

A second type of blog can be in the form of a community. A community-based blog is structured so that each student has an individual blog, and all are grouped in the main community website, where course information and other resources are made available. Students are allowed to choose the style of their blogs from a set of templates, and they write their own blogs. With a large group of students, educators can organize individual blogs into groups, so that peer group members can easily browse each other's blogs and interact with others conveniently. This type of blog is structured so that each individual student has an open space for them to design and write their own learning logs creatively; a group mentor, who can be one of the students or a senior student, is assigned to coordinate and support group members, and to encourage communication between group members and between groups.

4. Implementing learning-centred blogs: two cases

As a university-wide supported web platform, WebCT was implemented and widely advocated in the Hong Kong Polytechnic University in the late 1990s. Teachers were strongly encouraged to use this LMS in teaching their courses. However, innovative practice to enhance learning and teaching were equally encouraged, and some early adopters took the initiative to implement Web 2.0 applications in order to create new learning experiences. A case on the use of community-based blogs and a case on course-based blog are discussed in this section.

Case 1: Community-based blogs in the School of Hotel and Tourism Management (SHTM)

Orientation is key to all programmes so that newly enrolled students can learn more about a programme and build social networking with new and senior students. The school adopted a blended approach to providing orientation for freshmen who studied in the programme in 2006. In this case, the primary intended learning outcome of the orientation programme was to allow freshmen to learn more about the learning culture in the SHTM. In addition, the programme served to encourage students to reflect on their high-school experience, to be aware of different expectations on becoming university students, to learn more about industry expectations and to raise the awareness of personal capabilities and directions for personal development. During the four weekly face-to-face orientation activities in the first month of university life, the students learned about academic note-taking and had the opportunity to network with local students, exchange students and students from mainland China.

Although students in Hong Kong may be familiar with using the web to search for relevant information when doing assignments, most used these technologies only for social networking and entertainment. Therefore, it was a new experience for them to use community-based blogs to promote interactions between members in an educational community. A platform that provided community-based blogs was organized so that each student had an individual blog and was invited to reflect after face-to-face activities. Through the blogs, students across courses could reflect on their learning experiences and continue by doing some structured online post-workshop tasks. More importantly, they could become more familiar with different learning styles and how to avoid plagiarism with the programme facilitator after the face-to-face workshops. In addition, the senior mentors could share more personal experiences of university study with the freshmen.

This was the first time the school had organized a blended approach to programme orientation. Unobtrusive monitoring of the blog activities indicated that the freshmen generally were ready to use the technology to share their experiences. The 170 students were formed into groups of twelve to thirteen, and each group had a senior student as a mentor. Over the four weeks, 59 percent of students shared their experiences in their blogs. Group members could set RSS feeds within their own

group so that they could immediately read about new postings from fellow members. They could also access postings in other groups' blogs. As they had been guided to do some post-workshop tasks, most students shared reflections on the face-to-face activities; many held further discussions about plagiarism, learning styles, multiple intelligence and time management, and they also started to share useful references. The community-based nature of the blogs attracted many to view these postings. The blogs not only bridged the physical and the virtual learning environment, they also networked communications between courses, between students from local, exchange and international backgrounds, and across year groups. However, given that the orientation lasted only a month and was not embedded in any of the university courses, there were no more contributions in the blogs when the orientation programme was completed.

Case 2: Course-based blogs in "English for the media"

The principal intended learning outcomes of the course were to create multiple opportunities for students, as future journalists, to develop writing fluency and presentation skills in mass media. While students learned the espoused theories in class, they needed to put theories into practice. Despite the learning management system, which allowed teachers to provide access to many rich resources for the course, there were no common virtual spaces for students to utilise. Therefore, course-base blogs were introduced and integrated into WebCT between 2006 and 2008. Students attending the course were expected to develop both knowledge and skills in modern journalism, including the development of interviewing techniques and report-writing skills, and mastering techniques needed for appropriate use of multimedia in web-based journalism. Students could critique the quality of journalism in a variety of daily current news media by setting RSS feeds from online news sources. More importantly, students gained practical experience by publishing and reviewing their own news output in the course-based blogs.

However, it was not uncommon to find that learners responded to each other's blogs on an *ad hoc* basis (Martindale and Wiley 2005). Students' approach to learning is highly influenced by assessment (Biggs 2003, Ramsden 1992). Most will participate regularly or respond to peers if their contributions are graded or marked as in an assignment (West *et al*. 2006, Dickey 2004, Hodgson and Wong 2008, Kerawalla *et al*. 2008). Consequently, students were assigned weekly in-class and take-home writing tasks. They could choose to work individually or in groups to draft a news report after they had conducted an interview on a chosen topic, and to post it to the news blog for comments by other seminar groups. In writing comments, students were strongly encouraged to apply the theories taught in class and make critical reviews of peer work.

Students in cohorts from the two years were surveyed about their experiences of using blogs for educational purposes using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). In the first pilot implementation in 2006–7, 28 students responded voluntarily to the end-of-course survey. The highest scores were "The online news blog enhanced my learning experience" (mean = 4.00; s.d. = 0.385); "The online news blog was an effective way for me to share ideas and thoughts" (mean = 4.00; s.d. = 0.61); and "The online news blog enabled me to learn more from other students" (mean = 4.00; s.d. = 0.67). The lowest score was "Did you encounter any technology problems while using the online news blog?" (mean = 1.25; s.d. = 0.44). The results indicate that students were in favour of the wider opportunities to learn through practice and from reading and reviewing peer work. However, in the open questions in the survey, many respondents reported that they encountered technical problems when attempting to insert digital images, format their writings in columns or use different typefaces through the blog settings.

Having gained experience from the pilot, the teacher paid special attention to the orientation of registration and postings to blogs in 2007–8. As this could be the first time students had been asked to carry out tasks in blogs, clear instructions on structured and open activities are necessary (Tryon 2006). The blogs were used as an extension of in-class activities to create a culture of learning by increasing peer interactions and sharpening critical thinking through constructive comments by peers. In addition, students were required to carry out a news blog project, in groups, as one of the assessment activities in which comments on "content", "organization", "grammar", "style and tone", and "layout and display" were to be provided to peer groups. Of the 22 student responses to the end-of-course survey, the highest scores were "The online news blog enabled me to learn more from reading the work of peers" (mean = 4.09; s.d. = 0.53) and "I welcomed group members sending me

comments on my postings in the blog" (mean = 4.09; s.d. = 0.53). The lowest score was "I am very familiar with postings to a blog" (mean = 3.23; s.d. = 1.02).

5. Discussion

Members need to feel connected, mutually supported and socially empowered when working cohesively and effectively towards common goals. In order to extend blogs from a series of individual contributions to a collective and collaborative environment in which learners share common interests, in other words to build a learning community, it is necessary to establish group goals and individual accountability (Slavin 1989).

Despite the large group size in the orientation programme in Case 1, the programme facilitator and mentors from senior years cultivated learners' intrinsic motivation through appreciation of their postings. Also, some postings were appreciated by peers by assigning them "stars". Apart from doing structured tasks, some students were ready to share their strengths and areas for improvement, while others posted personal stories. The learning culture gradually evolved by way of individual learners sharing resources, knowledge and experience when working in collaborative situations.

In Case 2, the structured tasks and the assignment were set as part of the course activities, whether such activities were conducted in class or in the blogs. The teacher invited students to post some class work to the blogs so that they could share different perspectives through reading peer group work. Gradually, a culture of sharing ideas and comments was established. To maximize the potential use of blogs for facilitating learning interdependence, students were asked to provide comments and suggestions to peers as feedback to the news blog project. The comments provided in this case were a form of formative assessment, pinpointing possible gaps in performance and areas for improvement based on the criteria for assessment. Research studies have found some evidence of the impact on learning through feedback with no grades (Black *et al.* 2003, Gibbs 2006). In this study, students welcomed constructive feedback because they learned how to improve further, as indicated by the survey results. However, the assessment of work in blogs can be done quantitatively, based on the frequency of contributions, and postings can also be assessed qualitatively based on the thoughtfulness and quality of reflection and comments (West *et al.* 2006).

6. Conclusions

To create a learning-centred environment that allows the active participation of learners, there is increasing interest among educators to engage learners through the use of blogs that are integrated into the LMS adopted by the host institutions in Hong Kong. As writing in blogs has become socially accepted for self-expression, students generally experience less of a technical challenge when they use blogs for learning. Educators can design two different types of learning-centred blog: course-based and community-based.

Depending on the intended learning outcome of a course or programme, an educator can set up some learning tasks in blogs related to activities in lectures, tutorials, laboratory work or work placement. However, educators must: (1) plan carefully how to maximize the features and potential that blogs can offer; (2) set clear guidelines and provide instructions on how learners contribute constructively and how their work will be assessed; (3) create a supportive learning culture that facilitates learning between peers and with educators; (4) reflect on the learning experience of the course and across courses; and (5) design innovative practices that conform to the purpose of the programme and are aligned with an institution's strategic objectives.

Given these conditions, learners can be encouraged to articulate questions, learning experiences and reflections that they have not expressed in class (Beldarrain 2006). Also, they can actively publish high-quality creative work, while their peers and students from previous cohorts can make valid, timely comments that enable the fostering of academic interdependence in the learning community. If the aim is to engage students through assessment of learning, educators can award marks for high-quality contributions and provide constructive feedback as students strive to develop discipline-based and generic competence in the course being studied.

A further advantage of blogs is that every learner has a historical record of their own performance, because each contribution is centrally logged, so individual students can reflect on how they managed

particular aspects of a course and how their competence developed over time. They can also easily compile a profile that provides multiple evidence of their capability when they have finished their university programme.

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Steven Jewell; An E-social Constructivist Approach to Assessment and Feedback

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Keywords & Précis:

assessment	electronic	social constructivist

This presentation discusses an electronic approach to assessment and feedback that engages students in the process and enhances the dialogue between student and teacher. It has improved the quality of students' work and reduced the marking time for the teacher.

Short biography of the author:

Steve Jewell is a senior lecturer at Coventry University Business School and for the last two years has been responsible for teaching research methods to postgraduate students. He has keen interests in e-learning and developing the employability skills of his students. He joined the Business School in 2003 initially as a member of a team running work-based programmes. Prior to that Steve was director of a management consultancy company called Leading Minds which was a centre for the Chartered Manager Institute. Steve's doctorate is in physical chemistry and he spent many years as a research and then production director working on chemicals, fibres and plastics. Steve and his wife own and run a residential home for the elderly.

Abstract:

> "Although students can, with difficulty, escape from the effects of poor teaching, they cannot escape the effects of poor assessment" (Boud 1995: 35)

Postgraduate business students are required to submit a 3,000-word project proposal for their dissertation. To write a convincing research proposal is a highly demanding task as it involves tackling a number of complex concepts, made more difficult by the need for the predominantly international students to adjust to western teaching pedagogy (Liu 2009). The author is responsible for teaching research methods and assessing students' research proposals.

Rust (2007) laments the insufficient resources and thought devoted to assessment and feedback practices, in his paper on the scholarship of assessment. Rust's views are reinforced by the low ratings given by students to assessment and feedback practices in the National Student Survey (NSS) 2007 (HEFCE 2007). In a study on the effectiveness of assessment from a students' perspective (Poulos and Mahoney 2008), the participants expressed strong preference for: consistent assessment practices; transparent assessment practices; clear criteria-referencing to a grade; early feedback; marks and feedback together: and instruction on the assessment process. The social constructivist approach (O'Donovan *et al.* 2008)sees assessment as a social and collaborative activity between students and teachers.

The first step in the social constructive approach was to develop a clear set of assessment criteria. The number of students on the module necessitated an electronic process and therefore Blackboard's features used for electronic assessment and feedback. The feedback consisted of a marked grade form and electronic annotations on their script, student accessing both of these electronically. The new assessment process was a major success with the students: "*Great! The grading form known in advance gave me the opportunity to know what it is expected of me".* 94% of students agreed that the feedback would help them with their dissertation. The process halved the marking turn-round time and was free of paper.

A number of initiatives were used to engage the students with the assessment process: in one of these, students were given bonus marks if their assessment of their work was close to the author's. The students had electronic access to the grade form so that they could self- or peer-assess their research proposal. Around 50% of students estimated their mark with their estimations falling into two broad categories. For students who the author marked at over 60%, their estimations were

generally in agreement with the author's; if anything they tended to be modest about their performance. Many of these had self-assessed themselves against the grade form. However, for students who the author marked at less than 60%, their estimations were up to 20% greater than the author's. This meant that most students who failed (the pass mark being 40%) had thought they would pass! On interviewing failed students it was found that the majority had not used the grade form, their estimations being based on the amount of effort they had put into their work or a visceral feeling. More work is required on encouraging weaker students to assess themselves against the criteria on the grade form.

In summary, the benefit to the student is quick, collaborative, detailed, transparent, and equitable feedback, and to the teacher a highly efficient process for coping with large student numbers.

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Peter Atkinson, Luis Fernando Sierra Zuluaga & Jane Osmond; The Terrain is Different Over There: Student perceptions of an international collaborative transport design project*

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Keywords & Précis:

e-teaching	e-learning	video-conferencing	Design	VLE

Design pedagogy in a truly global context is an important research strand identified by the Centre of Excellence for Product and Automotive Design at Coventry University. This paper, using data gathered from several student focus groups, outlines a successful 2009 student-led collaborative project between Coventry University and EAFIT University, Columbia.

Short biography of the authors:

Peter Atkinson, Senior Lecturer in Industrial Design at Coventry University is a professional and experienced lecturer and researcher.

Luis Fernando Sierra is a tutor in Product Design Engineering at EAFIT University in Medellín, Columbia, specialising in the teaching of Transport Design, design methodologies, drawing and presentation skills, with a passion for Automotive Design.

Jane Osmond is Senior Research Assistant for Centre of Excellence for Product and Automotive Design, Coventry University, researching students' spatial awareness skills, threshold concepts in design and internationalisation of the curriculum.

Abstract:

The formation of a design pedagogy in a truly global context is an important strand of research identified by the Centre of Excellence for Product and Automotive Design at Coventry University, and this paper, using data gathered from a series of student focus groups, outlines a successful student-led collaborative project between Coventry University and EAFIT University in Colombia which materialized as a result of a series of informal visits to Colombia in 2007.

The collaborative project began informally in 2008, and was strengthened in 2009 whereupon, from a wider cohort of some 120 second-year students taking an Integrated Transport Design module, three groups of Coventry students were encouraged to form an international design team with three pairings of Colombian students.

A key ingredient essential to the project's success was the use of communication technologies, some of which were provided on an institutional basis, including a Tandberg videoconferencing system, used on weekly basis for "formal" tutorials; Blackboard, used as a project briefing document repository and messaging facility; PebblePad, used to provide a website style of interactive brief; and a specific Google Site, developed at EAFIT and used by students to share their presentations with each other and for comment by staff. Meanwhile, the students also appropriated several existing "social" communication technologies, including a student-led Facebook group, which helped to identify early levels of interest prior to the formation of project teams; MSN, which the students used to communicate between "official" tutorials, and Skype, through which students managed their own web-based meetings.

Preliminary findings from the focus group data indicate problems were experienced in relation to time-zone differences and different study patterns, and also the lack of physical face-to-face contact which the students acknowledged could lead to misunderstandings, either in communication tone or language problems. Despite this, both sets of students were almost universally positive about the

experience, and felt that it would enhance their ability to seek employment in the global design community of practice. From an institutional point of view the findings from the project will serve as a pedagogic model for future institutional collaborations both with EAFIT University and with existing, and new, international partners.

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Frances Kelly & Susan Carter; Carrying Meaning Across Boundaries: The role of metaphor in thesis writing

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Keywords & Précis:

metaphor as traveller across borders	thesis writing	doctoral education

Metaphor (that famous traveller across borders) can enable a thesis writer to structure the thesis in a way that also underscores its meaning. We examine specific structural metaphors from completed theses and from survey data that have been used in the conceptualisation and articulation of research.

Short biography of lead author:

Frances Kelly is a lecturer in the Centre for Academic Development, the University of Auckland. In her current role, she works to support doctoral candidates toward the completion of their doctorates through a programme of taught courses, and through working with supervisors and graduate advisors in departments and faculties. Her research interests in Higher Education lie primarily in the area of doctoral and postgraduate education. Frances obtained her own PhD in English literature in 2003.

Abstract:

Working from an academic development centre at the University of Auckland, we support doctoral candidates in a variety of ways, including assistance with thesis writing. In this paper, we will outline how this position in between the disciplines enables us to work with doctoral students as they engage with the discipline-specific conventions of academic writing, but also with the moves, expectations and conventions that are generic, or common to the thesis genre. In our role, we have found that students working in disciplines in which there is no established or pre-determined form that a thesis should take can sometimes struggle to create a structure which will provide an overall unity for the various parts of their thesis.

The first part of the paper will consider the role that metaphor (that famous traveller across borders) can have in broad terms as it enables a thesis writer to establish a structuring strategy for the thesis that also underscores its meaning. We argue, following critical theorists writing from different disciplinary perspectives including Jacques Derrida, Laurel Richardson and Evelyn Fox Keller, that metaphor is not limited to 'literary' texts nor is it merely ornamental. Metaphor can transcend the boundaries of disciplinary convention. Furthermore, structural metaphors of doctoral theses can draw on knowledge that lies beyond formal academic research practices, for instance reflecting thesis writers' ways of thinking that draw on cultural conceptions of how knowledge is produced. Metaphor can frame academic content with an epistemology appropriate to the author's identity or sense of self.

In the second part of the paper we examine specific structural metaphors that have been used by thesis writers in the conceptualisation and articulation of their research. Our samples come both from completed theses that we have analysed and from survey data collected from current research students. While some researchers describe utilising metaphors that are familiar, such as the journey, others are somewhat surprising, like the sword. The completed theses have employed metaphors of the concerto, the double helix, and the *toga* or mat to conceptualise and articulate complex ideas about their research findings that also draw on their own unique cultural and individual ways of knowing.

Carolyn Britton & Janette Chianese; Internal boundaries and external constraints: A confidence issue or skills 'gap'? Perceived and 'real' barriers to learning among first year nursing students

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Keywords & Précis:

academic literacy	learner confidence	constructing learner identities

This paper explores the perceived barriers to learning of a small group of first year nursing students, and argues that effective strategies to promote academic literacy must address issues of confidence and emotion around learning as well as skills development.

Short biography of the authors:

Carolyn Britton is a sociologist and academic skills developer with research interests in the scholarship of teaching and learning, particularly academic literacy. She is currently researching with her co-presenter, Jan Chianese, students' perceptions of academic writing and strategies to develop and support it. She has also published a number of articles on mature students and identity in various academic journals, and has contributed chapters to books on similar themes.

Jan Chianese is a programme leader in Radiotherapy with research interests in student learning in practice settings and student literacy in the academy. She is currently undertaking research into academic literacy with Carolyn Britton (co-presenter). She is also a reviewer for various Radiotherapy journals.

Abstract:

Academic writing is central to success in higher education. Whatever the discipline or field of study, students are expected to be able to write in a formal academic language and style and are assessed on their writing skills.

This places a premium on "good writing" and gives advantage to those who already possess the skills which enable success before they enter higher education. Thus, in the context of widening participation and increasing diversity, some learners are disadvantaged as a consequence of not having been exposed to the kinds of writing experiences required for higher education.

There is a substantial and growing literature on academic literacy (see, for example, Ganobcsik-Williams 2006, Lillis and Turner 2001, Lea 1998, Lea and Street 1998) which reflects the increasing concern amongst academics and others about the apparently falling standards in student writing (Ganobcsik-Williams 2004). This is usually linked to the rise of mass higher education and consequent broadening of the student body since the 1990s (Garner 2004), as well as the alleged "dumbing down" of the school curriculum (McVeigh 2002).

There is now widespread agreement that it is necessary to teach academic writing to university students (Ganobcsik-Williams 2004, Ivanic and Lea 2006). However, there is less agreement about how this should be done. A generic "skills" approach, which is the explicit teaching of elements of writing, is probably the most common method and rests on a view of the learner as deficient in some way. An academic literacies approach, however, which sees academic writing as a socially situated practice, suggests that these skills must be embedded in an academic discipline (Lea and Street 1998). This approach is underpinned by the constructivist view that learners are not empty vessels waiting to be filled, but are active constructors of their own learning.

Thus the process of becoming a student in higher education is not just about acquiring knowledge and skills but a social process in which what is at stake is the construction of a new identity as a learner (Christie *et al*. 2008). This foregrounds issues around confidence and emotion in learning, which arguably is as much if not more of a barrier to learning than a skills deficit.

This paper explores the perceived barriers to learning of a small group of first-year nursing students, who identified themselves as needing additional support and who chose to participate in a writing group. It argues that the students' initial perception of their needs as learners was that they lacked the necessary skills to succeed in higher education, which accords with the dominant view of "weak" students as having a "skills deficit".

However, data obtained from semi-structured interviews with students before and after they had participated in a writing group suggest that the "real" barriers to learning were emotional rather than cognitive-/skills-based. While they initially perceived themselves as lacking various attributes which they hoped to gain from the writing group experience, and did develop some skills, what emerged as the most important gain was greater confidence in their abilities as learners, which arose from the social nature of the group.

Thus, perceived and "real" barriers to learning may not coincide; what this suggests is that effective strategies for promoting academic literacy need to address emotional factors around learning.

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Becca Westrup &Teresa Caldwell; 'Getting off to a Flying Start': Promoting the use of Academic Writing mentors in breaking through transition boundaries.

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Keywords & Précis:

Flying Start	A-level student transitions to HE	Academic Writing mentoring

Highlighting the notion that students' transition from A-Level to university has received increasing attention we outline some particular challenges that students can encounter.

Short biography of lead author:

My role at the Write Now Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning is to support the work of the CETL at Liverpool Hope University. I am involved in the development of initiatives and resources to help students and staff with their academic writing, peer tutoring, research and evaluation. I also provide academic writing support for The Flying Start project which seeks to enhance the academic writing transition between FE and HE. I am also responsible for academic writing mentor training.

My research interests include student writing and assessment in Higher Education. In particular I am interested in the role of students' identity and agency in writing and assessment processes.

Abstract:

In recent years the transition of students from further education to higher education has received increasing attention. Previously researchers have identified this transition process as confusing and difficult for some students. In particular, studies have suggested students can encounter difficulties with changed understandings of learning cultures and requirements in relation to essay writing and assessment at university. The challenges students face include: a lack of "spoon-feeding" and an expectation of independence (Ballinger, 2003); difficulty understanding assessment criteria (Harrington *et al.* 2006); difficulty understanding and interpreting tutor feedback (Chanock 2000; Higgins *et al*. 2001); mis-matches between students' and tutors' expectations and implicit requirements of academic writing (Lea and Street 1998, Lea and Stierer 2000).

In this paper an outline of an academic writing mentoring intervention (Flying Start, 2009 http://www.hope.ac.uk/flyingstart), aimed at providing support and guidance for A-Level students, will be discussed. Central to this is an evaluation of the delivery of the programme developed in collaboration with the Centre for Widening Participation and the WriteNow CETL at Liverpool Hope University. We will offer suggestions for gaining an understanding of what makes an effective intervention to help students and staff break down boundaries encountered during the transition process. Given the focus for evaluation, our current research is not to produce an audit of the past but to inform future strategy.

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Anna Popova; Renegotiation of Collective Culture: Staff and students' participation in a new EYPS pilot route

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Keywords & Précis:

collaborative learning	bounderyless environment	Early Years Professional Status (EYPS)

Renegotiating collective culture is challenging, especially when an innovation is involved. This presentation reports on the findings from a University based project where staff and students are involved in negotiation of learning. The pilot route towards an Early Years Professional Status is at the centre of this collective learning.

Short biography of the author:

Anna Popova is a lecturer at the University of Worcester, Institute of Education. She is at the final stages of completing her PhD degree at the University of Bath. Her research interests include development of pedagogic practices, interagency collaboration in children's services and international perspectives in childhood. Her theoretical perspectives are supported by post-Vygotskian/socio-cultural concepts.

Abstract:

This presentation will be based on a research project conducted at the Centre for Early Childhood at the University of Worcester. The project focuses on creating conditions within which undergraduate students can obtain an Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) during their BA course. This is a pilot route which raises a number of considerations for the students, staff and institutional practices of the centre and faculty. Central to the creation of adequate conditions for students' successfully completing EYPS is the issue of potential boundaries between the ongoing BA course in Early Childhood and a new pilot route. The boundaries can be realized through the institutional operations and discourses which have not been involved in the new route, the students' negotiation of two learning trajectories at the same time and the staff's re-interpretation of the teaching-learning process. The research team responded to this challenge by creating a research methodology that was capable of creating a bounderyless environment for the realization of the pilot route (the term "bounderyless" is employed in this case to denote a set of opportunities which are created to engage in power neutral and participatory activities). Grounded in the ideas of the Developmental Work Research (Engeström 1987, 1990, 1993), the methodology was suitable to the needs of the pilot project because it provided multi-voicedness, necessary to overcome existing boundaries. The series of linked workshops involved the centre's staff, EYPS candidates and their mentors. This methodology helps all the partners of the pilot to renegotiate and re-interpret (if it becomes necessary) existing practices and views.

This presentation will outline the underpinning principles of the pilot methodology. Special attention will be paid to the discussion of the ways in which collective culture undergoes transformation as a result of the participants' re-interpretation of the ongoing practices (Engeström 1987). The findings of the project highlight the dynamic and flexible nature of organizational learning. The original theory underpinning methodology is questioned, expanded and creatively adapted to the concrete needs of the learning environment of the Centre for Early Childhood.

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Joanne Lee, Sean Cummins & Rob Flint; An Open Curriculum: Turning education 'outside in'

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Keywords and Précis:

open curriculum	learning space	critical encounter	Fine Art

This presentation explores the use of an 'open' curriculum on an undergraduate Fine Art programme, via three examples of innovative learning spaces. It shows how students define their own study through a focus on how practice, theory and professional skills operate outside the university.

Short biography of lead author:

Joanne Lee is an artist and writer based in Brighton, UK, and is currently Senior Lecturer in Fine Art at Nottingham Trent University. Her research interests include an investigation into the aesthetics of everyday urban life, an exploration of curricula in fine art education and an attention to the potential of remaining unresolved. Her project 'Made up: Resourcefulness as a creative strategy' was supported by the AHRC and she has held a Research Fellowship at the Henry Moore Institute, Leeds for an inquiry into 'Critical Enchantment'. Publications include the co-authored book Drafts/Draughts (Artwords Press) and a chapter 'Languages to delight in art' for In(ter)discipline: New Languages for Criticism, (Legenda).

Abstract:

This presentation reflects upon curricular redesign within a BA (Hons) Fine Art programme. The programme offers an "open" curriculum through which students are able pursue those practical and theoretical skills which are most pertinent to the rapid shifts in art practice and to their own needs. The programme provides a structure to support the student in defining their own learning experiences; students can, as a result, explore a range of traditional and new media, and consider diverse critical/conceptual approaches to making/theorizing art. They are supported in determining the emphasis of their studies according to their own developing understanding: this results in a diverse variety of practical and theoretical learning across the student cohort, which can manifest itself in a spectrum of activity ranging from process-driven making to explicitly conceptual/theoretical practices.

This presentation explores three of the innovative and interdisciplinary learning spaces made possible by the new curriculum design. Firstly, it will consider Thinking Space: writing through an open curriculum. This section will explore the role of writing for students' learning experiences within Fine Art at NTU. It will show how a series of carefully designed writing assignments, across a 120-credit Level 3 module, enables practice, theory and professional skills to be developed holistically. It will also demonstrate how this innovative approach to writing (assessed through a Research Portfolio) has replaced the traditional final-year dissertation.

Secondly, it will explore Space for Critical Encounters: "Show and Listen". The Fine Art Programme offers distinctive studio seminars; these "Show and Listen" sessions offer a significant innovation upon existing models of "studio crit", as the difference between intention and interpretation is experienced by students as a live event through the joint "witnessing" of one another's presentations. Using Martin Buber's notion of "encounter", the presentation will explore how these situations create a "revelatory" space, through which interpretation is "performed" and the myth of intentionality unravelled. As a result, the group experience cumulatively builds a form of "co-knowledge".

Thirdly, it will consider The Curriculum is Out There: Delivering Contemporary Practice. This section begins from Boris Groys' (2007: 146) suggestion that "The mechanisms of contemporary art, rather than the results, could be a field of academic knowledge... Instead of studying works and canons, we would study processes and strategies." Given that the diverse territory of contemporary professional practice is the intellectual subject matter of Fine Art students' study, how might this actually be

delivered within the timetable? This section will show how the reinvention of the traditional lecture format within an interrelated series of practitioner talks is combined with the “Reflexive Archive” project to enhance their reception, using online resources to engender student discussion.

We seek a debate about how turning the curriculum “outside in” can promote independent learning and allow students practical/intellectual mobility in a rapidly changing world. We welcome discussion around how the approaches outlined, with their emphasis upon co-learning and a refusal of the lecturer’s “mastery” of the discourse, have a wider resonance with colleagues from other fields in higher education.

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Marianna Papadopoulou; Personal Constructs and Critical Theory: How may they be reconciled?

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Keywords and Précis:

personal theories	public theories	critical engagement

This study proposes a pedagogy of self-reflection that aims at facilitating students' critical engagement with knowledge. Beginning with an exploration of their personal knowledge, students are encouraged to first explore their constructs, then 'map' these onto the constructs of the public domain and explore their consequences and contradictions.

Short biography of the author:

Dr Papadopoulou is an educationalist. She began her teaching career working with young children. Her PhD thesis is in the area of children's learning and understanding of their lived world. Since 2003 she has been teaching at the UK Open University and the University of London. She has carried out research with children and with adult learners. Her current research interests and activity are in the area of academic learning, with a particular focus upon learning as a mode of being.

Abstract:

The purpose of this work is to propose ways of supporting students in developing a critical stance towards knowledge. Critical thinking requires a different type of engagement with the world and its constructs, one that is distinct from the modes of thought involved in everyday living. It involves a change of mindset, a different process of which learners may not be aware. The pedagogical approach advanced here aims to assist students in developing a critical stance by discovering the grounding of their "own", personal theories. Learners are first supported in interrogating this personal knowledge (how it is founded and what is its evidence base?), before comparing it to the public constructs of the academic domain.

One of the chief preoccupations of the western academy is to introduce and foster a mode of intellectual activity known as critical thinking (Barnet, 1997). Critical engagement involves the practice of questioning that which is "given", challenging assumptions, examining the evidence base and challenging the implications and applications of theoretical constructs. Critical engagement enables students, not simply to accumulate "facts", but rather to employ knowledge constructs effectively to generate their own learning and apply it to different contexts (Maclellan, 1999).

Becoming "critical" is not easy to achieve but is rather seen as one of the most difficult academic skills to attain. Studies (e.g., Marienau and Fiddler 2002) suggest that students often perceive academic learning as the accumulation of knowledge expressed as the memorisation and reproduction of information; this has been partly attributed to students' limited awareness of different possibilities (Maclellan, 1999; Martin, 2005).

Critical engagement requires a different stance from that adopted in everyday life, where knowledge is often treated as fixed, stable, taken for granted; or as representing the only "real" possibility (Walker and Finney 1999: 534). Becoming "critical" requires interrogation of such fixed, taken-for-granted assumptions. It presupposes an appreciation of how knowledge is constructed and attained, an examination of its evidence base, and the existence of alternative interpretations.

However, students may often find it difficult to perceive the relevance of academic effort to their everyday engagement, and this can become an obstacle to adopting a critical stance (Walker & Finney, 1999). The thesis proposed here is that learners can be assisted in developing a critical stance towards knowledge if they first discover how to become critical towards their own constructs and theories.

Personal theories, though subjective and limited in scope, are in part the product of the sort of evidence available to everyday experience. Public theories, on the other hand, are usually the product of philosophical, scientific and social scientific constructs that students only encounter in academia. They are typically based on reflecting upon research evidence and are subject to academic scrutiny that meets the criteria of systematic rigorous investigation (Griffiths & Tann, 1992).

The approach proposed, rather than treating personal and public constructs as incompatible, presents them as being in a dialogic relationship and as mutually influential. Beginning with an exploration of personal knowledge, its foundations and evidence base, students are encouraged to analyse and codify their findings. These are then "mapped" onto the differently grounded constructs of the public domain, and their consequences and contradictions explored.

Among the outcomes of this activity may be a reconsideration and redevelopment of the learners' personal theories, resulting in a more critical stance towards the world and its constructs.

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Nicole Steils; Teaching without Boundaries? Being a teacher in virtual environments

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Keywords and Précis:

teacher role	virtual learning environment	uncertainty

Virtual learning environments (VLEs) have an increasing impact on teachers in higher education. While research concentrates on potential benefits or technical issues, socio-psychological issues remain under-explored. Reflecting on an ongoing literature review this paper will explore issues centred around the uncertainty associated with the role instructors assume within a VLE.

Short biography of the author:

Nicole Steils has started a PhD in the CURLIEW project funded by the Leverhulme Trust at Coventry University in 2009. Her research interest concentrates on the impact of teaching in immersive virtual worlds on learner and teacher identity and how students and teacher use the 'new' opportunities of learning and cooperation.

Originally qualified to be a teacher in secondary school, she has been working in out-of-school education as a training expert and coach for over ten years.

Abstract:

Virtual online environment technologies have an increasing impact on the way we teach and educate. Virtual learning environments (VLEs) offer new techniques and unique resources for facilitating both knowledge transfers and skills development. These methods are used as complimentary educational tools, enhancing rather than merely replacing traditional teaching methods and learning environments. Text-based online multi-user virtual worlds have been used since the 1970s (e.g. Achterbosch *et al.* 2007), yet only recently has their widespread uptake in higher education seen environments such as Second Life (Virtual World Watch 2009) used for large-scale online education.

Research in the subject area of VLEs has predominantly focused either on the technical issues that surround the implementation of the fundamental components of a learning environment, or the potential benefits and comparative gains of using VLE technology in higher education. However, the sociological and psychological issues underpinning the experience of VLE continue to remain under-explored. This paper will attempt to help to fill in these existing research gaps by exploring the question of what the effect of virtualisation (i.e., the transition from real to virtual world) has on the role and identity of the teacher in higher education.

This paper will explore issues that centre around the uncertainty associated with the role instructors assume within a virtual environment, and the subsequent impact on their experience and behaviour. Using information collected through an ongoing review of the relevant literature, the paper will propose some hypotheses that will form the basis of future research. In order to further emphasize the importance of future work in this area of VLEs and to provide a basis for further discussion of these important issues, the paper will also reflect upon several ongoing case studies.

Key points addressed in this paper include:

- The identification of the factors governing the changes in behaviour that are observed when practitioners transition from real to virtual worlds;
- The quantification and analysis of the uncertainty expressed by some instructors when working with VLEs;
- Role-reversal in virtual learning scenarios, and the role of the teacher as a learner;
- The authority of the practitioner, and the impact of virtualisation on this authority and their subsequent ability to motivate and direct students. In order to effectively retain a position of

authority, a major issue involved here is the perceived dual-need for expertise both within the specific subject delivered and of the use of VLE technology in general;

- The relationship between the appearance of animated 3D virtual characters (known as avatars) and their assumed roles within the learning process.

The challenge involved in analysing these issues is significant. Yet addressing these issues is important, because they are fundamental in providing an effective VLE for both practitioners and learners. This paper will present both a short taxonomy of existing literature in these areas, and provide a basis for further discussion of these important issues.

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Rebecca Khanna; Every Which Way But Loose: The journey of renegotiating the boundaries within a conceptual framework of a narrative inquiry

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Keywords and Précis:

development of a conceptual framework	boundaries to creative thinking	doctoral study

This paper discusses the challenges of devising a conceptual framework as part of a doctoral thesis. It is based on a narrative inquiry exploring the experience of course approval events in higher education. I hope the paper will provide scope for mutual critique and discussion amongst colleagues facing similar challenges.

Short biography of the author:

Rebecca has worked as a clinician and senior manager for over twenty years across a wide range of specialisms and locations in the National Health Service. Presently, she is working in higher education as a lecturer within an allied health programme and is currently an EdD student at the University of Glasgow.

Abstract:

This paper seeks to illuminate the complexities and dilemmas within the ongoing journey of devising a conceptual framework. According to Leshem and Trafford (2007: 96), a conceptual framework can be viewed as providing a necessary theoretical overview of intended research and order within that process. However, my journey was far from straightforward as the above definition suggests.

The paper is based on the author's work in progress as part of ongoing EdD research, which focuses on one of the most contentious aspects of educational practice associated with the approval of courses in higher education. The study explores the experiences of stakeholders linked to the approval of pre-registration allied health professional programmes in a UK university. Through adopting the lens of narrative inquiry and utilizing interview conversations, documentary analysis and observer-participant reflections, this work seeks to foreground the narratives of participants. Full ethical approval requirements have been met. Overall, the findings indicate course approval events are neither apolitical, nor benign. These spaces rather than affording choice for collegial debate seem to have become sites of negotiation. This study revealed a matrix of narratives; three layers interweave an ecological dynamic within and between each other. These involve the contextual narratives of course approval as an instrument; individual performance portraits of identity, perspective and power; and finally explanatory stories, which reflect the existence of a multiplicity of collectives moderating the success of approval events.

During this session, I will aim to share the spaces of liminality I have inhabited, and which I still revisit when faced with demonstrating coherence of theoretical ideas, alongside struggling to find resonance with my own position as a researcher in this narrative study and, most importantly, doing justice to the voices of participants. Subsequently, I have realized that this has much to do with prior approaches to learning research skills, alongside roles in my professional life. As a result, initial thinking about the conceptual framework was characterized by seeking to identify clear lines or boundaries to represent the relationships of those involved in course approval. However, on reflection I realized that this approach exemplified a contradiction between realizing abstract ideas and frameworks that offer a misleading certainty. Through critical conversations with others, and with myself, I appreciated that this perspective was not only hampering attempts to explore relationships between theory with practice; it also demonstrated little resonance with the values of narrative inquiry and of social constructionism, which forms a basis for addressing the contexts of course approval in this study.

Kronenberg and Pollard (2005) argue that people make borders and that therefore they can be unmade and renegotiated, and in adopting such a stance, this paper will outline my conceptual framework and highlight significant moments which have so far prompted its review. I hope that by sharing this personal journey it will provide scope for mutual critique and discussion amongst colleagues as they consider similar challenges.

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Gemma Tombs; The 'Hidden Curriculum': Second Life and the political university?

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Keywords and Précis:

e-learning	hidden curriculum	second life

This paper aims to raise questions within the educational community about the nature of pedagogical design in a twenty-first century setting. Looking at the virtual world Second Life, it will question how curriculum boundaries are necessarily impacted by the socio-political state of the university.

Short biography of the author:

Gemma Tombs is a PhD student at Coventry University, working within the Learning Innovation Applied Research Group. She is part of the Leverhulme-funded CURLIEW project, which seeks to address the socio-political impact of the use of immersive virtual worlds in education. Her particular research topic addresses the nature of pedagogical design within Second Life and other immersive virtual worlds, with a particular focus on the socio-political state of the university and what impact this may have upon curricula design.

Abstract:

In recent years, emerging digital technologies have become increasingly relevant in education, especially in the higher education sector. Virtual learning environments such as Blackboard are considered mainstream for most institutions, and provide essential support to both the student and the teacher. Moving beyond these environments are 3-D immersive virtual worlds such as Second Life in which a significant percentage of UK universities are enjoying some degree of presence (Kirriemuir 2009). Virtual worlds can facilitate problem-based learning environments, encourage the creation of simulation activities and promote distance learning (Mayrath *et al*. 2007). Immersive virtual worlds also demand new and inventive ways of teaching; they have the potential to revolutionize the way that we think about the educational curriculum (Savin-Baden 2008) and the way it is taught.

Despite the potential that Second Life offers for experimenting with and developing new pedagogies, there has been little research to date on how educators are designing curricula for teaching in immersive virtual worlds. This is particularly true of how these increasingly prevalent technologies fit within present curriculum design. It is also necessary to differentiate between the written curriculum and the curriculum in practice (Barnett and Coate 2005): the student experience can be entirely distinct from the curriculum-as-designed, depending on both the teacher and the learner.

Drawing on current PhD research, this paper seeks to analyse critically the contemporary literature on the topic of curriculum boundaries in Second Life, concurrent with a preliminary analysis of module and programme information. Looking at documents such as mission statements, prospectuses and programme and module specifications, it will argue that immersive virtual worlds must not only be viewed within the context of the curriculum-as-designed and the curriculum in practice but also within the borders of the "hidden curriculum" (Snyder 1973, Barnett and Coate 2005). The "hidden curriculum", which considers socio-political factors such as the globalization of education, changing conceptions about the role of the teacher, and economic pressures within the wider community, may have significant influences upon the written curriculum. This paper will then go on to argue that due to the problematic nature of locating immersive virtual worlds within pedagogical spaces, the socio-political state of the institution and individual departments can play a significant role in determining the inclusion of virtual worlds within the written curriculum.

This paper will conclude by raising questions about the nature of the educational community, suggesting new perspectives of learning and teaching within a socio-political context: if the curriculum is subject to changing conceptions of learning, of the relationship between the teacher and the learner, what implications do immersive virtual worlds hold for the worldwide "hidden curriculum"?

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Matt Mawer; Colliding at the Edges: The convergence of literacy and learning in virtual worlds

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Keywords and Précis:

e-learning	literacy	virtual worlds

This paper will critically explore the relationship between modern literacies and virtual world innovations in electronic learning. The relevance of virtual worlds as both a conduit to facilitate digital literacy and a space in which literacies may be developed will be discussed.

Short biography of the author:

Matt Mawer is a PhD student at Learning Innovation ARG, Coventry University. His work is part of the Leverhulme Trust-funded CURLIEW project charting the socio-political impact of virtual world learning on Higher Education, particularly the experience of learning with virtual worlds. Currently he is focusing on the intersection of modern literacies and digital pedagogical spaces. Progress on his PhD, and idle musings, can be followed at: http://cuba.coventry.ac.uk/mattmawer

Abstract:

Digital communicative technologies and spaces are becoming increasingly prevalent in modern lives, including those of students entering higher education (Merchant 2007, Sheehy and Bucknall 2008). Literacy theorists have suggested that the shift from page to screen for everyday tasks of communication, writing, information search, and collaboration has facilitated a shift toward new digital literacies that incorporate the skills required to engage with these new technologies (Merchant 2007, 2009). This apparent shift in literacy practices has led to calls for radical education changes to accommodate a new generation of digitally literate students (e.g. Prensky 2001a, 2001b, Barnes and Tynan, 2007).

The basis of such claims has been progressively eroded by recognition that not all students currently entering higher education posses high levels of technological competency (Bennett *et al*. 2008), and that new systems of meaning-making may not outmode their predecessors (Merchant 2007, Steinkuehler 2007). Moreover, the ethos of lifelong learning within higher education is expected to ensure an influx of new students beyond the “digital native” (Prensky 2001a) age bracket who have a stake in the future of academic literacies.

3D virtual worlds such as Second Life are attracting increasing attention both as literacy spaces (e.g., Steinkuehler 2007, Gillen 2009) and educational technologies (Virtual World Watch 2009). These multi-user environments have achieved enormous commercial success, and have begun to see greater incorporation into academic life. The intersection between virtual worlds as educational spaces and student literacies remains vague however, and the increasing interest in virtual worlds within higher education affirms the need to address this ambiguity.

Based on the theoretical underpinnings of a PhD project, this paper will present a critical exploration of the interaction between 3D virtual world spaces and literacy practices in higher education. The relevance of virtual worlds as both a conduit to facilitate digital literacy and a space in which literacies may be developed will be discussed, especially in relation to the intersection between opportunities offered by virtual worlds and the needs and aspirations of students entering higher education in the present and future.

This paper will argue in particular that the challenges to literacy practices offered by these assumptions, particularly with regard to the digital aspirations of students, require an exploration of the implications for higher education now and in the future.

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Yung-Fang Chen; An Online Learning Project – Systems Theory: Using online quiz to support student learning

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Keywords and Précis:

e-learning	on-line quiz	systems theory

The research is a CIPEL and BES (Coventry University) funded e-learning project: Systems Theory, the project started in September 2008 and is planned to be completed in July 2009. The research team includes Drs El Parker, Marcella Daye, Yung-Fang Chen, Ms Michelle Barrett, and one Learning Technologist, Andrew Brooks.

Short biography of the author:

Dr Yung-Fang Chen is a Senior Lecturer in Disaster Management and Emergency Planning at Coventry University, England. Her research focuses on crisis and disaster management, risk communication, and training exercise. She is also interested in serious games for emergency response and e-learning pedagogy.

Abstract:

This paper describes research undertaken for a CIPEL and BES (Coventry University) funded e-learning project: Systems Theory. The project began in September 2008 and will be completed in July 2009. The research team includes Drs El Parker, Marcella Daye, Yung-Fang Chen, Ms Michelle Barrett, and one Learning Technologist, Andrew Brooks.

The paper is based on an essay submitted to a Masters module (M12CSHE): Learning Technology in Higher Education. The paper proposes the online quiz as an ideal on-line gaming methodology to enhance students' learning outcomes, as it uses highly interactive online technologies and reflective exercises (Connolly and Stansfield 2006).

The paper will begin by examining the strengths and disadvantages of using the e-learning method. Pedagogically, it has four advantages: first, it provides more methods of teaching and learning; second, various teaching and supportive materials meet students' diverse needs; third, learning from playing (and at home) may be more effective; and fourth, the learner-centred environment encourages learners to engage in learning activities (Collis 1996, Westera 1999, HEFCE 2005).

The paper will proceed by illustrating the e-learning project; the educational rationale of the project and the plan and design process of the project will be described. The distinguishing characteristics of the Systems Theory e-learning project are as follows: first, the use of "blog" style to represent the contents of the learning objective is different from traditional rigid "pop-up window boxes" style; secondly, it applies a consistent format for each unit so learners will be familiar with the way the learning objective is functioned (e.g., each unit consists of a literature review, a case study and an online quiz); thirdly, the online quiz provides learners with immediate assessment and feedback so learners are able to identify their learning outcomes.

However, a few limitations of the project and some weaknesses of the online quiz assessment style are also identified. For example, while it is advised to use closed questions for the quiz, it is difficult to assess learners' understanding of the complexity of systems. In addition, relying heavily on the Learning Technologist prevents the researchers effectively revising the contents of the project.

Lastly, the paper will discuss the evaluation methods. External and internal validity is used to evaluate the effectiveness of the online quiz and the e-learning project. In addition, a four-dimensional framework is also proposed to examine learners' learning outcomes (de Freitas and Oliver 2005), and the infrastructure of the learning objective. As the completion of the project is by the end of July, only a preliminary assessment and evaluation will have been conducted. Feedback from the research team, the technician and other colleagues will be discussed in the presentation.

Once the evaluation from the participants has been completed, it will provide the research team with some indication as to what can be improved. It is believed that this online quiz can be a starting point for other types of online Serious Games.

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Joanne Smailes & Pat Gannon-Leary; Student Communities of Practice: What virtual models can engage and address the needs of a diverse student environment

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Keywords and Précis:

communities of practice	diversity of the student experience	peer assisted learning

By considering relevant literature and primary data designed to gain more definitive evidence of student activity in three different technological domains (i.e. VLEs, Social Networking and Virtual Worlds. This paper investigates the potential use of virtual communities of practice to support peer based student interactions

Short biography of lead author:

Joanne Smailes is Learning and Teaching Advisor for Staff Development in Learning and Teaching Support and a Northumbria Teacher Fellow.

Abstract:

A report commissioned by the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC 2008) found that the two most regular activities undertaken by students are, firstly, use of university systems which support their learning and, secondly, accessing social networking sites. Kirremuir 's (2008) EduServ Foundation study highlights the increasing number of UK universities which have a presence in the virtual world Second Life.

University Systems are aware of student engagement with their own in-house technologies, such as virtual learning environments (VLEs), but knowledge of student engagement with social networking and virtual worlds is often derived from anecdotal evidence. This paper seeks to redress this by trying to increase understanding of three technological models for enhancing learning and student engagement: "established" technologies, e.g., VLEs; "populist" technologies, e.g., Facebook; and "emerging" technologies such as Second Life. This paper takes as its premise the notion that universities should strive to design peer support systems for students to engage in, and focuses its investigation on the potential use of virtual communities of practice (CoPs) to support peer-based student interactions.

Evidence to substantiate this premise is derived from the literature which has explored areas of student diversity such as students from lower-income families, older students, first-generation students and international students. The work of Harvey *et al*. (2006) indicates that students from lower-income families have less peer support to draw on and suggests that there is some correlation between socio-economic groups, first-year grades and probability of withdrawing from study (especially where family problems intervene). Farmer *et al* (2008) found that older students perceived peer support as less supportive, with similar findings found for first-generation students – an alternative measure of socio-economic status. The study also found that international students experienced difficulty integrating into the university community. These studies, taken in conjunction with the findings of Eggens *et al*. (2007) that personal networks affect student attainment and Farmer *et al*. (2008) that academic marks achieved correlate positively both with degree of satisfaction and of supportive peer activity, provide evidence that substantiates the premise of this paper; in addition it endorses Smith and Bath's (2006) suggestion that, since peer interactions (including social interactions) are essential determinants of graduate outcome, the notion of a learning community or a CoP should be reinforced within any innovations for supporting student learning. This suggestion prompted this investigation of the potential use of virtual CoPs to support peer-based student interactions.

The approach taken includes a consideration of the relevant literature combined with analysis of primary data designed to gain more definitive evidence of student activity in different technological domains. In the light of this evidence, the advantages and disadvantages of the three virtual models in respect of supporting peer based student interactions within a CoP are considered.

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Shefalika Ghosh Samaddar; Development of Metadata Model of Web Learning Using Semantic Web.

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Keywords

semantic web	modeling e-learning	LTSA (Learning Technology Systems Architecture)	DRM Digital Rights Management)

Development of a metadata model for e-learning coordination and control using semantic web moves from pure education to more adaptive edutainment. The model is a transition from LTSA based model to semantic web based web-learning meta model. The meta-model is prepared using OWL and requires more generic framework like RDF

Short biography of the author:

Shefalika Ghosh Samaddar - MSc, MPhil, MTech, PGDIPR, Faculty Member of Computer Science & Engineering, Motilal Nehru National Institute of Technology Allahabad, India is a Gold medallist in Mathematics. She is involved in a Govt. of India project on 'Development of a framework for Knowledge Acquisition and Machine Learning for Construction of Ontology for Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL) Semantic Web Portal for Tribal Medicine' and is the chief investigator of the project 'Development of educational Content and Associated Depository of Web Services for Intellectual Property Rights'. She was the founder-editor of a double-blind peer-reviewed journal – Kindler – the Journal of Army Institute of Management Kolkata. Her research interest embraces the field of Intellectual Property, Information Security, Software Engineering and related fields. She has a number of research papers to her credit in online and hard copy based journals.

Abstract:

This paper aims to develop a metadata model for e-learning co-ordination and control and its implementation using the semantic web. Such a metadata model can be configured for any education empowerment in teaching learning, research and edutainment. Most of the e-learning activities in today's digital environment are being offered as web services which are typically available through an e-learning web portal. E-learning is an essential part of the Virtual University Information System (VUIS) which requires a well-defined architectural model that ensures not only the proper functionality of the system but also its dynamic applicability with flexibility of the services in higher and specialized education, including supervision of cross-country research projects and curriculum design in customized education. Sometimes these services are each part of a different kind of services; e.g., a portal offering travel and tourism services may offer the e-learning of a language of the land of intended travel within a minimum number of hours or offer dynamic translation services while considering and resolving successfully the inter-cultural issues. E-learning thus moves from pure education to more adaptive edutainment or education configured for a specific job. Disciplinary leadership in such cases lies with a number of virtual communities represented comprehensively through web-learning portals.

The considered model is a transition from an LTSA (Learning Technology Systems Architecture)-based e-learning model to a semantic web-based web-learning meta model. The difference between e-learning modules and virtual distance learning modules is very indistinct, and often the curriculum team uses the same or similar modules as objects, whereas the difference between e-learning and web-based learning techniques is clearly understood through the introduction of web services, by the contrasting web structures, and by the different content and associated DRM (Digital Rights Management) used in each case.

This paper presents the development of an e-learning system model based on an extended IEEE-LTSA. The original IEEE-LTSA is extended so that it suits the requirements of a semantic web-based model. Dynamic web services are conspicuously absent in e-learning modules and therefore the co-

ordination and control module in the LTSA-based e-learning model requires a new web avatar which is presented in this paper. A number of e-learning mechanisms and modes are already available. This paper also offers a survey of e-learning modes and is able to identify successfully different phases, activities, various data schema, invariants such as business rules and relations which may be extended to ontology in the present meta-model. The classification of e-learning in terms of activity coordination and control is a stepping stone for the successful implementation of the meta-model. The meta-model is ultimately implemented using semantic web languages such as Ontology Web Language (OWL) and requires more generic framework like Resource Description Framework (RDF). There are a number of issues involved regarding the application of semantic web initiative into e-learning. The other issues, such as multi-institutional and inter-cultural collaboration, may include the design and development of mark-up and annotation tools, relevant ontology, intelligent agents, etc. Capability building by semantically integrating and selectively retrieving context-specific e-content is achieved through this meta-model.

Tuesday 15 September 2009 Parallel Session 3: 10:15-11:15

Juliette DG Goldman & Christine Collier-Harris; Integrating Pedagogies in Sexuality Education for Enhanced Teaching and Learning

Griffith University, Australia

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Keywords and Précis:

integrating curriculum pedagogies	sexuality education	educational theories of learning frameworks/intelligences

The frequent absence or minimisation of Sexuality Education in Primary school denies children's right to appropriate sexual knowledge, attitudes and values. This poster demonstrates how integrating educational theories, here Anderson and Krathwohl's learning framework with one of Gardner's intelligences, can generate appropriate, worthwhile and varied Sexuality Education pedagogies.

Short biography of the authors:

Dr Juliette DG Goldman, PhD, ACM is a Senior Lecturer in Education at Griffith University, Australia, with a significant and extensive international body of research in children's sexual cognition and sexual education, and the role and understandings of their teachers. Her current research examines appropriate and integrated pedagogies for learning and teaching Sexuality Education, especially in relation to child sexual abuse and the ubiquitous earlier maturing of girls and boys.

Christine Collier-Harris, BA Hons (1st Class) and Griffith University Medal, is a Research Assistant at Griffith University, Australia, majoring in Philosophy and Sociology. She researches and edits lecturers' and university students' work, to publication and/or graduation with awards.

Abstract:

Sexuality education has frequently been ignored or marginalized by Departments of Education, schools, and by teachers themselves. In light of the earlier maturing of both girls and boys into the primary school years, this absence or minimization provides a denial of children's right to education about appropriate sexual knowledge, attitudes and values. There is far more literature on pedagogies for every other subject such as maths or social studies, than there is for sexuality education. This poster presents a theoretical integration of Anderson and Krathwohl's theoretical framework for teaching and learning integrated with one of Gardner's Multiple Intelligences, here English Linguistic, to demonstrate how this can generate appropriate and varied sexuality education pedagogies for the primary and lower secondary classroom.

Benjamin Bloom's original taxonomy classified cognitive behaviours in a noun-based "cumulative, hierarchical system for describing, classifying, and sequencing learning activities" (Orlich *et al*. 2001: 97). However, a revised version of that taxonomy, constructed by Anderson and Krathwohl (2001), includes the verb categories of Remember (lowest), Understand, Apply, Analyse, Evaluate and Create (highest). These are then cross-linked with four types of knowledge namely, Factual Knowledge (lowest) which includes elements necessary for work and problem-solving in any discipline; then Conceptual Knowledge's network of functioning interrelationships; then the inquiry methods and skills criteria necessary for Procedural Knowledge; then the highest category, Metacognitive Knowledge, about cognition in general and self-cognition in particular (*ibid*.: 29).

Gardner's Multiple Intelligences

For Gardner, "intelligence comprises a set of separate intelligences, each of which is specialized for acquiring knowledge and solving problems in different areas of cognitive activity" (Krause *et al*. 2006: 231). Most people are deemed to have varying degrees of these intelligences, rather than just one of them. Gardner identifies eight distinct domains, namely Logical Mathematical, Spatial, Inter-personal, Intra-personal, Bodily Kinaesthetic, Musical Rhythmic, Naturalist, and Verbal Linguistic intelligence,

which is the ability to perceive, generate or perform spoken or written languages and expressive meanings (*ibid*.: 232, Szarkowicz 2006: 132).

The strength of integrating Gardner's theories with Anderson and Krathwohl's (2001) theoretical framework

People need relevant, timely and effective sexuality education at every stage of their lifecycle (Goldman and Bradley 2001, 2004); but the years *before* sexual maturation, which occurs at an average age of about 12 years for girls and 13 years for boys, are most crucial, and can be addressed most effectively in primary schools. Anderson and Krathwohl's (2001) theoretical framework can show the teacher, and also the student, where goals, expectations, motivations and learning are located, and where such learning can be directed for the greatest benefit. Gardner's theory in verbal/linguistic functioning, acquisition, and expression, that is, intellectual connectivity and communication, may assist this learning process with an underlying theoretical basis for its pedagogy and implementation. This poster provides some examples of how teachers can apply the integration of these two theories to sexuality education for this very purpose.

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Connie Nshemereirwe; Managing Changes in Academic Staff Workload at a Private African University

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Keywords and Précis:

academic staff workload	academic workload models	staff workload at African universities

The paper examines the process of addressing the heavy workload that academic staff at Uganda Martyrs University have gradually had to shoulder as the University has expanded. A special task force was set up in April 2008 to come up with a solution and reports its findings.

Short biography of the author:

Connie Nshemereirwe is a lecturer in the Faculty of the Built Environment at Uganda Martyrs University, and is currently the Acting Dean. She started out as a Civil Engineer but pursued further studies in the Design of Education and Training Systems. Her areas of research interest include Quality of Higher Education, The Learning Process and the First Year Experience. Among other duties, she is the chairperson of the Special University Task Force on Academic Staff Workload, and will report on some of the activities of this task force at this conference.

Abstract:

Private universities in Africa face diverse challenges, chief among these being the lack of access to public funds. In addition, given the rate at which the higher education sector is expanding, they face stiff competition from other universities, and cannot charge fees high enough to meet their needs. Attending this are the difficulties in recruiting and retaining quality academic staff, due in part to the poor working conditions, low pay and high workload. In a report on staff retention in Africa, Tettey (2006) recommends non-salary-based solutions to some of these problems, and one of these is better management of academic staff workload. The nature of academic workload has become increasingly complex in the last few years, with changes in knowledge production and synthesis, increased accountability structures and the effect of information technology on teaching and learning possibilities (Coaldrake and Stedman 1999, Paewai *et al.* 2007).

This paper discusses the response of Uganda Martyrs University (UMU), a Catholic-founded private university, to the issue of academic workload. UMU opened in 1993 with one Faculty, one Institute, 81 students and about twenty academic staff. Since then, the University has grown to seven Faculties and Institutes, student numbers now stand at about 3,500, and the University offers courses at three separate centres. The greatest expansion has been in the distance and part-time programmes.

This expansion progressed with a deliberate strategy to keep inputs as low as possible so as to remain competitive, and these included staff. In recent years, however, academic staff have become more disgruntled about the heavy workloads they carry and, in response, the University decided to set up a taskforce to review academic workload in April 2008. The taskforce was mandated to define clearly what constitutes academic workload, to establish the current academic staff workload, to review all University policies related to academic workload, and to propose a viable workload model.

The Workload Taskforce found that many staff were overloaded, and that this was mainly due to increased student research supervision and the marking of assignments and examinations in the new part-time and distance learning courses. Further, it was found that academics could neither quantify nor qualify their workload beyond saying “it [was] too much!” Finally, considering the urgency of the matter and the difficulty of addressing the differences between faculties, it was agreed to have a first solution that would act as a framework, and have a second phase of planning at faculty level. A General Workload Policy was to be drafted to guide this phase, and a regular review process integrated.

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Karen Arrand; How Can We Motivate Students to Engage with PDP Online?

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Keywords and Précis:

collaborative online learning	PDP	e-learning	e-tivities

Building the Foundations of an Online Student Community Using e-tivities Inspired by Salmon's 5 Stage Learning and Teaching Online Model:

This poster evaluates the use of "e-tivities" in a level 2 Personal Development Planning (PDP) session for Media Production students. It provides a reflective account of the benefits of using Salmon's 5 stage learning and teaching online model to design an e conference. It illustrates how a variety of discussion techniques including threaded discussion, blogs and journals are used to stimulate interaction and develop thinking. The results of the study indicate that e-tivities offer a useful framework to design engaging e learning and can facilitate learning through discussion but there are conditions that may reduce effectiveness; including the type of question asked and the timing of the delivery.

Short biography of the author:

"Karen joined Coventry's Media & Communications department three years ago and is an associate senior lecturer. She came from a long and varied career as a television Series Producer with the BBC. She is an expert in Contemporary factual programming and has been in charge of producing a diverse range of output from live studio formats to observational documentary for both BBC1 and BBC2.

Since starting at Coventry, Karen has completed a Post Graduate Certificate in Higher Education and her professional interests have moved towards further study in teaching practice. She is currently taking an MA in Higher Education to run alongside her teaching commitment and is particularly interested in exploring the links between biography, broadcasting technologies and learning in higher education.

Abstract:

My first experience of teaching PDP for Level2 Media Production students was proving unsatisfactory; half-way in to a jam-packed speaker-led programme, attendance was dwindling and I was feeling very remote from the students. Previous attempts to engage students in PDP online via PebblePad and CUonline had not been successful.

Research led me to Gilly Salmon's "e-tivities – the key to active online learning". Salmon's enthusiastic approach:

> e-tivities are important for the online learning world because they deploy useful, well-rehearsed principles and pedagogies for learning but focus on their implementation through the best of networked technologies. (2002: 3)

Furthermore Salmon offers tutors an easy-to-follow model and ideas for successful implementation. In particular I was interested in her tasks which she claims are "motivating, engaging, purposeful tasks". Would these re-energise this module which had developed a saggy middle? e-tivities are based on student interaction: well, my students LOVE to talk. They are also designed and led by an e-moderator; this would give me a set role with guidelines (very helpful for a novice) and they are purported to be easy to run (via bulletin boards). Salmon's infectious passion and her supportive style convinced me that it would be worth the effort to design an e-conference.

I devised tasks based on the five stages of socialization and used a mix of discussion threads, blogs, journals and games all relevant to PDP. Students were invited to take part in an e-conference that ran over a morning. Evaluative and qualitative results were produced from student questionnaires (see poster).

Overall there appeared to be an e-learning advantage to this teaching method. Students liked the accessible and supportive place for reflection on their personal development that the e-tivities provided. They liked partaking in relevant skills based games and having one-to-one and group discussions with the tutor. Many felt they gained more than in a large lecture scenario. However, more students may be motivated to take part in future if this is embedded into the module rather than provided as a one-off event, and the content has to be engaging for it to be worthwhile. Furthermore, criticism of Salmon's model is emerging in recent literature, particularly Pam Moule (2007), and this is considered by the poster.

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Ian Frank & Malcolm Field; World Class Thinking

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Keywords and Précis:

meta-skills	thinking skills	transfer	workshop

We present an experiential workshop that gives participants practical and theoretical support for the development of thinking skills across a curriculum, largely irrespective of resource constraints.

"World Class Thinking" provides a unifying theme by describing both the method ("using the world as a classroom") and the goal ("high-level performance").

Short biography of lead author:

Ian Frank graduated from the Department of Artificial Intelligence at Edinburgh University, where his PhD research was on computer game playing and how to automatically explain a computer's "thinking" to humans. "The understanding and explanation of the complex" is a good summary not just of his research interests in science, but also of his experience in teaching. He became a faculty of Future University-Hakodate in 2001, and has been experimenting with educational practices and workshops over several years. More information on his workshops and teaching can be found at www.koto-tsukuri.org.

Abstract:

We have been experimenting with new educational practices that draw on a diversity of sources, including artificial intelligence, communication, Japanese culture and robotics. In particular, we have targeted interaction between people and their environments based on a philosophical understanding of how the world can be apprehended, rather than with any particular theory of learning. This enables our teaching to share aspects of numerous theoretical approaches, including Dewey's emphasis on the social, Vygotsky's social formation of the mind, and Problem-Based Learning.

In this context, we have found it useful to appropriate the term "world class thinking" for its ability to describe both a means ("use the world as a classroom") and an end ("high-level performance"). The Japanese homophone for "class" also gives us a third interpretation. The verb "to live" or "to get along" is *kurasu*, and with this reading "world class thinking" has its deepest meaning: how is it that you actually live your life in the world?"

We will present a sixty-minute experiential workshop that will challenge the way that participants think about their environment, and their interaction with it. Using a series of activities that require just very simple tools, we will look at components of thinking skills. Our goal with these activities will be to stimulate an understanding of the mind's thinking processes and of the creative ways that ideas can be connected. Underpinning the activities, to provide a formal basis, will be a categorization of thinking skills drawn from diverse sources, from Polya's 1957 classic on how to solve mathematical problems to recent works on creative thinking and workflow management. This formalization is drawn from our work on the teaching of "technological thinking with no technology", and thus emphasizes how interactions with everyday objects can still be related to thinking skills required in the modern, technological age. We describe this formalization in more depth in the full paper, and will also provide printed reference at the workshop. Participants will thus leave with both practical and theoretical support for the development of thinking skills across a curriculum, largely irrespective of resource or funding constraints.

Cherie Lebbon, Karen Bull & Jane Osmond; Is e-Telier a Challenge Too Far? e-Teaching and learning for studio centric learners

Coventry University, United Kingdom

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Keywords and Précis:

e-teaching	e-learning	Design	VLE	workshop

This workshop explores responses from Industrial Design students at Coventry University to the implementation of Skype and Google Groups during a final year design research project. It examines an apparent mismatch of expectations between staff and students, in particular the fear that the technology was intended to replace face-to-face communication.

Short biography of the authors:

The authors are based at Coventry University: Cherie Lebbon is a Senior Lecturer in Design Theory, Dr Karen Bull is Deputy Director, Centre of Excellence in Product and Automotive Design (CEPAD) and Jane Osmond is Senior Research Assistant for CEPAD.

Abstract:

Since 2007 the Industrial Design department at Coventry University has been trialling the use of e-tools to support teaching and learning with students who do most of their learning in a studio environment (see Lebbon 2008; Lebbon and Owen 2008; Bull *et al*. 2009). The tools used include video conferencing packages such as Skype, social networking tools such as Google Groups, Facebook and institutionally-located tools including WebVista and PebblePad.

This paper explores the impact on the student experience in relation to the implementation of Skype and Google Groups during a final year design research project. Through a series of observations, focus groups and student feedback it is evident that whilst students were generally quite positive about how useful the technologies were in terms of having access to "extra" tutorial sessions via Skype and the ability to access and store documents on GoogleGroups, there is a mismatch between student and staff expectations and their experiences of using e-learning tools. Significantly, it has highlighted that students find the tools at times "unfriendly", and visually unsophisticated, and also fear that they are being used as a replacement for face-to-face communication.

Our findings suggest that we need to help students to change the way they think about online face-to-face communication and its relationship to the traditional forms of teaching. Design students are familiar with working in an *Atelier* type studio-centric environment, defined by Craddick and O'Reilly (2002) as "involving a group of students… working with one or two tutors… through a year-long cycle of design." Consequently, the students are used to working alongside a tutor who offers a high level of immediacy and provides "on-call" support. Therefore, this research aims to identify to what extent a student can gain a similar experience online.

The research is also informing the development of a range of recommendations for ways to use and engage with e-learning tools within industrial design teaching, across international student networks, and within large student cohorts. As a result of the research, it is recognised that there is a need for effective technical support and training for staff and students; the ability to offer simple, secure and flexible tools for e-teaching and learning; and, clearer guidance and materials to promote working and better acquaintance with continuously changing technologies.

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Fred Garnett & Nigel Ecclesfield; Beyond a Boundary: Some consequences of the Open Context Model of learning

London Knowledge Lab, United Kingdom

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Keywords and Précis:

beyond boundaries	open context model of learning	architectures of participation	workshop

This workshop/debate seeks to explore the boundaries experienced by learners, staff and leaders in post-compulsory education and the application of the Open Context Model of learning to overcoming these boundaries to create learner-centered pedagogies and collaborative institutions.

Short biography of the authors:

Nigel and Fred have worked for many years in post compulsory education settings including community, further education colleges and higher education. Fred is currently a Visiting Research Associate at the London Knowledge Lab and Nigel is a Research Manager responsible for work in the post compulsory sectors at Becta.

Abstract:

BTC (Beyond the Classroom)

In the Beyond the Classroom (2009) report from the REVEEL project reviewing "the effectiveness of post-16 e-learning" < http://www.reveel.sussex.ac.uk/reports.php>, it is suggested that learning had moved beyond the classroom. The report identified issues to be addressed by leaders, staff and learners as technology provision moved the locus of learning beyond the formal classroom. (Leaders facilitate learning in multiple contexts; staff recognise learning resources sourced beyond the institution, learners to develop learning literacy not bounded by the subject.) In this paper we will look at issues concerning the learners' perspective and the boundaries presented to them, and which strategies are, or could be made, available to them.

LGC (Learner Generated Contexts)

The Learner-Generated Contexts Research Group was constituted to look at a range of issues in education based both on the learner-centric "Ecology of Resources" context model of education (Luckin 2005) and the debated assumption that Web 2.0 and User-Generated Content would happen principally as a consequence of the use made of the technology.

The OCML (Open Context Model of Learning), Luckin *et al* (2009) outlines a framework for the co-creation of learning by developing the relationship between pedagogy, andragogy and heutagogy in learning processes. Within an "obuchenie" context, control of learning is handed over to the learner, guided and supported by teacher(s). This context-model approach is designed to refocus educational experiences around learning and away from boundaries. Subject-based pedagogies are designed to create a particular formal power structure within education which is the legacy of book-driven classroom-bound literacy. Andragogic strategies are about negotiating learning in response to learners' interest, but also about renegotiating learning interests into formal educational offers, that is, placing boundaries on interests. Heutagogy is about freeing up creativity and using epistemic cognition strategies to develop new activities or knowledge, that is, moving beyond boundaries and both recognizing and critiquing tacit knowledges in terms of understanding and practice.

Analysis

Whilst the OCML addresses issues for leaders, staff and learners, iPED has particular concerns for learners. We wish to look at inclusion, social networking and boundaries that inhibit learning and development. Facilitating learning beyond boundaries, by supporting learning that reflects learners' interests and engagements, is arguably the educational strategy that is most inclusive. This can often

be best achieved by enabling social networking to enable communities to develop, and social networking and other communication tools to facilitate. The Becta (British Educational Communications and Technology Agency) Web 2.0 report (Crook 2008) shows that learners are mostly using Web 2.0 tools for communicating and creating social networks. These social resources can only be developed if staff use the collaborative co-creating strategies of the OCML, as a means of using their expertise for learning.

The OCML provides a framework from which a range of co-creation strategies can be evolved, which enable staff to stimulate valid cross-boundary learning strategies, which will both enable Beyond the Classroom learning and relevant assessment and accreditation strategies relevant to learners and their contexts, e.g., community and employment.

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Tuesday
15 September 2009
Parallel Session 4:
11:45–12:45

Rebecca Freeman, Louise Goldring**, Danny Wilding~ & Linda Graham~~; Negotiating the Boundaries to Student Engagement: The national Student Learning and Teaching Network perspective*

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Keywords

student perspectives	learning and teaching	Student Learning and Teaching Network

This session provides an opportunity to hear from Student Learning and Teaching Network committee members about their experiences challenging the boundaries of student engagement as a network and within three distinct learning and teaching projects across UK institutions.

The SLTN:

The Student Learning and Teaching Network is a community of students actively engaged in learning and teaching projects across the UK. See http://studentlandtnetwork.ning.com/

Abstract:

The Student Learning and Teaching Network is an informal community of students who are actively engaged in learning and teaching projects across the UK. It is coordinated by a committee of volunteers, originally from Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL), who have been working together since March 2006 to offer a variety of activities, events and online communities.

As a network we have sought to challenge perceptions of students as passive consumers by promoting and empowering students as valid and active members of learning communities. Our members include course reps, peer and staff mentors, student interns, student researchers, students involved in designing learning spaces and student union officers.

This session will provide an opportunity to hear from committee members about their experiences challenging the boundaries of student engagement within three distinct learning and teaching projects across UK institutions.

The Reinvention Centre for Undergraduate Research (RC)

The RC < http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/sociology/rsw/undergrad/cetlhas sought to promote undergraduate research by:

- developing an academic journal, *Reinvent: A Journal for Undergraduate Research*, which provides undergraduate students with an opportunity to present their own research in a peer-reviewed journal;
- 'reinventing' the undergraduate curriculum to incorporate a significant research component.

The ethos of the centre aims to immerse undergraduate students in the academic culture of the university and provide them with knowledge and resources so that they are able to have an active role in the construction of their education beyond simply making module choices.

The key barriers to full student engagement concern the proliferation of the 'student as consumer' discourse/culture, which can make students apprehensive about choosing modules that contain research elements as these modules are seen as a risk to grades and potential employment after university.

Centre for Excellence in Enquiry-Based Learning (CEEBL)

CEEBL <http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/ceebl/>coordinates a Student Intern Programme which encourages current students at the University of Manchester to become actively involved in shaping their curriculum and supporting students through the Enquiry-Based Learning process. Through this work CEEBL has developed a definition of what active student engagement means and, based on Intern experiences and those of the coordinator, will discuss some of the potential barriers and boundaries we have negotiated such as the necessity for time, communication and appropriate support.

Centre for Excellence in Assessment for Learning (AfL)

The central ethos of our CETL <http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/cetl_afl/> is to foster student development in taking responsibility for evaluating, judging and improving their own performance by actively using a range of feedback. The CETL Student Development Officer has been working with students to develop ways and opportunities '*to have a voice*' beyond the boundaries of the essay using more creative methodologies. Many of these activities have been introduced in social and informal environments that are rich in informal feedback and dialogue that evoke thoughtful reflection, supporting self-assessment.

As a network committee we will reflect on the boundaries encountered by students and the network in active engagement in learning and teaching and the challenges and opportunities which have developed through their negotiation.

Andree Woodcock, Sean McCartan, John Mair; Implementing European Design Studio Practice Teaching in a Chinese University

Coventry University, United Kingdom

Corresponding author: a.woodcock@coventry.ac.uk

Keywords and Précis:

internationalisation	studio practice	boat design	Design

This paper is based on a two week 'European design studio experience' with Chinese and British students at Zeijang University of Media and Communications (ZUMC) in Hangzhou, Southern China.

Short biography of lead author:

Professor Andree Woodcock is Leader of the Design and Ergonomics Applied Research Group and Chair of Educational Ergonomics and Design. She has led a number of projects looking at the design of educational environments in primary, secondary and tertiary education.

Full Paper:

Implementing European Design Studio Practice Teaching in a Chinese University

Abstract

This paper is based on a two-week "European design studio experience" with Chinese and British Students at Zeijang University of Media and Communications (ZUMC) in Hangzhou, Southern China. Following previous visits to ZUMC, McCartan, Mair and Woodcock from Coventry School of Art and Design (CSAD) took 19 of their industrial design students to ZUMC to provide their Chinese counterparts with an opportunity to engage in an international, co-operative design experience based around the design of a university hospitality boat for Hangzhou's most famous tourist spot – the West Lake. The exchange will provide a blueprint for future visits. This paper documents the process, challenges, surprises and lessons learnt during the exchange and situates the design of the experience within the Hexagon-Spindle model of educational ergonomics.

1. Introduction

Coventry University is situating itself as an international university. With a Centre of Excellence in Product and Automotive Design, the School is recognized as being one of the UK's leading centres in industrial design teaching. This is being studied by Bull and Osmond (Osmond and Turner 2008a, 2008b, Osmond and Bull 2007) to further understand and enhance the "Coventry method". Woodcock *et al.* (2009) have taken a different approach to understanding the delivery of educational provision based on an augmented concentric rings model (Galer 1987), the Hexagon-Spindle (H-S) model (Benedyk *et al.* 2009). As part of the internationalization programme, and to further understand our own practice, McCartan, Woodcock and Mair took a group of 19 industrial design students for a two-week visit to Zeijang University of Media and Communications to deliver European studio design practice in a Chinese university.

The UK-based students comprised second-year industrial and third-year boat and other industrial design students. The latter would act as mentors to the groups, under the direction of the Boat Design Programme Leader, Sean McCartan. All CSAD students were familiar with design studio practice as undertaken at Coventry. The students were joined by sixteen Chinese students from ZUMC and Jiliang University. The visit lasted two weeks, with each day including intensive periods of studio practice.

The aims of the visit were:

1. To create an opportunity for Chinese students to engage in and experience European studio design practice;
2. To create a learning experience that would enable both Chinese and English students to participate as equal partners;
3. To provide formal and informal learning opportunities;
4. To enable designers to experience cultural and design differences first hand.

The aims were met through students working in co-operative groups to develop concept designs which would fulfil the following design brief.

> To develop interior and exterior designs for a 20 metre, hospitality boat for Zhejiang University, which would reflect traditional Chinese culture and hospitality, and be situated on the West Lake in the city of Hangzhou.

2. The teaching and learning experience

The teaching and learning experience comprised the following:

1. Background lectures on boat design, market opportunities and an introduction to the technical vocabulary;
2. Setting the design brief;
3. European studio practice in groups, which went through the following stages:
   a. Brainstorming on requirements and themes
   b. Development of individual ideas and rooms
   c. Discussion amongst the group to select group design
   d. Concept design, detail design and packaging
   e. Development of presentational material
4. Hull design using CAD software;
5. Formal presentation of designs.

Two central tenets of educational ergonomics are that, to be effective, teaching and learning should be designed to match the needs of the learner, and that the design of the teaching environment and experience should facilitate the build-up of knowledge.

2.1 The design of the teaching experience

Teaching material had been developed in the UK prior to the visit, with little knowledge of the level of understanding or interest of the Chinese students in boat design. This had been difficult to judge at a distance, and although attempts had been made to pass information between the two universities in the run-up to the visit, this information did not find its way to the students. The initial lectures clearly presented the market opportunity for boat design. However, these were of little interest to those who cannot afford a boat, let alone a superyacht, or who were not part of a large corporation looking for investment opportunities.

Clearly, the initial plan to design a superyacht needed some revision, so that it matched the local situation, experience and interests of all the students. A revised brief was produced (see above), one to which all students could relate and to which all students, especially the ones from ZUMC, could understand. The Chinese are very hospitable, with current practices arising out of traditional ceremonies, and these need to be conveyed and preserved in the concept designs. Whilst ZUMC does not have a hospitality boat, given their status, such a development was deemed feasible. Additionally, the hospitality boat was to be designed for West Lake, Hangzhou's most famous tourist spot. This was an area with which the ZUMC students were familiar, so they could take the lead in fact-finding expeditions to the local city.

Although CSAD has Add+vantage modules to teach students about Chinese language and culture, none of the students on this visit had been on these, nor had they taken part in English Corner (a student-to-student or staff-to-staff teleconferencing facility). They were therefore somewhat unprepared for life in a Chinese university and conversing in Chinese. The students from ZUMC and Jeliang University had had many years of regular lessons in the English language, although they were at first reluctant (or too shy) to talk with us. The formal lecture arrangement of the first sessions did nothing to help communication. Students were seated on fixed chairs in rows, which provided little

opportunity for face-to-face interaction, even when the class was mixed. Some of the slides were presented in English and Mandarin but, with their high technical content, they failed to capture the imagination and interest of the students, whose first subjects were media and design.

The ZUMC students who attended the first two lectures could volunteer to take part in the remaining ten days of teaching and learning activities. These activities paired the local knowledge of the Chinese students and their drawing skills, with the more technical and design knowledge of the UK students. Once the teaching material had been re-engineered to match the needs of the students, there were few problems with the task. Some sixteen students volunteered to join us, although others would come and go once we had a recognized base room (and, indeed, as word spread that something exciting was taking place). This necessitated, after negotiation with our hosts, taking over an art classroom, which we converted into a design studio simply by pushing desks together and by equipping it with markers, tape and large sheets of drawing paper.

Once removed from the rigid classroom structure, the students enthusiastically divided themselves up into five groups. In the first few days, a volunteer interpreter (from one of the media courses) worked with each of the five groups. However, once the Chinese students had overcome their shyness and became familiar with everyday spoken English, they requested that the interpreters be sent away. The medium of communication emerged through and around the development of sketches and visual material. The language was design.

Needless to say, formal lessons were supplemented with a planned and unplanned social programme. The formal programme saw visits to West Lake, shopping expeditions to Hangzhou, day trips to Shanghai and the Lake of a Thousand Islands, a tea museum and plantation, while the informal programme comprised the full range of normal student activities, sometimes well into the early hours of the morning, which, with the first lecture starting at 8 o'clock, was something of an endurance test for even the hardiest of CSAD students.

The H-S model alluded to in the introduction asserts the need to consider the whole system of teaching and learning experience, in the design of effective learning interactions. At its most formal, this can be depicted as in Figure 1.

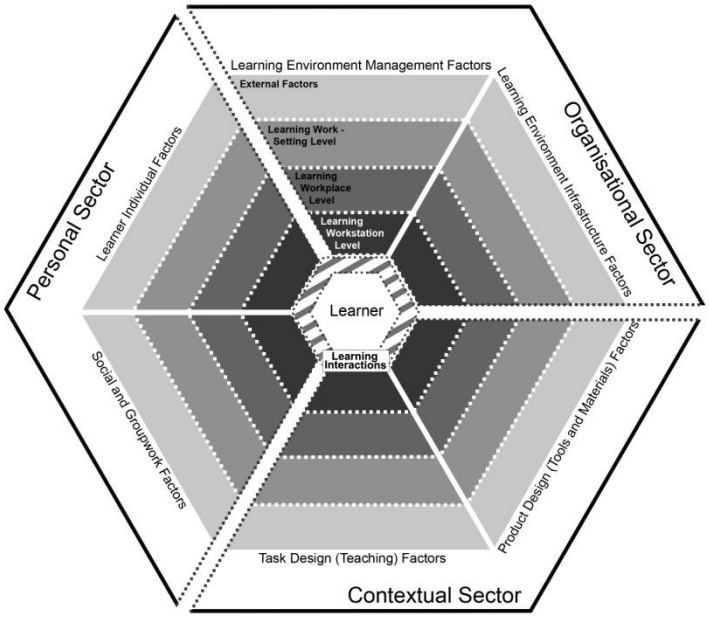


Figure 1: The Hexagon Model of Ergonomics applied to teaching and learning environments

In this section we have considered some of the barriers we experienced, such as language barriers, classroom design and the design of the initial teaching material. These were overcome through an action learning approach, which required us to reflect on our experiences and adapt to the circumstances. At a wider level, the work setting (taking the whole two weeks as the unit of analysis) provided sufficient opportunities for the students to mix formally and informally, on and off task. They encountered each other formally, started to know each other through working on the task,

which then seamlessly spilled over in to a rich and varied social (dining and karaoke) and sporting events (such as football, table tennis and basketball), which in turn facilitated a richer understanding of cultural differences. The exchange started to become more than the sum of its parts.

This idea starts to be conveyed in the spindle part of the H-S model (see Figure 2). This sees an acknowledgement of the build-up of different learning experiences, occurring in different spaces through the duration of a task. As much learning occurs in these visits around a dinner table, or on a football pitch, as it does in the classroom.

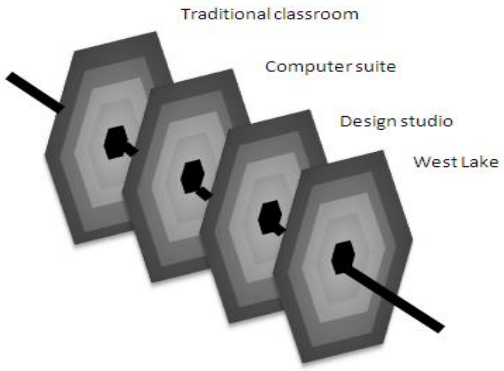


Figure 2: Representation of different learning contexts

Figure 2 represents the mix of some of the different learning context which were used in the ZUMC learning event. The H-S model requires that each of these learning contexts is acknowledged, and that each one may be more appropriate to a learning interaction, and that these may both, in turn (when combined with the Hexagon model) suit students individual learning styles and characteristics.

Figures 3, 4 and 5: Sessions in the computer room and design studios

2.2 The design of the teaching environment

The H-S model distinguishes two sets of factors which are very important for European design studio practice. These factors relate to individual and group work practices. Any individual may bring their own factors to the task; for example, they may prefer to work with a pen rather than a graphics tablet, but, additionally, they will also have their own feelings about individual and joint working (European design studio practice requires designers to work individually and in groups). Providing a studio environment required the students to sit together, where communication would be easier, but the social events (such as trips to West Lake) contributed to the breakdown of communication barriers and started to give the students confidence to talk to each other,

Having a fairly open design brief, with very little design direction (not even the shape of the hull was a pre-given), was challenging for the ZUMC students. The mentors reflected that the Chinese students were less willing to start putting their ideas down on paper, or in trying out new concepts, even though their drawing skills were superior.

Reflecting on the concept designs which emerged, the mentors felt that the Chinese students

> '[drew] inspiration from Chinese culture such as the nature and the use of organic forms – animals , architecture, lotus flowers found predominantly at the local lake (west lake).

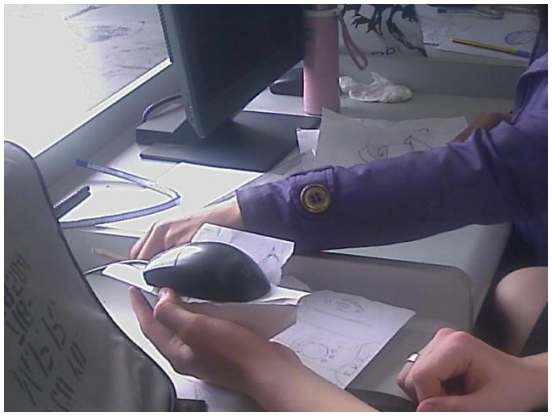
A small proportion said that their design had no inspiration, but they wanted the product to be remembered. From an outside perspective we noticed that in their designs the colours of Chinese artefacts (white and blue) were seen throughout. Without a conscious inspiration there still was a subconscious inspiration shown throughout mainly by bringing all parts of China they've experienced collectively into their design.'

'The CSAD students take their inspiration from fashion X and art, modern architecture, cars, media such as films, magazines and advertising. These inspirations are what we're brought up on and are glamorized throughout our lives for us to believe are luxurious, tasteful and stylish. For this … western inspiration was rarely taken from cultural traditions and history. Designs are to be modern, not seen before and quite eccentric to give the design the X Factor and not just be a part of the status quo.'

(All quotes are from student mentors, acknowledged at the end of the paper.)

After the introductory lectures and the setting of the design brief, top-down lecturing was abandoned. In terms of classroom design, this means a more informal layout, so that non-hierarchical groups can be supported in their activities by the layout of the furniture. European design studio practice requires students to work as a group when they are first discussing the initial design brief and brainstorming ideas, and as individuals when they are developing concept designs and focussing on detailed design of specific ideas; and then coming together as a group to pool initial ideas and select concepts to take forward.

This is all performed in a relaxed atmosphere of co-operation (and some inter-group competition), where designers assist each other, develop an almost unconscious level of what else is happening in their group, and adapt and adopt elements from each other's work. Group leaders may emerge, but they may also just emerge for part of the process; work is private when it is being developed, but then becomes open to inspection, criticism, adoption or adaptation by other members of the group. The role of the lecturer is as a critical friend, or design manager, giving ideas, assisting in technique, maintaining a semblance of order. Students are free, within reason, to talk, shout, argue, move around to see what others are doing, and draw inspiration from other groups. Sessions are not limited to one place or to one time. Indeed many of the groups found other places to work, where they could draw on inspiration from more traditional surroundings, or when they were not tied to specific lecture times. They congregated in and off campus, in coffee shops, hotel games rooms, the class room and design studio when not in use.



Figures 6 and 7: One of the student mentors explaining hull design using origami and tools to hand

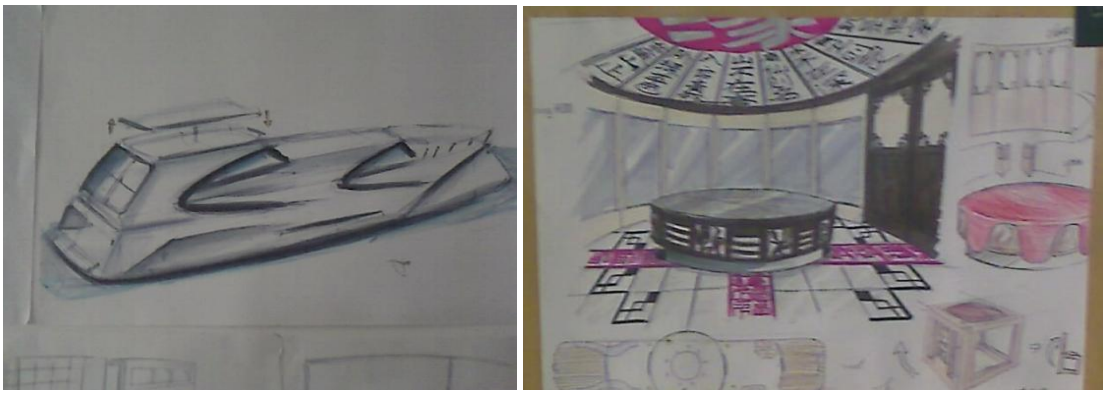
This requires different skills and attitudes (see Hexagon model above) from the students, who being from different cultures and teaching traditions will clearly have different responses to group work. Here, we clearly relied on the experience of the UK students to organize their groups and lead the process of co-operation. In Coventry, all students are trained in this way of working from the first year. Studio practice was transmitted through action learning, producing healthy levels of discussion, debate and design refinement.

This was difficult for the Chinese students, as reflected in the following comment from the student mentors:

'European design practice and work dynamic requires team working… being used to acknowledging other people's ideas and integrating that into our thoughts and design ideas. The Chinese found this a difficult task, not only overcoming their confidence with their work but also accepting constructive criticism at times and allowing collaboration between students within their group.'

Importantly, both groups of students were able to teach each other new skills, and in doing so gain a richer understanding of their own knowledge or their gaps in it, e.g., in the use of CAD and perspective, anthropometry and drawing skills.

Modern design studios are pressurised environments. This was replicated in the activities at ZUMC, where with just 15 hours of studio time, each group was required to produce a full set of flat work depicting each room of the boat, the exterior design, design of the hull, and a verbal presentation in English and Chinese. All groups voluntarily spent additional time working on their projects – in the library, coffee shops, card tables, in their hotel rooms, and on fact finding trips to West Lake. Importantly, they wanted to do this. They wanted to get to know each other and to work together. This was supported in part by the planned social programme, the making of a video of the trip (Mair 2009), starring the students. However, the students themselves developed a much richer and more varied social programme which has produced lasting friendships and a truer insight into Chinese culture.



Figures 8 and 9: Examples of final exterior and interior designs

The final outcome of the week was a series of presentations of the finished designs by each group, in both Chinese and English, with the Chinese students demonstrating that they understood the design principles and were able to defend their design ideas.

Figure 10: Final group presentations

Within the 15 hours available, the five groups of students all produced a full set of concept designs, which incorporated brainstorming, user requirements, hull design, package drawing and ergonomics, exterior and interior design (Figures 8 and 9). The CSAD students had learnt about Chinese culture, design and language, and had tutored their companions in such design skills as perspective drawing. The "winning group" (see Figure 10) even produced a scale model! The students from ZUMC, all boat design novices, learned about English language, mastered CAD packages (Freeship), and applied their

drawing and design skills to innovative interior and exterior design. Not only had the students engaged in a truly immersive cultural experience, they had also demonstrated the value of experiential, co-operative learning, and shown that language need not be a barrier to fruitful international co-operation.

3. Conclusions

Short duration educational visits may be limited in terms of their scope. Goal-directed working, such as that provided by the design brief, provides the opportunity for meaningful formal engagement which can lay the foundations for more informal activities. Although plans were made to ensure that both sides were aware of the ambitions of the visit, these were difficult to operationalize owing to the university structures and technological difficulties, which impeded communication and planning. The success of the exchange relied on the experience of the tutors at both universities, their belief in the benefits that could be derived from the programme and their willingness to adopt a flexible, action learning approach, which enabled local difficulties to be overcome.

The students were able to overcome language and cultural differences to produce group and individual work which was of a standard comparable to that of students working in CSAD. Not surprisingly we found significant differences in the ability of the two groups of students to work in a European design studio practice setting. The students from ZUMC, although in many cases possessing superior drawing skills and conceptual ideas, were uncomfortable in articulating, defending and critiquing these. This represents an opportunity for both CSAD and ZUMC to collaborate further to create the next generation of global designers.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank ZUMC and Jiliang staff and students and all CSAD students, including Industrial Design student mentors Michael Kramer, Mark Norton-Menendez, Richard Partington, Matthew Taylor and James Ratcliffe.

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John Mair; Having Conversations in Coventry with Students and Others

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Keywords and Précis:

Coventry Conversations	Media

This paper will examine the phenomenon of the Coventry Conversations 'the best speaker programme in any British university" (Professor Richard Keeble) and how they relate to students and their learning about the world outside the academe.

See: http://coventryuniversity.podbean.com/coventry-conversations/

Short biography of the author:

John Mair invented the Coventry Conversations three years ago on joining Coventry University. They have played and played well on old and new platforms. In previous lives, he was a factual producer and director for the BBC, Channel Four and ITV. He is award-winning and has made over 200 broadcast films.

Abstract:

Most learning takes place outside the classroom; especially in a public subject like media. We all watch TV, listen to the radio, read papers and magazines and use the internet. We all "know" those who practise in the media – but do we?

Students studying media have precious little opportunity to meet practitioners and pioneers. The "Coventry Conversations" offers just that. Over the last three years, 150 movers and shakers (of differing importance) have come to Coventry to converse with me, and with students and some "real people". Conversations are all free and open to the public. Participants have talked about their work, their career and their advice to ingénues, to audiences ranging from 20 to 200.They are part of a very informal yet formal education process where CU Media students are asked to engage – almost by osmosis – with the modern media world and big issues within it. The students hardly realize they are learning about these big questions.

Most of these Conversations have been podcast on the University site and now on iTunes. Some are very popular, being downloaded 2,000 times or viewed 7,000-plus times. The audience is there for intelligent and regular media talk even in a sleepy hollow like Coventry University.

The Conversations are extracurricular yet vital to learning. Students with resolve and a genuine desire to work in the media can come, pick up tips, and many report them in a variety of media within and without the university; the very astute get an email or other contact from the mover and shaker to pursue. If each media student attended all forty-plus Conversations in a year, they would be near pitch perfect literate in modern media matters. Their formal learning would be secondary.

Students are firmly encouraged to report the Conversations in the weekly newsletter "The Buzz" (which I edit) and the online e-newsletter cutoday.wordpress.com (which another student edits). Both have been major successes with CU Today attracting 13,000-plus hits in just three months and much praise. Students are also encouraged to build a portfolio with outside published pieces on the Conversations. Some do and have made a small living from this freelance work. They are the kicking-off point for a whole journalistic learning experience.

The feedback from students has been almost universally positive. I have in the past administered questionnaires which demonstrate appreciation of the calibre, range and quality of the Conversationalists. There is also formal feedback from a senior member of another faculty who observed a Conversation for my PG Cert.

I shall talk about the Conversations, play some extracts, and make the case for them being the most important and innovative learning tool currently available within Media and Communication and

within the University itself. In terms of replication of this initiative elsewhere, my advice would be “be brave, ambitious and hold your nerve. Jealous colleagues will try to abort them at or close to birth. Have faith in this form of learning and drive it forward on all platforms. It is the future.” There is nothing culturally specific to the United Kingdom in them either.

Professor Richard Keeble, the Chief External Examiner for Journalism at Coventry, describes them as “the best speaker programme in any British University”.

There is little one can add to that.

Norman Powell, Karen Lander, Katja Stuerzenhofecker & Anna Snape; Using an Evaluation Framework to Build Capacity in Pedagogical Research and Evaluation

University of Manchester United Kingdom

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Keywords and Précis:

enquiry-based learning	evaluation framework	pedagogic research

This paper describes the open, devolved and 'fractal-like' model of supported self-evaluation developed by CEEBL, to build the capacity in pedagogic research and educational evaluation. Its operation is then illustrated through three contrasting case studies that draw out how the development of EBL and its evaluation is supported by CEEBL.

Short biography of the authors:

Dr Norman Powell is the Research Associate in the Centre for Excellence in Enquiry-Based Learning (CEEBL) at the University of Manchester. As well as supporting projects run by CEEBL, his role involves the development of pedagogical research in Enquiry-Based Learning and evaluation of the CEEBL's activities.

Dr. Karen Lander received her PhD from the University of Stirling in 1999. She then worked as a Research Fellow for one year, at the University of Stirling, on an ESRC grant awarded to Professor Vicki Bruce and herself. She has been a lecturer at the Department of Psychology, University of Manchester, since January 2001.

Katja Stuerzenhofecker is a Lecturer in Religion and Theology in the School of Arts, Histories and Cultures at the University of Manchester.

Anna Snape is a third-year student on the Religion and Theology programme in the School of Arts, Histories and Cultures at the University of Manchester

Full Paper:

Using an Evaluation Framework to Build Capacity in Pedagogical Research and Evaluation

Abstract

CEEBL (Centre for Excellence in Enquiry-Based Learning) has adopted an open, devolved and "fractal-like" model of supported self-evaluation, which is consistent with the principals of EBL (Enquiry-Based Learning) that it supports. This framework assists in building the capacity of pedagogic research and educational evaluation for the project-holders, whilst recognizing the contexts within which the evaluations take place. The evaluation framework is described, outlining its rationale and implementation. Its operation is then illustrated through three contrasting case studies that draw out how the development of EBL and its evaluation is supported by CEEBL. It is shown that just as EBL promotes supported, student-led enquiry into a discipline, so the CEEBL evaluation framework promotes supported, project-holder-led enquiry into EBL practice.

1. Introduction

EBL is a supported and collaborative process, through which learners gain personal, professional and transferable skills by enquiry into their core discipline (Kahn and O'Rourke 2005). CEEBL (CEEBL 2008a) is one of the 74 CETLs (Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning) sponsored by HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council for England), which specifically promotes the practice of EBL.

CEEBL is in an almost unique position in its host institution, the University of Manchester, in that, it works across Faculty boundaries, bringing together staff from a variety of disciplines through its

workshops and project-holders' events. The appreciation for the opportunity for educational discourse with colleagues from different disciplines but with related interests is a recurrent theme in feedback from project-holders and workshop participants alike.

This paper describes how the evaluation framework developed and implemented at CEEBL has been designed to support the development of staff through the evaluation of their own projects.

2. Methodology

CEEBL embodies the principles of EBL in its operations. This is equally true in its approach to evaluation and in its approach to staff and curriculum development. To facilitate this evaluation approach, CEEBL has adopted "an open, devolved and fractal-like model of supported self-evaluation" (Powell 2007: 4):

- Open: each participant will have differing aims, emphasis, experience and interpretations, of EBL (within CEEBL's core account of EBL) and of evaluation (within the broad account of evaluation given in this strategy). This diversity will be valued and supported.
- Devolved: the responsibility for evaluation is transferred up to the highest possible level of activity (Figure 1). Staff will be evaluating the effect of their innovations on their students. In some cases, learners will be setting their own learning outcomes and evaluating whether they have achieved them.
- Fractal-like (or scale-independent): essentially the same model of evaluation will be used to evaluate CEEBL as a whole, as well as all the activities that CEEBL is engaged in, up to individual projects and individual learning.
- Supported: participants will be helped and aided by colleagues from the supporting layer below (Figure 1). Other colleagues may support the evaluation by providing external and internal perspectives and comments on the processes.
- Self-evaluation: everyone should evaluate the effects of their actions, at each level of operation.

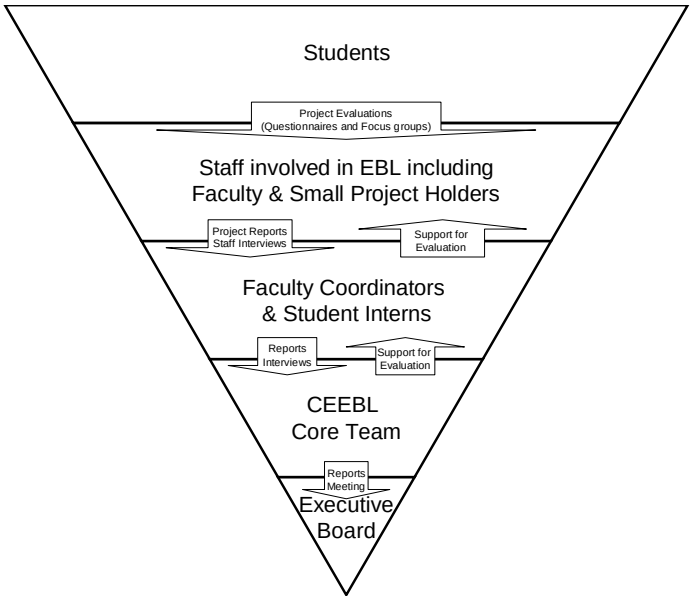

Figure 1: Model of CEEBL

Indeed, the fractal-like quality of the evaluation extends beyond CEEBL, in the sense that the strategy mirrors the evaluation strategy that HEFCE developed for the CETL programme, that is to say, encouraging each CETL to develop its own Evaluation Strategies, employing different methodologies and methods to reflect their intellectual contexts and individual needs. "HEFCE did not prescribe a methodology or focus for the self-evaluations as we expect each CETL to choose an approach that is appropriate to its individual needs" (HEFCE 2007: 2). As the CETL programme spans intellectual traditions of many disciplines across the country, so too does CEEBL across the University of Manchester.

EBL, in its purest forms, values the autonomy of learners to explore their own lines of enquiry in a safe and supported environment. Rather than replacing a traditional teaching and learning orthodoxy with a new orthodoxy, project-holders are encouraged to respond to the principles of EBL and the examples and experiences of other EBL practitioners. Consequently, they explore and develop forms of EBL that are best suited to epistemological and cultural backgrounds of their local contexts. In a very real sense, the project-holders are modelling the process of supported enquiry that they are developing for their students. Consistent with this approach is the encouragement of project-holders to develop forms of evaluation tailored to their project.

There are several factors that may influence the nature of the resulting evaluation:

- The epistemological stance of the project-holder and the discipline that s/he works in. This influences what evidence is accepted or valued in a specific context. Acknowledging this epistemological stance is more likely to result in evidence that is understood and valued by the discipline-based educational community, which will be the immediate audience for any results.
- The principal aims of the projects, that is, the motivation for introducing EBL to their students and what they hope to achieve from this, will differ. This will affect the focus of the evaluation.
- The nature of EBL activity that is being developed. The size, time-scale, the very nature of the activity and the products it creates may be very different between projects.
- The prior experience and engagement of the project-holder with the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning and educational evaluation. Different project-holders may bring different levels of expertise and sophistication to different aspects of the project.

All these factors suggest the appropriateness of an open and pluralistic approach to evaluation. It should also be noted that educational evaluation is a contested area (Henkel 1998). CEEBL values the autonomy of the project-holder in engaging in this discourse and finding their own location within it.

Through encouraging the project-holders to engage in the process of developing their own evaluation for their projects, we are developing their capacity as educational evaluators, providing the insight and tools to evaluate educational developments in the future.

An additional, important consideration is the relationship of evaluation to research. We consider the evaluation activity, not as an end in itself, but as part of the evidence-gathering process of developing an empirical basis for researching EBL. This practitioner-based research is likely to take the form of action research (Zuber-Skerritt 1992), but may develop into other forms of pedagogic research, as practice and interest develops. An important component of developing evaluation into research is that the project-holders themselves have made the decisions behind the project and its evaluation, engaging with the evaluation and educational literature in the process. This practice provides a strong sense of empowerment and ownership of the EBL development, and their enquiry into that development, to take and disseminate within the wider community as their own.

For the project-holder, engagement in evaluation begins at the stage of bidding for the project. They are invited to “provide us with a brief description of the mechanisms you intend to use for evaluating the achieved outcomes” (CEEBL 2008b: 3). Ultimately, project-holders are responsible for reporting the results of the evaluation in their symposium presentation and case study report. For some, this provides their first pedagogic publication and a starting point to develop further presentations and publications.

This approach does put a lot of responsibility on the project-holder. However, it should be noted that, like EBL, this is a supported process:

- The bid and case-study templates provide a framework in which to propose and report their initiatives. Without being prescriptive, they provide a check that various aspects of the project have been considered, planned and reported.
- It is also supported through CEEBL’s Evaluation Strategy (Powell 2007), available on CEEBL’s website. The evaluation strategy provides a clear but open statement of EBL:

> *Enquiry-Based Learning (EBL) is an open, flexible, social and supported form of learning that values, stimulates, nurtures and rewards people’s capacity for and process of enquiry.*

and of CEEBL's mission:

> *Our mission is to expand and enhance the practice, understanding and profile of Enquiry Based-Learning (EBL), institutionally, nationally and internationally, with the result that everyone engaged in CEEBL and EBL will become capable, committed, curious, collaborative, scholarly and life-long learners through enquiry.*

The evaluation strategy then goes on to provide advice and guidance on evaluation, deliberately avoiding being prescriptive.

- The CEEBL team, particularly the Research Associate, provides advice and guidance through consultation as and when project-holders require it. Additional support from CEEBL comes in the form of the student interns who provide advice on and can facilitate focus groups on behalf of the project-holders.
- Workshops from acknowledged experts in pedagogical research and evaluation are provided for project-holders and the wider CEEBL community.
- As in EBL, peer support is encouraged. Project-holders are encouraged to share their ideas about their EBL development and evaluation with each other. This is facilitated through a sequence of events aimed specifically at the project-holders, namely: an introductory event where project-holders meet and discuss their projects; a mid-year seminar where progress and initial findings are discussed; and finally a project-holders' symposium where the final results are presented. The project-holders' symposium also allows an opportunity for the next year's project-holders to meet last year's project-holders.
- CEEBL also holds workshops open to the wider educational community, providing project-holders with the opportunity to interact with that wider community.

The framework is open and pluralist, as the case studies presented here will demonstrate, encouraging project-holders to embrace both qualitative and quantitative forms of evidence to understand better their development:

- Many projects employ mixed methods of evaluation, for example the preparation of students for a team project in Electronic Engineering employs a combination of quantitative and qualitative sources.

However, this is not the only pattern to emerge:

- The School of Psychology has developed and validated a quantitative instrument.
- Religions and Theology has taken a participatory and appreciative approach using rich, qualitative sources of information.

Through exploring these three case studies, it will be shown how contrasting approaches to evaluation have been developed within this framework.

3. Findings

3.1 Electrical and Electronic Engineering

The aim of this project was to prepare students for a team project by providing them with an opportunity to practise and develop these skills in a smaller-scale team project in the more supportive environment of their tutorials (Powell *et al.* 2006). Student groups were asked to design a temperature sensing system for a commercial decorative tile kiln.

Its evaluation is perhaps typical of other CEEBL project evaluations, in that it combines a number of sources both quantitative and qualitative. To this end, this project employed an *integrative evaluation* (Draper *et al.* 1996), which uses a combination instruments to understand the student experience of the EBL activity. These instruments included: bespoke, goal-free (Scriven 1973) questionnaires and learning logs (Draper *et al.* 1996) and established questionnaires, such as the *Student Process Questionnaire* (Biggs *et al*. 2001) and *Learning Resource Questionnaire* (Brown *et al.* 1996), as well as focus groups, direct observations and reflections by the members of staff involved.

This project was further developed and evaluated over three cycles of its implementation (Powell *et al.* 2008a), continuing the use of the goal-free questionnaire, including reflections on critical incidents (Cowan 2004) and student attendance of the tutorials, which proved to be a useful proxy for student engagement.

The impact of the EBL activity on the team project, for which it was intended to prepare students, was also evaluated. This was conducted through interviews with supervisors and students in the early weeks of the project (Powell *et al.* 2008b).

In this case, the member of the project team who was operational in the design, implementation and evaluation of the activity joined the CEEBL core team and continued to support the project through its subsequent refinements and evaluations.

This case demonstrated the use of a variety of sources of data for the evaluation process, a commitment to a continuous process of iterative refinement and evaluation of the activity, and a shifting use of sources reflecting the changes in focus of the evaluation.

3.2 Psychology

The School of Psychology developed an EBL activity as part of its first-year tutorial system. This was, in part, to get students engaged in discussions about issues in Psychology, as well as to develop their research and study skills. CEEBL supported the development of this activity by facilitating a workshop, where volunteer staff and students from the School worked from the trigger question: "*What is Bad Psychology?*" This question gave them insight into the process of EBL through first-hand experience. This was followed up with a workshop on facilitating EBL for the tutors, drawing on the expertise across the University.

To evaluate this activity a member of staff in Psychology developed a quantitative questionnaire. This was, in part, influenced by an EBL Survey developed in a CEEBL workshop on evaluation (Moore 2006). The resulting questionnaire (Lander 2008) is based on a series of 7-point Likert scale questions, divided into five themes: 1) Participation of the learners; 2) How much the learning is owned and driven by the learners; 3) Reaction; 4) Learning; and 5) Behaviour; these last three are based on Kirkpatrick's (1996) levels of evaluation. This instrument has been validated with the first cohort of Psychology students (Lee *et al.* 2008).

Further, the project-holder has supported the use of this questionnaire in other EBL projects, for example French language (Franc *et al.* 2007) and Pharmacy (Freeman and Sattenstall 2006, Sattenstall and Freeman In Press), showing commitment, not only to continued evaluation, but supporting the evaluation of other colleagues. In the latter case, a CEEBL Intern who had been a student on the unit assisted in re-expressing the questions for the new context.

This case demonstrates capacity developed from within the discipline being used in the evaluation to develop and validate reliable quantitative instruments, such instruments being an important tool in Psychological research.

3.3 Religion, Culture and Gender

In the Religion, Culture and Gender unit, students are not only expected to contribute to discussions on contentious societal issues, such as the treatment of young Irish girls by the Catholic Church in the *Magdalene Laundries* and its media depiction (Mullen 2003), but small teams are expected to preface a debate with a presentation, based on their research of a key reading. They must then trigger the debate with appropriate questions and facilitate that debate, while scribing key points for other students to use in their reflections upon that debate. This process aligns with the radical, emancipatory theories of feminism that underline the unit, where the implicit power relations of the classroom and deference to authoritative sources are critiqued (Stuerzenhofecker 2008a, Stuerzenhofecker 2008b). Through the process, the voices, experiences and intellectual contributions of the students should be heard as part of the debate and should be validated as sources of knowledge by the other students.

This process does make a lot of demands on the learners and, as part of CEEBL's support to this project, workshops were designed and delivered to explore the skills and emotional competencies that the students would need to engage in this process.

The evaluation of this activity drew from a variety of rich qualitative sources, including the detailed reflective journals of the students and the observations of the staff teaching. An important additional resource was the contribution of one of the students on the course who, through attending a focus

group, became an insightful and valuable contributor to the evaluation process, representing and providing insight into the views of her peers as well as her own. Aligning the evaluation with the emanicipatory principals of the subject and pedagogy, a participatory approach was adopted (Burke 1998, Cousins and Whitmore 1998). The student's role as a partner in the evaluation and co-producer of knowledge is recognized in part by her role in disseminating that knowledge (Snape and Stuerzenhofecker 2009). The evaluation also took an appreciative aspect (Cooperrider 2001) in exploring the positive experiences of one student to understand how this experience can be extended to the rest of the cohort. Through this enquiry, the concept of academic assertiveness (Moon 2009) was adopted to frame the skills and competences that students need to develop.

This case emphasizes the use of rich, qualitative information in the evaluation process and the contribution of an individual student.

4. Conclusions

In each of these three cases, the values and epistemological stance of each of the disciplines can be seen in their approach to evaluation: the Engineer reaching out for tools according to their utility; the social scientist approach of the Psychologist, understanding through the patterns emerging from the general behaviour of the many; and valuing of the individual experience of the Theologian.

These three cases demonstrate a continued commitment to evaluation and enquiry into their practice beyond the first cycle of their development. The cases of Engineering and Theology illustrate the cyclic nature of development and evaluation. The case of Psychology has also taken the form of supporting other project-holders, in the continued evaluation of their developments, again beyond the initial implementations of their projects. This echoes the collaborative, peer-support component of EBL.

We believe that the evaluation strategy and framework that CEEBL has put in place is enabling and empowering: giving permission for our project-holders to find their own path through the contested areas of educational evaluation and pedagogic research, whilst providing support from the centre and each other.

The evaluation process is, in itself, an enquiry into the practice and effectiveness of EBL on behalf of the project-holder, which involves establishing an approach that is appropriate to the context, purpose and nature of the EBL activity. Throughout this process, CEEBL has provided specific and tailored support, both to the implementation of EBL and its evaluation. Just as EBL promotes supported, student-led enquiry into their discipline, the CEEBL evaluation framework promotes supported, project-holder-led enquiry into their EBL practice.

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Lesley Gourlay; New Identities 'On the Moon': Crossing the boundary from practitioner to new lecturer

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Keywords and Précis:

academic identities	transitions	academic literacies

This paper will report on a study into the transition experiences of new lecturers who have come into the role from an established professional or practice background. In doing so it will critically examine some of the assumptions of common models of transition and development.

Short biography of the author:

Dr Lesley Gourlay is a research fellow in the Learning Innovation Applied Research Group at Coventry University. Her background is in Applied Linguistics, and her research interests include identity transitions and trajectories for students and staff, academic literacies, internationalisation, and the uses of online immersive worlds in higher education.

Abstract:

The transition from research degree or postdoctoral appointment to lecturer is a complex one which has recently begun to be investigated in the research literature (e.g., Barkhuizen 2002, Knight *et al.* 2006, Archer 2008). However, the transition into the academic role from an established professional or practice background has received less attention. Development aimed at supporting transitions into lecturing posts have tended to focus primarily on generic principles of teaching and learning, assuming that the wider set of academic practices required of early career academics will be either already known from the PhD process, or will be communicated from within the discipline. In an implicit "apprentice-master" model it is assumed that the novice will learn the norms of participation via "legitimate peripheral participation". However, the applicability of this model is to literacy practices is highly questionable (Lea 2005), and the transition is arguably more complex in the changing contexts and values of contemporary higher education, where academic identities are increasingly fluid (e.g., Barnett and Di Napoli 2007). This is particularly the case for new lecturers making the transition from the professional /practice setting, where their identities, practices and values have already been established, and may be in tension with the practices, discourses and expectations of the lecturing role.

This paper will report on a funded project involving case studies of new lecturers from professional/practice disciplines in a post-92 setting, looking at the extent to which the required academic and literacy practices and identities of the discipline are learned or negotiated, via explicit development or informal interaction with peers, experimentation and personal refection. In doing so, it will also focus on the emotional and identity-related aspects of this transition, and the resultant sense of alienation and disruption as "borders and boundaries" are negotiated, and identities are textually enacted (Ruth 2008). This ultimately aims to explore the limits and potentials of academic development in this area, in a context where some of the certainties surrounding research, meaning and knowledge in higher education and increasingly contested. It will conclude with implications for practice, and PgCert courses in particular.

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Heather Conboy & Richard Hall; Journeys in Peer E-communication: Student Mentors' Perspectives

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Keywords and Précis:

peer-mentoring	institutional/non-institutional technologies	transitions

This paper explores experiences of level 2 student mentors, focusing on their communication with mentees, using negotiated technologies. The authors draw upon the potential for web-based tools to help transcend the boundaries between 'formal' and 'informal' learning, in order to question the institutional role in facilitating communication between students-as-peers.

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Full Paper:

Journeys in Peer E-communication: Student mentors' perspectives

Abstract

There is growing interest in student peer-mentoring as a way of enabling new students to tackle the perceived cultural, academic and social boundaries associated with the first year of study in higher education. This paper explores the experiences of a group of level 2 student mentors, focusing on their communication with level 1 mentees using negotiated technologies. The authors draw upon the potential for web-based tools to help transcend the boundaries between "formal" and "informal" learning, in order to question the institutional role in facilitating communication between students-as-peers. This builds on recent research into how students use technologies to facilitate their movement towards more independent learning. The outcomes from this experience will inform practitioners and those involved in mentoring schemes in scoping spaces for student communication in more informal environments.

Keywords: mentors, peer-mentoring, read/write web, transitions

1. Introduction

New students face a variety of challenges upon entering higher education (HE) including adapting to cultural and academic expectations, alongside fitting-in socially with new peers (Yorke and Longden 2008). During this period of transition, students need to be encouraged to become independent thinkers who take responsibility for their own learning and development. This paper examines the role of second- and third-year student mentors in this process; the findings feed into emergent outcomes of a nationally funded project, which explores the role of technologies in student transitions.

Recent research studies demonstrate that a framework of technologies, including both institutional and non-institutional read/write web tools, is crucial in connecting students' informal and formal learning (Hall 2009, JISC 2006). Studies have focused upon the opportunities these tools offer for the development of connectivist approaches to learning (Anderson 2007, Franklin and van Harmelen 2007, Siemens 2009) and for the development of inclusive learning spaces. This aligns with Siemens' (*ibid.*) view of personal development as a process of making meaning through socialisation, interaction and collaboration, as well as with social and constructivist learning theories (Bandura 1977, Driscoll 1994, Vygotsky 1978), which highlight the importance of structured opportunities for

developing mastery in new learning situations (MMU 2007). Thus, by building on recent research on transitions (HEA 2008, University of Ulster 2008, MMU 2007), the CoTIL project (2009) evaluates the student-led development of these spaces, beyond the formal use of "institutionally" provided technologies for communication.

In a recent study on retention, Yorke and Longden (2008) note the negative impact on students of a perceived lack of contact with their tutors. From this perspective, peer-mentoring offers the potential to extend and enrich academic tutoring, while providing institutions with a relatively economic way of managing increased student numbers (Boud *et al.* 2001, Green 2007). The mentoring process is a way to encourage first-year students to take the advice of more experienced peers, thereby providing in-roads to the subtleties of institutional and academic culture and promoting social links to enable more independent learning (Green 2007). The mentors' role equates to a scaffold for new students in breaking through transitional barriers and reaching a personal "turning point" or transformation, in which the learner becomes conscious of their engagement with their learning (Palmer *et al.* 2009). As Palmer *et al.* (2009) point out, management structures, in the form of support services, have little chance of reaching across the "liminal space" of "betweenness" that specific students experience in their real or perceived exclusion from the academic or social.

There is currently a great deal of interest in understanding student informal use of technologies in order to make connections with formal learning contexts (Trinder *et al.* 2008, Sharpe and Benfield 2005). This suggests a need for a better understanding not only of the use of these technologies but also of their role in negotiating boundaries between different aspects of a student's learning experience. According to Giroux (2005), boundaries are personal binaries and dichotomies which can frame new epistemologies in order to question meaning and education, particularly in an information-rich world. For Giroux (2005: 2):

> Thinking in terms of borders allows one to critically engage the struggle over those territories, spaces, and contact zones where power operates to either expand or to shrink the distance and connectedness among individuals, groups, and places.

A critical element, therefore, is whether and how boundaries such as formal/informal and personal/institutional can be bridged. This has a deeper impact given the growing student preference for home-working and using personal technologies for self-regulation of their learning (Ramanau *et al.* 2008). However, Anagnostopoulou and Parmar (2008) highlight the important role of institutional virtual learning environments (VLEs) and the need for their early introduction into level 1 student learning. Furthermore, they recommend that educators create opportunities to associate social and academic activities, at the same time respecting those who participate in different ways, for example by lurking. With specific reference to student mentees, Page and Hanna (2008) found that students strongly "favoured the provision of an online forum" for peer communication.

Against this backdrop of transitions, social learning theory, educational and personal technologies, this paper builds on this research to look beyond the formal use of "institutionally" provided technologies for communication to learn from experience of mentors.

2. Context: mentoring project

This study explores a pilot student mentoring scheme in one UK university from the perspective of the mentors. The scheme was co-ordinated centrally and involved considerable awareness-raising and training of mentors, to empower them as "buddies" rather than apprentices. Volunteers from levels 2 and 3 were assigned to a group of first-year students of the same discipline, with a focus on supporting their transition into HE. In Humanities, this involved 24 mentors and 130 first-year mentees from Education Studies and Media Studies. Mentors, individually or with another mentor, were assigned to support a group of first-year students. The main challenge identified by students (both mentors and mentees) and staff was that crucial opportunities may have been missed because of the unavoidable but relatively late start-up in week 2.

Hence, as a pilot without any pre-planned technologies for collaboration and contact, researchers were able to liaise with mentors to explore and define the potential for online communication among students. Students were given support, but ultimately decided which technologies to use for

mentor/mentee communication. Staff took care to support rather than lead, including the recommendation of which technologies to deploy.

3. Methodology

Mentors were asked to keep logs of student communication which identified: approximate times of communication; the rationale for the use of specific technologies; and any perceived benefits and disadvantages. The research was based on action research with participants, in order to offer insight for future enhancements and development. The researchers attended a large number of mentor-mentee meetings to facilitate an understanding of student perspectives within this context. In all, 20 students provided verbal feedback in meetings and focus groups and 13 "logs" of communication were received.

The research was aimed at a better understanding of the following questions:

1. What strategies were deployed by students in the use of technologies for personal, social and academic purposes?
2. What were the student experiences of using these technologies?
3. What attributes of the technologies did they relate to particular mentee responses?
4. What type of independent study skills were developed in mentoring?

4. Summary of findings

4.1 The selection of technologies to use

Each of the mentors considered themselves to be conversant with web-based technologies and the majority felt themselves to be good "online social networkers". Initially, mentors asked to have an area for communication set up on the VLE, which they felt would act as a hub or central area for peer contact. One student commented that this was "a positive sign of [our] legitimate role within the institution". Students were also encouraged to use any other technologies they thought appropriate, and to this end they were offered an induction session emphasising a range of social media possibilities and support as needed.

Mentors were almost unanimous in saying they "left it to the mentees" to select the technology to be used, and abided by their decision. However, their own preferences, along with considerations about which methods they thought mentees would be more likely to engage with, were clearly central factors in the suggestions they put forward. One mentor stated that "I let my mentees decide which form of communication to use. I offered many choices but the mentees felt more comfortable using [face-to-face, student email and VLE]". The mentor noted that "only email was really used by this group".

As time progressed it became apparent that the VLE community was not being used by first-year students, although 25 per cent did login. Despite introductory welcomes and offers of support from mentors on discussion forums and blogs, no mentee responded. Although originally framed as an area for all peers, mentees suggested that information about the scheme should be posted there to attract and encourage more activity. For this reason they thought that tutors should have access to this area. Despite this, none of the tutors used it, preferring it to be student-focused. Thus technology use appeared to migrate from the VLE to other technologies, principally Facebook.

A mentor argued that "we looked into this [VLE] method and thought it was a great idea but because our Facebook group had been successful we decided to stick with one community to communicate." The same student noted the impact of personal factors on mentee engagement: "Nobody wants to be first to write on the discussion board… unfortunately the 1st years were either reluctant to use this or did not want to advertise their problems or may have had difficulty using this page."

Extrinsic motivations need to balance aspirations against cultures that exist in the use of non-institutional tools. Figure 1 demonstrates the complex and mixed economy in the use of technologies.

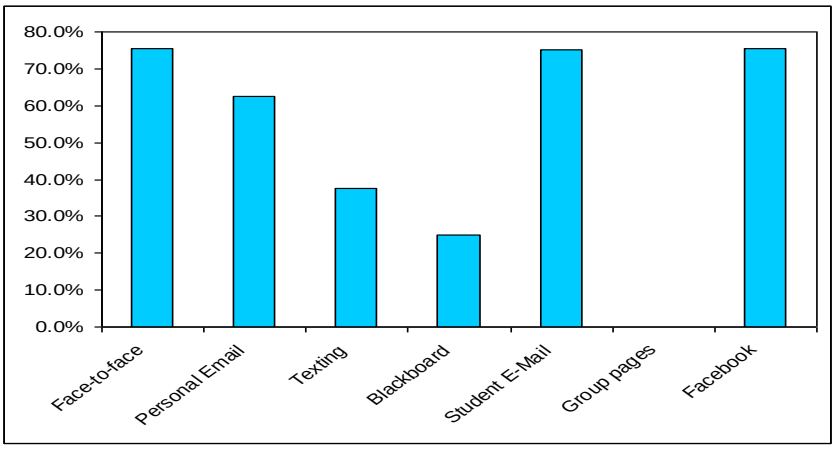

Figure 1: Mentor-reported frequencies of the use of technologies with mentees

4.2 The "institution", technologies and peer communication

Thus, two main attitudes were identified amongst mentors: those who favoured institutional technologies, in particular the VLE; and those who preferred non-institutional communication tools like Facebook. The terms "institutional" and "non-institutional" are used for convenience, although interestingly these terms were rarely used by the mentors.

Half of the mentor groups initially favoured using the VLE citing its familiarity, its standing as "legitimate" activity, and for its administrative convenience. However, this preference related more to the mentors' intentions than the eventual follow up by mentees. Many mentors expressed their concern that mentees might think of "institutional tools as too formal". Several commented that they did not feel that they could be as chatty and informal on the VLE, which perhaps indicated a reluctance to talk about staff members and the institution more generally in a critical light.

Some mentors had clear reservations about using the VLE, mainly because they felt that their mentees would not use it. Several reasons for this notion were suggested. One mentor noted that "I did not use the [VLE] community as I felt it was quite impersonal and felt too formal." Another mentor claimed that "it was a good idea, [but] I access Blackboard maybe only once a week and did so even less as a first year so didn't feel it would be the best way to contact mentees."

The same mentor team noted that communication with students depended on their continual prompting: "There has been one student [who] has consistently stayed in contact and others have dipped in and out when they need." A second mentor in this group "found that the mentees were not interested in using the VLE. Maybe, it would be useful to give them training on how to access it and use it to their advantage." A third wondered about external stimuli: "I think first year students should be encouraged to check their email and blackboard accounts more often, as I know this was something I didn't realise the importance of upon beginning university."

Half of the mentor groups used Facebook, which was perceived to be a better alternative for two principle reasons: its currency with students: and its more informal appeal. Students felt that they used this environment anyhow, and one second-year student remarked that "most people are on Facebook – that's were people hang out, so it's worth trying that." Another added that "it [Facebook] is the best because most people have Facebook and it makes it less formal and more informal." Interestingly, several students reasoned that they has selected Facebook as "it was important that the mentees did not feel intimidated by the scheme." Even so, there appeared to be no greater engagement from mentees than with the VLE. Those mentors using Facebook invited first-years to join their groups, and although all joined, mentors reported that they did not fully participate in meaningful discussions. One mentor stated that "we felt we would get a better response by setting up an informal Facebook group than by using student email. However as time went by without contact we resorted to any methods available."

Mentors were not favourable to the use of Twitter, either because it was new or not clearly beneficial. Other social networks like Ning.com groups were suggested, but these students felt more comfortable using Facebook.

4.3 Converting "push" to engagement

Most mentors felt they were in a position of having to contact mentees to "push" their services and to encourage input. A number perceived that the lack of first-year student responses was due to a lack of interest, an inability to formulate useful academic questions and queries, a lack of recognition of the role that mentees could play, or, as one student put it, because "they were being lazy". There was also an element of mentor-desperation in not receiving responses from mentees with several commenting on "the fact nobody turned up to meetings or even answered our messages and stuff was a little disheartening."

Mentors generally believed that the first-year students did not take full advantage of opportunities. This lack of contact was perceived to be the failure of the mentees to appreciate the good advice they would receive. It was a rejection of opportunities to learn independently. Mentors also felt that the scheme and the benefits that were available should be more widely disseminated and impressed upon students.

However, mentors recognised that mentees clearly responded and engaged at specific times of the year, such as when assignments were due and when mentors attended face-to-face classes to offer help. One mentor noted that he

> had contact with 3 of my mentees who were very comfortable asking for advice and enquiring about information. One in particular was happy to keep in contact and seen me as a valuable asset. I have offered my services about every 2 weeks via email and met up with mentees when required. Mentees only contact me when they had a problem or were unsure, most of the correspondence came when assignments were due or when they had to choose modules.

One of his peers felt some frustration:

> It's been hard to get the first years to actually make use of us, but they seem to be more collaborative lately and we've had a few chats with them about academic issues such as assignments and also some student life-related issues. Facebook and email have been very useful but only right after meeting with the students face to face.

These mentors recommended that face-to-face meetings, although infrequent throughout the year, provide crucial scaffolding and prompts for first-year students. One mentor reflected that "the only thing that seems to be missing is the mentees getting more involved." For a separate mentor it was important to overcome fear through personal ownership: "we should be left to make our own communication through email, social networking sites and phone calls/texts. I believe this makes the scheme more personal and less "scary" as it does not feel so affiliated with the university."

Another mentor argued that whilst mentees might prefer anonymity in raising areas of concern, social networks and social modelling of practices were central to encouraging engagement. For this mentor the tool was not a barrier to involvement in the process: "To be honest there has been minimal results using my own form of communication so [Facebook] may not be the best method, although I do find it easier for myself."

Another mentor disagreed

> "I don't think there's any need to be anonymous and I believe the private mentor-group of mentees blackboard areas that are already set up are enough. We can always arrange our own communication separately so it's good that we have the chance to use the blackboard community if the mentees want to."

On the overall use of technologies, there are interesting parallels with the study by Page and Hanna (2008) who surveyed a group of mentees. Of the 70 students who participated in the study, only 12 (32%) had actually met their mentors, preferring to communicate "via email, texts and phone calls". Twenty percent of students said they would like a dedicated physical space, which compares with only one student comment within this study, which pointed to the unsuitability of many physical locations they had used for meetings.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

It is important to note that in general students commented favourably on the overall experience and on the support they had been given. Mentors unanimously supported the delivery of technology-induction sessions and felt that this should be extended to mentees. Clearly, the main benefit for mentors was in social engagement and affective learning. One stated that "it has been very rewarding for me, knowing that I have eased other peoples fears with regard to all aspects of the course." He went on to emphasise the need for communication with first-years that was "enjoyable and informative." For a second mentor engaging with the process of mentoring and acting in a advisory role was "very interesting and challenging." Therefore in moving the scheme forward focusing the links between reward and the challenge is central.

However, in terms of the boundaries between "institutional" or "non-institutional" tools, a complex context existed. Mentors felt appreciated as stakeholders in an institutional scheme, as evidenced in the reasons they gave for wanting to become a mentor: "giving something back to the Faculty". Yet many were very aware that a perception of being linked to the "institution" might deter mentees from participating in the scheme and hinder communication. This impacted their selection of technologies, with many mentors purposefully deciding to communicate with mentees using "non-institutional" tools such as Facebook.

However, whether this worked was a moot point and it is clear that online communication cannot be considered in isolation from face-to-face events. The main technologies that were used and clearly facilitated mentee follow-up were texts and email. Mentors continually felt in a position of having to "push" their services and expertise. Enforced use of the VLE may be problematic, as suggested by Page and Hannah (2008). Students clearly welcomed the possibility to use a range of methods of communication.

Therefore the authors have four recommendations for moving the scheme forward.

1. First-year mentees need earlier training about the scheme and available technologies, preferably with opportunities prior to induction.
2. Mentors require extended discussion on issues encountered in creating and maintaining online communities.
3. Institutions would benefit from further emphasising the benefits for mentees, perhaps through videos that explain the mentor role to new first-years.
4. Students should be supported in the development of online spaces for communication, with the freedom to select their own tools.

These findings contribute to our understanding of student use of technologies within the mentoring context. Further studies are needed which link up the various aspects of technology use with the larger institutional framework. It is clear that the format of any mentoring scheme will depend on how it is presented and promoted to students and whether it is compulsory or voluntary, again changing the social dynamics and rendering the choice of technologies secondary.

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Peter Every; The Infantilisation of the Student Body: How it occurs and why it must stop.

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Keywords and Précis:

student experience	social networking	androgogy

This paper takes as its starting point the analysis of a small number of student emails and course evaluations in which the words 'I felt like I was being treated like a child' are used. This analysis has continued through the use of informal interviews in which the author has attempted to derive the reasons for such an assertion.

Short biography of the author:

Peter is a senior lecturer and course leader for Creative Computing degrees at Coventry University. He has recently completed an IPED Research scholarship investigating the usability of discussion forums in an academic context and is now engaged in investigating the use of social networking and Web 2.0 tools in teaching and learning. He is a founder member of the Interactive Worlds Applied Research Group.

Abstract:

One of the positive outcomes of a conference series like iPED is the complex and nuanced picture of learner diversity and learner needs that our global academic community builds during these events. It is a sad fact, however, that many of us return to institutions in which, as a consequence of organizational or operational expediency, our ability to serve this diversity is in some way compromised.

This paper takes as its starting point the analysis of a small number of student emails and course evaluations in which the words “I felt like I was being treated like a child” are used. This analysis has continued through the use of informal interviews in which the author has attempted to derive the reasons for such an assertion.

Leaving aside the etymological root of the term “pedagogy”, infantilisation refers, not to the childhood experience of warmth and affection, but to the frustration that children experience when they feel that their opinions or interests are ignored or sidelined by “grown ups”. Most often, “feeling like a child” occurs when one believes one is being overlooked or ignored. The context in which students express this feeling of marginalization can include:

- The rapid rise in student numbers that has led to strategies of homogenization and massification of the learner experience.
- The expansion of the multiple roles expected of a modern academic to include applied research, administration and marketing alongside traditional teaching and research, reducing opportunities for student contact and relationship building.
- The need for remedial attention to the skills and knowledge expected of sophomore students which predisposes an academic to see those students in terms of what they cannot do.
- Assessment modes that have seen a shift to computerized testing and pre-printed, or tick-box, assessment sheets, removing the simple human contact provided by handwritten notes in the margins.
- Assessments which have become over-burdened by legalistic provisions to counter plagiarism or collusion but which can also “over-specify” the required elements of the submission, for fear that the student’s response may break the marking model, unless it conforms to a fairly rigid structure.

- A reduction in extracurricular activities, both of a social and a study-focussed nature, in which staff and students develop a relationship outside the boundaries of the classroom.
- The understandable, but profoundly unfortunate, effect of forgetting a student's name.

Against this analysis, the paper will propose modest, non-time-consuming activities that can counteract some, but not all, of the depersonalizing and infantilizing factors outlined above. It will discuss the role that online social networking might have to play in re-inserting “friendship” into the staff-student relationship and the complex professional issues that arise from this. Finally, it will examine the impact of a timely, targeted email in dispelling the effects of infantilisation.

This paper recognizes the critical role of personal tutors and of the use of personal tutorials – a practice not exercised everywhere – and notes the lack of good experiential literature on what it means to be a personal tutor.

Tuesday
15 September 2009
Parallel Session 5:
13:45–15:15

Leadership Perspectives Symposium; Researching Working Lives

Discussant: Dr Jane Salisbury, Cardiff University, United Kingdom

Convener: Lyn Daunton, University of Glamorgan, United Kingdom

Co-Presenters: Caryn Cook, Lynne Gornall & Brychan Thomas,

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http://news.glam.ac.uk/news/en/2009/jul/21/working-lives/

Keywords:

HE roles and work practices	academic staff	academic leadership

Symposium Structure:

Lyn Daunton: Introducing Researching Working Lives

Michael Sheehan, Owen Clark, Nigel Copner & Martin Graff: Working from Home

Discussion – led by **Jane Salisbury**

Caryn Cook and Lyn Daunton: Working Lives; lessons to take forward

Lynne Gornall: Becoming Indigenous: Narratives of new professionals as communities of equals in HE

Discussion and summary – led by **Jane Salisbury**

Overview:

"Working Lives" is the name of an interdisciplinary team of researchers who are examining changing roles and work practices of HE staff and the spaces in which they work. The research has its origins in a groundbreaking study (Gornall, 1999) that explored policy shifts and external funding drivers which were impacting on academic roles and boundaries, and creating opportunities for different groups of staff in HE employment. It is informed today by studies on leadership (Daunton and Moss, 2006); educational research (Goodson 2003, Salisbury and Jephcote 1997); changes in HR practice (Moss *et al*. 2008); and ethnographic approaches to "new professional" careers (Gornall and Thomas 2001).

As professionals endeavour to take into account newer adjacent roles and others' occupational re-specializations and positionings, some of the tensions and dilemmas associated with both the "blurred boundaries" and assumptions about professional self-determination (Freidson, 2001) are highlighted. The current research looks at these new institutional and occupational relationships and at some of the working practices adopted by academics within what may be termed "postmodern employment" (Cornford and Pollock 2003).

The types of administration that academic staff are involved in and the spatial working arrangements around this have led the team to extend Soja's (1996) notion of "third space", and the margins or boundaries in which work is undertaken, to other kinds of working zone. One particular area of interest has focussed on links between "home" and "work" and the ways in which academic staff construct these separations in talking about the different kinds of work that they do. The approach is informed by the work of Felstead *et al.* (2005).

The aim of the 'Working Lives' team Symposium is to present the WERN "Working Lives" findings (and methodology), as well as other invited work, and to elicit debate and discussion. In particular, the challenges of cross-disciplinary and collaborative scholarship – ways of working in the research study of "working lives" – will be explored.

The Working Lives team are part of the Welsh Education Research Network (WERN), from three UK HEIs, and have received WERN funding from ESRC/HEFCW (2007/8 and 2008/9) to support this research.

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Michael Sheehan, Owen Clark, Nigel Copner & Martin Graff; Working from Home

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Keywords and Précis:

working at home	social interaction	leadership symposium

The objectives of the research are to gain insights into what organisations might do to replicate the social interaction experienced at work when people are working in the home environment. The authors are also interested in the technology/technologies that might be used to facilitate and produce this.

Short biography of lead author:

Dr Martin Graff is a Reader in Psychology in the Faculty of Social Sciences in the University of Glamorgan his research interests are the psychology of behaviour, specifically including online interactions and navigation, cognitive styles and ICT.

Abstract:

Professor Michael Sheehan, Owen Clark, Nigel Copner, and Martin Graff are four academics at the University of Glamorgan who are conducting research on how people work from home. Their research objectives are to gain insights into what organizations might do to replicate the *social interaction* experienced at work when people are working in the home environment. They are also interested in the technology/technologies that might be used to facilitate and produce this.

Their pilot studies, which will be discussed at the IPED Working Lives Symposium, have been conducted with HE staff in the first instance. The group are now collaborating with others, including the *Working Lives* team, on interdisciplinary studies of working from home, particularly the behavioural and social aspects of home-based work. The contributors bring the following sets of disciplinary expertise to this study:

- Dr Martin Graff contributes research interests in the psychology of behaviour, specifically including online interactions and navigation, cognitive styles and ICT.
- Owen Clark is a Research Fellow with special interests in interdisciplinary approaches to transport services and issues (inclusion, public and community, land use, travel planning), with experience of user/organizational/policy interactions and mapping.
- Dr Nigel Copner specializes in telecommunications and optical technologies and has strong links with businesses and applied research.
- Michael Sheehan is Co-Director of the Centre for Research on Workplace Behaviours at Glamorgan and Professor of Management. He is particularly interested in organizational behaviours in the context of human resource management strategies. The impacts of organizational change on individuals, bullying, and individuals' experience of acquiring and implementing new skills at work are the approaches that he brings to the study of home-based working.

The group will discuss the findings from their pilot survey and current collaborative designs in the laboratory. The post holder's contribution will be highly visible to the commercial consortium members, and the key demonstrations and results of this project will be essential to the success of the project as a whole.

Lynne Gornall; Becoming Indigenous: Narratives of "New Professionals" as communities of equals in HE

University of Glamorgan, United Kingdom

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Keywords and Précis:

narratives of academic and 'new' professionals	academic and occupational change	leadership symposium

Academics are no longer in the majority in most institutions and HE occupational change is today a story of changing roles and boundaries. Through their writing and presentations, academics can articulate and disseminate this changing status; the session will explore the other occupational 'voice' of 'new professional' staff in HE.

Short biography of the author:

Dr Lynne Gornall is a Principal Lecturer at the University of Glamorgan involved in project management, research and enterprise projects. She has a background in cultural and ethnographic studies.

Abstract:

If we examine the literature on academic roles and occupational change within UK higher education (HE), it is clear that here is a story of boundaries, tensions, joking relationships, teamwork and ambivalence. External factors, alongside internal policy shifts, have publicly set the context for changes in the balance of the HE workforce, and today, academics are no longer in the majority in most institutions. Moreover, the valuing in HE of "all staff", has paradoxically, led to the further demotion of academic employees as principal stars in the employment pantheon.

The "end of knowledge" discourse and postmodernist play with crises did not help. As Taylor (1999: 95, 115) has pointed out, teaching is what the academic profession does, but it is an area with "poorly developed (formal) expertise" and often characterized by "virtues rather than skills". Doubts about the commitment or involvement of academics as "knowledge leaders" in the new modern economy emerged (Slaughter and Leslie 1997), even though as a profession, they might have been poised to shape and define this. Instead, in the 1990s, academics arguably lost control of the teaching and learning agenda.

It would be difficult to think, as Taylor has contended, of a profession better placed to respond to the challenges of change, and to develop work practices adaptive to and supportive of change, than the academic profession (1999: 94). Yet the 1990s' rise of "Teaching and Learning" policies, units and projects – responses (amongst other things) to greater and more differentiated bodies of students – was also one in which "our services", as Martin notes, were both "more in demand and yet less essential" (1999: 2).

What academics have lost, Taylor (1999: viii) has argued, is not so much a tangible position but a "loss of opportunity". There is reduced control, in particular, over new modes of learning, learning development and the structure of the new learning environments, and how these are to be operated" (p.114)**.** Moreover, such loss is at the heart of what academics do within the institution (*ibid.*).

Academic staff have comprised the established, most visible, occupational group in HE. With strong "individual" cultures, they were also organized and vocal; they played a key role in the management and shaping of the sector. Today, as well as researching and writing about HE, they are able to disseminate their opinions widely through publication, conference attendance, teaching and networking. The story of the development of the university, and of the narratives of HE, from the Enlightenment on, has been their story.

The period that saw the establishment and increase in staff employed in "teaching and learning"-related roles in HE, work that privileged *learning* (and the student experience) above that of *teaching* and research-based inquiry, was also one in which new professional and distinctive collective

identities have been developing (Beetham *et al.* 2001; Squires *et al.* 2000, Oliver 2002): as Freidson (2001: 6) has reminded us, "professional*isation*" is a *process* as well as having a "structure".

What then is the story of new professional staff in HE? The session will draw on both anthropological studies of communities and issues of "who" may tell the stories about the "way of life" of the organization. It will also consider new research on the role, perspective and positioning of new T&L staff themselves, now perhaps out from the margins, and whose collaborative professional practices may well be of wider professional – and even research – interest to their academic neighbours (or should we say "co-workers"?).

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Suki Ekaratne & Shrinika Weerakoon; Development as Moving Beyond Boundaries - Steps and tools that facilitated border crossings in higher education staff, students and stakeholder institutions*

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Keywords and Précis:

blurring borders in HE development	change management in HE development	stakeholder skills and competency development

This paper reports on the successful steps and tools that were refined and used to reorient and re-skill staff, students, university management and graduate-employing corporate sector to move beyond their strongly held boundaries, with staff development initiatives spreading across all universities in the country, with even the corporate sector roped in.

Short biography of the authors:

Suki Ekaratne is now Senior Academic Staff Developer at the University of Bath. He was previously Founder-Director of the Staff Development Centre, University of Colombo.

Shrinika Weerakoon is Senior Lecturer at the Staff Development Centre, University of Colombo in Sri Lanka.

Abstract:

As staff and educational developers, we found that bringing about development in HE impinges on individual as well as institutional borders and boundaries that were held in learning domains and performance capabilities. Whether it related to students, staff or institutions in the higher education or corporate sectors, the individual setting elicited anxious and stressful feelings when development was viewed as a perceived assault on previously-held beliefs and competencies, which therefore thwarted and restricted development by resisting progressive change-movement across and beyond real and perceived boundaries.

Using examples that we experienced in developing countries, such as Sri Lanka, and developed countries, such as the USA and the UK, we present and discuss examples in staff, student, institutional and country-wide settings that helped us set up and develop staff development initiatives to bring about changes across borders of learning domains and performance capabilities, using principles centred around the Zone of Proximal Development concept (Wood and Wood 1996), whereby we found it possible to dismantle real and perceived boundaries held by participants.

Examples presented will illustrate the steps and tools that we used successfully, with supporting data, whereby movement was directed to cross borders and to remove developmental barriers by instilling confidence and developing competencies. The steps and tools included blurring perceived borders by facilitating self-regulatory processes to recognize boundaries through metacognition, overcoming anxiety generated by Scholarly Defense (Argyris 1991, 1996), directional setting, incorporating new methods into participant practices through benefit-sharing to facilitate Scholarship of Learning and Teaching (Healey 2000, Hutchings and Shulman 1999), and use of Learning Contracts (Knowles 1986) for personal and teaching-learning development, oscillation between existing and future boundaries (Ekaratne and Weerakoon 2007), provision of non-confrontational frameworks for blurring borders including peer-learning communities. We will also show how international collaborators and institutions across several countries (such as SEDA UK, POD USA, the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce) engaged in helping the border-crossing of individuals and institutions, illustrating an example of the functioning of Academic Communities without Borders in the geographical sense.

In the presentation, we will invite participants to analyse and examine the extent to which they can adapt the steps and tools we used and presented, so as to address the challenges they themselves face in helping individuals and institutions to move beyond boundaries, especially in view of the widening participation agenda (Redmond 2006).

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Catherine Bovill; Students as Co-Creators of Curricula: Changing the relationship between tutor and student in higher education

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Keywords & Précis:

student participation in curriculum design	changing the student-tutor relationship	student participation in curriculum design

In higher education there are increasing calls for students to become 'co-creators' of their own learning. This paper outlines research findings about active student participation in curriculum design. Discussion will examine ways that active student participation in curriculum design led to tutors and students redefining their traditional relationships and boundaries.

Short biography of the author:

Dr Catherine Bovill has been a lecturer in the Academic Development Unit at the University of Glasgow since 2007. Catherine's role includes co-ordinating the PG Diploma in Academic Practice and contributing to teaching on the New Lecturer and Teacher Programme. She has particular responsibility for teaching to new lecturers in the clinical sciences about research and scholarship, small group work and inclusive curricula. Catherine also contributes to a module on learning and teaching for graduate teaching assistants and is an active member of the Faculty of Education ethics committee. Her research interests include student and staff partnerships in curriculum design and participative approaches to teaching and research.

Abstract:

In the current context of higher education, there are increasing calls for students to become 'co-creators', partners and active participants in their own learning (Bovill *et al*. 2008, ESIB 2002, Nicol 2008, QAA n.d., SFC 2008). This raises a challenge to some traditional perceptions of the tutor-student relationship where the prevailing culture in higher education views the tutor as the expert and the student as the subordinate learner. Rather, co-creation and partnership suggest the need for a more equal relationship between tutor and student and a potentially radical change to the ownership of traditional areas of practice such as curriculum design. Currently, there is little research literature that explores active student participation in curriculum design within the higher education context.

This paper outlines the findings from a research project investigating examples of active student participation in curriculum design. The study focused on gathering in-depth information from three case studies, where students were actively participating in designing the curriculum. These cases were purposively chosen as they were identified in an earlier QAA Scotland-funded project investigating first-year curriculum design (Bovill *et al*. 2008) and were the only examples gathered that demonstrated high levels of active student participation in curriculum design. Therefore they provided a clearly delineated and "bounded" sample, suggestive of using case study methodology (Jones *et al*. 2006). This choice of methodology was also supported by the need for in-depth information from these cases to provide greater understanding of a currently under-researched area of practice.

The three examples investigated in the study were from an environmental justice course at Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh, a geography course at University College Dublin, Ireland, and from an education course at Elon University, North Carolina, USA. Semi-structured interviews with course co-ordinators and document analysis formed the main research methods used in the study. The research investigated: descriptions of the curriculum design work undertaken; the rationales tutors gave for adopting a collaborative curriculum design process; the processes involved in carrying out the work; factors which influenced the level of student participation aimed for and achieved; and also whether the outcomes differed in any way from adopting a tutor-led curriculum design approach.

The findings and lessons from the research study are presented, focusing particularly on ways in which active student participation in curriculum design led to tutors and students redefining their relationships and traditional boundaries. These findings also raise some challenging questions for academic staff and curriculum planners in the higher education sector and some of these questions will be utilised to engage audience discussion.

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Karin Crawford; Understanding the Students' Perspective on How Pedagogical Approaches Influence Their Experience

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Keywords & Précis:

students consulting on teaching	student experience	students as partners

This presentation will describe a pilot project at the University of Lincoln; 'Student's Consulting on Teaching'. The project's focus is the student perspective; it offers a 'lecturer-led' student-based service to educators, whereby trained student consultants provide feedback to individual lecturers on how students experience the pedagogical approaches.

Short biography of the author:

Karin is a Principal Teaching Fellow in the School of Health and Social Care and Director of Teaching and Learning for the Faculty of Health, Life and Social Sciences at the University of Lincoln. Karin teaches on the undergraduate programmes in the school, with a particular interest in the development and facilitation of learning through open, distance part-time learning and using technology to aid learning. In her role as Principal Teaching Fellow, Karin also supports the work of the University of Lincoln's Centre for Educational Research and Development (CERD) and in her capacity as Director of Teaching and Learning for the Faculty, Karin undertakes a range of Faculty level responsibilities including chairing the Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee and representing the Faculty on various University-level committees.

Abstract:

This presentation will share the author's experience of setting up and running a pilot project, in the School of Health and Social Care at the University of Lincoln. The project's core focus is the student perspective; it offers a "lecturer-led" student-based service to educators, whereby trained student consultants provide feedback to individual lecturers on how students experience the pedagogical approaches. The project acknowledges that students are the "experts" on the experience of participating in teaching and learning activities. As such it works in partnership with students, potentially breaking down the perceived boundaries between student and teacher and encouraging "the development of collaborative relations between student and academic for the production of knowledge" (Neary and Winn 2009: 137). Student observers/consultants are trained and paid; they also gain valuable experience that will be useful for their own development.

This project offers an innovative strategy designed to enable academics to further enhance teaching and learning and thus improve the student experience. Academics typically receive student feedback, comments and ratings on their teaching through end-of-unit evaluations and large student surveys such as the National Student Survey (Hagyard 2009). All of these mechanisms can be, and have been, critiqued, but perhaps their most indisputable weaknesses are that they are impersonal and untimely. Issues of focus, motive and timing for evaluative feedback are significant in making it meaningful (Hounsell 2009). The purpose of the SCOT (Students Consulting on Teaching) project is to enhance teaching and learning at the University of Lincoln by providing academics with a source of informed feedback other than student questionnaires. It is contended that timely, focussed, negotiated feedback from the student perspective supports the reflective practitioner, their "situational understanding" (Eraut 2004: 100) and the development of practice-based evidence.

The project supports the University of Lincoln's strategic goals for continuous improvement of teaching and related professional practice, alongside the aim to provide students with relevant experiences to enhance their prospects, with students being valued as producers and peers. Upon request by an academic, a trained student consultant/reviewer, who is not a member of the academic's classes, is invited to provide feedback on teaching and learning in a particular session, module or unit. Because invited student consultant/reviewers are not enrolled in that course, or have

not previously taken that course, the feedback that academics receive is from an impartial student's perspective.

The presentation will provide a candid evaluation of the opportunities and challenges that have arisen through the implementation and management of this scheme that works in partnership with students as consultants on teaching.

The audience will be provided with handouts and various materials about the project including leaflets and examples of project documentation.

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Peter Samuels, Yvette Solomon, Duncan Lawson, John Goodband & Roy Bhakta; From 'Anarchy' to Establishment: Case study in the evolution of a mathematics social networking community

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Keywords & Précis:

social networking services	Mathematics	communities of practice	Mathematical identity

This paper presents a case study investigation of a UK Higher Education mathematics department's experiences of how the establishment of a Facebook community with active student and staff membership has led to greater participation and a change in undergraduate learning identities within the department's community of practice.

Short biography of lead author:

Peter Samuels obtained an MA in Mathematics from Cambridge University and a PhD in Mathematics from the University of Reading. He is currently Senior Research Fellow with the SIGMA Centre for Excellence at Coventry University where he also coordinates the Serious Games Applied Research Group. His current research interests include: discrete mathematics education; Appreciative Inquiry research into mathematics support leadership; mathematics study skills resource development; serious games and mobile learning in HE mathematics; the training of mathematics education PhD students; and collaborations between mathematics support and academic writing.

Full Paper:

From 'Anarchy' to Establishment: Case study in the evolution of a mathematics social networking community

Abstract

The popularity and utility of social networking services have the potential to change the relationship between academic departments and their undergraduate students, and students' own relationships with their subject. This has been shown to be particularly relevant in the area of undergraduate mathematics learning, where local communities of practice are frequently experienced as excluding.

This case study investigates recent experiences within a UK higher education mathematics department of the use of Facebook as a means of supporting easy and effective mathematical communication and a move towards more participative undergraduate learning identities.

Drawing on data acquired from multiple sources, the study describes how the establishment of a Facebook community with active student and staff membership may have led to greater participation and a change in undergraduate learning identities within the mathematics community of practice in the department. However, it has also raises issues about the negotiation of group ownership and censorship, and the extent to which Facebook can encourage open collaborative learning within the wider context of student aspirations in a competitive climate.

The paper concludes by considering how the new pedagogic and social structures which are potentially facilitated by the availability of social networking services need to be framed within the context of staff and student expectations within changing academic cultures.

1. Introduction

Research into undergraduate mathematics learning indicates that a sense of belonging to the community is crucial to success for many students. Brown and Macrae (2005) found that students

who had more positive attitudes to their studies shared ideas in a mathematical community. Seymour and Hewitt (1997) identified peer tutoring and support as a major factor in continued participation in science/mathematics degree programmes.

Wenger's communities of practice model (1999) characterises identity as the experience of a common enterprise, with shared values, assumptions, purpose and rules of engagement and communication. Solomon (2007) draws on this model to argue that identifying as a participant in an undergraduate community of practice is vital to sustaining a positive attitude to mathematics study.

According to Brown and Macrae (2005) and Seymour and Hewitt (1997), one reason why learner identity may be so crucial in undergraduate mathematics is that students can experience the transition from school or college to university as particularly challenging. Some students meet these challenges by evolving community practices of peer support and a strong mathematics student identity.

Brown and Macrae (2005) also found that students' new ownership extended from their use of physical space to their use of university-provided virtual learning spaces. Back and Pratt (2007) analysed how NRICH discussion boards support the development of an identity of mathematician.

A particularly interesting form of virtual communication through Social Networking Services (SNS) has recently emerged. Boyd and Ellison (2007) state that SNS share a number of common features:

- A personal profile – users can create a page outlining personal details that other users can view
- Personalisable – to some extent, users have control over the layout of their profile
- Contacts/friends list – users can add other users to an online contacts list
- Messaging service – users are able to send messages to other members of the SNS

Ipsos MORI (2008) found that over 90% of UK university students maintain a SNS profile. Given the widespread use of SNS by students, it is natural for educational institutions to seek to exploit SNS to enhance learning.

Maloney (2007) indicates that the design of SNS shares many of the qualities of good educational technology in terms of facilitating peer feedback and matching the social context of learning, aligning with contemporary models of good practice in learning which encourage collaboration and active participation. However, Selwyn (2008) reports that the kinds of dialogue exchange within SNS are often "low bandwidth"; that is, the level of interaction between learners is often at a lower level than desired by educationalists. Learners tend to use SNS to micro-manage their social lives, as an arena for social exploration and to develop social networking skills rather than for deep dialogue based around their subject areas. Selwyn concludes that "the primary educational significance of social networking would appear to be its informal use". Ipsos MORI (2008) suggests that this informal use is more effective when the students themselves set up the groups.

One particularly popular SNS is Facebook (Facebook 2009). This paper presents a case study investigation of the possibilities for identity development and deep interaction in mathematics afforded by the use of Facebook within a UK higher education Institution.

2. Methodology

Some initial data is provided on the four Facebook groups which have been set up in relation to the University mathematics department. The methodology used to elicit opinions is two individual interviews plus a focus group.

The first interview was carried out with the staff member (henceforth referred to as SM) most involved with the Facebook groups amongst mathematics undergraduates at the University. The second interview was carried out with a postgraduate student (henceforth referred to as PS) who had acted as mediator when the mathematics department insisted that the Alternative Group be closed and had pointed out the benefits to its members of creating an official student society.

Six students participated in a focus group 7 months after the Alternative Group had been closed down. Five of these students (at this time, second-years) had been initiators of this group, and were now responsible for the University's Society of Mathematics and its associated Facebook group. The sixth was in the first year and active in the new society. Whilst the main theme of the discussion was

to gain the students' account of the history of the Alternative Group and their perception of the value of the current Facebook group, a number of key issues emerged, some of them unexpected. These focussed on:

1. The perceived purpose of both Facebook groups and of the University's Society of Mathematics
2. Learning relationships
3. The students' views of mathematics as a university subject

3. Findings

3.1 General statistics of the University's mathematics Facebook groups

Table 1 below summarises the history of the four Facebook Groups.

Facebook group name	University Maths	Alternative	Underground	University Society of Maths
Period open	May 2007 – present	October 2007 – May 2008	May 2008 – present	October 2008 - present
Current status	Inactive	Closed	Inactive	Active
Owner(s)	SM + PS	Six 1st-year students	Six 1st-year students*	One 1st-year + six 2nd-year students[2] + SM + PS
Form of membership filtering	Only members of TU allowed to join	None	Closed, invitation only	None
Main forms of dialogue	Discussion topics/online chat	Online chat	N/A	Discussion topics/event organisation/online chat

Table 1: History of the University's Mathematics Department Facebook groups from May 2007 to January 2009

Table 2 gives the breakdown of the membership of the groups in January 2009.

Classification	Staff	Others	'08-'09 1st years	'07-'08 1st years	'06-'07 1st years	'06-'07 2nd years	'06–'07 3rd years	Post graduate
University Maths	8	-	-	10	10	13	2	5
Alternative[3]	1	31	-	19	5	11	-	2
Underground	1	6	-	6	-	1	-	2
University Society of Maths	4	2	5	12	5	-	-	3

Table 2: Facebook Group membership January 2009

3.2 A staff member's (SM) perceptions

After studying as an undergraduate at the University then gaining a PhD, SM worked for the mathematics department. During SM's time as a student, there was no society for mathematics students. Students tended to work either individually or in small tutorial groups. There was no large group socialising and no socialising with staff. SM observed that this had changed.

> The newly refurbished maths centre had made a big difference to the way the maths undergraduates socialised. There was a small core group of about six students and they acted as a nucleus pulling other students into the group. This group contained some very strong personalities and they had lots of influence on other 2nd years.

[2] These are all the same students

[3] Figures shortly before this Group was closed down in April 2008

SM's motivation for starting to use Facebook was that he thought the students, and in particular the core group he mentioned, were keen to use it to discuss mathematics. At this time SM was spending approximately six hours per week in providing mathematics support to undergraduate students. However, his expectation that the students would use Facebook to discuss mathematics proved incorrect.

> I was surprised … the students didn't even use the University Maths Group to discuss revision for the exams.

When the Alternative Group was set up, SM joined it in order to maintain contact with as wide a range of students as possible. He observed that virtual interaction using Facebook prompted physical interaction between different year groups, a phenomenon which had not existed in previous years.

From late October 2007, students starting sending private messages to SM asking mathematical questions because they saw him as approachable.

When the Alternative Group was closed following pressure from the University authorities, some students set up a "secret" Facebook group (called here the Underground Group). SM was invited to join this group as a member, but not as one of the owners.

> Setting up this group gave the students a sense of self-confidence … that they were still in control, that they could set up their own group if they wanted to no matter what had happened to the Alternative Group.

3.3 A postgraduate student's (PS) perceptions

PS had acted as mediator when the mathematics department insisted that the Alternative Group be closed and had pointed out the benefits to its members of creating an official student society. The main purpose of the interview was to hear PS's perspective on the events around the formation and closure of the Alternative Group and the setting up of the University Society of Mathematics.

PS saw ownership of the groups as an important factor in their levels of activity.

> I think the students saw me as part of the establishment so they didn't invite me to join the [Underground Group] … the University Maths had become stagnant, but the Alternative Group, because it was owned by students, had more freedom.

PS explained his motivation for persuading the undergraduates to close the Alternative Group as follows:

> The [Alternative Group] wasn't suitable for being the main University maths students Facebook group for lots of reasons … it was cliquey … the group wasn't promoted to everyone and not everyone was made to feel welcome … it wasn't an official student society but it used the university name and so there was bound to be a conflict … particularly because the name was rude.
>
> When they set up the [Alternative Group], they knew about official student societies but they probably didn't want to be bothered with all that stuff … it's so much easier just to set up a Facebook group.

When the University Society of Mathematics was set up as an official student society in May 2008, initially PS and another postgraduate student became President and Vice-President. However, in October 2008 when all the formalities had been completed, some undergraduates willingly took on these roles. PS thought that this was because of their inexperience.

PS pointed out that the University Society of Mathematics Facebook group had contributed to the sense of control the students felt, and observed that they generally the tone of the University Society of Mathematics Facebook was constructive and purposeful.

3.4 Perceptions of the Focus Group 1: Social networking in mathematics: the perceived purpose of the Facebook groups and the mathematics society

The students described the origins of the Alternative Group as 'more jokey than anything', as 'not really mathematical'. While it had been started by a group of mathematics students and referred to

mathematics in its name, its main purpose was to socialise, and its success was measured by the students in terms of numbers of members (which included friends who were not mathematics students).

Socialising was felt to be important because of the size of the mathematics university community and of the overall University community in comparison to school. Indeed, the students commented on how they would never have joined an official mathematics society in their own induction week, and they gave as their reason for not contributing to SM's original Facebook group that 'it was a completely different interest'. In their account of the closing down of the Alternative Group they tend to play down the Dean's involvement, telling a non-acrimonious story of how it was suggested by SM and PS that they form a 'proper' mathematics society with financial backing from the university, with little to be lost through the closing of the group:

> It had run its course anyway – it wasn't expanding and it wasn't providing anything and the joke had pretty much worn off

Despite the emphasis on socialising, the Alternative Group did have some mathematical focus (IN refers to the interviewer):

> [IN: so you started it up for a laugh?]
> It was to start with… some of the original posts might have been fairly interesting [sarcasm – i.e. frivolous] … but as we went along there was more serious points towards it – some people were actually asking maths questions and it was having maths related things … there was occasional course-related thing but mostly it was just general.

However, the predominant nature of later contributions about mathematics appeared to be requests for help. The idea that the only reason for discussing mathematics is to get help with coursework is assumed also by S1's (S1 refers to student 1, S1 refers to student 2, etc.) underlining of why the Alternative Group was largely social:

> The thing was with it last year … the people who were in that group were all in the same year, so we'd help each other out in class anyway.

He went on to comment that, this year, the University Society of Mathematics Facebook group has a major focus on helping students in the first year.

Using the University Society of Mathematics Facebook group as a means of facilitating course help via the organisation of face-to-face meetings and book lending has become the major focus of the group's activity, and their discussion centres on the maintenance of the group through formal roles and society processes.

3.5 Perceptions of the Focus Group 2: Learning relationships

The students' involvement in the Facebook site and in the University Society of Mathematics thus has a formal focus as a means of bringing people together for face to face discussions about mathematics problems. Further discussion about the decision to 'sign up' individuals to help with particular modules rather than invite assistance from anyone revealed some important technological issues but also issues in learning relationships. Aside from continuity and consistency of help, the face-to-face system avoids some of the obvious problems of discussing mathematics online.

Crucially, however, face-to-face discussion enables a two-way teaching dialogue:

> S2: If you explain it face to face with somebody they can agree on the steps you're doing rather than you just listing them all … you can't explain every point, you're just telling them what to do rather than helping them understand it.

It may also be the case that this system avoids public embarrassment: when asked about staff involvement in the site, S1 explains why he did not contribute to the University Maths group:

> IN: Do you want all the staff to be involved?
>
> S2: Yes
>
> S1: Not all the staff because then it is just the University Maths except you got to pay 2 quid
>
> S3: We've got to keep an element of fun
>
> …
>
> S1: It would just seem – to me the University Maths didn't seem to have much point because I wasn't prepared to put a question into something where everyone would think I was stupid.

Their major focus on mathematics discussion as a support for assessment and teaching is underlined by their comments on one student's contribution to the dedicated module virtual learning environment, which have discussion sites. Asked about their contribution to these, S2 says that '*you might as well e-mail the lecturer*'.

3.6 Perceptions of the Focus Group 3: Mathematics as a university subject

One of the reasons given for not really using the Facebook site as a means of mathematics discussion was that it was difficult to discuss mathematics though this medium – the students did not have access to LaTeX (Lamport 1989), for instance. Additionally, they preferred face-to-face contact as it changed the nature of learning relationships as outlined above. However, it emerged towards the end of the discussion that the students' attitude to mathematics as a university subject provided an overarching reason for their particular use of Facebook. All agreed that their reasons for choosing to study mathematics at university level were because they had found it easy at school, and that a mathematics degree was a passport to a good job. S1 admitted that he did not really like the subject, and suggested that this was not unusual:

> I don't think there are that many people who actually have a genuine interest in maths … I don't, I really don't, I never have.

Further discussion showed that the students distinguished between 'real' or creative mathematics, engaged in only by a few students, and a more common instrumental mathematics. They also recognised that their own motives for taking mathematics may have confused ability with liking.

For S6, mathematics simply '*seemed the better job prospect'*. Only S3 suggests that he might enjoy mathematics for intrinsic reasons, giving as an example how he had found a '*pointless*' [i.e. non-assessed] lecture on triangles *'quite interesting'*. S1 sums up the majority view, perhaps, though:

> One thing I would have preferred in that lecture – he could have said at the start it was nothing to do with the course – then 2 hours later I wouldn't have written 17 pages on something that I didn't need.

These motives and attitudes provide an explanation for the students' use of Facebook as described here. While Facebook clearly has the potential to support engaged discussion and enable a shift in power relationships between learners and tutors, this potential is unlikely to be taken up when students are not driven by an initial intrinsic interest. The students in this study appear to have a strong focus on meeting assessment requirements, and have made use of Facebook to facilitate these rather narrower aims while maintaining the social networking side of Facebook in order to 'keep an element of fun', agreeing with the findings of Selwyn (2008).

4. Conclusions

This case study has found that the emergence of Facebook can contribute to some major changes in the experience of mathematics undergraduates, but that, in common with observations in Ravenscroft (2009), the situation is more complex and ambiguous than might be anticipated. Our data show that use of Facebook tends to flatten the hierarchical social culture of academia and that this can be both a good thing in terms of general student engagement but also a challenge in the sense that there is a culture clash between web 2.0 (O'Reilly 2005) tools and the social and pedagogic structures of academia. As Hemmi *et al.* 2009: 29) point out, "the volatile modes of online interaction enabled by the new social media perhaps sit uncomfortably within existing higher education practice". This case study demonstrates that students' perceptions of the purpose and nature of their university study are also highly relevant to the success of social networking as a means of fostering new teaching and learning relationships.

This case study research indicates that the phenomenon of Facebook (and potentially SNS in general) should be viewed from:

1. **The context of the social networking of students in general**: Some first-year students appear to take initiative in the formation of new social networks due to their prior experience of using SNS at school, but this is by no means universal. Student cohorts vary in their sociability and assertiveness but it seems to take only a small group of vocal students to get a social network going. The availability of Facebook can assist this process and can also be more inclusive (e.g. some students may not wish to socialise in a public house but most have access to Facebook via university computers). The study indicates that, however inefficient it may seem, some students prefer to contact staff by Facebook rather than faster methods, even if the subject is course related. As Back and Pratt (2007) suggest, different media can sometimes engender an alternative sense of identity, and our experience verifies this: some mathematics students who may have difficulties in overcoming shyness or articulating ideas have been transformed into fluent writers by utilising Facebook. The sense of not using a university-controlled forum may account for this loss of inhibition.
2. **Their self-positioning in the wider academic community and its practices**: The findings indicate that, while staff may be seeing Facebook as a site for more participative pedagogic practises which include opportunities for introducing students into the mathematics community, most students approach their studies rather differently. Facebook appears to have enhanced staff-student relationships but, with some exceptions, this change appears to be largely social in nature, agreeing with Selwyn, (2008). While this is clearly to the good in producing more egalitarian relationships with potential for identity change of the type we envisaged, the students' history of Facebook use and their rather instrumental attitudes to their university studies have considerable effects on the usage of such sites. However, while these media have the potential to go beyond help with assessed work and to foster relationships which are not only more egalitarian but also supportive of more engaged or participative learner identities students do not always appear to perceive or want this potential, or capitalise on it.

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Qin Zhou; Fostering Effective Student Learning of the Linux Operating System

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Keywords & Précis:

activity-led learning	problem-based learning	fostering effective student learning

This paper is to present my activity-led learning (ALL) practice that has fostered effective student learning of the Linux operating system, and share my research findings and experience in teaching the difficult subject with the wide academic communities.

Short biography of the author:

Dr Qin Zhou is a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Engineering and Computing, Coventry University in Coventry, UK. She is also a GIAC Certified Forensics Analyst and the creator of Masterkey Linux. Her research interests include operating systems, incident response, digital forensics and data recovery.

Abstract:

This paper is to present my activity-led learning (ALL) practice that has fostered effective student learning of the Linux operating system, and to share with the wider academic community my research findings and experience in teaching this difficult subject.

Linux is a powerful open-source modern operating system which is widely adopted and used in the computer community. When I first introduced Linux to the Engineering students in 2000, I faced huge resistance and received many complaints from the students. After some reflection, I realised that the complications of use, installation and less friendly user interface of Linux were the chief off-putting issues.

Starting from 2006, I began to develop my own distribution of Linux, “Masterkey”. It is a bootable live Linux operating system with a user-friendly desktop environment. With no installation required, Masterkey Linux is started directly from the CD/DVD-ROM or USB device of a computer and is fully accessible within minutes.

The beta version of Masterkey was released to students in 2007 for use in learning the subject of Linux included in some of our undergraduate courses. The approach of ALL and problem-based learning (PBL) was adopted and Linux-related group projects as well as problem-based/activity-based assignments were designed to foster students to do more practical work. A series of supporting learning materials was developed for the students to use, and advice was given to the students whenever needed. To my surprise, the students were very supportive. They were actively engaged in learning Linux and adopted open-source philosophy immediately. Feedback from the students was really positive. One student showed his support by designing a beautiful set of artwork for Masterkey which is now included in the latest release. The pass rates for related course elements (modules) were high.

A collection of tools focused on incident response and computer forensics was added to Masterkey Linux after the Beta version. Masterkey has since transferred itself to a live Linux forensics system. Masterkey is also being used in teaching computer forensics in 2008/9. The students have accepted it happily without any problems. Oral feedback from the students was also very positive.

Masterkey was introduced to the HEA ICS community and teaching experience using Masterkey was presented in the Computer Forensics Workshops in 2007 and 2008, respectively. Both were well received by the delegates. Many delegates requested copies of Masterkey and showed great interested in it.

In response to the feedback from students and the Workshop delegates, the official Masterkey Linux website, http://www.masterkeylinux.com, has been set up to distribute Masterkey and provide related information and support in 2008. The Masterkey Community site (http://www.masterkeylinux.com/community/) has been built to provide a friendly virtual environment for students and other community members to communicate with each other and help each other out in 2009. Students were also encouraged to get involved in the development.

Susan Mathieson; Communities of Practice and Academic Workgroups: Does the shoe fit? Rethinking agency and structure in academic teaching cultures.

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Keywords & Précis:

academic cultures of teaching and learning	modifying communities of practice theory	academic cultures of teaching and learning

This paper offers a modified communities of practice approach to understanding academic cultures of teaching and learning that shifts the focus from self-referential and agentic communities to foreground the significance of context in mediating academic cultures.

Short biography of the author:

Sue Mathieson is currently Learning and Teaching Coordinator at Heriot Watt University. She has a PhD in Educational Research from the University of Lancaster. The title of her thesis is 'Situating academic teaching cultures from the South African Experience: a modified community of practice approach'. Before starting at Heriot Watt University in February 2009 she worked as Humanities College Quality Consultant at the University of KwaZulu Natal in South Africa. Her research interests are academic cultures of teaching and learning, organisational change in higher education, the impact of merger on academic cultures, communities of practice theory and sociocultural theory.

Abstract:

Applications of "communities of practice theory" to academic practices of teaching, learning and research tend to work on the assumption that academics have considerable agency over their environments. However, it is argued that academic practices, rather than being emergent from largely agentic communities of practice, are shaped by a range of structural forces that academics have to mediate in developing their practices of teaching, learning and research. This perspective brings in to question the concept of communities of practice as relatively bounded and self reflexive entities, and instead posits a modified community of practice understanding of academic practices of teaching and learning as developed historically through a process of mediating a range of structural opportunities and constraints. From this perspective, academic practices of teaching and learning can be understood as emerging from networks of practices mediated in a complex and shifting environment.

This presentation draws on research into the experiences of academics of changes to their academic cultures associated with the merger of two South African universities into a single university (Mathieson 2009). Data was gathered from 30 semi-structured interviews with academics across four merging disciplinary workgroup clusters, supplemented by a range of secondary data available to me as a consultant in the quality promotion unit, such as programme and school reviews, and my participant observation as an academic of the university. The data was analysed drawing on Wenger's (1998) concepts of the joint enterprise, shared repertoire and mutual engagement, while also paying attention to issues of power and the significance of broader discourses in shaping academics' perceptions of change in their practices (Alvesson 2002, Contu and Wilmott 2003).

The research findings also challenge dominant structuralist understandings of difference in academic cultures as determined by differences in the epistemological characteristics of the disciplines (Trowler 2008). This research found considerable differences in workgroup cultures of the same discipline that had developed in different contexts. These differences could be understood as resulting from different ways of mediating the relationship between disciplinarity and a range of other forces acting on academic workgroup cultures.

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Selda Koydemir-Özden; Graduate Education in Turkey: Needs of students and evaluation of services

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Keywords & Précis:

graduate education	Turkey	graduate school

Based on Consensual Qualitative Research, this study reports on the findings of a study that attempted to understand the various aspects of academic, social, and personal needs of 16 Turkish graduate students enrolled on either a Master's or Doctorate Program at an Institute of Social Sciences.

Short biography of the author:

Selda Koydemir-Özden received her PhD from the Psychological Counselling Programme at Middle East Technical University. She is an assistant professor in the Guidance and Psychological Counselling Program at Yeditepe University.

Abstract:

Introduction

In Turkey, the demand for graduate education is increasing with the ongoing socio-cultural changes that started in the early 1980s such as the need for highly-skilled people in the competitive labour market (Akduman *et al.* 2001, Mizikaci 2003). Along with the demand for further education, the number of undergraduate schools and graduate institutions in Turkish universities, and the variety of programmes offered, are rapidly increasing. However, the quality of the services offered, particularly by graduate schools, is questionable given the limited number of qualified staff and academic resources (Karakütük 2001). Although most of the universities introduced accreditation studies, especially after Turkey joined the European student exchange programmes and after the Turkish Higher Education Council mandated universities to introduce such programmes immediately (Öz 2005), little is known regarding the status of the current academic programmes. Thus, it is believed by the researcher that understanding the needs of Turkish graduate students and their perceptions of graduate programmes could assist the principals in working towards the establishment of more qualified programmes to meet European quality standards. In this paper we report the findings of a study that attempts to understand the academic, social and personal needs of graduate students enrolled in an Institute of Social Sciences. Specifically, answers to such questions as "What are the major stressors of graduate students?", "What are the strengths and weaknesses of the graduate programmes?", "How are academic staff perceived and evaluated by graduate students?", "How does being a graduate student influence one's personal life?", and "What are the future career concerns of graduate students?" were sought.

Methodology

Consensual Qualitative Research method (CQR) (Hill *et al.* 1997) was utilized throughout this study. For this purpose, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with graduate students. Questions were selected by reviewing the relevant literature, and then modified by the opinions of two experts in the field of educational sciences. A total of 16 graduate students (9 females, 7 males) participated in the study. They were selected, using the convenient sampling method, from the Institute of Social Sciences in four different Turkish urban universities.

Findings

Data were analyzed by using the standard steps of CQR. Analysis of the data revealed common themes related to: a) transition to graduate school; b) experience of stress; c) ways of coping with stress; d) quality of the graduate education; f) academic needs; g) problems experienced with the

academic staff and peers; h) effects of graduate study on personal life; and i) future career plans and concerns. The most frequently mentioned stressors were workload, the qualifying exam, and balancing graduate study and personal life. The common coping strategies were relationships with family and friends. Many weaknesses of the graduate programme, such as lack of qualified physical and academic opportunities provided by the school, were identified. Participants indicated several problems they encountered in communicating with staff. They also reported being very concerned about life after graduation.

Conclusions

Turkish graduate students experience as great a level of stress as graduate students in Western countries. The unemployment concerns seem ironic given that most of them attended graduate school with the hope of finding better jobs. The findings regarding the stressors encountered by graduate students and the academic problems they face appear to be similar to the findings of other studies conducted with different samples (e.g., Pallos *et al.* 2005, Rocha-Singh 1994). The perceptions of the participants concerning the quality of graduate programmes also indicated that the universities are in need of improvement, particularly in the areas of academic staff and resources, so that the institutions can meet the requirements of the accreditation standards. The findings are believed to reveal the status of graduate education in Turkey, a developing country, as perceived by the students.

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Aileen Cater-Steel &.Jacquie McDonald; Developing Research Supervisors: Breaking down internal barriers and drawing on resources from the Australasian academic community

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Keywords & Précis:

research supervision	community of practice	training needs analysis

This paper reports on a project to improve research supervision. The project has established a Community of Practice - Research Supervisors (CoP-RS), conducted a training needs analysis, designed a professional development program, coordinated the delivery of pilot workshops, and is evaluating the effectiveness of the activities.

Short biography of lead author:

Dr Aileen Cater-Steel is an Associate Professor in the School of Information Systems, Faculty of Business, USQ in Queensland Australia. Her research interests include research supervision, IT Service Management and IT Governance. She holds a Learning and Teaching Associate Fellowship at USQ.

Full Paper:

Developing Research Supervisors: Breaking down internal barriers and drawing on resources from the Australasian academic community

1. Introduction

This paper reports on the progress of a project focused on the important learning and teaching issue of research supervision. The aim of the project is to enhance the learning journey of postgraduate research students by improving the capability of research supervisors at the University of Southern Queensland (USQ) Australia. The project has established a Community of Practice – Research Supervisors (CoP-RS), conducted a training needs analysis to determine the training requirements of supervisors, designed a professional development programme, co-ordinated the delivery of pilot workshops, and is evaluating the effectiveness and outcomes of the activities.

This paper describes the background which prompted the project, then details the activities undertaken to date and planned for the future. The outcomes and challenges are described. Conclusions are drawn and future research directions suggested.

2. Background

In the past, much of the professional development for research supervisors at USQ was conducted within faculties. It was organized in a sporadic, *ad hoc* fashion with little evaluation of training programmes. In 2008, the Graduate Research Committee (GRC) at USQ decided to implement an accreditation scheme for RHD (Research Higher Degree) supervisors. This raised awareness of the need for a coherent training programme for supervisors.

This project is directly aligned with the institutional goal “research and research training” in USQ’s Strategic Plan (2005–2009) (USQ 2005). It contributes to the initiative of “fostering the development of researchers and research students within USQ”. More importantly, the project complements the Academic Professional Development project, a major sub-project of the Program Revitalisation project that includes tailored professional development as well as communities of practice (LTSU 2008).

Increasingly, universities in Australia are under pressure to ensure postgraduate research students complete their projects in a timely manner. We also need to consider student satisfaction with the quality of supervision provided and ensure adequate resources are provided to ensure effective supervision. The issues addressed by this project are:

- do research supervisors at USQ have adequate knowledge and skills to supervise students?
- can the capability of research supervisors be improved by offering workshops and resources as part of USQ's professional development program?

Previous research has shown that supervisors tend to base their supervision approach on their own experience as research students (Pearson and Brew 2002). Traditionally, it was presumed that anyone capable of performing research was able to supervise a research project effectively (Taylor and Beasley 2005). Furthermore, the role of Principal Supervisor was achieved only after serving an "apprenticeship" as an Associate Supervisor "for the duration of a candidature, from admission through to submission of thesis and successful award of degree" (Monash University 2004).

Recently, literature has emerged relating to the pedagogy of research supervision and the recognition of research supervision as a form of teaching (Manathunga 2005). Consequently, research supervisors are urged to reflect on their own research style and that of their students. Pearson and Brew (2002) mount a compelling argument that supervisors need to develop a "repertoire of knowledge and understanding about different aspects of supervisory practice" (146).

This project follows guidelines promoted by Pearson and Brew (2002) and is "focused on the development of supervisors' knowledge base, their skills and their orientation to their practice" (148). It aims to provide the following learning outcomes for research supervisors:

- knowledge of USQ institutional requirements and procedures including ethics and workplace health and safety;
- greater self-awareness of supervisors' own conceptions of research and supervisory practice;
- understand what constitutes a productive research learning environment;
- appreciate a range of good practice approaches to research supervision.

The community of practice approach (Wenger 1998) supports the development of each supervisor's knowledge base as it provides a framework or approach where subtle, tacit types of knowledge can be cultivated, shared and sustained (Hildreth and Kimble 2004). Tacit knowledge is highly personal, and is understood without being articulated. It is the kind of knowledge that successful, experienced supervisors use in their everyday practice, however, it is hard to formalize and therefore difficult to communicate to others as it is unvoiced or unspoken. Lave and Wenger (1991) and Vygotsky (1978) have identified the acquisition of knowledge as a social process, and communities of practice provide the opportunity to share and articulate tacit knowledge.

The term "communities of practice" emerged from Lave and Wenger's (1991) study that explored learning in the apprenticeship model, where practice in the community enabled the apprentice to move from peripheral to full participation in community activities. Wenger *et al.* (2002) describe communities of practice as:

> Groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis … (As they) accumulate knowledge, they become informally bound by the value that they find in learning together. Over time, they develop a unique perspective on their topic as well as a body of common knowledge, practices, and approaches. They also develop personal relationships and established ways of interacting. They may even develop a common sense of identity. They become a community of practice. (pp. 4–5)

In April 2008, the USQ Graduate Research Committee adopted a proposal to accredit research supervisors and record their details in a register. The most recent figures available at the time suggested there may be as many as 80 USQ staff currently supervising research students. The GRC discussion paper stated that applicants for accreditation as a Research Higher Degree Supervisor "must have undertaken the University's Research Supervisors' Program or demonstrate that they have an equivalent level of expertise and/or training". At the time, USQ did not have a Research Supervisors' Program. Subsequently, USQ subscribed to fIRST, a repository of resources and workshops compiled by a consortium of universities in Australia and New Zealand (fIRST Consortium

2002). A working group was formed at the June 2008 GRC meeting to recommend the components of the Research Supervisors Development Program.

The knowledge and skills required by supervisors can be broken into two groups, administrative and academic. The GRC Working Group identified that administrative knowledge could be covered in an induction program for research supervisors and include topics such as USQ research policy, intellectual property (IP) policy and contract framework, ethics clearance, workplace health and safety issues relating to students, policies related to research finance support, administrative processes, USQ and Federal Government policies relating to admission, confirmation of candidature, submission of thesis, and examination. This list extended the range of topics recently identified by USQ's Director of the Office of Research and Higher Degrees (OR&HD). In relation to academic knowledge and skills, in the past, *ad hoc* seminars and workshops had been organized at USQ and Faculty level. The GRC Working Group recommended the following topics in the professional development programme: developing the student-supervisor relationship, literature review, development of the proposal and confirmation of candidature, thesis writing, and data analysis methods.

3. Methodology

Based on the background as described, the project was designed and achieved funding as a Learning and Teaching Associate Fellowship project. The project comprises four main activities to be achieved in 17 weeks from the beginning of March 2009:

1. establish a Community of Practice for Research Supervisors;
2. perform training-needs analysis;
3. develop and conduct induction and pilot workshops program;
4. evaluate the programme and report outcomes and recommendations to stakeholders.

3.1 Community of Practice – Research Supervisors

The establishment of a Community of Practice for Research Supervisors (CoP-RS) across all faculties at USQ commenced with the launch of the project. The purpose of the CoP-RS is to provide a formal social network of USQ research supervisors to encourage education, dissemination of best practice and to build on the existing knowledge in research supervision. Support and guidance was provided by LTEC CoP expert Dr Jacquie McDonald, as part of her Learning and Teaching Support Unit (LTSU) Community of Practice leadership role.

The community of practice model proposed by Wenger (1998) and developed further for business contexts by Wenger *et al.* (2002) provides a framework for the building of successful academic communities of practice. The essential elements of a Community of Practice are defined by Wenger (1998) as:

- a domain of knowledge that creates a common ground and sense of common identity;
- a community of people who care about the domain and create the social fabric of learning;
- a shared practice that the community develops to be effective in its domain.

In this project, the domain of knowledge is focused around research supervision, and the community members are USQ research supervisors. At USQ substantial progress has been made in adopting the Community of Practice concept since it was piloted in 2006 in the Faculty of Business CoP for First Year Core Course Leaders (McDonald and Star 2006, McDonald and Star 2008). The model has some unique features that have proven successful at USQ for implementing and sustaining CoPs in an academic context. These features include the use of the three CoP elements of community, sharing practice and building domain knowledge which provide the organising structure for CoP meetings. CoP priorities and a yearly agenda are established from issues identified by members at the first CoP meeting. The role of convenor is shared by a domain expert (in this case the Project Leader Aileen Cater-Steel) and a convenor with knowledge of CoP processes and professional development knowledge (Jacquie McDonald).

This CoP structure ensures that each of the essential elements of a CoP is addressed at CoP meetings, and it provides clear direction, outcomes and value-adding for members. The structure, community support, and outcomes have assisted in addressing initial scepticism about "just another meeting"

and ensure best use of the time committed, for time-poor tertiary educators (McDonald and Star 2008).

To help establish the Cop-RS, lists of supervisors were provided from the Office of Research and Higher Degrees. The lists had been provided individually from each of the five faculties and were in five different formats. The files contained errors and omissions in names. When the lists were combined, duplicated, and corrected the total population of supervisors numbered 190 rather than the initial estimate of 80. Invitations were emailed to the supervisors to attend the launch of the project and the first CoP-RS Meeting.

3.2 Training-needs analysis

Initially the Project Leader intended to develop the training-needs analysis for USQ. However, in July 2008, the researcher became aware of an Australasian Survey. The survey, funded by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council, was conducted by researchers involved with the fIRST Consortium (2009). Supervisors at USQ were encouraged by the Office of Research to complete the survey but there was insufficient response from USQ for fIRST to provide a detailed analysis of USQ responses. In March 2009, the researcher gained cooperation from the fIRST researchers to reopen the survey for USQ supervisors. Research supervisors were encouraged by the DVC Research to complete the survey. This has resulted in 48 responses to date.

3.3 Workshops

Through the CoP-RS, the project is building on the existing repository provided by the fIRST consortium by supporting professional development and providing opportunities to share practice, build resources and implement innovative research supervision practices. The establishment of the CoP-RS will address USQ's desire to improve research supervision practices by drawing together separate islands of research supervision knowledge into an accessible body of resources and social networks of professional expertise. The project aims to increase the awareness and use of different approaches to research supervision through the creation of a program of activities that will incorporate existing workshops and resources available both within USQ and from the wider fIRST Consortium of thirty-five universities throughout Australia and New Zealand.

Based on training-needs identified, suitable workshops from the fIRST collection will be identified. Where there is no suitable workshop available in fIRST, members from the CoP-RS will be invited to suggest an alternative. The fIRST workshop authors will be invited to USQ to present the selected workshops. To ensure transfer of skills, at least one USQ research supervisor will be identified as an "understudy" and encouraged to work with the presenter so that in-house expertise can be developed to conduct the workshop on an ongoing basis.

4. Findings

The CoP-RS meetings have a three-part structure: fellowship and sharing refreshments; sharing practice; and building domain knowledge. During the initial CoP-RS, supervisors worked in groups to discuss, list, and prioritise issues in relation to research supervision. The issues fall into four categories:

- A lack of training, mentoring, workload to support supervisors. Training requirements include thesis proposal defence, thesis writing, philosophy and methodology. It was suggested that there was a need for compulsory professional development for all supervisors, and for an audit of supervisors' skills and processes.
- The need to establish and maintain positive relationships with students and to recognize external pressures for student to complete in minimum time.
- The requirement for a central web-based repository so that supervisors can access policies, procedures, definitions.
- Difficulties in supervising international students in Australia and across borders.

The final issue is the result of the doubling of the headcount of international research students, over a five-year period, from 39 to 88 as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Higher Degree Research Students – Headcount from 2003-2008

	YEAR					
Student Group	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
International	39	43	51	58	65	88
Domestic	146	157	158	157	203	241
Total	185	200	209	215	268	329

Source: USQ Data

The second CoP-RS meeting focused on sharing practices related to international students. Members discussed the challenges of international students and suggested a range of solutions to overcome the perceived challenges. One suggestion is to use the existing USQ course management system (Moodle) to create a community research course which is not tied to any program or semester offer. This course would provide an online environment for supervisors and students to share resources, build learning communities and electronically answer frequently asked questions (on such subjects as, for example, policy issues). The Moodle environment also hosts asynchronous discussion forums, so international students can interact at any time, despite different time zones. Other suggestions involved supervisors using communication technology such as Skype to help students overcome feelings of isolation.

In terms of building domain knowledge, the second CoP-RS examined training requirements for RHD supervisors. The suitability of the fIRST resources was discussed and four workshops selected for testing. Members of the CoP-RS volunteered to take on the role of understudy for each workshop. The authors of the selected fIRST workshops have been invited to present their courses at USQ and to facilitate the transfer of knowledge to the understudies so that the workshops can be scheduled as required in the future.

Although the project is achieving its outcomes in terms of the establishment of the Cop-RS and the pilot workshops, there are challenges. The CoP-RS meetings include supervisors from all five faculties, but only about 20 supervisors are engaged in the CoP at this early stage. It is not surprising that there is resistance as the project is associated with USQ's implementation of the supervisor accreditation initiative. The extent of resistance is difficult to gauge: after the invitation to the first CoP-RS meeting, the Project Leader received this email sent in error! "yes, I got this too! Again, it's a process of 'institutionalising'. Anyway, we have a meeting with XXXXXXX that day – 9.00-10.30." Increasing expectations of accountability and performance are changing the traditional supervisor role, with the locus of accountability with "the institution rather than individual academics, particularly in Australia … where ranking relates to the institution rather than its 'component parts'" (Coaldrake and Stedman 1999).

Another challenge relates to the lack of a reward mechanism for understudies to compensate them for their time in preparing and conducting the pilot workshops. Also, supervisors from USQ's two small satellite campuses have not shown interest in the project. A strategy needs to be formulated to ensure that they can be involved in the CoP-RS and can attend the workshops.

5. Conclusions

It is too early to judge if the programme of workshops developed by this project will suffice to provide the skills required by USQ supervisors. Evaluation may determine that it is not a sustainable model. The project is using a variety of methods to evaluate its efficacy:

- Extent of participation and activity in CoP-RS as recorded during meetings;
- Feedback from CoP-RS;
- Feedback from evaluation forms at pilot workshops.

Beyond the life of this project, its longer-term impact may be measured by the following performance indicators: Research Higher Degree enrolments and completions; research student and graduate satisfaction; research student graduate destinations; and qualifications and skills profile of staff.

One of the highlights of this project is that it helps to overcome internal USQ boundaries between "Research" and "Learning and Teaching" (L&T). Financial support from the PVC L&T was provided with an Associate Fellowship grant. The Associate Fellowship provided teaching relief for 18 weeks and provided travel costs to enable presenters to come to USQ ($6,000AUD). The project also involves the HR department (recording of attendance for professional development register, scheduling workshops), the PVC Research (funding for CoP-RS refreshments) and also the Office of Research and Higher Degrees (providing lists of supervisor names). The planning and implementation of CoP-RS is a collaborative partnership between the Project Leader and a member of LTSU. This is an example of the "joint portfolio" between the teaching and learning centre and the research centre of the university as prescribed by Murphy (2004). The CoP-RS is creating research leadership and building a research supervisor community that has broken down the borders between Faculty and research disciplines. Despite the complex issues around sharing different research methods and approaches, the CoP-RS provides rich learning opportunities and builds a dynamic community with a high level of expertise and resources to support both local and international research students.

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Kevin Walls & Dennis Foster; Engaging Staff and Students in a Trans-national Postgraduate Programme

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Keywords & Précis:

international learning environments	boundaries to trans-national learning	distance learning support mechanisms

This paper examines how our faculty is currently analysing the academic practices used in the UK blended programme and using them, together with the instructional design and the support mechanisms, to drive the structure and organisation of the overseas delivery in order to enhance the learning experience.

Short biography of the authors:

An extensive background in multi-national organisations preceded a move into Higher Education. As a senior academic Dennis Foster builds links between the academic community, businesses and industry professionals. He is a specialist in e-learning content authoring and instructional design. As a lifelong training professional, he has gained the coveted Chartered Manager award from the Chartered Management Institute UK.

Kevin Walls is the instructional designer at the faculty of technology, innovation and development at Birmingham City University. He has been working on several projects, including the MSc Logistics and Supply Chain Management blended learning programmes since 2005. His interests include distance learning support tools, and interactive e-learning materials.

Abstract:

Part of Birmingham City University, the faculty of Technology, Innovation and Development (TID), began delivery of its first UK blended learning programmes: an MSc in Logistics and an MSc in Supply Chain Management in September 2006. As a first venture into blended learning delivery, the faculty staff experienced a very steep learning curve with many lessons learnt, particularly in the choice and use of learning support mechanisms and student engagement. Video-conferencing has been incorporated into the UK courses to overcome the loneliness of the long-distance learner and other technology, such as forums, podcasts, mass e-mail, etc., have been trialled, more or less successfully, and/or integrated into the programme and valuable lessons learnt. These programmes continue to run twice yearly and have already successfully produced graduates from the first cohort in September 2008.

These MSc programmes are currently being set up for delivery to a new overseas blended learning cohort in collaboration with Nilai University College, Malaysia, for an initial delivery beginning in September 2009. The two universities have not collaborated before, Nilai University College has not hosted a blended learning course before, and the TID faculty has not delivered one overseas. Our experience with technology and with our own domestic blended learning programme means that the physical distance, the *border* between the two institutions, should no longer prevent collaboration between such geographically remote locations. However, there are still *boundaries* which need to be considered. Expectations and previous learning experience will impact on both staff and learners. There may be differences in the learner approach to and use of technology and support systems.

This paper examines how our faculty is currently analysing the academic practices used in the UK delivery and using them, together with the instructional design and the support mechanisms, to drive the structure and organization of the overseas delivery in order to enhance the learning experience.

In addition, the pre-planning includes an opportunity to explore how those lessons learnt during the domestic delivery in the UK might be successfully applied to an international learning environment.

We are aware of the areas where differences between the two programmes may lead to modifications to the course content, delivery, or the tools used to support it. For example, the boundaries between the different staff, students, learning styles, learning cultures, assessments, expectations, etc., may all impact on the course.

This is an exciting moment. On the one hand there is a clean slate, an opportunity to implement best practices in e-learning technologies without any interference from “legacy” courses. On the other hand, there is a limited pool of practical experience or published research to draw on. Hence, this conference will provide an excellent opportunity to pool resources and understanding of the internationalization of higher education and its impact on academic practice both in this specific instance and more holistically.

Charlotte Mbali; The Circumfluence of a University: Border-crossing in a new continuing education programme at a South African University

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Keywords & Précis:

continuation education	knowledge for its own sake	community outreach

There are many border-crossings to be navigated in the circumfluence of a University, as analysed in this paper about re-establishing continuation classes at a South African University, including borders of lecturer credentials, knowledge status, cultural links, market targets and synergies of cultural and educational activities.

Short biography of the author:

Charlotte Mbali has worked many years in adult education both in the UK and in South Africa. Some of this has been within formal higher education, while some has been with social awareness organisations, and development education centres. For the past 16 years, she has been working in a Centre for Higher Education on pedagogical courses for lecturers and research about it. Her interest in continuation education stems partly because it seems to be good for lecturers to be challenged to present their topics to the intelligent public rather than just for their own students and research interests.

Full Paper:

The Circumfluence of a University: Border-crossing in a new continuing education programme at a South African university

1. Introduction

All organisms have a circumfluence: trees affect the air temperature around them, plants affect the soil composition, elephants make the ground shake. Similarly a university, as a social organism, has a circumfluence which goes beyond its defined institutional boundaries and budgets. Higher education policy frameworks and league tables have the effect of narrowing the goals of many universities to certain measurable targets such as research publication and graduate output. But nobody has yet found the appropriate measures for university circumfluence, which is why continuing education is now a neglected or haphazard provision compared to its peak days in the 1980s. Where continuing education is conceived as being mainly about continuing professional education (CPD), this can thrive and bring in extra fees. Where it is about "community outreach" this may be in the rhetoric but not significantly in the budgets. Where it is just about "liberal education" or simply knowledge that local people would like access to, this does not have much appeal to university planners working to the national frameworks and international competitiveness. This article is about what a project of continuing education might reveal about a university's circumfluence, and how paying attention to the border crossings around the circumfluence can affect the pedagogy.

2. Synopsis

The border crossings this adult educator/researcher encountered in the activity of trying to re-establish continuation classes at a university campus included:

- Curriculum borders
- Defining education markets
- Border crossing with other adult education activities such as bookshops, film festivals, environment networks
- Established knowledge and alternative knowledge, especially with regard to health
- What establishes the credentials of a lecturer?

- Cultural borders in potential course subject matter (in a culturally diverse city)
- Generational specific demands
- Knowledge for qualifications and knowledge for its own value
- Challenging the limits of average computer skills with a technosmart Moodle system

This paper could consist of a narrative account of the first 10 months of a "new" continuation education programme, but instead this narrative will be subsumed in an analysis of the problems encountered and the questions they raise that reflect various concerns about trends in higher education, both internationally and in South Africa

3. Background

The capacity to mount university continuation classes demands a certain level of intellectual capital in a locality. Durban, South Africa, is a port city of some 3.5 million people which has a large research university (University of Kwa-Zulu Natal) and two universities of technology. Higher education, in some form, has been available for about 100 years in this city although not widely open to the entire population during the 40-plus years of apartheid government. The population of Durban in apartheid times was classified in four groups: White, Indian, Coloured and Black, but within these groups there are more specific groups, English- and Afrikaans-speaking among the Whites, Hindus and Moslems within the Indian group, and a minority Sotho or Xhosa-speaking Blacks among a predominantly Zulu population, as well as a more recent influx of other Black Africans especially refugees from Zimbabwe. The major university reached parity of White, Indian and Black students by the mid-1990s, and now Blacks are in a majority in all the higher education institutions. The teaching staff at the universities are predominantly either White or Indian, with Blacks still a minority. In generational terms, this means that the city has significant numbers of retired white or Indian academic staff. There has been brain drain of graduates, especially young white professionals, overseas.

The more recently graduated, post-apartheid, would include larger numbers of Black graduates.

4. The history

In 1970 the Convocation and the SRC of University of Natal requested a series of extension lectures which Mackie (1995) asserts was motivated by the students' desire to broaden the established curriculum with supplementary courses, for instance in another Faculty, and by Convocation's sense of the need to provide its members with the means of keeping abreast of developments in their field. Thus, right from its inception, this programme had both a curriculum-broadening aim and a vocationally-specific aim, to which a third goal was soon added, that of working with the educationally dispossessed. By 1980 there were three divisions in the Adult Education Centre: Liberal Studies (the extra classes for the intelligent public and interested students); Professional Studies (for professionals to keep abreast of their field); and Community Studies (a later development of this was the training of adult educators). The Liberal Studies division became the Unit of Continuing Education (UCE) with a staff of two who, over the next 25 years, organised evening and Saturday courses at the Howard College campus. Something similar in aim was taking place at the Indian University with highly popular winter schools in the 1990s. By 2004, when the two Universities merged, the winter school had been cut, and in 2006 on the retirement of the two UCE staff, that programme was also dropped, to the frustration of the 800-plus clients on its mailing list. It was rumoured that the management of the merged university, focussed as they are on a "transformational" agenda, were not interested in subsidizing a programme which they saw as providing mainly for an aging white suburban constituency. As the national funding framework does not allow for this type of university extension function, one budgetary solution would be to attach the administration of it to one of the more lucrative professional programmes, such as those for teachers in the Faculty of Education. But those who are closer to the actual clients realized that this "solution" was not going to deliver anything like the programme they hoped for, so they stepped beyond the bounds of the university and founded a new non-profit organisation called Lifelong Learning, kzn (LLLkzn).

5. Border-crossing challenges for LLLkzn

The constitution of LLLkzn specifies that it is for disseminating education *not for qualifications*. The downside of this is that LLLkzn thereby abandons any claim to the lucrative enterprise of providing continuing professional education, or of the frustrating efforts to provide "bridge" qualifications for

the ever-growing numbers of under qualified school-leavers. But a major advantage is freedom from the heavy quality requirements of the SA system (registration of all qualifications with SAQA, and accreditation of the institution with the CHE). It is also free from the long-drawn out (often two-year) process of trying to mount a new course within the university which requires filling in module templates for submission to school and faculty boards. This means that LLLkzn can mount short courses or even single lectures month by month, according to demand. The market would be the judge of quality.

This market-responsive feature was made possible by the development of open source computer software such as Moodle which means that the LLLkzn site can advertise courses online and gauge the demand for them before the delivery dates, and cancel those that are under-subscribed.

LLLkzn was not intended to be entirely separate from the university. Venues, AV equipment, computer networks, and such like, can all be accessed more easily from within a university structure. At the start, we had begun by asking, within the university community, who would be willing to lecture in such a programme, and were pleasantly surprised at the variety of lecturers who volunteered. These lecturers all had interesting material that they could easily adapt for this different audience. Indeed it could be asserted that it is pedagogically good for lecturers to be challenged to adapt their material for the intelligent general public, rather than either the rarified discourses with their peers in specialist journals or the routinized lecture mode to their students. A class of adults, who have chosen to attend, and put aside money and time to do so, are likely to be highly motivated. The questions they ask, and the discussion generated, would tend to have unexpected real-life connections that the lecturer would not have so readily have encountered within the confines of the discipline or with regular students who are often too focussed on “passing”. The participants of such voluntary classes bring considerable diverse experience, which means the pedagogy can be more social allowing the students to learn from each other.

As the viability of the project depends on attracting enough students to mount a class, the choice of topics to advertise stems from perceptions of the market. At first we naively thought that if we just advertised a good menu of courses in general (via the website and local newspapers) people would flock to sign up. Then we discovered that it is hard work to get publicity via articles in the press, and publicity of the advertising type costs money in column inches. We reconsidered the situation and realized that for each topic we had to generate a publicity plan, which involved penetrating the networks of people likely to be interested. For “Computing for Parents” we had to go to the schools and parent-teacher bodies. For “Climate Change” we had to become familiar with the “green” journalists and the enviro e-networks. For those used to constructing curriculum around a progression of learning, especially as required by a professional body, this required a novel way of seeing how their speciality fits in with the other sources of knowledge available to the general public. For those planning LLLkzn, it means being aware of the schedules of these various specialist networks, and working in synergy with them. It means working alongside those whose livelihood is also tied up with the knowledge, such as booksellers (our treasurer is the campus bookshop manager), journalists, musicians, performers and specialist consultants.

Globally, if we are educated and employed, we can access many sources of knowledge: books, specialist clubs and societies, TV, films and DVDs, newspapers, the internet. New knowledge as generated in universities is digested by journalists, scriptwriters and popular authors and reshaped into a public format. With so many other ways for knowledge to reach the public, is there then any need for university lecturers to engage directly in continuing education? The answer is yes, because in an age of globalised presentation of knowledge, the particular points of local relevance get lost. For example, South Africans can watch Al Gore’s film *An Inconvenient Truth* without realizing that, because of their coal-generators, their carbon footprint is far higher than the average American’s. A local lecturer can focus on the locally salient points, with illustrations, thus strengthening the university’s local circumfluence.

Of course, the university is not the only provider of such knowledge. There are employed professionals, knowledgeable activists in organisations and enthusiastic expert individuals who have valuable knowledge to contribute. An example of each: the trauma doctor who wants to lecture on injuries to children, to begin an outreach programme to primary teachers and parents; the animal rights activist who can explain how people can co-exist with monkeys rampaging on their property;

the couple who have spent twenty years developing a rose garden with an incredible variety of rose cultivars. Continuing education can also be a vehicle for civic and democratic education. Urban planners can be invited to explain how the metro is tilting northwards with the new airport. The police can be invited to talk about crime and the importance of community police forums. Self-development topics are also popular and lucrative (judging from sales of motivational books), as are health matters.

But here we hit the dilemma of what constitutes "acceptable" knowledge for a continuing education programme associated with a university. There is therapy as professionally defined by the Medical Board, and then there are alternative therapies, such as African traditional, Indian traditional (Ayurvedic) and more wacky modern claims to healing and holistic good. Some of the latter are keen to get on the schedule of the LLLkzn courses primarily to attract customers to their practice. So are there boundaries of standard and alternative knowledge, of education and private enterprise that need to be clarified? We asked a regularly qualified doctor if we should feature the alternative health providers in the programme; he said go ahead with the variety. So if a Reiki master practitioner wants to give an introductory lecture on Reiki, with the hope that individuals may then pay for therapy at her practice, is that any different from the financial adviser who gives a free lecture on financial planning and handing out his business cards at the end?

We have decided to let the clients decide. Fortunately the Moodle system has a neat way of linking course description to lecturer profile. So we have told lecturers to put enough in their profiles about their qualifications and experience to allow people to make up their own minds about whether they want to pay money for the knowledge these lecturers can provide. We also know we need some "cash cow" topics that will generate enough income for LLLkzn for us to pay for the desired publicity and other outreach programmes we envision. But will this eventually result in a dumbing down of topics, as the most popular are likely to be the least academic? Probably not, as those after the most dumbed down form of leisure entertainment are more likely to head for the beach, the casino or the clubs and pubs of this metro. Those who are prepared to spend their leisure in class are more likely to be the better educated, many are alumni, and some are former staff, of the university. They are part of the university's circumfluence, the more highly educated mixing in with the general public across the city. For knowledge dissemination, such people are vital – they are "the innovators and early adopters" (Rogers, 1962), the small percentage of well-informed people who influence public opinion, the Clerisy (Coleridge, 1829) who enlighten the rest.

Another border-crossing challenge is religion. Individuals wanting slots in the lecture programme may be primarily concerned with religious propagation. So why can't we just let the clients decide? If they want to pay to be preached at, why not? Our reaction to this is cautious. Durban is a city where the different cultural groups still do not intermingle much socially. LLLkzn classes could be a safe space where inter-cultural dialogue could be undertaken. So if we take into the programme religious or "meaning of life" topics, we will try to ascertain first how inclusive the lecturer intends to be in inter-cultural outreach.

Will classes segment according to generational interests? In the 1990s, computer classes mostly consisted of the over 40s who needed to catch up with skills they had missed in their own formal education. We are shaping programmes to appeal to certain age groups, for example, one on energy drinks and sports injuries to appeal to the young gym members and one on the family medicine cupboard to attract young mothers. But in the main it is to be hoped that, unlike regular undergraduate education, continuing education classes can attract a spectrum of age groups. Thus it can facilitate dialogue across the generations, especially valuable in South Africa where the older generation has different versions of recent history.

There is such a strong policy framework of quality assurance and accredited institutions in South Africa that some tend to ask first "can I get credits for this course?" This reveals how liberal education is being smothered by excessive demands for qualification. Not all types of knowledge need to be assessed and credited. "Knowledge for now, knowledge for life" is our motto. If it is really the knowledge of "now" it may need to be a one-off, put in because it is topical but cannot wait for the slow process of academic or professional curriculation. If it is "for life", then people value it for its own sake, because they see how it meets their life needs. This includes the retired people who no

longer need qualifications and who, with the wisdom of age, can select the knowledge they wish to enjoy in their remaining years.

Some of these older clients are challenged by the techno-smart Moodle system because they were used to communicating by phone with the staff of the previous programme. But we are persisting with coaxing them to sign up online and crossing that border into computer-assisted education administration. We also intend to implement a questionnaire online which will enable us to find out more about LLLkzn participants' interests, complaints and wishes. Hopefully we will have some data from this to analyze by the time of the IPED conference to give some research depth to the discussion above.

It should reveal more about the "border crossing" which such continuation education develops. It should also illuminate some characteristics of the circumfluence of the university.

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Wendy Bignold, Peter Clough, Fleur D' Souza & Arun D' Souza*; The Three Cs of Cross-institutional Research: Culture, curriculum and community*

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Keywords & Précis:

institutional collaboration	research culture	research community

This paper explores research culture, curriculum and community as understood by two institutions, one Indian, one English, which are working together to establish a joint research institute. In order to collaborate effectively leaders should not see differences in understanding as barriers but as opportunities.

Short biography of lead author:

Wendy Bignold is the co-director of the Institute of Research in Education and Society, at St. Xavier's College, Mumbai, India. She is a senior leader and Vice Dean of Education at Liverpool Hope University, UK. She has taught in a wide range of educational settings in the UK, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Hong Kong, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and India and in doing so has had to work across potential barriers, both physical and conceptual.

Abstract:

Universities and colleges of higher education around the world are increasingly required to develop their research profiles in order to compete in national and global markets. This requires a higher percentage of academic staff to be research active which necessitates the development of new research skills in staff and the confidence to undertake high quality research projects. This is particularly so for many lecturers at colleges of higher education in India and for many tutors at post-1992 universities in the UK. For this reason St Xavier's College, Mumbai, India, and Liverpool Hope University, UK, have established a joint research institute to facilitate staff development and joint research projects. This paper draws on the practice that has arisen from this collaboration, discussing the issues and presenting solutions to the complexities of cross-cultural, cross-institutional, collaborative research.

In developing a joint research institute three major areas of exploration have arisen which all apply to the research agenda. These are research culture, research curriculum, or areas for research, and research community. Each institution has its own understanding of these key components, influenced by national and institutional culture (Crossley and Watson 2003). In order for collaborative research to be undertaken effectively, these differences should not be seen as barriers between the partners but rather as the basis for sensitive discussion identifying similarities in the first instance (Liamputtong, 2008).

The main body of the paper is divided into three sections, Culture, Curriculum and Community, each of which poses a number of key questions which this case study is seeking to address. These questions are considered firstly from a theoretical perspective, drawing on relevant literature, and secondly examining the data gathered for this enquiry.

Starting with a discussion of cultural differences and similarities, contextualized by a critique of intercultural theory and cultural pluralism the first set of questions consider:

- What are the culturally determined traditions of practice relevant to this study?
- How do these traditions influence concepts and conceptualizations of research?
- What are the relationships between local, regional, national and international research definitions and policies relevant to this study?

When considering the actual curriculum, that is, potential research themes, the following key questions arise:

- What counts as knowledge and data?
- To what extent are epistemologies culturally determined?
- Would the same issues of ethics or methodology exist if it was a science-focussed collaboration, as opposed to the social sciences?
- What are the political implications and possibilities of research of this sort?

Finally the community, the academics at each institution and the institutions themselves, are discussed as a research community, exploring these questions:

- What is the importance of a shared vision and mission?
- How can effective, meaningful communication be developed?
- How can a sustainable community be established across significant distances?

This is a significant case study given the trend for cross-institutional collaboration in higher education. The paper seeks to present a summary of the theoretical context in which some of this intercultural collaboration takes place and to identify key lessons learnt so far from this particular collaboration.

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Tony Carr; Online Conferences: From generic conference design principles to remediated conferences

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Keywords & Précis:

conference design	online conferences	remediation

This paper considers changing notions of conference design including the shift towards more participatory designs and unconferences. It then explores the development of online conference and cites the e/merge online conferences as an example of how conferences can be remediated through well designed and facilitated online communication.

Short biography of author:

Tony Carr is the Staff Development Co-ordinator at the Centre for Educational Technology at University of Cape Town. His operational and research interests include online facilitation, communities of practice in staff development and online conferences. Tony has recently embarked on PhD research about the design of online conferences for professional development.

Full Paper:

Online Conferences: From generic conference design principles to remediated conferences

1. Introduction

This short paper is part of a research project on designing online conferences for professional development. The increased use of online conferences is driven by many factors including the convenience of participation from anywhere with an internet connection, savings in travel and accommodation costs, ecological concerns and the post September 2011 perception in many countries of the risks of long distance travel. These factors, however are insufficient to sustain participation in an online conference or to explain the persistence of an online conference series across several years unless these conferences are well designed and well facilitated to meet participant needs. The design of online conference then becomes a key concern if they are to be rated as good as face to face conferences or perhaps even in some ways better given the specific affordances of online conferences. After considering some of the generic design issues which affect conferences I will discuss how the affordances of online conferences provide further possibilities for engagement in conference learning communities. Thus designers of online conferences can reshape or remediate (Bolter 2001) the notion of a conference to produce events which only in part resemble their face to face precursors. This paper will include the "e/merge" online conferences as an example of what is possible even across a continent with limited bandwidth.

2. Changing Notions of Conference Design

Before discussing online conferences I need to consider the changing nature of conferences at a more generic level by drawing on literature which critiques conventional conferences and suggests improved design. While the notion of a conference is currently undergoing far-reaching re-evaluation the contemporary debates resound with echoes of similar debates in the late 1960s, including a critique of large group meetings and recommendations for the reformulation of conferences for a new era when younger conference participants seemed to be rejecting the authority of the presenter and the conference organiser. These earlier debates are eloquently reported in the second edition of Conference Planning (Warner Burke and Beckhard, 1970).

The problems of large conferences are well documented. In 1970 Bradford and Corey listed the four key weaknesses of large group meetings as "(a) the phenomenon of audience passivity induced by listening only; (b) the anonymity phenomenon of being lost in a mass instead of belonging to a working group; (c) the rejection phenomenon of resisting suggested changes made from the platform because the speaker is different from the audience member and does not understand his problems; and (d) the "one-way "communication phenomenon, which prevents the interchange of points of view and information at problem points that is essentials for real communication" (*ibid*, :66). Bradford and Corey 1970: 66) suggested the need to jettison the assumption that successful meetings were "dependent primarily upon forces emanating from the platform". In a live meeting in the recent Spaces of Interaction online conference convened by the Association for the Advancement of Computers in Education (AACE 2009) about improving conferences, Betty Collis suggested that most conferences are not designed for learning. Most of us will have experienced how this applies even to conferences in the field of education. The economics of conference management seems to lead to a focus on the rapid throughput of multiple tracks of presentations in packed schedules, which allow minimal time for engaged reflective conversation within scheduled sessions or for conversations across tracks. Ravn and Elsborg (2007:3) state that "we may well question the efficacy of such massive one-way communication. While there has been extensive experimentation pretty much everywhere else in the educational world, the conference, seen as a forum for learning, stills pegs the learner in the role of passive receiver of information." Such blocks to the use of conferences as learning events are not limited to events run by commercial conference management firms. Fortunately the organisers of iPED have an approach to conference design which is more likely to facilitate learning. A sampling of conference organisers' manuals, which are available online, suggests that a justified focus on issues such as funding, logistics and protocol may sometimes crowd out an explicit focus on learning. However, there are some encouraging statements in this regards. The Canadian Association of Journalists Conference Planning Guide (2002) suggests the desirability of "a convention that will provoke, illuminate, educate and delight" while the undated checklist for organisers of the International Association of Technological University Libraries conferences suggests that "Interactive sessions such as panel and discussion sessions may be particularly valuable and encourage audience participation."

Conference participants may also want something different from the traditional fare. Bradford and Corey (1970:68) suggest that "there are general patterns of audience needs - the need to participate in the meeting, the need to be accepted by others, [and] the need for reinforcement through discovering that others face the same problems". When Linda Starr (2005) asked the members of the Education World teacher team to talk about their best educational conferences their responses suggested the value of several aspects of the conference experience. These included high quality presentations with challenge and inspiration from experts, presentation by peers, networking opportunities, a sense of community with peers, sharing of stories and practices and transferable ideas.

Studies of conference design also suggest the need for conferences to provide opportunities for effective networking and reflective learning in communities of practice and inquiry. Zelmer and Zelmer (1991:14-15) list several motivations for informal interaction including "exchanging information with colleagues", "meeting potential colleagues", "talking to old friends", and "exploring employment opportunities". Howarth *et al* (2007: 7) state that "[p]eople attend a conference for a variety of reasons including learning new techniques, methods, and technologies. The conference activities are the necessary link between the attendees and the information that they want to obtain." They recommend that "activities should give attendees a starting point and encourage exploration and inquiry". Ravn and Elsborg 2007: 6 ask "What elements must a conference have to stimulate the kind of learning that helps people pursue their projects, unfold their potentials and flourish as humans?" They conclude that the design principles for a learning conference are concise presentations, active interpretation, self-formulation, networking and knowledge sharing, eliciting questions from less assertive participants and providing opportunities to engage with presenters after a presentation. Finally "there is good sense in conceiving of the conference as a learning forum that not only requires good input (in the form of substantial and entertaining presentations), but also facilitated processes and activities that induce people to interpret actively what they hear, relate it to their ongoing interests and projects, and to share inspiration and knowledge with each other at the conference" (Ravn and Elsborg 2007:23) . Chapman *et al* (2007:268) focussed in on the evaluation of

learning at conferences to develop "New Learning "as a process to both facilitate and to dynamically evaluate "learning and knowledge generation at research and professional development conferences. By drawing conference participants into capturing their learning through the conference the New Learning evaluation strategy changed the conference. The learning opportunities and knowledge creation were enhanced as participant learning became an overt object of reflection and conversation for participants.

The use of conferences to induct participants into the cultures of a professional community must also be a design factor. Benne and Demorest (1970:11) assert that "[e]very conference is a miniature society which is set up to assimilate for the time, immigrants from various back-home cultures. Its aim is to produce changes in these immigrants through conference associations - changes which will modify, directly or indirectly, back-home practices and patterns." They extend the immigration analogy to suggest that resistance to the new culture by the "tourist" and the uncritical embrace of the conference culture by the "expatriate" involve some form of rejection. (p13) Meyer (1985: 57) asks "How do newcomers work towards establishing a professional identity in a field while they are still developing a knowledge of that field ?"

The form taken by conferences has been challenged repeatedly over several decades. Mill (1970:5-6) describes an environmental conference in the late 1960s which included a loose schedule, participants dropping in an out of events, information booths, rock bands, experiential activities and participants who insisted on speakers coming down from the stage to engage with them. He argues that "The purposes of conferences will change. There will be fewer information-giving sessions and more information exchange; fewer passive audiences and more participative groups" (Mill 1970: 4).

More recently the traditional notion of the conference has been challenged by the rise of the "unconference" which originated within the technology industry but has been used across several sectors including education, librarianship and media. The organisers of the 2007 Common Repository Interfaces Group Unconference assert that "An un-conference is a combination of the best parts of a conference (face-to-face discussions generating new ideas, passionate debates and genuine information exchange) with all the PowerPoint stripped out. The agenda is set by the attendees on the day in a very simple and direct way." Follett 2006 describes the character of an unconference as "somewhere between that of a bazaar and that of an intellectual salon".

The unconference draws on principles from the Open Space Technology approach (Heft, undated) which has been used to unleash the creativity and best thinking in groups of up to hundreds of participants in large scale consultation and planning processes. One of the key principles in that of the law of two feet which states that "Any person neither learning from nor contributing to a group discussion must walk (or move) to another one ". Farkas 2009 in discussing the plans for the American Library Association Annual Unconference believed that "it's great to experiment with new participatory models within the framework of Annual ... It just doesn't make sense anymore for the topics discussed at a conference to be decided more than a year in advance."

From literature discussed thus far it would seem that conference designers need to accept and revel in multiple paradoxes as they design and develop a complex, emergent conference ecosystem. It may be that the ideal academic conference negotiates multiple interdependent and dynamic balances including balancing formal interaction with spaces and opportunities for informal engagement; presentation of information and ideas with learning through conversation across a broader conference community; and integration of delegates in a temporary conference community which includes respect and space for individuals to pursue their own interests. Each conference will find different ways to negotiate the challenges of fostering a conference community which is enlivened by the passions of the delegates and can support powerful learning by both experts and newcomers.

3. Online conferences

Perspectives concerning online conferences have changed radically over time. Writing in 1985 Draves stated that "The computer conference, the teleconference, and the audio conference will all have their place in the future. But their role will be delegated to two areas: pure information transfer and activities that cannot be accomplished by other means" (Draves, 1985: 83).

While online conferencing tools, including online discussion forums and chat rooms, have been in use since the early 1970s (Woolley 1994) the notion of the international online conference for academic and professional communities is a more recent phenomenon. One key step was taken in 1984 when Lisa Kimball organised an online conference which was available to participants networked through several mainframe computers. Another early model which demonstrated its resilience well into the period of the World Wide Web (Rubin 1996) is the e-mail based online conference. This was exemplified by the online Distance Education conference initiated by Terry Anderson in 1992 (Anderson and Mason, 1993) for distance educators who could not travel an annual face to face conference.

Since the mid 1990s the rapid increases in both bandwidth and processing power available in developed countries in particular have influenced the technologies and form of online conferences. There has been a proliferation of development of low cost live online meeting technologies including several free online services which have fuelled the shift towards increased use of synchronous online conferencing and online conferences which start and end within the time frames of conventional face conferences. Some online conferences now make effective use of Web 2.0 tools such as wikis, blogs (Blog Action Day 2008) and twitter to design conferences and unconferences which are increasingly driven by the energy and passions of their participants. There is also a countervailing tendency in that many online conferences attempt to replicate a face to face conference experience of intense synchronous interaction over a period of a few days. In conference communities with access to significant bandwidth the use of 3D simulation environments such as Second Life (Special Libraries Association Maryland Chapter 2009) has become normal over the past few years.

Designing and facilitating online conferences involves negotiating all the balances faced by organisers of face to face conferences but in a developing medium with an expanding toolkit. The key challenges are not about the best ways to reproduce a face to face conference in cyberspace. Laurillard (2006) suggests that "attempting to construct equivalence between online and face to face conferences is difficult as the medium offers an entirely new way of "doing" conferencing one which is not widely exploited because we don't really know how". This presents an opportunity to consider how online communication facilitates reshaping or remediation (Bolter 2001) of the notion of a conference. While online conferences will remind us of face to face conferences the newer technologies allow for different modes of interaction and transformed experiences of conference participation. The key affordances of asynchronous and synchronous communication environments are well documented (Laurillard 2002: 146-151, Bender 2003: 128-130 and Palloff and Pratt 2007: 67-71). Thus online conference interactions can include communication across space and time, extension and deepening of conversations beyond what is possible in face to face conferences, and bringing together communities who would be unlikely to meet in a face to face setting for logistical or financial reasons.

One example which attempts to use online communication technologies and facilitation to remediate the notion of conferences is the "e/merge" series of online conferences on the use of educational technology in African universities. A more detailed analysis of the way these conferences facilitate boundary conversations across multiple communities of practice will appear in Carr, Czerniewicz and Brown (2010).

4. The e/merge online conferences

> "Some lurked, some dropped occasional pearls of wisdom, and others left footprints of their visit everywhere. Some were online permanently, others parachuted in and out for concentrated times, and some multiplied themselves virtually.´
>
> e/merge 2006 participant posting in the Farewells forum

The e/merge biannual online conference organised by the Centre for Educational Technology at University of Cape Town has run successfully in 2004, 2006 and 2008. This conference is designed as a special event to support the sharing of good practice and the growth of communities of practice among educational technology researchers and practitioners across Africa and beyond. The topics relate to the use of educational technology in African education with a specific focus on tertiary education. e/merge runs for two weeks in July and consists of four overlapping three day phases of conversation concerning clusters of related papers, presentations and online workshops surrounded by a wrapper of the welcome phase and the farewell phase. The presenters are partnered by a

trained online facilitation team with multiple roles including creating a sense of a welcoming community, supporting delegates in their learning about online conference participation, facilitating rich, reflective conversations and providing regular summaries and daily updates. While the bulk of the interaction occurs in asynchronous discussion forums there is increasing use of synchronous interaction in online meeting rooms to raise the level of energy and connection among participants and several e/merge 2008 participants ran conference blogs. The formal interaction is enlivened and enriched by informal conversations and by opportunities for participant initiated conversations in an Open Space forum. e/merge is as much about celebration of community as an opportunity to exchange information and learn about the development of good practice in African and global contexts.

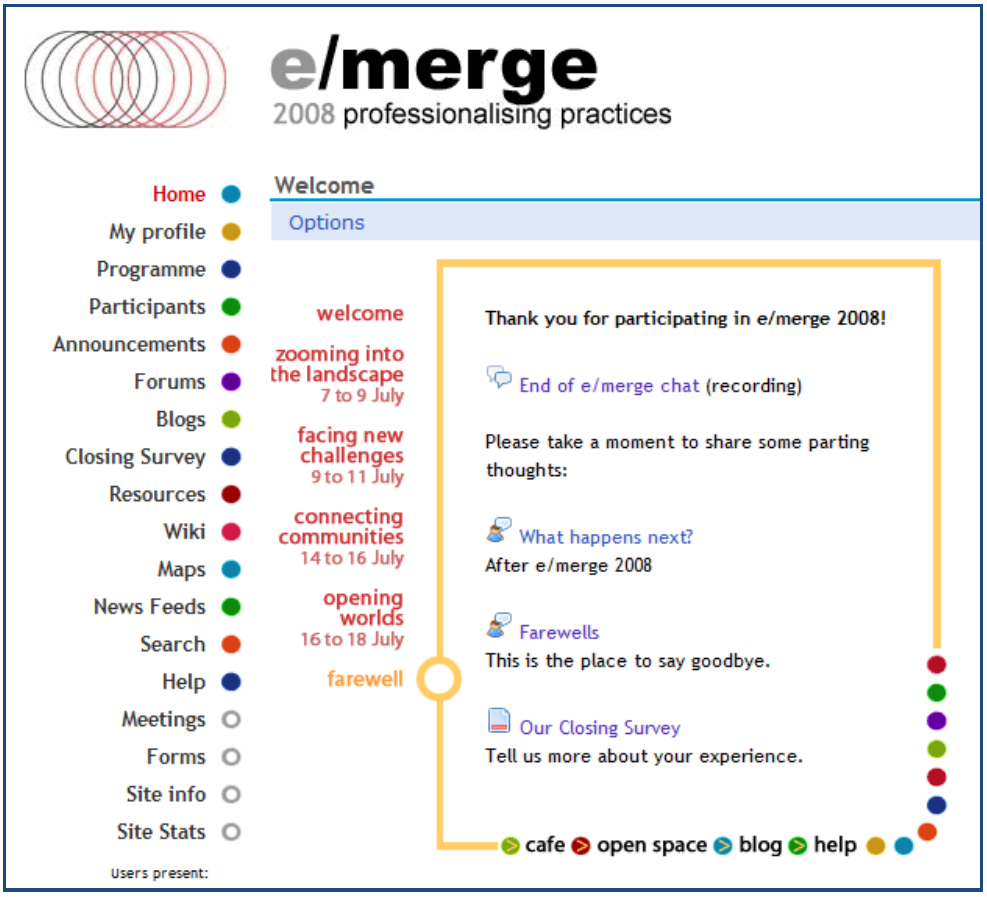

Figure 1: e/merge 2008 conference interface

The 2008 conference involved 224 participants including delegates from 11 African countries and from five other continents. There was always a critical mass of participants over the two weeks of the conference as some delegates joined late and others dipped in and out of the conference depending on their schedules and topics of interest. In the discussions there were 1617 messages spread across 31 forums and many of the live presentations attracted over 25 participants. The most active discussions included the forums on ICT in Schools and Adult Learning, and the Cafe' forum. The bulk of the interaction came from a core group of 40 highly engaged participants who posted 80% of the messages.

e/merge participant feedback from the forums describes several of the affordances of online conferences including:

Interaction across space and time: B from Uganda commented that "once registered you are assured of participation in almost all sessions" while delegates from Iceland and South Africa participated while attending and travelling between face to face conferences. This affordance supported communication during the conference however it was not fully realised due to ongoing work commitments experienced by many delegates. In contrast to the fear that online communication at a

distance may be impersonal the facilitation by conference hosts and the use of spaces for informal interaction supported warm communication.

Scope for reflective engagement: L from Nigeria was relieved that "that the site and its contents would still be accessible even after the conference is over". A from South Africa enjoyed being able to read the discussions quietly at a time that suited her. The extension of conversations beyond the short sessions experienced in face to face conferences allowed delegates to engage more reflectively with the topics discussed and permitted a wider range of participants to communicate directly with regional and global experts.

Access to the community: B from Denmark described "a very positive forum for exchanging points of view with more experienced people out there". Several participants mentioned learning from particular presenters both from within Africa and beyond. M from South Africa stated that "As I say goodbye, I feel like one waving at a community that I talked, dined, and stayed under the same roof with." Further feedback referred to the value of informal interaction and participation in a community of practice where ideas and challenges were shared. It is highly unlikely that the e/merge conference community could have met under the roof of a single face to face conference for logistical and financial reasons. Low (or no) conference fees and the freedom from travel time and travel and accommodation costs facilitated the recruitment and involvement of participants and presenters.

5. Conclusions

Following Laurillard (2006) we are still trying to develop the most effective online conference designs. Conference designers face complex and difficult choices about several interrelated balances which impact on how conferences are experienced by participants. The generic conference design literature surveyed here suggests a trend since the late 1960s towards more participatory conference designs and a greater focus on conferences as spaces and networks for learning. The most recent radical expression of this trend is in the form of the unconference. Designers of online conferences have an opportunity to step beyond attempts to reproduce standard face to face conferences online. The new medium allows for a remediation (Bolter 2001) of conferences to take advantage of multiple affordances of communication technologies including communication across time and space, scope for reflective engagement and access to a widely dispersed network including international and regional experts. The most recent trends towards the use of blogs, wikis and social networking environments provide tools to support a new generation of online conferences which are influenced by unconference designs.

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Virtual Presentations

Chinny Nzekwe-Excel; The Role of Study Skills and Learning Development on the Student's Learning Experience

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Keywords & Précis:

study skills and learning development	virtual presentation	student

The role and impact of Study Skills and Learning Development for students in higher education institutions on the students' learning experience and academic achievement.

Short biography of the author:

Chinny Nzekwe-Excel is a Learning Development Adviser for the Centre for Learning, Innovation and Professional Practice at Aston University, Birmingham UK.

Abstract:

On gaining admission into higher institutions, students are faced with the challenges and pressures to meet the institutions' academic standards and conventions. If such challenges and pressures are not recognized and dealt with, this could result in cases of withdrawal or non-completion. Various services, ranging from personal or careers counselling, pastoral and financial advice, to assistance with academic study skills and childcare, exist in most institutions to cater for students' needs and concerns. Research shows that study skills and learning development (SSLD) has been flagged as a key service most desired by students (Dhillon *et al.* 2006, Wingate 2007, O'Connor and Matthews 2009). This indicates the need to investigate the integral role and impact of SSLD for students in HE institutions on the students' learning experience and academic achievement.

SSLD creates a positive atmosphere and strategic approach for students to reflect on what they have been taught, develop fresh ideas, enhance their capacity to learn, and improve their academic/critical writing ability. It offers a structured approach for students to adapt to the demands of educational or academic standards. SSLD is aimed at incorporating teaching and learning with academic skills thereby ensuring a better learning experience for the student. It captures and addresses the needs of diverse students on a one-to-one or group basis (depending on the students' requirements), thereby reducing the chances of non-completion. Furthermore, during the SSLD sessions, learning development advisors could identify students' concerns and weaknesses, and focus on these specific areas rather than being generic, given that that students do not value the relevance of generic courses to their study.

A study conducted at Northumbria University in 2007 on the academic development of nursing students shows that the students all identified an improvement in their academic writing ability, understanding and confidence, with the availability of the skills development package (Bailey *et al.* 2007). The study further reported a zero percent failure rate for the students who attended the skills development sessions. Furthermore, a pilot survey conducted at Aston University in 2009 on the learning development centre show that the students (respondents) consider the centre as being supportive, informative and practical (Daley 2009). The survey also revealed that over 50 percent of the respondents improved their confidence with the help of SSLD. However, over 40 percent of the respondents highlighted the need for the centre to improve its advertising and promotional strategies of the SSLD services. Subsequently, a few respondents flagged the need for lecturers to promote the SSLD and make students aware of its usefulness.

Therefore, SSLD is an academic necessity that is useful and beneficial to both students and institutions. The inclusion of SSLD in any institution's developmental strategy would play an important role in enabling students to develop into life-long learners. Hence, to adopt and ensure the value of SSLD, institutions need to guard and promote the significant role of SSLD in improving the students' learning experience and successful achievement.

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Andrew R. Mott; Technology Empowers Learning: How fostering independent study, through community support and improved learning assessment, creates socioeconomic rewards

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Keywords and Précis:

technological advancement in education	community supported enhanced learning assessment	socioeconomic rewards

Technological advancement has provided the global learning environment the opportunity to support independent study through new learning assessment techniques. Gaps between educational institutions need to be bridged, in order to foster confidence in students' ability to self-direct learning and produce socioeconomic benefits.

Short biography of the author:

Inspired by personal frustrations in his local academic community's lack of ability to embrace technological advances in communication, Andrew R. Mott has committed himself to finding examples of the successes technological evolution offers, in order to help steer creative education into the future of learning. Living in the controversial oil sands province of Alberta, Mott is looking to use technology to empower learning, and increase professional community support of individuals looking to research and develop solutions to growing global concerns. His belief in the ability for self-paced, self-directed learning to strengthen communities and provide for greater economic rewards than traditional teaching environments has him busy creating an augmented reality school that bridges the gaps he has personally faced in Canada's educational model.

Abstract:

Are borders self-imposed areas of restriction or boundaries of limitation created by others? Are informal learning structures comparable to mapped degree programmes? Is it more effective to bend students to the will of an institution or to have communities support the individual's search for deeper understanding? What role does self-testing play in accreditation?

With the advent of the full-text article and online books, knowledge that was once difficult or tedious to obtain is now easily accessible to anyone with an internet connection. Lectures, that were once limited to location and seating capacity, are now available for download and improved note-taking strategies via iTunes and other services. As technology continues to break down the physical barriers to the academic world, those looking to study independently are gaining more support from the community to do so. The freeing of information has allowed interdisciplinary study to be more readily accomplished by students looking to broaden their academic vision or professional scope, and has moved learning beyond the borders of time and space. Complementing the opportunity to obtain intellectual breadth is the option of deep study within certain fields of knowledge and practice. Through the scanning of printed books, libraries are shifting away from their traditional role of book storage to the role of information storage, and are increasing their service areas to anywhere that has access to the information superhighway. The coupling of the global information revolution with the continued construction of cyberinfrastructure has allowed for advanced learning assessment techniques to evolve from local, individually conducted reviews, into international, professional community reviews that deepen credibility, strengthen social structures of evaluation, and provide students with numerous facets of feedback. While the future promises students greater learning opportunities, the present still has structural learning gaps between primary, secondary, and post-secondary institutions. Most students pursuing an undergraduate degree today lack the strength that independent study requires, or have fallen into the acquiescence that foundation schooling perpetuates. Institutions of higher learning need to reach beyond the campus to create a connection with compulsory education that fosters a passion for self-directed learning. It is through the strengthening of inter-institutional ties and an allowance for education to stretch beyond the

limitations of traditional scheduling, in order to accommodate personal learning momentum, that the global learning environment will improve humanity's collective intelligence and quality of life. This paper serves to help clarify the steps needing to be taken by educational institutions to provide students with greater support in independent study, as well as outline the socioeconomic benefits of improved learning assessment.

Linda Schwartz & E. Christine Belcher; Transforming Educational Borders Through Inquiry*

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Keywords and Précis:

negotiating spaces of transformative education	inquiry at boundaries of discourse	critical pedagogy

Educators, operating within a renewed view of practice that finds a sense of place within traditional institutional models, can respond to current pedagogical and curricular shortcomings by invoking critical inquiry that operates at the margins of our disciplines, transforming how we facilitate learning and the nature of the discourse itself.

Short biography of the authors:

Christina Belcher is Associate Professor of Education at Redeemer University College in Ontario, Canada, and is a doctoral candidate (education studies) at Monash University, Melbourne, Australia. She has taught in teacher education faculties in Australia, New Zealand and Canada. Her interests are in children's literature, worldview and culture, leadership, interdisciplinary research, and gender and identity studies.

Linda Schwartz has completed a term as dean of Humanities at Kwantlen Polytechnic University in British Columbia, Canada, and holds a PhD in interdisciplinary studies (critical pedagogy) from the University of Manitoba, Canada. She is a music theorist and composer, an academic administrator, and has scholarly interests in pedagogical theories (teaching and learning), aesthetic philosophy, and interdisciplinary hermeneutics. Belcher and Schwartz have co-authored on topics of pedagogical inquiry (2007, Provoking Curriculum Conference, Banff, Alberta, Canada), academic leadership, and transformative educational practice (2007, Australia Teacher Education Association, Wollongong, Australia).

Abstract:

Our presentation considers the possibility of negotiating spaces of transformative education within conventional institutions, by attending to cues that signal impending crisis or opportunity (Palmer 1998). We observe shifts in educational writing, research and practice taking place in post-secondary contexts that raise new questions about what education is *for.* Rather than retreat to safe positions of repeating narratives and relying on familiar tools and methods invoked to confine and conventionalize teaching and learning, we advocate for teaching that embodies a measure of risk and vulnerability in the classroom (Britzman 1991, Dillabough 2002). Critical pedagogies, intentional interdisciplinary collaboration, and meaningful, relational pedagogical design offer rich alternatives to educators who dare to grapple with inquiry that provokes a hopeful stance in learners.

Transformative educational practice raises appropriate questions about established borders and spaces in teaching and learning. Educators, operating within a renewed view of practice that finds a sense of place within traditional institutional models, can respond to current pedagogical and curricular shortcomings by invoking critical inquiry that operates at the margins of our disciplines, transforming not only how we facilitate learning, but the very nature of the discourse itself. In this charged environment, teacher and learner are changed: former sites of power in teacher-learner transactions are destabilized; critical inquiry brings about new forms of knowledge; and teaching praxis becomes more responsive and responsible, tending toward the ethical, and toward hope (Freire 1972, Curzon-Hobson 2002).

Linda Schwartz; Music theory Pedagogy in the Post-secondary Context: Critical and responsible practice in a liminal space beyond the borders of conventional discourse

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Keywords and Précis:

music theory pedagogy	critical pedagogy	instructional improvement

The research focus examines current curricula and pedagogical practices to reveal gaps in teacher knowledge, discipline content, scope of inquiry, and in student learning within the current norms of practice, prompted by lack of meaningful inquiry in the music theory classroom.

Short biography of the author:

Dr Linda Schwartz has recently completed a term as dean of Humanities, Kwantlen Polytechnic University in Surrey, British Columbia. Schwartz is a music theorist and composer, whose research focus is music theory pedagogy. She is also interested in philosophical aesthetics, hermeneutics and critical theoretical studies applied to teaching and learning.

Abstract

Of all instructional domains in undergraduate music studies, pedagogical practice in music theory is most misaligned, as evidenced in normative practice that transmits bounded, narrow and repeated discourses in subject content and method. Many of music theory's instructional practitioners are marginally informed with respect to currents in music scholarship and in broader inquiry, and principles of effective teaching practice are not acknowledged or linked systemically to curricular aims and methodological approaches within the domain.

This project examines the current state of tonal music theory pedagogy with a view to transforming purpose and improving teaching practice. The project originated out of a dual concern: first, that tonal music theory instruction is not connected with modes of music research inquiry in other discipline fields or in other domains of music study, or with advanced scholarship in music theory and analysis; and second, that general practices of teaching music theory are weak pedagogically and ill-informed with respect to best instructional practices within and outside of music scholarship.

The research focus examines current curricula and pedagogical practices to reveal gaps in teacher knowledge, discipline content, scope of inquiry, and in student learning within the current norms of practice, prompted by lack of meaningful inquiry in the classroom. The approach to this complex of problems is interdisciplinary and draws initially on three relevant and overlapping spheres of thought: matters of historical contextualization and ideology pivotal to the constitution of music theory as a disciplinary domain; theories of musical unity and the potential influences of a "critical theory of musical meaning" (Cook 2001) and a scholarly paradigm shift (Popper 1963) on music theory instruction; and the possible adoption of a critical pedagogy that could engage learners meaningfully, transform discourse, and destabilize ideologies or sites of power in music theory instruction.

Relative isolation from other domains within music scholarship and from other disciplines in the arts and sciences reinforce the suggestion that there is no established means by which constitutive dimensions, clarified for all academic fields, can be articulated for music theory instruction. A possible avenue for re-conceptualization of music theory pedagogy is proposed by shifting pedagogical practice to the edges of the domain, to liminal space between the polarities of music theory and cultural musicology, where responsible and ethical inquiry leads change by responding critically to the tradition, and theory (no longer a means of instrumental and ideological control) acts as a dynamic vehicle for mediating experience in the classroom.

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