iPED Research Network
Proceedings of the 3rd International iPED Conference, iPED 2008

Full proceedings
(Refereed)


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3rd International Conference
iPED 2008
Proceedings

‘Researching Academic Visions & Realities’
Academic Writing
Conceptions of Leadership
Emergent Pedagogies

8-9 September 2008
Coventry University TechnoCentre, UK
‘Researching Academic Visions and Realities’

The conference archived website may be found at www.coventry.ac.uk/iped2008

Overview

Bringing together a globally diverse community comprising academic developers and innovators, academic leaders and managers, as well as practice-based scholars and education researchers, the 2008 conference provides a forum for collaborative exploration and discourse on increasingly pressing academic realities.

Presenters’ evaluations of the realities of academic life, and the design of appropriate and potentially pioneering responses address three key themes:

**Academic Writing**

Academic Writing is emerging in the UK and around the world as a field of enquiry that examines the ways in which students learn, and underpins innovations in how writing is taught in disciplines and across institutions. iPED 2008 addresses key Academic Writing issues and visions through a pedagogical research focus.

Contributions consider the role of writing centres and writing programmes in developing teaching and research practices. Contributions also investigate conventions of reflective writing in the university and engage with contentious questions about how and whether or not reflection might be assessed. Some contributions interrogate theories and strategies of assessing via writing portfolios and through portfolios containing written elements, while other contributions investigate aspects and challenges of supporting postgraduates and academics in publishing in English.

The visions and reality of Academic Writing experience in higher education institutions are explored through this theme.

**Conceptions of Leadership**

Globally, post-compulsory education is experiencing a period of radical change. The need for leadership, and the pressures on those in leadership roles is greater than ever before. This theme explores conceptions of academic leadership in a range of contexts, which includes:

- International visions of leadership, leadership in global higher education: including trans-national, virtual, private and corporate universities; leading multinational teams.
- Peer-led teams: moving from hierarchical management to leadership through relational capital.
- Boundaryless leadership beyond the university: leadership in virtual organisations, leadership in research networks, leadership within collaborative partnerships.
- Professional development for academic leadership.
- Visions for strategic leadership.
- Leadership in the context of widening participation.
- Leadership and influence in educational development.

Papers report contemporary research, inform professional practice, and facilitate professional development for those in, or aspiring to, leadership roles in post-compulsory education. Contributions emphasise visions of effective leadership to face a challenging future.

**Emergent Pedagogies**

This strand of the conference is concerned with our response to the realities of higher education: how are we meeting the demands of our learners who come from a wide range of backgrounds, engage in learning in a variety of contexts and hold increasingly high expectations of personalised learning and assessment in a mass higher education system.

Have the explosion of the web and the arrival of Web 2.0 resulted in the anticipated paradigm shift in learning and teaching? To what extent do immersive and social-networking technologies promote learning and encourage inclusion. Are the innovations we propose sustainable, transferable and generalizable?

We explore research that challenges pre-existing assumptions about teaching and learning and the evaluation of innovations that contribute to new conceptions of education in the post-compulsory sector. Contributors aim to sustain and extend proven innovations beyond the original learning communities, including the shifts in academic identities upon which emergent pedagogies depend.
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All submissions to the conference were subject to double-blind peer review.

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The Conference Committee includes:

Dr Lynn Cluuder, Co-Theme Leader: Academic Writing
Dr Frances Deepwell, Co-Theme Leader: Emergent Pedagogies
Dr Lisa Ganobcsik-Williams, Co-Theme Leader: Academic Writing
Virginia King, Conference Convenor
Jannie Roed, Co-Theme Leader: Conceptions of Leadership
Dr Andrew Rothwell, Co-Theme Leader: Conceptions of Leadership
Dr Andrew Turner, Co-Theme Leader: Emergent Pedagogies
Kate Watson, Conference Administrator
**Philip Chambers* Researching Academic Visions and Realities: Learning from the Arts**  
*Reflective Learning, United Kingdom*  
**Keywords:** learning from the Arts  

**Short biography of author:**  
Philip Chambers worked as a lecturer in Drama, Dance and Education at the University of Worcester UK for thirty years, where he also led the Postgraduate Education Programme for ten years. He chaired the Reflective Practice Thematic Interest Group for the European Teacher Education Network’s annual conference for five years. He was joint founder of the International Reflective Practice Research Group in 2001 and continues to work with them as a consultant.  
His research and teaching interests emphasise the importance of the self, the concept of narrative and the lived experience paradigm. Central to his approach in the areas of both research and teaching is risk taking and the challenging of orthodoxies. Such a creative approach emphasises innovation, trying out new approaches and the potential, resultant, unanticipated outcomes.

**Abstract:**  
The capacity of the arts for refining the sentiments and speaking the truth is universally accepted but not always subscribed to in the realities of everyday life. Something similar is true of the academic world and it is my belief that the arts have an unrealized potential in academic life. If we are to move forward and realize our visions we need to disrupt some of the academic realities with which we are familiar. By re-examining the arts and positioning them in a hierarchy of academic needs I believe we might further enrich research and practice in a number of innovative ways.

As a dance and drama tutor and a lover of literature my personal academic vision and reality is closely bound up with creativity and the arts. This presentation is an attempt to begin to interrogate some of the ways in which we might learn from creativity and the arts in the areas identified as the three key themes of the conference:

**Conceptions of Leadership: The Art of Leadership. Leadership lessons from Dance.**  
Applying the principles of dance performance to the management of change and the improvement of individual and organizational leadership. How might we use a different vocabulary to think about academic and professional leadership?

**Emergent Pedagogies: Inclusion, Diversity, Dignity and Humanity. Directing a Play.**  
The promotion of social inclusion and individualization through the agency of drama. Approaches to reconstructing and stabilizing social enterprises. Can we learn anything about the techniques and strategies for sharing across borders and sustaining innovation from directing a play?

**Academic Writing: Poetry and Reflection.**  
‘All art aspires to the condition of music’ (Walter Pater).  
Does all reflection aspire to the condition of poetry? Considering reflection and poetry as process and product. The epistemological point of reflection; coming to know. Defamiliarisation and the transformative possibilities of reflective learning. What do we mean by reflective writing?
**Stephen Downes** How I Know What I Know About Online Learning

*National Research Council, Canada*

**Keywords**: online learning

**Short biography of author:**
Stephen Downes works for the National Research Council of Canada as a specialist in online learning and new media. Currently based in Moncton, New Brunswick, at the Institute for Information Technology, Stephen has become a leading voice in the areas of learning objects and metadata, weblogs in education, content syndication, digital rights and related issues. Stephen is perhaps best known for his daily research newsletter, OLDaily (short for Online Learning Daily), which reaches thousands of readers across Canada and around the world: [www.downes.ca/news/OLDaily.htm](http://www.downes.ca/news/OLDaily.htm)

**Abstract:**

Online learning, as with other internet disciplines, sweeps across boundaries, disrupting and changing the very nature of enquiry into the domains it touches. It can be argued that traditional research methodologies are of little use in such an environment; it is difficult to measure the impact of an intervention in such a rapidly changing and chaotic environment. Stephen Downes has earned a reputation as a researcher in the field of online learning using methods that might be seen as unorthodox but which (he argues) produce reliable results. This presentation will look at these methods, seek to identify a basis for practice in them, and will offer alternative approaches for researchers.
Robin Middlehurst* Transforming University Leadership: Concepts and practice
*Leadership Foundation for Higher Education (LFHE) & Kingston University, United Kingdom

Keywords: models of leadership

Short biography of author:
Director: Strategy, Research and International at the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education (LFHE) and Professor of Higher Education at Kingston University, UK. She is seconded half-time from Kingston University to LFHE where her role involves establishing a research programme in support of the Leadership Foundation’s work, reviewing and co-developing its overall strategy and ensuring that its activities reflect international practice and perspectives. Her personal areas of research, teaching and consultancy include the nature and impact of change in higher education policy and practice with a particular focus on leadership and leadership development; governance and management; quality assurance and enhancement at national and international levels; ‘borderless higher education’ and international HE strategy. Robin has been influential in the establishment of both the LFHE and the Observatory on Borderless Higher Education. She co-directs the successful Top Management Programme for Higher Education, and contributes to leadership development programmes for a number of UK universities. Her consultancy and research clients include UNESCO, OECD, UUK, SCOP and the UK funding bodies.

Abstract:
This session will explore different ways of conceptualising leadership in higher education, based on newly published research commissioned by the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education in the UK and the existing higher education (and wider) literature on leadership. It will be linked to experiences of the practice of leadership in a range of HE contexts. A key question to be answered will be: ‘are current models of leadership fit for purpose?’
**Sally Mitchell * & Lisa Ganobcsik-Williams** * The Role of Writing Development Work in the University

* Queen Mary, University of London, United Kingdom
** Coventry University, United Kingdom

**Keywords:** writing centres

**Short biography of authors:**

Sally Mitchell co-ordinates Thinking Writing, a curriculum development initiative at Queen Mary, University of London, with a focus on linking writing to the learning process. Her interest in language in education began with the Assessing Achievement in the Arts project at Exeter in 1990 (Ross, Radnor, Mitchell and Bierton, 1993). She then moved on to study argument in educational settings and is the author (with Mike Riddle) of ‘Improving the Quality of Argument in Higher Education: Final Report’ (2000) and (with Richard Andrews, 2000) of ‘Essays in Argument’. She has also co-edited two books in the field: ‘Competing and Consensual Voices’ (with Patrick Costello, 1995) and ‘Learning to Argue in Higher Education’ (with Richard Andrews, 2000).

Lisa Ganobcsik-Williams co-ordinates the Centre for Academic Writing, Coventry University. Formerly Co-ordinator of Academic Writing for the Warwick Writing Programme, Lisa has taught writing in a variety of disciplines. She has also taught and tutored writing in US universities and has had input into the Royal Literary Fund Fellowship Scheme for writing tuition in UK universities. Lisa has published in Rhetorica, The Writing Center Journal, and Computers in Composition. Her publications also include an edited book, Teaching Academic Writing in UK Higher Education: Theories, Practices and Models (Palgrave Macmillan 2008), and A Report on the Teaching of Academic Writing in UK Higher Education (2004). Lisa serves on the boards of the European Writing Centers Association (EWCA) and the European Association for the Teaching of Academic Writing (EATAW), and is an ex-Officio board member of the International Writing Centers Association (IWCA). In 2005 she was nominated for a National Teaching Fellowship.

**Abstract:**

In this presentation Sally Mitchell and Lisa Ganobcsik-Williams will collaboratively explore the topic of writing development for students and staff in Higher Education. In the UK and many other countries around the world, Academic Writing is becoming established as a new and vibrant area for pedagogy and research. Mitchell and Ganobcsik-Williams will discuss government and policy issues to which writing developers must respond as well as issues that arise as a result of introducing and implementing writing development in universities. The speakers will share the insights they have gained through practice and research on writing development as a transformative agent at both local and institutional levels. Focusing on Writing in the Disciplines (WID) as an institutional strategy, the speakers will outline recent research in which they have been involved on evaluating WID approaches and will explore research on other types of writing support.

A key issue under discussion will be how institutions adjust to the expanded numbers and diverse needs of 21st century students, and how they equip them to graduate with the high level literacy skills expected of them by academic departments and employers. Ganobcsik-Williams will review research she has conducted on this topic and will present on a current evaluation of writing pedagogy in which her Centre is involved. Mitchell will draw on recent consultations across her institution, which highlighted common concerns (for example with reading, use of the internet, the examination regime pre-university) and a diversity of strategies around teaching, course design, assessment and the use of ‘writing support’. She will consider the implications of what she found for developing effective local practices and coherent institutional approaches, focusing on the roles of disciplinary and writing specialists and ways in which they can work together.
James Morrison* Speculations on the Future of Higher Education
*University of North Carolina, United States

Keywords: futures

Short biography of author:

James L. Morrison (PhD, Florida State University, 1969) served as an assistant professor of education and sociology at the Pennsylvania State University from 1969-1973, at which time he moved to UNC-Chapel Hill, where he taught courses in research, planning, management, and using technology in educational organisations. He is now professor emeritus at UNC-CH.


Professor Morrison received the Distinguished Scholar Award from the American Educational Research Association's Special Interest Group on Strategic Change at the 1999 annual meeting.

Abstract:

Higher education is in the midst of a major transition that will fundamentally change the way colleges and universities conduct their business in the coming decades. Although change in social institutions is seldom rapid, the combined forces of demography, globalisation, economic restructuring, and information technology are forcing institutions to reconceptualise their markets, organisational structures, and pedagogical practices. Professor Morrison describes these forces, projects how colleges and universities may have evolved by 2020, and outlines pertinent issues facing higher education in light of these potential developments.
ACADEMIC WRITING

Tuesday 10:30, Room 1.8, Oral Presentation

Joelle Adams* & Sally Griffin* Supporting the Academic Writing of ‘Widening Participation’ Students in the Changing Context of Higher Education

*Bath Spa University, United Kingdom

Keywords: academic writing; widening participation; identity

Short biography of authors:

Joelle Adams coordinates the Student Study Skills Centre at Bath Spa University. She has over 7 years of experience teaching academic writing in higher and further education in Canada and the UK. Her research interests include the influence of identity on academic writing in higher education, teaching students from ‘non-traditional’ backgrounds, and the role of writing centres in the academy.

Dr Sally Griffin is the Widening Participation Officer at Bath Spa University. Sally’s current role includes the development and implementation of the University Widening Participation Strategy and managing the team of project officers who deliver the associated outreach programme. After completing an honours degree as a mature student, Sally obtained her PhD in Biogeochemistry after researching the environmental impact of ancient mining and metallurgy on the Mendip Hills. She has also taught environmental science and ecology on undergraduate programmes.

Abstract:

This paper outlines how a collaborative project between the Student Study Skills Centre and Widening Participation departments at a teaching-led university is transforming pedagogical practice in the teaching of academic writing to students without prior familial history of higher education. Part of a larger initiative to improve access, recruitment, performance, retention, and satisfaction of students from ‘non-traditional’ backgrounds, this project aims to help students prepare for the expectations of academic writing by developing study materials for use in the crucial period between matriculation and the beginning of study.

The project reacts to Lillis and Turner’s (2001) argument that we need to ‘look to the formation of new pedagogies that better engage with students, who are welcomed into the academy by the rhetoric of widening participation, but at the same time denied an adequate participation by taken-for-granted assumptions about academic conventions’ and Hockings et al’s (2007) claim that ‘pre-entry expectations, social, cultural and economic backgrounds also seem to affect how students adapt to learning in higher education’. The researchers apply Ivanič’s (1998) four aspects of self to investigate the influence of autobiographical history on students’ discoursal and authoritative selves in the socio-institutional contexts in which they write by interviewing students from the target audience who have recently finished their first year of undergraduate study and then apply this information to the formation of new teaching materials. This project works backward to find out what help students need and aims to provide them with the type of information that will demystify expectations of academic writing and help them become more comfortable in the culture of higher education.

The presentation will include an exhibition of the outcomes of the project along with suggestions for practice and further research. This paper will appeal to teachers of academic writing; those working to widen access to and participation in higher education; subject tutors seeking strategies to help students improve their academic writing; and administrators concerned about student recruitment, retention, satisfaction, and performance.

Indicative References:


Rebecca Bell* Poster Pedagogy: Using the EKARV Method to Explain Exam Terms
*Nottingham Trent University, United Kingdom

Keywords: Academic Writing - exam terms; EKARV; dotmocracy

Short biography of author:
Rebecca Bell works as a Learning and Teaching Officer in CASQ. Rebecca is one of the NTU representatives of the Learnhigher CETL and is currently researching the academic writing provision in place here at NTU and other higher education institutions.

Abstract:
Academic writing can prove to be a ‘stumbling block’ for some students, particularly during examinations. Confusing terminology coupled with pressurised conditions can often lead to misinterpretation and subsequently, incorrect responses to questions. In an attempt to counteract these issues a number of posters have recently been developed to increase awareness and understanding of key words popularly used in exam questions. The posters aim to give students a better understanding of what is required in their answers when terms such as ‘discuss’ or ‘explore’ are included in the question. The posters are written in a specific style called EKARV, a technique commonly used in museums and galleries.

The EKARV method was designed by Margareta Ekarv in response to her observations of museum visitors. Noticing that visitors often had to read text in poor light whilst standing up in a distracting and noisy environment, Margareta decided to experiment with different styles of text that would be easy to read and so more attractive to the reader. The resulting method was EKARV, a process of using simple wording and language, active verbs and short lines. The text is often concentrated to an almost poetic level and the layout mimics the rhythm of speech. EKARV is designed to draw readers in and provide text that is both enjoyable and educational.

It was noted that our students are often confronted with posters or information that they are expected to read in a distracting or poorly designed environment. Many of the informational posters placed around campus are in noisy or crowded locations which prevent effective reading. Therefore we have recently trialled a range of EKARV posters throughout the University campus. The unique layout of the posters draws students’ attention and seems to transfer information more effectively to them, whilst also introducing them to a new style of writing.

The posters were placed around campus in 2007 during and prior to the exam period and will also be used in 2008. In order to collect student feedback on the posters we have also integrated an approach called ‘dotmocracy’ into the design. By utilising this feedback procedure students were able to quickly and easily feedback on the posters. During the session I would briefly like to feedback on the process of creating, developing and evaluating the posters. EKARV is not without its critics however, and we are mainly interested to know what conference attendees think of the posters and the approach in general.
Fatos Eren Bilgen* Confronting Ourselves: Using reflective journals as tools for self-evaluation and professional development of English language teachers in Cyprus

*University of Leeds, United Kingdom & European University of Lefke, Cyprus

Keywords: reflective journals; professional development; English language teaching

Short biography of author:
Fatos Eren Bilgen is currently pursuing her doctorate at University of Leeds as a part-time research student and working full-time at European University of Lefke in North Cyprus as a Senior Lecturer at the Department of English Language Teaching. Currently, she is also acting as the director of the English Preparatory School at the same institution.

Abstract:
This presentation will explore the use of reflective journals as tools for professional development among novice and more experienced English language teachers at an English preparatory school in North Cyprus. Being an English language teacher is one of the most demanding and hectic teaching posts that one can perform at a university in North Cyprus. Teachers of English Language, working at preparatory schools around the country have to teach at least 20 to 23 hours per week, attend seminars, workshops and other activities in order to develop themselves professionally and stay in this competitive profession. However in this hectic professional life, many teachers do not analyze or evaluate their personal experiences, ideas or feelings and find themselves running from one class to another and from one workshop to another without much benefiting from any of these activities. On the other hand, it is very common to find teachers who believe that development comes automatically with the “years of teaching experience”. The misconception is that every year we become more effective just because the years are passing by and leaving us with more experience and wisdom. Although experience plays a primary role in learning, it is not the quantity of experience but the quality of how we use these experiences that is significant. As emphasized by Beaty (2000), although experience plays an important part in a teacher’s personal and professional development, more and more experience is not a guarantee of learning and development. In fact, if experience is not used in an effective manner, ten years of teaching may be “one year repeated ten times” and moreover this repeated experience may even result in fossilization of ineffective practices. Dewey (1933), Schön (1983), Knowles (1998) and many others, stated that, professional learning is based on a qualitative way of discovering knowledge, analyzing and reflecting on previous experiences and ways of knowing in an attempt to create new knowledge and methodologies. This process of learning and development requires evaluation of information and what is taking place in order to be able to become aware of key experiences for our own personalities. In this respect, reflective writing can be used as a tool to analyze and use experiences encountered as a teacher for fostering professional development. Based on these ideas, the presentation will report a pilot study on the use of reflective journals among novice and more experienced English language teachers in promoting professional development and it will also include my personal and reflective account of the usefulness of reflective journals in my professional development as a part-time researcher, lecturer, director and student of teaching.

Indicative References:
Lisa Clughen* & Matt Connell* Writing and Resistance: Preliminary findings from a pilot project to embed writing-across-the-curriculum in social theory at Nottingham Trent University (Full Paper)

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Lisa Clughen is a Senior Lecturer in Spanish and Learning, Teaching and Academic Support Co-ordinator at Nottingham Trent University.
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Paper

Writing and Resistance: Preliminary findings from a pilot project to embed writing across the curriculum in Social Theory at Nottingham Trent University

Lisa Clughen and Matt Connell, Nottingham Trent University

Abstract

Support for writing instruction amongst lecturers in UK Universities is high, but subject staff often prefer that it be provided by dedicated practitioners. However, given the well-documented problems with the Study Skills approach (where literacy support frequently becomes a generic add-on) it is now a commonplace in literacy research that writing development would better be embedded within the disciplines. Despite attention to embedded approaches, such as Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC), beginning to burgeon in the UK, a continuing problem for learner support staff lies in convincing time-poor subject staff to engage with such literacy initiatives and to find space for them in already saturated curricula. Furthermore, behind perceptions that the embedding of literacy development is onerous may lie an attitude that such development is both ‘beneath’ subject staff and unconnected to the specific concerns of their academic discipline. Given the strong WAC claim that writing stratagems and thinking/theorising within disciplines are intrinsically linked, it would seem to be a valuable pedagogy to adapt to the UK context. A recent research project at Nottingham Trent University set out to explore this proposition through the piloting of a WAC approach in the Social Theory subject area. This paper discusses some of the preliminary project outcomes, using the work of Sigmund Freud and Theodor W. Adorno to probe various psycho-social aspects of the phenomenon of resistance to the embedding of writing development in a discipline.

Keywords: WAC/WID; writing development; embedding; resistance; psychoanalysis

Calls to teach writing are everywhere, both without and within UK Universities (Ganobcsik-Williams, 2006: xxii). Outside of the university, government education policy has situated literacy development high on the agenda (NCIHE, 1997) and within universities support for writing instruction amongst staff is high (Ganobcsik-Williams, 2006: xxii). It seems, however, that a commonplace is evident in literacy and learner theories in response to these calls: from a variety of theoretical and empirical bases, theorists and practitioners across the globe contend that embedding writing into subjects will help students to improve many aspects of learning and performance (Ganobcsik-Williams 2006; Haggis 2006; Warren 2002; Bean 2001: xi; 1; Lea, Street 1998; Taylor 1988). In the UK there is now a burgeoning interest in the Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) and the WAC-related Writing in the Disciplines (WID) programmes from the US which have translated these claims into a systematic practice and it is argued that such a pedagogy has much to offer UK contexts (Mitchell, Evison 2006).

Nevertheless, it also seems that the insights from the long-standing and compelling literature on higher education (HE) literacy have largely escaped subject lecturers and HE policy writers in the UK, who frequently view writing development as separate to core disciplinary concerns and as the province of external support services (Davies, Swinburne, Williams 2006: xv). Indeed, within this context, critics question whether integrative approaches to writing development, such as those offered by WAC or WID, can really be incorporated into contemporary UK Higher Education as the issue of who will do the embedding is a fraught one (Murray 2006: 131-33). A central problem for literacy development tutors in the UK lies in convincing time-poor and innovation fatigued subject staff to engage with literacy support agendas and then to translate them into practice within their own specific contexts.
This paper presents preliminary findings from a pilot study that attempted to do this in the Social Theory subject area at Nottingham Trent University (NTU). It will discuss the vagaries of a project that aimed to explore whether it was feasible to introduce the WAC approach into this specific UK teaching context. What resulted from this was a project that encountered many resistances and obstacles along the way, but, in doing so, yielded useful data about the vexed process of embedding writing within the curriculum.

**Context**

The project was carried out in the School of Arts and Humanities (AAH) at NTU. Enhancing academic support for students is enshrined in both University and School-level strategic objectives. As part of its local support agenda, in 2002 the School of AAH established an Academic Support Service which is coordinated by Lisa Clughen, a Senior Lecturer in Spanish in the School.

It was a tenet of the Academic Support Service from the outset that academic writing is subject specific and intimately linked to disciplinary practices, epistemologies and discourses. The coordinator thus set up Project LISA (Learning in Specialised Areas) in order to work with subject tutors to ensure that any materials produced fit the purposes of the different subjects. However, the extent of this awareness of the ways in which writing development was inseparable from disciplinary contexts was considerably sharpened over the years of the service and many case studies were collated which motivated and transformed this awareness into a guiding service philosophy.

The following two examples from one-to-one tutorials are illustrative of this point:

A first year English Student accessed the service as she had received what she considered to be a poor mark for an essay entitled ‘Is Dickens a social reformer?’ Tutor feedback indicated that she had written a sociology essay in response to the question, rather than considering, for example, how Dickens’ use of narrative form may or may not underpin any radical content unleashed from his texts. It was, therefore, a lack of awareness of the disciplinary ways of writing in this module that hindered success in this essay, rather than any deficiencies in the student’s writing skills per se.

A third year English student visited the service asking for help with the structure of the following essay: ‘“He – for there was no doubt about his sex…” begins Virginia Woolf’s Orlando: With reference to one or two texts studied on this module, consider the ways in which doubt and sex are registered in terms of narrative or representation.’ The student, however, already knew the typical advice from the study skills literature on the processes of approaching essay questions and structuring work. It transpired that she could not begin to structure her work as she did not understand the difference between narrative and representation. It was not a lack of skills preventing progress with this student, therefore, but a lack of subject understanding.

These examples, and the many others collated throughout the years, have made it evident that writing is so subject related that the logic of embedding it is impossible to resist, at least from the perspective of this Academic Support specialist. This realisation led to her sympathetic engagement with WAC/WID and other positions on developing writing, such as that of Academic Literacies, which insisted that writing is context specific and that attention must be paid to contextual matters if writing is to be developed most effectively. This appreciation was the driving force behind the project which trialled a WAC/WID-inspired series of writing activities, offered by the academic support coordinator to the Social Theory subject area. The project was piloted initially in a core level 2 module with 36 students. The module was team-taught by five full-time members of teaching staff and one part-time member of staff.

The aim was to introduce writing tasks into each fortnightly seminar and, where possible, into the weekly lectures. Tasks set would respond to two central insights from WAC and other literacy theories such that students would be offered opportunities for both personal, writing-to-learn and discipline-specific writing within this module (Bean 2001: 52). In the actual event, this vision ran up against a recalcitrant reality and had to be substantially modified. In Freudian terms, we could say that the fantasy project had to face a rigorous process of reality testing (Freud 1917: 419). The major reality check emerged in the form of various expressions of resistance to the project.

**Encountering Resistance**

The following guidelines from the US literature on establishing WAC programmes motivated the project:
1. Staff need to understand WAC principles if a programme is to succeed (McLeod, Soven 2000: 4-5).
2. Subject staff must have ownership of and believe in WAC pedagogy or they will resist it (McLeod, Soven 2000:4).
3. WAC initiatives have to be done gradually (McCleod, Soven 2000: 4).

In practice, the aforementioned guidelines tended to work against each other. It was immediately apparent that not all tutors were prepared to engage and the attempt at embedding WAC continually wrestled with uneasy levels of staff enthusiasm. Although the module leader (Matt Connell) had agreed to the project, the module was team taught and not all tutors were willing participants. The module leader, in an attempt to mediate in a context involving resistance, said that he, rather than the literacy tutor, would have to liaise with staff so that he and they could own the project. Discussions of WAC pedagogy were, therefore, initially infrequent and paper based, or mediated by the module leader, rather than by direct contact with the literacy support tutor. It seemed as though resistance to the project thwarted the dialogue necessary for an understanding and ownership of WAC, whilst simultaneously the demand for dialogue about WAC theory provoked resistance. Judgments about whether the chicken or egg of resistance/demand came first depend, of course, on whether one is the support or subject specialist! Even when, two months into the project, direct contact was restored between the module team and the literacy support tutor, resistance continued.

Resistance, as McLeod and Soven indicate, is a known phenomenon when attempting the embedding of WAC:

Faculty must see these as important and useful ways of teaching before they will institute them in their own classrooms; they will never be convinced by having WAC imposed on them in fact, experience suggests that they will usually do their best to resist it (2000: 4)

Such resistance is awkward, because it is clear that the embedding of writing development is the best way of escaping the problems inherent in the ‘bolt-on’ skills approach and instead restyling writing development as a practice interior to the subjects themselves (Ganobcsik-Williams 2006; Lea, Street 1996:158-9). In stark contrast, the data gathered during this project demonstrated that the support of many academics for literacy development is still predicated on the notion that they will not have to deliver it. University staff may cleave to a strong sense of identity of themselves as being subject experts or researchers as opposed to teachers of ‘study skills’. Some participants in this project used the discourse of ‘study skills’ as a ‘straw man’ whose dismissal allowed them to distance themselves from calls to embed the practices: ‘We aren’t teachers of study skills, we are subject experts.’ A critique of study skills approaches which is, ironically, the same as that put forward by WAC/WID, ended up being used to dismiss WAC/WID before staff even knew what it was proposing.

We would suggest that behind some of this rather knee-jerk resistance may lie what Theodor W. Adorno referred to as ‘Taboos on the Teaching Vocation’ (1969). Adorno’s Freudian analysis of the dark psychosocial complex which gathers around teaching is particularly interesting because it also links reflection on the socio-cultural status of teachers to some of his philosophical views on the connection between writing and thinking. Adorno contrasts a certain contemptuous view of teachers with the relative prestige accruing to the university professor. He traces a cultural imago, long since modified in reality but retaining a tenacious power, of the teacher as a sort of failed or castrated academic, good for nothing else (‘those who can, do...’), who behaves as a coercive authoritarian, using either violence, or a grouchy hostility not far from it, to force square pegs into socially rounded holes through the exercise of a rigid and mechanical pedagogy that serves society more than the individuals who are its reluctant objects. The teaching of skills is central to the role of the teacher in a capitalist society, and sceptical academics may fear that the demand to teach literacy skills undermines their role as critics of a functionalist approach to education.

This lurking imago of the teacher threatens the academic as well. In a UK context, we would suggest that subject specialists can be afraid that the ‘massification’ of higher education, particularly in the new university sector, is eroding their status as autonomous academics and progressively restyling them as teachers. We can perhaps talk of fears of a ‘schoolification’ of the university. Some resistance towards the embedding of writing practices might be understood in terms of a powerful combination of academic status anxiety coupled with very real and principled fears for intellectual freedom in a time-poor economic environment.

Yet ‘schoolification’ also has its tempting comforts, for both staff and students, not least an emphasis on the learning of facts and a disinclination towards critique. For all their lofty embrace of critique and critical freedom, if we were to apply the harsh exaggerations of orthodox Freudian theory, we might be tempted to suggest that perhaps, in reality, harried academics may use a repressed and occasionally almost hostile frustration with the new clients of the new university to justify an all too traditional didactic mode of education, whilst claiming that their resistance to things like WAC is a defence of academic standards. In any case, this didactic mode is often exactly what clients of the higher education industry think they are buying. Adorno already noted a tendency for students on large courses to prefer the “dogmatic lecture format” over any attempt “to make the lecture routine more like a seminar” (1969: 182-3).
Resistance from lecturers towards WAC, based on fears of being reduced to ‘mere’ teachers, was therefore coupled with a complementary reverse resistance from some students in this project about being asked to think and write for themselves - students may be afraid that the introduction of WAC may mean that they will not be taught the ‘facts’ they need to know to pass their essays and exams. In such situations, even the critical, dedicated and highly competent academic may end up simply teaching some alternative scholarly positions which can be treated by anxious students as a mechanical set of consumer choices. These choices give a fig leaf of critical cover to an intellectual nakedness - students rarely really inhabit the ideas that they parrot. It does not help that for students most writing is done in a high stakes context, for assessment or note taking on which assessment will in due course rest. These are not times when students are likely to experiment with their writing or their ideas, a state of affairs in which student's own self-esteem is vulnerable: ‘heeding the watchword safety first, one wants to pass the exam by taking as few risks as possible [...] which [...] does not exactly reinforce the intellectual powers and ultimately endangers an already tentative sense of security’ (Adorno 1963: 24-5).

One may get a whiff of a sort of resigned pragmatism (rarely consciously expressed), an assumption that anything beyond a sort of ‘compare and contrast’ approach to theory or history is overambitious for our students. Behind a despairing assessment of the quality of student writing (‘this writing is rubbish’) may lie a tabooed judgment on those who produced it (‘this student is rubbish’) and occasionally perhaps an even more taboo self-doubt which hides behind this teacherly judgement of the student whose failure could be taken as a reflection on the tutor (‘am I rubbish?’). One possible psychological reaction to these chains of association is to respond defensively to any initiative, such as WAC, which is perceived as eroding the status the academic enjoys over the teacher. Nevertheless, despite the power of such Freudian analysis (or, as the writers of this paper should perhaps be prepared to admit, self-analysis), it is crucial to avoid a hubristic psychoanalytic dismissal of all critique of WAC/WID as irrational defence mechanisms. Much of the resistance may be perfectly rational.

Staff in our study spoke about how the institutional context in which they work impacted upon their willingness (or not) to take part in the WAC project. They identified that they have fewer hours to teach content than was the case ten years ago, and report a sense of innovation fatigue, so that new ideas are often seen as an additional burden. They also identified an issue of autonomy – when staff feel that they are being encroached upon on a day-to-day basis they are more likely to take control of what they can say no to in order to counter initiatives that are issuing from the centre. Adorno identifies an honourable ‘antipathy’ towards ‘the administered school’ as one element of an ‘aversion’ to teaching (1969: 177-8). This antipathy takes on exaggerated and defensive forms within the throes of the permanent administrative revolution that has ensued in a post-92 university sector eager to embrace a new managerialism. This new managerialism champions vocational employability for the masses rather than the free development of the individual reserved for those groomed for the top-flight by the Russell group (and for those elite academics who do the grooming) and thus reinforces anxieties about academic freedom that may be displaced into resistance against initiatives like WAC.

Ironically however, whereas academics may think that embedding writing development pedagogies is going to ‘reduce’ them to being teachers of grammar, frustrated proponents of a WAC approach want them to understand that actually WAC offers a much richer conceptualisation of the role of language and writing within specific disciplinary contexts. Rather than embracing it, WAC, and other pedagogies espousing the importance of embedding literacy support, actually challenge the mechanical skills model of teaching and offer opportunities for the critical engagement with ideas that academics seek to protect. Such pedagogies are based on the principle that writing and thinking are social and cultural acts so that how you think is linked to the culture you are thinking in, and the epistemologies and ways of doing/acting in that culture. Meaning, they contend, is culturally constructed and writing is dialogic. Furthermore, writing and speaking are intimately linked with self identity and self assertion. To write you have to think you have something to say, a position. You have to feel that you are somewhere in the debates, not an onlooker who at best parrots the words of others. This requires an audience that the isolated act of assessment cannot provide. WAC and its related pedagogies establish that students need to feel part of an academic community just at a time when the notion of a community of free scholars is seen as a quaint anachronism actually long since eroded by an individualistic conception of the university.

Conclusion

If writing is to be situated at the heart of university learning, as WAC and WAC-related approaches promote, it is likely that this pedagogy will be met, at some point, with resistance. Indeed, in this project, it seemed that it was only possible to deal with the core insights from the literature on developing WAC programmes once the first year of the project had run its course. Embedding literacy development in this project was more to do with working through resistance than the realisation of an exciting and effective writing-intensive course.
Using various Freudian concepts, it has been possible to probe the gap between vision and reality when it comes to the task of embedding writing development in the curriculum. If we substitute ‘fantasy’ for ‘vision’, we can usefully recall Freud’s practice of encouraging his clients to use the reality testing function of their egos to temper fantasy with reality, without crushing what we might call the contribution of fantasy to visions for changing that reality.

This testing process should also be applied to resistance to WAC, revealing that some of it at least is misplaced. What resistant academics can actually gain from WAC is that, unlike some other approaches to writing development, it does in fact respect the specific demands of HE disciplines. It can thereby be used to counter top-down attempts to impose more mechanical versions of the embedding of writing support. Interpreted in this manner, WAC’s respect for disciplinary specificity perhaps demands that in a resistant context it be implemented in a creatively messy and dialogic fashion. This could also be its best defence against falling prey to the taboo on the teaching vocation and achieving some currency with initially hostile lecturers. Understanding resistance can be seen as a productive, rather than destructive, part of working towards embedding, because in voicing resistance staff can come to own literacy development for themselves. What emerges here is that what is really resisted is not WAC itself but a general tendency towards bureaucratic encroachment upon academic life.

References


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Jayne Dalley* Reflection in an Academic Context: Articulating outcomes

*Coventry University, United Kingdom

Keywords: reflection; assessment; outcomes

Short biography of author:
Jayne Dalley is a Senior Lecturer in Physiotherapy at Coventry University where she has worked for 10 years. Her teaching interests include personal development and academic literacy; research interests include learning in practice placements and reflection. Working with undergraduate and postgraduate students she is interested in the tensions between developing the reflective process and demonstrating outcomes.

Abstract:
If reflection is worthy of being taken seriously by the academic community, it should be possible to assess reflective writing by normal academic strategies, rather than by an intuitive, possibly personalised, 'feel' for whether a piece of writing is 'good' or otherwise. The academic expectations should be clear both to students and the academic marking team.

This belief led to the development of a set of guidelines, for year one students, to indicate the elements that written reflective work should contain together with criteria for assessing its academic worth. Previously, the students’ written work was disappointing; neither the models nor the marking criteria being used were making the required elements of assessed reflection overt to students. The process of developing the guidelines involved the articulation of a particular understanding of reflection – that reflection is a tool for learning and a means of demonstrating learning. This is congruent with the professional values (CSP 2005, HPC 2005) which this student group need to demonstrate upon professional registration. A variety of models were explored with the aim of selecting one which included this understanding (e.g. Gibbs 1998). However, these aimed either to guide or to theorise the process, none were specifically designed to articulate academic expectations. The elements which were common to all models were identified, given conceptual labels with regard to clarifying desired outcomes, and new guidelines emerged. These elements were Description, Exploration, Insights, Further Developments, and Theory-Practice Links.

Our marking criteria were revisited in light of these guidelines. Whilst the underlying academic components such as structure and clarity were not altered, the language was adjusted to mirror the language in the guideline; the students no longer had to translate academic elements into a reflective context.

The guideline articulated the essential elements of reflection required whilst allowing the use of any reflective model to structure a piece of academic writing. Evaluation of the intervention in practice highlighted many students used the guideline as their structure or model. Proving a high degree of structure for reflection is already recognised as facilitating student performance (Nielson et al 2007).

Increasing constructive alignment (Biggs 2003) by making overt the link to the marking criteria improved the ability of students to meet the assignment requirements - demonstrated in assignment marks. Unexpectedly, the markers’ feedback was that their understanding of the requirements of written reflection was also improved and there was evidence through the moderation process of greater standardisation of marking judgements.

However, the number of reflective scripts written in creative and original styles diminished. There is clearly a tension between providing a formulaic structure for the benefit of a cohort of students, and the development of truly creative work by a few students. The challenge now is to articulate that creativeness and imagination are also desirable attributes; meanwhile, the guidelines are currently being used with Masters’ students to explore their further potential. This presentation will be informed by current relevant research.

References:
**Mary Deane* One-to-one Writing Consultations: Vision and reality (Full Paper)**

*Coventry University, United Kingdom

**Short biography of author:**

Dr Deane is a Senior Lecturer at Coventry University's Centre for Academic Writing (CAW). Her specialisms include 'Writing in the Disciplines' (WiD) and rhetorical theory.

**Full Paper:**

**Academic Writing: Vision and Reality**

**Dr Mary Deane, CAW, Coventry University, UK**

**Abstract**

The aim of the Centre for Academic Writing (CAW) at Coventry University is to enhance staff and students’ academic development through writing consultancy. This paper presents qualitative evidence of the effectiveness of CAW’s 1:1 writing consultations in the form of anonymous student feedback, which indicates the institutional benefits of 1:1 writing consultancy. It is also argued that this provision is incomplete without a concurrent programme of ‘Writing in the Disciplines’ (WiD) offering staff development to academics as they embed explicit writing instruction into modular curricula, and supporting students beyond the immediate environment of CAW.

**Keywords:** Academic Writing, writing pedagogy, one-to-one writing consultations, Writing in the Disciplines (WiD), student motivation

**Introduction: CAW**

Coventry University’s Centre for Academic Writing (CAW) was founded in 2004, with a dual remit of furthering staff and students’ academic development through writing consultancy. This twofold approach to writing development is set out in the CAW mission statement:

> CAW is an innovative teaching and research centre whose mission is to enable students at Coventry University to become independent writers, and to equip academic staff in all disciplines to achieve their full potential as authors and teachers of scholarly writing.

(CAW 2008)

CAW offers individualised writing consultancy to staff at Coventry University on writing for publication, doctoral work, grant application, and managing writing projects of all kinds. CAW also runs staff workshops on a range of academic development issues such as planning, revising, and editing scholarly texts. These are complemented by a specialised form of writing groups called ‘Protected Writing for Publication’ (PWP) sessions, which provide time and space away from distractions so individuals can focus on a specific writing goal with a view to achieving publication targets. A feature of PWP sessions that is particularly appreciated by staff, is the availability of a CAW writing specialist, who works individually with colleagues to provide feedback and consultancy on publications in progress. Beyond the campus environment, CAW runs successful Scholarly Writing Retreats, which provide more extended space for concentrated writing with 1:1 feedback. CAW’s retreats are highly valued by delegates, who often turn around their writing projects as a result of such conducive surroundings, and who also frequently re-think their whole approach to managing the composition process. Hence, in a range of ways, CAW supports the University’s Applied Research agenda by fostering the development of new academics and providing protected space for experienced scholars to escape temporarily from demanding schedules.

**CAW’s 1:1 Student Writing Consultations**

In addition, CAW offers individual writing consultations to all students, in all disciplines, at all levels at Coventry University. At these sessions writing specialists assist students in constructing clear and convincing arguments with the apposite scholarly conventions. Consultations are offered on an appointment basis and can be booked by calling, emailing, or visiting the Centre. Provision is made for part time and distance students with late opening hours, and although CAW has not established e-consultations to date, these are provided in extenuating circumstances. Students may make one appointment at a time, and are encouraged to implement the writing
strategies they learn during a consultation to become increasingly independent and confident scholars. This provision of individual feedback on students’ texts aims to enhance their academic performance, to advance students’ employment prospects, and to extend their participation in cultures of writing within and beyond the academy. Such provision is not part of all students’ experience at UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), although it is growing in popularity as Writing Centres are increasingly introduced in British universities. Typically, students attending a 1:1 writing consultation bring a copy of the relevant assignment brief and other guidelines, plus either a plan or an initial draft for the assignment. CAW writing specialists seek to identify whether students’ texts respond appropriately to the assignment briefs, and they focus on argumentation, referencing, and rhetorical moves within the assignments.

Scholars have researched qualitative impacts of 1:1 writing consultations, including students’ perception of the benefits, such as increased confidence as writers, motivation to write, and independence in managing the process of writing (Field-Pickering 1993; Haswell 2000). It has been demonstrated that attending a 1:1 writing consultation is likely to impact positively on students’ writing behaviour (Harris 1986; Ady 1988). Feedback from students at CAW reflects these findings, as one student reveals:

Since starting working with CAW my essay writing has improved in all areas. Thanks for giving me your time and expertise to develop myself.

(Student feedback 30.6.06)

Although Bell (2000: 14-15) argues that researchers need to move beyond studying students’ perceptions of the benefits of teaching interventions, the reality when seeking to evaluate the work of a Centre for Academic Writing is that research into educational initiatives is challenging (Hylton 1990; Lerner 1997). The task of assessing the effectiveness of writing interventions is particularly complex, as Neulieb explains (1982). There is wide variation in students’ experiences prior to university education, which complicates the process of identifying the impact of teaching interventions (Yates 2004: 15). Furthermore, various factors influence students’ development during their university careers, and can distort the assessment of how 1:1 writing consultations impact upon individuals. Such factors include the differing learning and teaching methods used by academics and the varying levels of support students receive from family and friends (Yates 2004: 16-30).

Whilst quantitative data gathering is problematic, students’ comments demonstrate the benefits of 1:1 writing consultations from a number of angles, and suggest that individual writing consultancy could be used more widely to improve retention and promote successful completion rates (Haswell 2000). For instance, as one student attests, ‘I have been getting better marks since coming here’ (Student feedback 19.1.06). Another student states, ‘The assistance of the academic writing centre has made a vast difference to my grades’ (Student feedback 23.4.08). Such improvement to grades is further evidenced by this students’ comment:

[I] found the session extremely useful and find the sessions improve my understanding of my mistakes for future work. My grades have also improved and I feel more confident to express my views academically.

(Student feedback 14.6.06)

During 1:1 writing consultations, students are invited to discuss their ideas in response to an assignment brief, and may be asked to spend time free writing in order to generate text and move towards articulating a scholarly argument (North 1984; Elbow 1973). This is often appreciated because students leave the session having progressed their assignment in a material way, as one student notes:

Excellent, positive feedback given and the assistance and ideas on areas which require improvement. Time allocated to adjust and discussed after. Really helpful!

(Student feedback 29.4.05)

Writing in this supportive environment is essential to enabling individuals to fulfil their potential by discovering their own most effective writing behaviours. Such support is highly motivating as one student explains, ‘Feeling motivated to start next assignment’ (Student feedback 7.2.08). Motivation is one of the most far-reaching outcomes for students as it impacts upon their studies more broadly, as one student recognises:

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1 The first UK Writing Centre was established in 2004 at Coventry University. At the time of writing in 2008 there are relatively new Writing Centres or comparable models of Academic Writing specialism at HE institutions in Belfast, Birmingham, Gloucestershire, Huddersfield, Liverpool, London, and Sheffield, amongst others.
It's great to get the opportunity to discuss my work. Not only does the session aid with the structure of my work, it also motivates me to work between sessions.

(Student feedback 4.3.05)

As these remarks suggest, there are various consequences for students attending a 1:1 writing consultation, and these depend on an individual's initial levels of motivation or anxiety. Whatever a writer's position at the start of a session, the most common outcome is increased insight into how best to manage the composition process, as one student explains, 'It's helped me gain a better insight into my writing' (Student feedback 29.11.05). As indicated in the CAW mission statement, the goal of the Centre is to foster student writers' independence, and success in this aim is often reflected in students' feedback:

[The tutor] has the ability to help one think for oneself. With [the tutor's] support I personally reach conclusions that I did not think I was capable of.

(Student feedback 1.9.05)

CAW writing specialists ask open questions to enhance the ability of student writers to discover what they think about a topic. This is appreciated by one student, who remarks, '[I was given] excellent support on structuring my essay by asking me leading questions to think for myself' (Student feedback 2.3.06). Students frequently feel more in control of their own writing after discussing their projects individually, and the comment, 'the fog has lifted' captures the sense of relief that this can bring (Student feedback 6.10.05). At 1:1 consultations, the responsibility for writing is firmly placed with the student, as this comment points out:

I felt quite stuck with my introduction and conclusion and [the tutor], as always, was able to give really wonderful advice, but at the same time, allow me to do the workings out, and make me think about the answers, without them being provided on a plate.

(Student feedback 6.4.05)

CAW tutors do not proof read students' texts, as this would interfere with the writer's voice (Flower, Hayes 1981). On the contrary, students attending 1:1 consultations often find that they gain confidence from discussion about their writing, which leads to a clearer voice in their academic papers, as one student recalls, '[It was] very good at restoring confidence, I might actually be able to progress from bashing my head against the brick wall to getting words on paper' (Student feedback 17.5.05).

At CAW, care is given to creating an open and friendly environment because students may feel intimidated by seeking writing consultancy. For instance, one student reflects, 'The session today has been extremely useful. I was concerned that I would feel inadequate but have been made to feel very comfortable and much more confident' (Student feedback 8.6.05). The approachability of CAW staff is valued by another student, who reflects, 'It was nice that you are made to understand your mistakes and not feel 'stupid' or inadequate' (Student feedback 29.11.06). CAW writing specialists operate in a supportive, constructive mode that is responsive to students' feelings, as one comment reveals, 'A very constructive session. My confidence is building and I am able to accept changes for the better not as criticism' (Student feedback 7.6.05). Individual writing consultations provide a unique opportunity for students to articulate concerns about the suitability of their chosen degree course, or to ask questions about the expectations of academics in their field as this student reflects:

I feel without this support being made available to myself and other students that some of us would not be able to continue on our elected course. With this extra support I personally have been able to catch up with assignments that I have failed in the past and even passed some assignments first time. After failing for so long it has given me the confidence to carry on with the course, and better self esteem.

(Student feedback 24.5.05)

There are implications for student retention, as indicated in the suggestion that without 1:1 writing consultancy, this student would reconsider continuing on the course. Indeed, it is the individualised attention that students say they value, and which they claim has a transformative power in their experience of HE, as one student reflects, 'Without [the tutor's] help I would not have passed' (Student feedback 29.6.05). This appreciation is echoed repeatedly in comments such as, 'Just want to say a huge thank you, for all the help I have received, I could not have got through the work without all your help; (Student feedback 25.5.07). Such students believe that would not complete degree programmes successfully without the individualised attention that is increasingly rare in a mass educational environment. Thus, 1:1 writing consultancy can be a liberating experience for students:

Thank you for listening to a second year student worry about his ability to write down what he is thinking. Your help, support and sympathetic ear have been just what I needed.
Despite students’ strong appreciation of CAW’s 1:1 writing consultancy, the challenge for writing specialists is meeting the demand. Systems are in place for accommodating as many students as possible and for filling any cancellation slots, but at busy times in the academic calendar the need is particularly acute, as a student remarks:

(Staff feedback 21.3.06)

Though unable to get an appointment due to the fact the centre was busy, I was put on a waiting list and the staff phoned me as soon as an appointment became available.

(Staff feedback 29.11.05)

Nevertheless, the popularity of CAW’s 1:1 student writing consultations poses a problem of scalability, which is shown in the figures of students attending individual consultations between 2004 when the Centre opened and 2008. Statistics demonstrate a steadily increasing demand, which cannot be met without limits. Figure 1 shows the numbers of students attending a CAW 1:1 writing consultation rising over a four year period:

![Figure 1. Number of students attending a CAW 1:1 writing consultation and number of Level 1 students attending consultations.](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Series 1</th>
<th>Series 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004-5</td>
<td>416</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-6</td>
<td>749</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-7</td>
<td>925</td>
<td>395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-8</td>
<td>950</td>
<td>341</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. Number of students attending a CAW 1:1 writing consultation and number of Level 1 students attending consultations.¹

Whilst figure 1 illustrates the increase in demand for writing consultancy at Coventry University, it also shows the proportion of students from Level 1 (First Year) attending individual consultations. This is significant because students find writing advice particularly beneficial as they make the transition from school to university, as this comment indicates, ‘As a new undergraduate student I found the process very helpful’ (Student feedback 17.10.07). Students progressing at any stage of their studies express appreciation for 1:1 writing consultancy, as this feedback reveals, ‘Due to the help that I have received at the CAW, I have managed to tackle my first level 3 assignment, with a lot more confidence and understanding’ (Student feedback 14.5.07). Such growing demand for individualised writing development necessitates an additional, alternative approach to writing development. Individuals who access CAW form a relatively small percentage of the student body at Coventry University, as figure 2 shows by giving the percentage of students attending individual consultations over a four year period:

![Figure 2. Percentage rates of students attending a CAW 1:1 writing consultation.](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Series 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004-5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-6</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-7</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-8</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. Percentage rates of students attending a CAW 1:1 writing consultation.²

¹ Figures for 2008 are incomplete as statistics were generated in July 2008.
² Figures for 2008 are incomplete as statistics were generated in July 2008.
Figure 2 illustrates the increase in demand for writing consultancy at Coventry University in percentage terms, and whilst there is steady growth, these figures show that many students do not access the opportunity to receive feedback on assignment drafts. This implies that CAW must adopt additional methods of enhancing students’ Academic Writing. Whilst individual consultancy is offered to students at all levels of study in all departments at Coventry, there is also a need to raise the profile of writing within departments in order to reach students who do not come to the Centre. The next section outlines the alternative approach of ‘Writing in the Disciplines’ (WiD), which constitutes another major part of CAW’s consultancy (Fulwiler and Young 1990, Monroe 2003). WiD is part of CAW’s staff development remit, but is also a means of reaching a more extensive range of students than 1:1 consultancy allows.

**Writing in the Disciplines (WiD)**

CAW writing specialists work with colleagues across the University to promote students’ writing capabilities through WiD initiatives. WiD involves collaboration between subject specialists and writing specialists to enhance students’ effectiveness in mastering the style, structure, and technical language associated with the academic discourse of their chosen discipline (Bazerman et al. 2005: 9-10). CAW writing specialists meet individually with subject specialists to assess and extend the ways in which writing is taught within modules. Whilst these collaborations impact positively on students’ learning experiences, they also contribute to the professional development of disciplinary academics, who become specialists in Academic Writing within their field as a result of this work. Moreover, the resulting initiatives provide data for Applied Research and related publications (see for instance, Somerville, Créme 2005). WiD initiatives are based on research into the function of rhetorical devices, terminology, and linguistic patterns in disciplinary contexts, and leads to the revision of Learning and Teaching (L&T) materials to instruct students in these areas. This approach to L&T flourishes through the dissemination of discipline-based literacy research to share understanding about writing conventions within disciplines at tertiary levels.

WiD is more familiar within US Higher Education communities than in the UK, and has grown out of the heritage of Composition and Rhetoric courses, which are offered to Level 1 undergraduates as part of the tradition of general education in the US Higher Education sector (Bazerman, Russell 1994). WiD is closely related to the US movement ‘Writing Across the Curriculum’ (WAC), which promotes students’ intellectual development by attending to the ways in which writing is taught within modules. Moreover, the resulting initiatives provide data for Applied Research and related publications (see for instance, Somerville, Créme 2005). WiD in particular may appeal to senior management in UK HEIs because it offers a vision for resolving some of the pressing realities affecting students’ performance such as retention, employability, and the successful completion of degree programmes, which are also served by 1:1 writing consultancy as indicated above. Whilst WAC programmes reinforce the role of writing in intellectual development per se, WiD is concerned with how language operates in a given disciplinary context, and can be perceived as a ‘more specialised subcomponent of WAC’ (Ganobcsik-Williams 2006: 50). UK students tend to specialise earlier than US students because they are required to choose approximately four A Level subjects at age 16, and these subjects are often orientated towards either a Humanities or Science-based education. When applying to university, British students often specialise in a disciplinary area, making WiD particularly appropriate as a writing pedagogy.

**WiD and 1:1 Student Writing Consultations**

In some respects it appears contradictory to promote a philosophy of teaching writing in the disciplines whilst offering 1:1 writing consultations; however, students are encouraged to reflect upon their own disciplinary writing conventions during 1:1 consultations and as a result they often reach a greater understanding of how they can perform most effectively in coursework assignments. For example, one student recalls, ‘It is very helpful to be having the support for your essay outside of lecture time’ (Student feedback 18.5.05). Another student remarks, ‘It’s nice to know that I have even more support and (from)someone who is separate from the course’ (Student feedback 7.12.05).

During 1:1 consultations it is made clear to students that their module tutors are the specialists on their writing (Clark 1988), so questions posed by students about the content of assignments are deferred to subject specialists. This is indicated by one student’s comment, ‘I asked a very vague, probably unusual question and [the tutor] helped all she could, advising me to speak with my [module] tutor’ (Student feedback 9.6.06). During a 1:1 writing consultation...
consultation at CAW, tutors listen to the challenges facing individuals and help them interpret what the demands of assignment briefs and to understand the writing culture of their discipline more fully. This is done by researching the assignments which are common in core modules as one student indicates, ‘I find [the tutor] to take the work seriously and it helps to know that she familiarises herself with the subject before she helps me with it’ (Student feedback 6.6.06).

Writing specialists become increasingly adept at identifying the demands of disciplinary assignment briefs as one student reveals, ‘Great capacity to pick up on the subject being discussed without being familiar with it’ (Student feedback 4.8.05). Students are appreciative of this consideration for their subject studies, remarking for instance, ‘It was an informative session which showed [the tutor] had a good knowledge of contract management too’ (Student feedback 5.3.07). Another student comments, ‘[the tutor] was very good in helping me structure my Reflective analysis essay, and giving me advice on how to tackle this. I am now very clear on what I need to do and also very confident about it’ (Student feedback 14.2.08). Student feedback often reflects the discipline-specific nature of discussion during a 1:1 consultation, for example, ‘A great help for me to see how I can improve my advanced economic seminar’ (Student feedback 15.2.08). Another comment attests to this, ‘[I] learnt about 112sw essay planning’ (Student feedback 17.10.05). This is also reflected by another student, ‘Thank you for helping me with how to construct my assignment for the leg ulcer management course’ (Student feedback 11.11.05).

Whilst CAW’s 1:1 provision is physically removed from student’s departments, individuals sometimes find that this alternative space enables them to discuss issues they have not dealt with in their modules, particularly to seek advice on disciplinary conventions they feel they should already know. Protected by the anonymity of a 1:1 writing consultation and supported by writing specialists, students often gain confidence and make new progress in their disciplinary studies, such as this individual, ‘good start, I think this will be very useful, and hopefully be supported by my module tutor’ (Student feedback 11.10.07). Nevertheless, there is a limit to CAW’s specialised advice, as one student reflects, ‘The session was overall satisfactory, however, I did not find it as informative as I initially perceived it. I was under the impression it would be more subject orientated’ (Student feedback 22.3.06). This comment reinforces the necessity for WiD initiatives alongside 1:1 writing consultations to provide embedded specialist advice on writing within the context of subject studies.

**Conclusion**

This paper has explored two ways in which CAW provides writing consultancy, first through individualised writing consultations for students, and secondly through WiD initiatives which promote staff development whilst fostering students’ writing. The paper has shown in particular how CAW fulfills a dual remit of working with staff and students to enhance the culture of writing research and pedagogy at Coventry University. For students, individualised consultations are opportunities to focus on improving their writing strategies which enhance their independence and confidence as scholars. Student feedback attests to the transformative role of 1:1 writing consultations, in comments such as, ‘I have gained a new approach to my writing’ (Student feedback 24.2.06). Nevertheless, this provision is incomplete without offering writing development as an integral part of module curricula, so the two methodologies are most effective in tandem as this study of CAW’s activity suggests.

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Majid Fatahipour* The Relationship Between Ambiguity Tolerance and the Use of Strategies in Overcoming Writer's Block (Full Paper)

*Azad University, Islamic Republic of Iran

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As a faculty member and lecturer at Azad University. He has taught undergrad courses to English majors for 4 years with a research interest in applied linguistics; has presented at international conferences; and published in national and international journals.

Paper

The Relationship Between Ambiguity Tolerance and the Use of Strategies in Overcoming Writer's Block.

Majid Fatahipour, Islamic Azad University, Parand Branch

Abstract

When people cannot begin or continue writing for various reasons, writer's block may have occurred. Understanding its nature and causes is a prerequisite to facing it (Hjortshoj 2001). Recent research supports the use of a strategy in dealing with it (Schmitt 2000), it may conflate with individual students' ambiguity tolerance, who are regularly exposed to ambiguous situations such as instructions, test questions, etc. (Sweeney, Owen 2002). For this study, two homogenous participant groups in an Iranian university were ranked by administering an Ambiguity Tolerance Scale (McLain 1993). Several blocks were spotted in writing assignments throughout the sessions held in one semester. After providing solutions using symptom-cure models (Elbow 1981; Mack, Skjei 1979), different writing strategies were applied. The output pinpoints the conflation of low ambiguity-tolerance with writer's block occurrences. It is suggested to equip teachers with the relevant knowledge and flexibility to empower the learners.

Keywords: overcoming writer's block; ambiguity tolerance; language proficiency; the use of writing strategies

Introduction

Consider the plight of a student who fails a college course due to difficulties in writing her term paper or even a graduate who watches his dream job disappear, blaming his lack of confidence in beginning the writing task interviewer asked him to complete in good time. He may have spent several minutes drooping over the paper for inspiration and when it dawned on him, no time is left to organise his ideas together. The experience seems to be universal as it can even be shared by a teacher who looks for a worthwhile outcome of her professional effort, reflecting on classroom events or a production that fulfils her desire to share one of her special moments in teaching. I didn't choose to use a plural to emphasize the spectrum of individual experiences and those lonely moments of authorship. Today, for many, authorship means hours and hours of steady typing and thinking with a laptop on their own, and an unfailing interest in working uninterrupted. The interruption, however, sometimes comes from within, which is the subject of concern in this paper: the writer's block.

Writer's block is the momentary loss of the inspiration or creativity that makes writers feel they have lost the ability to begin or continue writing. There can be several explanations as to the reasons for the phenomenon; yet the question in vogue is the reasons causing the block, before starting to overcome the phenomenon. One perspective is to view it at the psychological level, that the reasons will be mainly emotional and motivational for those who fail to write. They are related to beliefs about oneself as a writer. This perspective acknowledges that blocks seldom have a single cause, rather there is mix of different maladaptive thoughts and emotions. Cognition or writing ideas are said to be crucial in controlling related emotions and thus avoiding blocking. An active meta-cognition helps in talking about problems and strategies, and to develop a variety of writing strategies (Boice 1993).

Once identified, methods aimed at curing the problem are suggested by the author. To cure blocks, some strategies were suggested, such as Automatisation, Regimen, Peer support, and Adaptive cognitions (Boice 1990). This is later expanded as automaticity, which is writing with reduced awareness of what is being written, or through free writing, where the writer lets the text flow without being critical. Then there is advice on the practice of
regular writing or regimen. As those who produce regularly, regardless of readiness or mood, produce more writing and have more creative ideas than writers who wait for inspiration before beginning. Next is the engagement in active meta-cognitions to talk about problems and strategies to effectively monitor their writing and to develop a variety of writing strategies, which is closely related to the last treatment: the need for external pressures and social supports to make writing efficient and effective (Boice 1993). The tendency to view blocks as a psychological problem leads to developing a Writing Process Questionnaire as a self-assessment instrument for students to spot negative and positive traits leading to or avoiding blocks (Lonka 1996).

There is, however, a controversy as to the exact causes of writing blocks. Recently, its attribution to obscure psychological disorders has been discarded. There is an attempt to ‘demystify’ the issue by considering blocks as real writing problems arising from specific misconceptions, writing behaviours, and rhetorical factors present at different stages of the writing process (Hjortshoj 2001).

Although the relationship between writer's block and some peculiar psychological condition maybe of less concern, there seems to be a deep-seated aspiration to discover what psychological factors allow some students to produce fluent, accurate, language learning and how these variables may ameliorate language learning for others. Sufficiently close maybe the individual's tolerance of ambiguity as an internal force in learners, which has been given due research attention in the recent years (Schmitt, 2002). They include tolerance of ambiguity in a host of personality-related variables that affect the process of language learning. Each of these variables may have an impact on language proficiency and the use of language learning strategies. A reason for association of Ambiguity Tolerance with Writer's Block lies in a state of ambiguity perception common to writers. Experiencing block, students mostly perceive some kind of ambiguity at the instance of writing. Inspiration to follow up a storyline usually coexists with a hesitation to continue in another direction. The possibility to develop the plot in the writer's mind in at least two different directions is a familiar phenomenon to writers. Thus, the decision to pursue a direction may necessitate some degree of tolerance for this ambiguity and the recovery from possible confusions can alleviate the obstruction and dissolve the block.

Tolerance of Ambiguity (henceforth referred to as AT) is a trait that was first assessed in relation to language strategy use in different skills of English language learning (Kazamia 1998), and is extensively researched in other disciplines of inquiry such as psychology (Furnham 1994). Specific studies were carried out as to its relationship to success in counsellor training and provided a framework to address inherent challenges with its use (Levitt, Jacques 2005). Despite the attention that AT has received in various disciplines related to psychology, its role and the need for it still remain elusive in the field of education.

Ambiguity in language learning is realized as uncertainty and language learning is one of the areas that is ‘fraught with uncertainty’, because rarely do learners know the exact meaning of a new lexical item or feel that they have pronounced a sound with total accuracy or have fully comprehended the temporal reference of a grammatical tense (Ely 1989). The pervasive character of uncertainty, or ambiguity, affects language learning and may inhibit student risk taking and interfere with their acquisition of new learning strategies (Ely 1995). Researchers have assumed that tolerance for ambiguity is a dominant trait affecting the overall cognitive and emotional functioning of individuals, as well as their system of beliefs and attitudes in three basic types of new, complex, and contradictory situations. People with a low AT tend to process information dichotomously into rigid categories (Budner 1962). The attempt to develop a scale for rating the ambiguity level of assignments is helpful in understanding the relationships and impact of ambiguity on student learning, partly as an ongoing effort to understand these relationships, control them, and consequently improve student learning (Sweeney, Owen 2002).

AT may actually increase as the student becomes a more sophisticated second language user and begins to wonder about the questions of style, levels of formality, situational appropriateness, and lexical nuance (Ely 1995). The relationship between in/tolerance of ambiguity and second language proficiency may be an interesting point to investigate, as ambiguity is considered to be a constant factor in the education. As students repeatedly experience ambiguous situations in test questions, instructions, and problem specifications, they must deal with them according to their individual level of tolerance to ambiguity (Sweeney, Owen 2002). Lack of tolerance, called intolerance for ambiguity, is defined as “a tendency to resort to black-and-white solutions, to arrive at premature closure... often at the neglect of reality” (Frenkel-Brunswik 1949: 115). There are some signs that indicate the conflation of ambiguity tolerance with more pedagogical variables. A recent study (Owen, Sweeney 2002) builds on the correlation of Ambiguity Tolerance level and assignment Ambiguity Tolerance on the one hand and assignment performance, learning, and project satisfaction on the other.

Research on the concept and construct of ambiguity gradually developed reliable measures to assess this trait. Most measures use either true/false or Likert-scale responses containing both positive and negative items. Instrument development began in the early 1960s, later modified in the 1980s (Budner 1962). It asks about ambiguous situations in the workplace and of personal nature, to distinguish a tolerant person from an intolerant
person with a range of scores ranging from 20 to 80, and a mean of 45. Building on an earlier instrument with high construct validity, the AT-20 scale, it also improves its reliability and internal consistency (MacDonald 1970). The MSTAT-I, retaining the strengths of previous scales reports a .86 Alpha reliability and significant positive correlations with the Budner and MacDonald instruments (McLain 1993).

Research on ambiguity has evolved from exploring its psychological aspects to developing measures to quantify it. The measures developed and improved throughout the 1960s to the 1990s (Budner 1962; Norton 1975; McLain 1993). The latter is used in this study. The most recent work focused on identifying ambiguous situations (Sweeney, Owen, 2002). Little research has been done specifically as to how it might relate to second language writing. Writing in a second language can be quite daunting for the uninitiated, such as the feeling students of English as a foreign language experience, and it is taxing as they often work unassisted and teachers can not provide proper feedback given the task, limited time, and the little training they themselves received.

**Methodology**

The participants are eighteen students enrolled in a compulsory course in the English Literature curriculum entitled Grammar and Writing. The study is aimed at reflecting on the relationship between several variables relevant in EFL teaching, viz. tolerance of ambiguity in English as a Foreign Language teaching project of an Iranian university. The investigation was carried out following an idea developed in different writing classrooms where low tolerance of ambiguity was suspected to be related to writer’s block. Two homogenous groups, set by proficiency test score, were ranked high, medium, and low by administering the McLain Scale of tolerance of ambiguity. Several blocks were spotted in classroom essay assignments throughout the sessions held in one semester. After providing solutions using Elbow (1988) and Mack, and Skjei (1979) strategies and models, participants were invited to take part in follow-up interviews regarding the self-perceived causes of blocks and effectiveness of strategies to overcome them. When learners are confronted with ambiguous situations their performance may change. The change may manifest itself in writing as either an increased time span required to begin writing or stopping in the middle. Considering the topics as similar, those who have a higher ambiguity tolerance may either overcome the blocks better and faster or do not encounter as many blocks as the others in the first place. In our context, blocks have been classified as lexical and grammatical, for our students seem to have blocks either because they were searching for particular vocabulary to express the fine details of their thoughts, or they reported they were blocked as they did not know how to put the ideas into words in the first place. The latter cases happened when they were not confident about the structure of what they wanted to convey.

To address the above issue, the following research questions were suggested:

- *Do students with high AT have an advantage in learning to overcome writers blocks?*
- *Do students with low AT tend to “shut down” when cornered with their teacher and their own discouragement?*

For the purpose of addressing the above questions, following procedures were implemented: Initially, the McLain (1993) scale of tolerance of ambiguity was administered. The student’s level was set. Then the teacher followed a planned feedback system in classroom while students were asked to write about that day’s lesson. When the researcher observed blocks, he referred to the following symptom and cure model used with only a few modifications for an Iranian University context. The class plan was based on these symptoms and cures, a sample of which is demonstrated in Table 1 (below).

There were cases that a symptom was not readily identifiable. Then, strategies adapted from the literature were applied to those still having trouble overcoming writer’s block (Mack, Skjei 1979). They were firstly advised to begin wherever they felt more confident with and to postpone parts like the introduction until they have a clearer idea of the main idea and purpose of the writing. They were then advised to talk to a person — a friend, a roommate, or a tutor, who is willing to spare a few minutes to talk their way to start writing about the topic. Having the person taking notes while they talk or taping the conversation or asking questions and guiding, is very helpful because they will probably be more natural, spontaneous and unpredictable in speech than when sitting, forcing themselves to continue writing. If that was not possible, they were advised to go it alone by talking into a tape recorder, imagining the audience sitting in front of them, or transcribing the tape-recorded material.

They were also advised to change the audience in their mind, to clarify their purpose and feel more comfortable in order to write. This was done by pretending that they were writing to a child, to a close friend, to a parent, to a person with whom they had a sharp disagreement, or to someone new to the subject, so they needed to explain paper’s topic slowly and clearly. They were finally advised to pretend they are someone else writing the paper. For instance, the president of a university asked to defend the new fee initiative. Consider being someone in another time period, or someone with a wildly different perspective from their own could offer a new standpoint to perceive an area otherwise undetectable. Verbalizing their writing made it more lucid.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptom</th>
<th>Possible Cures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You have attempted to begin a paper without doing any preliminary work such as brainstorming or outlining...</td>
<td>Use invention strategies suggested by a tutor or teacher. Write down all the primary ideas you'd like to express and then fill in each with smaller ideas that make up each primary idea. This can easily be converted into an outline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You don't want to spend time writing or don't understand the assignment...</td>
<td>Resign yourself to the fact that you have to write. Find out what is expected of you (consult a teacher, textbook, student, tutor, or project coordinator). Look at some of the strategies for writing anxiety listed below.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You are anxious about writing the paper...</td>
<td>Focus your energy by rehearsing the task in your head. Consciously stop the non-productive comments running through your head by replacing them with productive ones. If you have some &quot;rituals&quot; for writing success (chewing gum, listening to jazz, etc.), use them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1: Adapted symptom-cure model used in the study.**

**Findings**

The preliminary findings of the study pinpoint that Ambiguity Tolerance may have a positive role in dealing with challenges such as writer's block. Low Ambiguity Tolerance is also likely to be surmountable. There is a silver lining in having ambiguous situations in life and in learning languages. Looking at writer's block from a psychological perspective does not necessarily mean regarding it as a disorder, (Hjortshoj 2001), but as an opportunity to understand and as a standpoint to manipulate the block through indirect means. In this study, the correlation between data already collected on two types of blocks and scores related to ambiguity tolerance are demonstrated in table 2 below.

**Correlations**

<table>
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<th>ATSCORE</th>
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<tr>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.128</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
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</table>

**Table 2: The relationship between Ambiguity Tolerance Score and Grammatical blocks, Lexical blocks in the study.**

Whereas the small sample in this study can be considered a caveat, the preliminary results show that grammatical blocks tend to be related to the stoppage or blocks writers experience in a significant way. The same is not, however, evident from the next table just below that. This may be due to the paraphrasing ability of our students who can normally evade doubtful vocabulary, redirect or convey the meaning in a variety of different ways. The lexical pool to refer to as a resource point is much wider than the structures they can possibly use to convey their message, without the risk of total miscommunication of the message.
Another possible relationship, which may seem intuitive at first sight, is the use of strategies mentioned in the
method section to overcome blocks with the scores students obtained in the scale. Table 3 depicts the insignificant
relationship between them, using Pearson correlation again.

\section*{Correlations}

![Table 3: The relationship between Ambiguity Tolerance Score and Strategy Use in the study]

Although the benefit of using various strategies to address and overcome the writer's block seem obvious, their
conflation with the level of ambiguity tolerance would have been interesting. The data available already does not
show any relationship with that.

![Table 4: Data on occurrence of Writer's Blocks, Strategy use to overcome them, and Ambiguity Tolerance
Score in the study]
The last table indicates the sum of all previous variables in one dataset. The strategies used to deal with writer's
block, are classified under three categories of cognitive, meta-cognitive, and socio-affective. We could not
elaborate more on this distinction, given the logistic limitations defined for this paper. Data are labelled missing for
some subjects due to absenteeism. One participant was out before collection of ambiguity tolerance scores and
the other after that. So, the latter is included (No.2), but the former is excluded from the table. The score for No. 5
and 6 is unavailable at this stage and they can be temporarily excluded from analysis until their score is obtained.
Given that the number of assignments is fixed, the number of blocks occurred and the strategies used to
overcome them were tallied by counting them and inserted to the tables. Ambiguity tolerance scores turned out to
have a high variability from the low of 61 to the high of 122. It may be due to the sheer unfamiliarity of the concept
for most of the participants. In conducting this test, utmost care was exercised to ensure that the participants do
not develop a pattern for what they could judge as 'right' answers. It was explained that there is no 'right' or 'wrong'
and they should only respond to the scale cues in a truthful and thoughtful manner. The items of the test consist of
mixed unpredictable positive and negative statements that could further guard against any foreseeable moderating
or confounding factor.
There are points to consider before concluding the findings. Writer’s block is a form of internal interruption that may have to do with other factors such as language proficiency, unless the effect is controlled. The way blocks are classified in this research by dividing them into grammatical and lexical may be thought of as language proficiency. There are reasons, however, that demonstrate this potential effect is controlled while refining the concept of writer’s block.

Firstly, the blocks were initially identified and confirmed through tools discussed in the relevant section and this classification of blocks is not set out as a measuring tool. Rather, it is a pattern found in the already collected data and for the purpose of analysis. So, the classification is of a posteriori, not a priori nature.

Secondly, the blocks were measured not only by teacher and student observation, but also by follow up interviews and regular self-reports using the most salient definitions in the literature (Boice 1993; Hjortshoj 2001). So the methodology does not only include the aggregate of student’s self-report, but also the total of counting the cases of blocks, as raters perceived. The inter-rater reliability index of raters was found to be 0.75.

Thirdly, the extraneous factors such as language proficiency were controlled in the best possible way and in the practicalities of intact classes. The students took part in a language proficiency test at the beginning of the semester and the students who scored 80% of the total were designated as participants.

Still there is a possibility that participants may be all set to write on the topic, if only they could write in their first language. Yet, the effect of first language writing skill is minimized in this study for two reasons. All participants have the same background of a centralized schooling system that almost homogeneously deemphasized writing skill development in their first language. Their important examinations including the university entrance exams lacked any measure of first language writing. So they, almost identically, felt little academic obligation to develop it. Through a washback effect few schools incorporated it in the syllabus. Success in highly competitive university entrance is a goal that leaves little time, if not motivation, on the individual level to develop first language writing skill.

Moreover, the topics were selected in ways that hold the interest of all the students in more or less the same manner. They were chosen from chapter ending activities of ‘Understanding and Developing Grammar’ by Betty Azar 1999. Students generally rated the topics as highly interesting to write about. If one topic did not hold the interest of a participant, variations were offered by the teacher to ensure that they began on the same footing. Options provided by topic items were mixed with attempts on the part of the teacher to keep all students involved. Given the length of semester and number of participants, it can be ensured that the topic could not introduce an uncalled-for variation in the performance of the participants.

Conclusions

Students often find themselves in deep waters, when facing an academic writing task. The writing blocks of many students may not be merely a deficit to be remedied, but a necessary stage in student’s writing power and development. So, breaking the silence of mind is what they often expressed they needed, when things were ambiguous and they did not know how to continue writing. Many writers seem to prefer working silently to achieve this

An individual’s orientation toward ambiguity can affect his/her success in overcoming writing blocks and understanding the tricks or strategies of writing is their main strategy to continue despite the possible incidence of writer’s blocks.

Another possible conclusion can be that understanding the construct of tolerance of ambiguity may provide a type of realistic motivation that may contain the recipe for success in overcoming writing difficulties.

Pedagogy may address writer’s block and promotion of tolerance of ambiguity in a way that higher tolerance acts like a motor pushing the writes to go ahead and not get distracted or over-anxious by problems in the process of writing because of holes in their lexical or grammatical production and performance, if not their grammatical or lexical competence or knowledge. Among these two, grammar seems to play a more critical role in blocking our students from writing. Replacing an appropriate structure is probably more taxing or a least challenging than finding a synonym that may be nearly as expressive about their thoughts at the moments of blocks in writing.

The positive correlation of facility in writing with ambiguity tolerance level may contribute to the idea that consciousness and awareness-raising of students about ambiguity tolerance is not without benefits. Increasing the consciousness of students through enhancement activities for tolerance of ambiguity can indirectly create a potential for better decisions at the time of actual writing, and especially those moments that are prone to place a block.
Raising consciousness of second language teachers can be made an additional advantage in dealing with both writer's block and ambiguity tolerance tactfully. They are commended to equip themselves with knowledge of strategies and tasks that empower learners to overcome their writing difficulties.

There is an irony that can turn into one of the potential challenges to be addressed in this line of research. There exists a belief that we may be able to improve student learning and performance by reducing or eliminating ambiguity from certain learning situations (Owen, Sweeney 2002). This seems apparent and advisable. The point is, however, that both blocks and ambiguity occur, no matter what we do as teachers. So, let’s learn, prepare and teach how to deal with them.

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Magnus Gustafsson* Anti-Realism for Academic Writing

*The Centre for Language and Communication, Chalmers University of Technology, Sweden

Keywords: genre; situated writing; anti-realism

Short biography of author:
Magnus Gustafsson is the director of the Centre for Language and Communication at the Centre. The Centre provides writing and communication in the disciplines courses and interventions across the university in both English and Swedish. Most of the activities are integrated into the content courses of the respective engineering programmes and in most of the programmes there is more than one intervention, which enables design for progression and adapting to the changing educational environments of the engineering students. With the MSc students there is only a limited number of integrated interventions and elective courses are offered instead. All MSc-programmes are delivered in English and many of the international students find those courses. Magnus works primarily with the PhD writing courses, with commissioned courses, and with the further education of teachers at the university who face having to teach in English on the MSc-programmes.

Abstract:
Cross-disciplinary courses in academic writing for PhD students at Chalmers University of Technology, Sweden, are informed by Swales’ CARS model and the belief that enhanced genre awareness will promote more effective writing. Despite the EFL-context, language proficiency is not a major component in the course seminars which focus instead on understanding one’s specific community and the ways of packaging research information in the respective communities. A second active component to promote enhanced writing is the peer learning setup of effective and reflective peer work.

The seminars are consequently unorthodox, in that much genre pedagogy aims at a high ability to adjust to a communicative community. Predictably, a significant part of the seminars involves genre analysis of published research articles and discussions as to how the PhD students will adjust their writing accordingly. However, such genre pedagogy also implies that there are different levels of representation. Each adaptation to the community or the specific writing situation results in a new representation of research – a new narrative. Discussing these levels of representation in research processes, through analyzing research articles from their respective fields, awakens writers to their essentially anti-realist writing and tends to improve writing.

The presentation aims to explore how this anti-realist perspective helps enhance writing. First, I indicate how and the degree to which the anti-realist stance promotes an understanding of genre mechanics in the first place. The second step is to look at how it might ‘unlock’ writing from reliance on ‘templates’ and ‘set phrases’ through heavily situating the text in a new narrative environment. Might anti-realism even help avoid the risk of self-plagiarism through its emphasis on the narrative context of research publications?

Indicative References:
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Sandra Harrison* & Roger Morgan**  Using Controlled Language Software to Identify Potential Problems for Non-Native Speakers in the Language of Engineering Examination Papers

* Coventry University, United Kingdom  
** Liverpool John Moores University, United Kingdom

Keywords: examination papers; comprehension difficulties; controlled language

Abstract:

This paper asks how we can identify potential problems in the language of examination questions which might cause difficulties of understanding for non-native speakers of English at UK universities. Work in the 1980s identified difficulties relating to instructional verbs in examinations (Swales 1982). But other studies found that the problem was more widespread – it was not confined to subject-specific technical vocabulary or even to instructional verbs, but extended to ‘ordinary’ English words. Indeed, in an alarming number of cases students interpreted problematic words with the opposite meaning to that intended by the writer (Cassels and Johnstone 1985). Sources of difficulty are words with more than one meaning, idiomatic usage taken literally, and rare vocabulary (Fisher-Hoch et al 1997), and also long questions and non-essential information (Bird and Welford 1995). Problems in understanding examination questions can mean that non-native speakers spend much longer than native speakers in reading questions; this can restrict choice because students will avoid questions that they cannot understand (Swales 1982). But little work has been done in the field of education that might help the writers of examination questions to identify and avoid potential sources of difficulty.

The aerospace industry has striven to make its manuals understandable and unambiguous to non-native speakers, a goal shared by writers of examination papers. To achieve this, the industry uses a controlled language with limited vocabulary and restricted grammatical rules. While recognising the limitations of this approach, the authors considered that by testing examination papers against the rules of this ‘Simplified English’, it might be possible to identify areas of potential difficulty for non-native speakers.

This paper describes the results of a study which tests past Engineering examination questions using software based on AECMA Simplified English, the controlled language in established use in the British Aerospace industry. The results identified many lexical items which were not in the original software list of “Approved words”. Some of these were technical words and others were non-technical terms which are in common use in an engineering context. However, some were potential problem sources, including implicit instructions and vague or ambiguous words. Messages that related to sentence structure, in particular messages that related to sentence complexity, indicated that some sentences had additional problems.

Indicative References:


**Simon Kinzley** The Effect of Academic Writing Instruction on Chinese Students’ Academic Performance: A case study

*Lancaster University, United Kingdom*

**Keywords:** English for academic purposes (EAP); rhetorical strategies; innovation bundle; diffusion

**Short biography of author:**
Simon Kinzley is one of the academic co-ordinators of the Lancaster University EAP and Study Skills pre-sessional course. He is also working towards a Ph.D. in which he is using innovation theory to analyse the impact of the course on the educational outcomes of Chinese undergraduates studying at Lancaster. Prior to this, Simon worked in China as the academic director of the Northern Consortium of British Universities’ International Foundation Year; a programme designed to prepare Chinese students for UK undergraduate study. He has also spent a number of years in Japan, teaching, designing courses and managing teacher development.

**Abstract:**
This presentation reports on the results of a study tracking a group of Chinese undergraduate students for a six month period, from the start of the Lancaster University Pre-Sessional course through to the end of their second term of study for an undergraduate degree in Media and Cultural Studies. The study was primarily concerned with evaluating the success of the Pre-Sessional course by considering its role in equipping these students with Western style rhetorical strategies such as skills of critical evaluation, use of evidence and adoption of referencing conventions and also in considering whether students who do adopt these strategies actually get better grades in their university work than students who don’t. Specifically, analyses of students’ Pre-Sessional course essays, degree essays, essay feedback and grades as well as student and lecturer interviews were used to answer four questions:

1. What parts of the Pre-Sessional course were actually new to these students?
2. To what extent did the students adopt the new strategies taught on the course and why?
3. Specifically, which strategies did the students adopt, fail to adopt or reject and why?
4. Do higher rates of adoption result in students getting higher grades and why?

Analysis of the essays that the students submitted on their degree courses revealed that these students did adopt the rhetorical strategies taught on the course to a substantial extent and that higher levels of adoption of these strategies generally resulted in students receiving higher grades for the essays that they wrote for their degrees.

**Indicative References:**
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Valentyna Maksymuk*, Olha Ivashchyshyn* & Yuriy Zavhorodnev* Interactive Assessment Techniques for Teaching Writing
*Ivan Franko National University, Ukraine

Keywords: teaching Academic Writing; assessment techniques; development of students' writing skills

Short biography of authors:

Valentyna Maksymuk – Associate Professor of the Foreign Languages Department for Humanities of the Ivan Franko National University, teachers law, PhD students; the author of the textbook English for PhD Students (2005), lecturer in English Stylistics and in Academic Writing of the English Language and Literature Department.

Olha Ivashchyshyn – Senior Teacher of the Foreign Languages Department for Humanities of the Ivan Franko National University, teaches philology students, the author of the computer programme TALL (Teaching and Learning Languages).

Yuriy Zavhorodnev – Associate Professor of the English Department of the Ivan Franko National University, Head of the Department, teaches English for academic purposes.

Abstract:

The paper focuses on the results of developing interactive assessment techniques and their impact on teaching academic writing to students of language and law faculties in Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, Ukraine. It also demonstrates the effectiveness of the computer technologies usage for elaborating feedback strategies of interactive character.

According to Leki (1999), Hacker (2000), and Yakhontova (2002), writing requires adequate skills from the writer to be understood by the reader. To improve writing skills a student-writer should acquire knowledge and gain experience on applying basic techniques of writing to imply clarity of statements and supporting ideas, unity and coherence, good details and well-chosen examples, logical order, conciseness and freshness. The paper shows how self-revising, peer interactions, peer responses and teacher’s evaluation through written comments to students in individual conferences and in teacher’s web-site assignments involving elements of cognitive process, are used.

The role of teacher’s assessment in the development of the students’ writing skills is focused on in this paper. The emphasis is placed on the interactive feedback strategies, characterized by mutual influence of both a teacher and a student, and their influence on the writing process and the facilitation of academic writing. Besides, it helps the writer to determine new approaches towards expressing the ideas in the most convincing way, to clarify means of creating textual clarity and making writing persuasive. When students get teacher’s feedback commenting on their drafts’ structuring, linking between ideas, describing, defining, exemplifying, classifying, assuming, hypothesizing, comparing, expressing caution, etc., it makes their further writing more sophisticated. To implement the above ideas and to develop the students’ writing skills, a set of assessment forms and a number of interactive activities for in-class and web-based work have been elaborated.

In academic writing classes, both the teacher and the classmates can play the role of a reader of students’ writing. The interactive feedback received from students is also significant and should be developed and constantly applied for teaching. Special assignments have also been created for this purpose. The student-student module activities gave successful results.

The usage of interactive feedback strategies of student-teacher and student-student modules helps to intensify the process of teaching the final draft writing and contributes to expanding critical thinking which, in its turn, leads to amplifying teacher’s resources and encouraging the teaching process. Providing clarity and understanding between a student and a teacher it motivates the further writing development of the students.

The presentation will demonstrate the contribution of Lviv University teachers in developing interactive feedback strategies for in-class and web-based teaching writing and discuss the results.

Indicative References:

**Jenny Moon** A Workshop to Introduce and Improve the Quality of Reflective Writing

*Bournemouth University, United Kingdom*

**Keywords:** reflective writing

**Short biography of author:**

Jenny Moon (BSc, MPhil, MEd, MSc, PhD) has worked in education, health, and professional development in Higher Education and was awarded a National Teaching Fellowship in 2006. Her recent focus is on pedagogy and human learning (reflective learning, critical thinking, and the learning of non-traditional students). She is Senior Lecturer (research) in the Centre for Excellence in Media Practice, Bournemouth University and a Consultant for the Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development.


**Abstract:**

The workshop is an example of what I now call a ‘graduated scenario’. It is designed for direct use with students, or with their teaching staff and it consists of working with story in small groups, with a later plenary. It includes both reading and discussion activities. It is designed to demonstrate to learners what reflective writing looks like and in addition, the way in which to write at a deeper level (i.e. less descriptively). The exercise is based on research and is supported by a theoretical framework that will be used at the workshop. The workshop has been widely used in the UK and abroad. In addition, access to a number of other similar resources that support reflective learning will be given.
Hilary Nesi* An Approach to Genre Families from a Multidisciplinary Perspective for Academic Writing Instruction

*Coventry University, United Kingdom

Keywords: assessed writing; BAWE corpus; genre family

Short biography of author:

Hilary Nesi is Professor in English Language at Coventry University. She has supervised research into academic discourse, taught English for Academic Purposes and evaluated EAP courses for many years, and has led projects to create the BASE corpus of British Academic Spoken English and the BAWE corpus of British Academic Written English. She is the chief academic consultant for the Essential Academic Skills in English (EASE) series of multimedia interactive self-access materials on CD-ROM, based around video clips of authentic academic discourse drawn from the BASE corpus. She is also a member of the advisory panel for Macmillan Dictionaries, including the Macmillan English Dictionary.

Abstract:

This paper reports on findings from the ESRC funded project “An investigation of genres of assessed writing in British Higher Education”. A main aim of this project has been to identify typical university assignment types through analysis of the British Academic Written English (BAWE) corpus: a collection of 2,761 good quality student assignments (2,896 separate texts, 6,514,776 words). The assignments in the corpus have been scrutinised for their generic properties, leading to the identification of 13 ‘genre families’, most of which are in use across a wide range of disciplines and at all levels of study, from first year undergraduate to Masters level. In this paper we will introduce families such as the Case Study, the Critique, the Design Specification, the Essay, the Narrative, the Problem Question and the Proposal, and describe some of the subgenres within each of these, such as site reports (engineering) as a type of Case Study, and marketing plans (business) as a type of Proposal. Our genre family descriptions will help subject lecturers and writing tutors communicate assignment requirements more clearly to their students and will also help raise awareness of the wide variety of genres university students are currently required to write.
Rebecca O’Rourke* Reflective Writing as Textual Practice

*University of Leeds, United Kingdom

Keywords: learning journals; academic text type; textual practices

Short biography of author:

Rebecca O’Rourke is a Senior Lecturer in the Lifelong Learning Institute at the University of Leeds. She teaches and researches creative and academic writing and is particularly interested in the pedagogic identity of teachers of writing. She first became interested in learning journals when teaching Return to Study programmes in the mid-1980s and consolidated this interest when university adult education was mainstreamed and accredited throughout the 1990s. She is part of the JISC funded Academic Writing Empowered by Social Online Mediated Environments [AWESOME] research team at Leeds

Abstract:

This paper is a contribution to the Academic Writing theme: “investigate conventions of reflective writing in the university and engage with contentious questions about how and whether or not reflection might be assessed”. Its focus is a textual analysis of learning journals which formed part of the assessment for a final year module, Recent Canadian Fiction (RCF), on a BA Hons English degree which ran for 10 years, between 1995 and 2005, at a UK HEI. Journals were first introduced to RCF as part of an Enterprise in Higher Education (EHE) project. The EHE project followed a 1995 Teaching Quality Assurance report which, although finding the School’s work excellent, suggested it explore some of the innovative approaches to teaching and learning then beginning to emerge. The module tutor for RCF led the EHE project and we collaborated on it. I was based at the same HEI but in another School and brought experience of working with learning journals and an interest in non-traditional forms of assessment to the project.

The journals are a valuable and fascinating source of data for research into reflective writing. The focus of much reflective writing and learning journal research has concerned advocacy, linked especially to questions of student engagement, the development of critical thinking skills and generic writing development, and the refinement of protocols for use. This emphasis on process has overshadowed equally interesting questions about reflective writing as text.

In this paper, I focus on the text of the journals themselves and use the data in two ways. First, I revisit the claims which the RCF module tutor and I made about the benefits of learning journals and explore if they held true for each cohort and whether and in what ways they become subverted or extended. In particular, I adapt the key questions for staff framed in relation to assessment for learning by McDowell and Montgomery (2007) in their paper to last year’s iPED conference to explore the configuration of student / teacher (and student / student) relationships and to ask whether learning journals resolve or create new conflicts in relation to learning and identity. This is especially pertinent to 3rd years who are negotiating the transition from student to graduate, a process which involves a profound shift in their identities as readers and writers. Second, I explore the proposition that reflective writing is a new academic text type, most often associated with professional, practice-based learning, and compare its emerging genre features and conventions with the textual features of journals in the data set as the basis for discussing the extent to which reflective writing conventions are discipline-specific.
Claire Penketh: Symposium - Shifting the Locus of Responsibility for Academic Writing

Chair: Claire Penketh, Edge Hill University, United Kingdom
Discussant: Linda Rush, Edge Hill University, United Kingdom

Description:

‘Responsibility in order to be reasonable must be limited to objects within the power of the responsible party’ (Hamilton, 1787)

There are expectations for tutors and students to take responsibility for their own writing development, yet both groups are subject to conditions that can be counterproductive to generating suitable writing environments. This symposium offers four papers aimed at exploring the locus of responsibility for academic writing and the ways in which appropriate conditions can be created.

The ability to take responsibility assumes a power dynamic where individuals can actively gain ownership of their learning rather than re-presenting the ideas and words of others. However, assessment processes and procedures can militate against this by limiting the potential for students to engage with the development of academic discourse. It could be argued that tutors might be subject to similar constraints and the expectation to contribute to the development of an academic discourse where internal and external constraints and prior experiences and identities dominate.

These papers are connected by concepts of shifting responsibility:

• The first, based on a pilot project introducing ‘Turnitin’ plagiarism detection software, discusses the shift from a reactive to a proactive approach to issues concerning malpractice via the introduction of developmental approaches.
• The extent to which students engage with written ‘feedback’ provides the next focus when responding to those who just ‘take the mark and run’.
• A staff writing for publication programme provides the context for a consideration of the responsibility for spaces, times and places for writing as part of a problematic dynamic for tutors as writers.
• The final presentation also considers the locus of responsibility from the perspective of tutors as writers and learners with a focus on the role of tutors’ epistemological perspectives, their conceptions of scholarship and the degrees of academic assertiveness evident in their approaches to writing.

We aim to explore the conditions where responsibility for the development of academic discourse through writing can be re-located as an accessible object.

Helen Newall* How to Turnitin Frogs into Princes: A plagiarism detection software story of changing the habits of a lifetime

*Edge Hill University, United Kingdom

Keywords: developmental approaches to Academic Writing; academic malpractice; Turnitin

Short biography of author:

Dr Helen Newall is a writer and creator of plays, short fiction and acousmatic soundscapes. Her work has been performed in Soweto, Barcelona, Toronto and across the UK and Ireland by groups as diverse as HTV Television Workshop; Carl Davis and The Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra; Chester Gateway Theatre (as writer-in-residence); Off The Ground Theatre; Action Transport; and The Nuffield Theatre, Southampton. Her fiction has appeared in Myslexia, Pool and Pretext. She is a co-author of The Road to Somewhere (2004, Palgrave), and has contributed chapters to How to Write Fiction (and Think About It) (2006, Palgrave) and Everything You Need to Know about Creative Writing (But Knowing Isn’t Everything) (2007, Continuum). She teaches at Edge Hill University where she is the Programme Leader of Drama, Physical Theatre and Dance and the new Drama, Physical and Visual Theatre programme.
Abstract:

Once upon a time, in the autumn of 2007, the presenter undertook a pilot project to explore possible implementation of 'Turnitin' plagiarism detection software with Level 5 undergraduate Physical Theatre students. The students involved were a cohort of twenty, most of whom had participated in a previous study using Turnitin in Level 4. Some were nervous writers. All preferred practical work to written work. Some of them had previously been through malpractice procedures, and some of them, who should have done so, hadn’t... The previous sampling had demonstrated that whilst manual detection by hard pressed essay markers was doing quite well, some cases were slipping through the net.

The aims of this pilot included considerations of how best to implement software to avoid alienating students, without frightening technophobic staff, whilst keeping budget holders happy... There are plenty of other projects and papers and even conferences surrounding Turnitin. To hard pressed staff marking piles of essays, plagiarism detection software looks extremely attractive: the time it takes for software to assess the content of, say, twenty submitted scripts is magical when set against the hours it can take to examine one script. But we wanted to examine how true that might be for this department: was time saved in one area lost in another through having to maintain class inboxes and manage electronic scripts, was software really going to be an aid, or would it be like the fat busting grill that ends up unwashed and unloved in a cupboard under the sink because it’s too much trouble? No amount of report reading and fact finding can ever really show you what it’s like to use such software and how it might best be used to support your students on your course, so we set out to find out. In setting out into this pilot study, with various 'powers that be' at the university watching, I worried that I was opening a can of worms, but, over the course of the twelve weeks something strange and wonderful happened...

This presentation discusses the aims of the pilot study which involved an examination of a shift from a reactive to a proactive approach to malpractice (in other words: prevention is better than the cure), through to the introduction of developmental approaches to writing resulting in students taking a greater ownership of and responsibility for, their own writing processes, but it will also concern itself with the personal narratives of self discovery articulated along the way by both staff and students; the self esteem of inexperienced undergraduate writers; the ownership of learning; and how, along the way, Turnitin, ticking quietly away underneath it all, was almost forgotten...

Monday 14:00, Room 1.4 ___________________________ Academic Writing Symposium

Jeanette Ellis* & Helen McNeill* Feedback in Focus: Do students really engage with their feedback?

*Edge Hill University, United Kingdom

Keywords: student engagement with feedback; Academic Writing; postgraduate professional development programmes

Short biography of authors:

Jeanette Ellis and Helen McNeill are Learning and Teaching Fellows at Edge Hill University and Senior Lecturers in the Faculty of Health. They have a particular interest in the continued development of mentoring with the intention of engaging lifelong learners in professional and academic progression. Specifically they are concerned with using feedback to inform learning at different levels and are interested in the learners perceptions of feedback and its application in developing individuals.

Abstract:

‘Feedback or knowledge of results is the lifeblood of learning’ (Rowntree, 1982)

If this statement is accepted as true and there seems no reason to suggest otherwise, it is reasonable to assume that learners would actively seek feedback in order to inform their learning and develop their academic writing skills. The principle of constructive alignment depends on an integral approach between teaching, learning and assessment (Biggs, 1999) and can result in the creation of a space for shared responsibility. Inherent to this is the process of feedback, which should offer both support and challenge to the student and ought to reflect the complexity of the task they have been set. There is much written in the literature about the role of feedback in developing academic writing skills (for example see, Catt and Gregory, 2006; Orrell, 2006; Hyatt, 2005; McCune, 2004). Hyatt (2005) highlighted the important role that written feedback on academic writing can have in the induction of students into the academic community of their chosen discipline and further suggested that feedback was central to learning as well as assessment.
Poor feedback has profound consequences for learners who may suffer from reduced self-esteem, confidence and ability to engage with the academic community (Hunt 2001). Arguably, this could have a detrimental effect on their willingness to face the challenge of academic writing in the future with a subsequent reluctance to engage in ‘lifelong’ learning, a central tenet of continuing professional development. Additionally, several authors have identified the difficulties presented to students by the sometimes rather opaque language used in feedback comments from academics (Hyatt, 2005; Higgins et al, 2001; Chanock, 2000).

The literature published to date on the role of feedback in developing academic writing appears to be almost entirely focussed on full-time undergraduates. However, continuing professional development programmes for health professionals recruit students onto part-time modules, often on a stand-alone basis and sometimes introduce these experienced professionals to higher education for the first time. Rather than having several years of study to develop their academic writing, these students must ‘hit the ground running’ and be able to produce work of an acceptable standard within the time frame of a 15-week module. As identified in the above literature, feedback, for those who seek it, could be tremendously influential in their academic success and could be a powerful determinant of whether the student continues with any further academic study. This paper will consider the effects of a novel approach to assessment which requires the students to submit part 1 of their course work mid-semester, with the subsequent feedback in both written and verbal forms ‘feeding forward’ to the submission of part 2 of the assessment at the end of the semester.

It is hoped that this study will contribute to the debate on what students need in relation to their feedback by going some way to redressing the power imbalances that fail to put the student at the centre of academic discourse (Hyatt 2005).

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Hyatt D F (2005) ‘Yes, a very good point!’: a critical genre analysis of a corpus of feedback commentaries on Master of Education assignments. Teaching in Higher Education. 10, (3) 339-353

Monday 14:00, Room 1.4 Academic Writing Symposium

Claire Penketh* ‘I can’t just ‘write’ - other things need doing!'
*Edge Hill University, United Kingdom

Keywords: shifting the locus of responsibility; Academic Writing; tutors as writers

Short biography of author:

Claire Penketh is a Research Officer in the Teaching and Learning Development Unit at Edge Hill University with a particular interest in student and tutor academic writing and the concept of equity in respect of the provision that is made to support writing development for both groups. She is a PhD student at Goldsmiths researching the role of drawing from observation as a discriminatory discourse.

Abstract:

The ‘opportunity’ or ‘pressure’ to write for publication is one of the many demands on tutor time in HE (Murray and Moore, 2006) where it is constructed as a natural expectation for some and a necessity or a luxury for others. This positioning of academic writing for tutors appears to reflect different ideas of what constitutes both time and responsibility for writing. This paper is based on an exploration of ‘tutors as
writers’ from the combined experiences of developing a staff writing for the publication programme, ‘Write In’, and recent research which aimed to identify times, spaces and places for tutor writing.

Writing takes time. This time can be in small bite-size chunks, an accumulation of ten minute slots or longer periods, such as, a day or even a weekend retreat, but writing takes time. With this demand for time comes a further expectation that an individual will have the responsibility to make the time to write. We expect students to arrange their studies and make time to write and Bean (2001) suggests that weaker student writing reflects the submission of early or first drafts rather than weaknesses with technical aspects of writing. It all takes time.

The ‘Write In’ introduced as a three day event in 2005, shifted to an extended eight month programme in 2008, providing a structure for facilitating staff writing for publication following a model developed by Murray (2002). Within this programme there are opportunities to attend practical writing sessions, share writing with a mentor and have regular contact with the facilitator via email as well as having the opportunity for internal peer review prior to submission to a journal. Although there are opportunities to take writing forward, there remains the issue of time to write, identified by many tutors as a main constraint. In the ‘Write In’ programme, this concept of time and the ability to ‘claim’ significant amounts of time to prioritise writing has been a significant factor in tutors’ motivation to participate. Providing a legitimate space to claim time to write was also a significant factor in extending the programme.

In a recent survey of 28 tutors and academic staff, participants were asked specifically about the times, spaces and places they identified for writing. What was evident from their responses was the range of writing activities they engaged with and the positioning and prioritizing of these in relation to their other professional, teaching and research roles. Although a majority of tutors identified themselves as writers, there were very different experiences of being able to legitimize writing time with responses ranging from ‘I am in a profession where I am expected to write’ to ‘I can’t just ‘write’ - other things need doing’!

This paper identifies some discrete characteristics of academic identity emerging from the ‘Write In’ and this related study, in respect of the ways in which tutors’ concepts of time can enable or constrain writing behaviours. It will offer points for consideration regarding the implications for practice in the ways we might better support tutors as writers.

**Indicative References:**


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**Linda Rush**

*Edge Hill University, United Kingdom*

**Keywords:** tutors as learners; professional development; epistemology

**Short biography of author:**

Dr. Linda Rush is a Learning and Teaching Fellow at Edge Hill University where she is Senior Lecturer in the Teaching and Learning Development Unit. Her current research is based on gaining a better understanding of the notion of tutors’ intellectual learning and more specifically, the relationship between tutors’ epistemological beliefs and their engagement with professional development. Her most recent work includes an ESCALATE funded project, exploring the role that ‘Learning to Learn’ can have in developing pedagogy in Initial Teacher Training.

**Abstract:**

This presentation will give philosophical and practical insights into the use and application of a distinctive philosophy of teaching, one which foregrounds the tutor as the active and autonomous maker of knowledge. It is argued that this creates appropriate conditions for tutors, as learners, to take responsibility as developing writers in respect of this knowledge.

Of particular importance, in terms of this enquiry, is that, frequently, many approaches to professional development (PD) for tutors in Higher Education consistently violate principles for optimising learning (Bransford, Brown, Cocking, 2000). Thus, with a view to understanding better the notion of ‘tutor learning’ and the ways in which it can be encouraged, I have been keen to critique current and evolving models of PD at Edge Hill University. Furthermore, mindful of how human beings are disposed to learn by imitation, colleagues within the Teaching and Learning Development Unit (TLDU) are particularly keen to promote
and investigate links between tutors’ engagement with a distinctive pedagogic approach concerned with learning to learn (a family of learning practices that enhance one’s capacity to learn) in higher education, and the personalisation of such values in the professional context of their own teaching and structuring of learning.

Particular attention has been paid to tutors as learners in the context of their engagement with the university’s Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning Support in HE (PgC TLHE), central to which is their composition of a series of critically reflective writings, culminating in the write-up of a small-scale piece of pedagogic research for publication in an in-house journal. To date, as a prelude to empirical enquiry, a selected range of literature has been drawn on to inform initial musings and testing out of ideas in respect of design and delivery of a curriculum whose primary aim is to promote ‘critical thinkers’ (e.g. Bransford, Brown, Cocking, 2000; Claxton, 2003; 2006; Hargreaves, 2006; Moon, 2006; Poerksen, 2005; Rawson, 2005). Here, critical thinking, is being viewed as an element of the taking of a critical stance – an acquired disposition towards knowledge and action (Barnett in Moon 2006), central to which are key concepts of ‘developmental epistemology’ and ‘academic assertiveness’ (Moon, 2006).

Moon (2006) argues that an obvious link exists between critical thinking and writing; writing being a primary medium to represent the process of thinking. Indeed, the capacity to write clearly and precisely is particularly associated with critical thinking, both in the sequencing and layout of evidence and in the broader summing up of the case. Furthermore, the production of a paper or ‘version’ of our thoughts provides a chance to engage with metacognition about our own thinking as we judge whether the material on paper says what we need it to say – and we duly revise it, or not. This presentation will draw on a range of practical exemplifications of these ideas.

Indicative References:


Lucy Rai* Reflective Writing in Social Work Education

*The Open University, United Kingdom

Keywords: reflective writing; social work; student writing

Short biography of author:
Lucy is Assistant Director of social work (Curriculum) at The Open University. Her research and publications focus on student writing in practice-based higher education, reflective writing and writer identity. Lucy is a Fellow of the Practice-based Professional Learning Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching.

Abstract:
Reflective learning has an established place within social work education. There is an extensive literature on the subject aimed at both social work educators and students (Boud, Keogh et al. 1985; Yelloly and Henkel 1995; Gould and Taylor 1996; Martyn 2000; Bolton 2003). There has been less work, however, focusing specifically on reflective writing in social work education in the UK, despite its importance as part of the process for students of embedding learning in real experiences through reflection (Watson 2002; Heron and Murray 2004; Rai 2004; Rai 2006).

This paper draws together literature relating to reflective practice in social work and reflective writing (including reflective journals) in other disciplines (Boud, Keogh et al. 1985; Baker and Nelson 1992; Moon 1999a; Moon 1999b; Creme 2000; Moon 2002; Moon 2004; Oldham and Henderson 2004; Thorpe 2004). It also explores a body of literature exploring academic writing in social work, primarily emanating from the United States and Australia (Berger 1990; Goldstein 1993; Kirk 1993; Austen and Mccelland 1998; Green 1998; Rehr, Showers et al. 1998; Bibus, Link et al. 1999; Sherman 1999; Tasker 1999; Witkin 2000; Dinerman 2003; Staudt, Dlumus et al. 2003; Waldman 2005). In doing so, this paper raises key issues for educators about the specific nature of reflective writing in social work and the support needed by students in developing skills to write reflectively for assessment. These issues include the impact of assessing reflective writing and the consequent importance for educators of recognising the ways in which reflective writing differs from other forms of academic student writing.

One of the important distinguishing features of reflective writing is the centrality of the self. Writing about the self in the context of social work involves exploring personal values and beliefs and also experiences of working with, for example, abuse, loss and discrimination. Writing about such individual experiences in the context of academic assessment has the potential to arouse strong emotional reactions. In addition to the emotive challenge of writing about experience, reflective writing poses particular cognitive challenges. This is of particular significance in social work as the skills required for reflective writing are commonly assessed early in students' academic careers despite being associated in other disciplines with study at postgraduate level.

In conclusion this paper offers some thoughts on ways forward for educators involved in supporting students develop skills in reflective writing. These include a conceptual model for exploring some of the key distinguishing features of reflective writing within a broader context of viewing reflective writing as a social practice, which is closely associated with writer identity.

Indicative References:
Goldstein, H. (1993). 'Writing to be read: the place of the essay in social work literature.' *Families in society* 74(7): 441.


Academic Writing

Peter Samuels* & Lisa Ganobcsik-Williams* Academic Writing Centres and Mathematics Support Services: Developing advanced services through collaboration
*Coventry University, United Kingdom

Keywords: writing and maths support centres

Abstract:

Academic Writing centres and Mathematics Support services draw their expertise from very different academic disciplines, but potentially share much in terms of theories and pedagogies of student support and social theories of practical disciplines. This presentation outlines the activities of the Academic Writing Centre and the Centre for Excellence in Mathematics and Statistics Support at Coventry University and argues that teaching and research collaborations between these two types of centre can lead to enhancements in provision that will benefit both HE students and academic staff.

The presenters will begin by reviewing traditional activities of Academic Writing centres and Mathematics Support services with reference to surveys, case studies and other scholarship. The presentation will then discuss an ‘expanded definition’ of such services, encompassing, for example, academic staff development in the teaching of writing, statistics advisory services and generic statistical methods workshops, and will discuss how these types of provision can be conceptualised and implemented. The presentation will then focus on exploring Coventry University’s Centres’ collaborations that have led to two types of advanced provision: Writing in the Disciplines (WiD) training for Mathematics Education doctoral research students and the development of outreach services grounded in the application of theories of learning spaces to Learning Development.

The provisions in Academic Writing and Mathematics Support at Coventry University will then be contrasted and potential further areas of collaboration and development identified, namely:

- collaboration in the development of the Centres’ research programmes, including addressing common research questions, such as the development of a pedagogy to describe their practice from a theoretical perspective
- provision for students with specific learning difficulties
- the development of study skills resources
- staff development programmes
- conferences

In conclusion, communication and collaboration between established Academic Writing centres and Mathematics Support services will be evaluated as a model for quality provision and creative synergy within Learning Development.
Christine Sinclair* Towards a Blueprint for a Writing Centre
*University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom

Keywords: establishing a new writing centre; academic literacies; congruence

Short biography of author:
Christine Sinclair is an educational developer in the Centre for Academic Practice and Learning Enhancement at the University of Strathclyde. She teaches a module on Academic Writing as part of the Pg Certificate in Advanced Academic Studies for new lecturers. She also works extensively with students with writing difficulties and is keen to establish a writing centre in the university. Christine researches into student experience by becoming a student again: for example, she looked at a student's exposure to academic discourse by becoming a mechanical engineering student, though her background is philosophy and education. She is currently experiencing being an online student through undertaking an MSc in e-learning at the University of Edinburgh. The new dimensions and modes of online writing are influencing her views on all academic writing: an effect that is simultaneously stimulating and disturbing.

Abstract:
Prompted by the themes of the iPED conference and the wish to establish a writing centre in my own institution, this paper attempts to articulate and seek feedback on my concerns over what writing centres should be about. It raises questions about appropriate theoretical underpinnings for such a centre as well as practical issues relating to space, events, artefacts and modes of participation. As there will be financial implications, a case has to be made to senior management. It is anticipated that making that case will expose a number of tensions and contradictions; it is suggested that these may provide a stimulus for progress (Elbow, 1986; Engeström, 1999).

The paper draws on a review of existing research into writing development and reports about writing centres (see for example Davies, Swinburne, & Williams, 2006; Ganobcsik-Williams, 2006) and relates the findings to my own action research. The latter is based particularly on my own experience as student, when I have recorded struggles with different modes and dimensions of writing at the time they happen. I am able to relate the literature and my own experience to issues raised by students and staff who consult me about academic writing.

The action research highlights concerns about the binary terms that sometimes arise in discourses about writing. In particular, there is a tendency to emphasize traditional and non-traditional students, standard and non-standard writing, disciplinary and generic contexts – with the former term privileged in each case. I argue that the perspectives embedded in these discourses must be considered by people setting up writing centres, even if they seem antagonistic to their inclusive and emancipatory philosophy. But taking account of them has a potential for mixed messages, which I demonstrate from reflection on my own experiences.

To seek management support for a writing centre, it may be necessary to promote certain desired outcomes. These include helping students to acquire traditional skills and become enculturated in normative academic practices based within clearly defined disciplines. Indeed, experience suggests that students and staff themselves would expect a centre to provide appropriate tips, strategies and techniques to reduce alienation – a study skills or enculturation orientation. Yet the literature and action research both point to the value of the insights of non-traditional students (and staff), the creative potential of non-standard writing, and a need occasionally to break away from disciplinary silos. Is there a danger here of an espoused theory and a theory in use (Argyris & Schön, 1974)?

The philosophy of the writing centre has then to maintain integrity, congruence and coherence in dealing with the varying needs and perceptions of students, staff, educational developers, management and other stakeholders in higher education. An academic literacies approach (Lea & Stierer, 2000) that subsumes the skills and enculturation agendas but foregrounds the contested nature of academic writing would seem to offer the most promise.

As well as providing support for “writing to learn” and “writing in the disciplines”, a successful writing centre will allow participants both to challenge (Ochsner & Fowler, 2004) and expand on (Emerson, MacKay, MacKay, & Funnell, 2006) the precepts and claims of such initiatives as well as other assumptions about academic writing.

Indicative References:


Frank Su*, Bill Norton* & Lin Norton* The Challenges Chinese Students Face in Academic Writing in Two UK Universities

*Liverpool Hope University, United Kingdom

Keywords: academic writing challenges; international Chinese students

Abstract:

Over 200,000 international students study at universities in the UK, of whom some 50,000 are Chinese (HESA, 2007). There has been much research exploring the challenges Chinese students face in English-speaking countries such as the UK, Australia and the USA (see Burrell and Kim, 1998; Durkin, 2004; Edwards and An, 2006; Kirkpatrick, 2004; Wang and Shan 2007; Zhong, 2006) and how they might be supported. However, students come from a variety of backgrounds with differing abilities and linguistic skills, and have differing needs for help, making it difficult for individual institutions to identify and target any support required.

The current study, supported by the Write Now CETL, was designed to explore Chinese students' perceptions of the challenges they face in academic writing at two Universities in the UK. The research focus was on the following aspects of academic writing: perceptions of academic writing in the UK, pre-writing, writing process (writing strategies, perceptions of plagiarism and referencing, linguistic challenges), revising, feedback, and academic writing support at university. This paper reports on the first stage of the project. Data were collected by a questionnaire administered online (n=45), from focus group interviews (n=5) and substantial hour-long semi-structured interviews (n=15). Questionnaire items were drawn from the research literature and from the first author’s experience as a Chinese international student in the UK.

Results indicated that the students perceived huge differences between the UK and China in what is meant by academic writing. Many did not know what tutors expected of them and were not sure how much support they were entitled to from their tutors. Writing strategies and linguistic challenges were perceived to be the two most difficult aspects of academic writing. However, the level of English language skill was clearly an important factor: Chinese students taking English as a subject were more concerned about writing strategies than linguistic challenges while Chinese students studying other subjects were more concerned about linguistic challenges.

In terms of the implications for support, these findings would suggest that much greater attention should be given to raising the level of English language skills. Students accepted that this was an area they had to address - when asked if writing standards should be lower for international students, most students disagreed as this would either be unfair to native students or would devalue the degree - they felt they just had to work harder to achieve the same end. The pilot questionnaire used has been refined and in the next stage, the instrument will be tested further in a larger scale study with Chinese students. As Chinese students share similar difficulties in academic writing with other groups of international students, in the future, the questionnaire could be adapted for use in studies with different groups of international students.

Indicative References:


Edwards, V., and An, R. (2006) Meeting the Needs of Chinese Students in British Higher Education, Reading: National Centre for Language and Literacy, University of Reading.i-16


Sonia Vasconcelos* Looking at Current Trends Toward Multilingualism in Building Knowledge-Based Societies and Their Impact on the English-only Research Setting

*Science Education Program/Medical Biochemistry Institute/Federal University of Rio de Janeiro(UFRJ), Brazil

VIRTUAL PRESENTATION: http://www.coventry.ac.uk/researchnet/d/769/a/5514

Keywords: knowledge-based societies; English-only research setting; multilingualism

Short biography of author:
Sonia Vasconcelos teaches scientific writing and is language editor of Annals of Magnetic Resonance. Her doctoral research focuses on the correlation between linguistic competence in the English-only research setting and scientometric indicators of research performance. Part of this study has been presented in international conferences and published in the Brazilian Journal of Medical and Biological Research (2007) and in Scientometrics (2008).

Abstract:
Building a knowledge-based society has proved to be a global imperative for emerging economies. In this scenario, gaining a competitive edge has been increasingly associated with developing core competencies, which include proficiency in foreign languages. In Europe, this is corroborated by the Bologna Declaration (1999), the Lisbon Strategy (2000), the Copenhagen Declaration (2002), and in the US, by the National Security Languages Initiative (2006). On the one hand, a recent report written by David Graddol (2006) for the British Council predicts a decline in the status of English as the main international language in the next decades. In this report, Graddol shows that we are on the threshold of a new era in which English proficiency would no longer be a competitive advantage for native-English speaking (NES) countries. His approach considers that, to a certain extent, most countries will soon have some significant linguistic capital associated with English. On the other hand, recent scientometric (Man et al., 2004; Vasconcelos et al., 2008) and econometric studies (Bauwens et al., 2007) suggest a linguistic gap in European and Latin American science and technology. These studies have shown a correlation between researchers’ English proficiency, publication in English-language international journals and other science and technology performance indicators. In addition, they suggest that competence in scientific English may be a competitive advantage in academia, an issue not explored in Graddol’s report. I argue that most Latin American countries have a long way to go to catch up with most developed countries in the English-only research setting. Most Latin American countries do not have educational policies to develop the communication skills of researchers nor can these countries allocate funding for language editing services. This language situation raises critical issues when we consider the role of multilingualism in the “educational arms race” identified by Graddol. Also, this situation should be a cause for concern in Latin American countries, such as Brazil, where the importance of English has been downplayed in the country’s educational agenda. I thus propose a discussion on the predicted decline in the status of English as a major foreign language in the next decades, the role of multilingualism in knowledge-based societies and the impact of these factors on the scientific community at large.

Indicative References:
Sarah Wilson-Medhurst* Assessing Reflective Writing – How should it be done and why is it important to assess it?
*Coventry University, United Kingdom

Keywords: reflective writing; assessment; integrating learning

Short biography of author:
The author is a Teaching Development Fellow in the Faculty of Engineering and Computing at Coventry University.

Abstract:
Reflective writing is widely used in a variety of higher education disciplines, particularly within student constructed portfolios (e.g. see Butler, 2006), as a means of evidencing reflection. Reflection is seen as an important part of the learning process (Kolb, 1984) and important for ‘deep learning’ (Marton and Saljo, 1976) to take place. While acknowledging the distinction between reflection and reflective writing, this presentation explores the role of reflective writing in supporting student learning and development using the kind of reflective writing process advanced, for example, by Moon, (Moon, 1999).

The key argument presented is that reflective writing, as evidence of reflection and related learning, can be assessed providing the reflective writing assessment criteria are clearly articulated at the beginning of the assessment process and that the reflective writing is appropriately located within the curriculum. Under such conditions the assessment can scaffold the learning process with which the student learner is engaged (and indeed support the tutor as learner).

Using anonymised excerpts from reflective writing pieces produced by undergraduate students in their first, second and third years this presentation illustrates the role of reflective writing in supporting student development through story-telling and sense-making. The students’ voices are evident in these excerpts which also serve to illustrate how suitably designed assessment can help students to make sense of their experiences and to integrate their learning from different settings. This is with a view to promoting self-directed learning as well as lifelong and lifewide learning skills.

The presentation explores key features of the reflective writing assessment design and the curriculum context within which the assessment is embedded. Early formative assessment and clear assessment criteria help to establish student trust in the process that is being undertaken, and to promote the kind of reflection that will subsequently help students to reflect on (and in) action, whatever the setting.

Indicative References:
Marton F. and Saljo R. (1976); ‘On qualitative differences in learning I: Outcome and process’. British Journal of Educational Psychology. 46, 4 – 11.
Moon J. (1999); Learning journals: a Handbook for Academics, Students and Professional Development. London: Kogan Page
CONCEPTIONS OF LEADERSHIP
Monday 11:30, Room 1.2, Oral Presentation Conceptions of Leadership

Andy Bissett* What Are Universities For? (Full Paper)
*Sheffield Hallam University, United Kingdom

Short biography of author:
Senior Lecturer in Software Engineering, having worked in several private and public sector industries. Major research areas include the social and ethical impact of technology, and the role and purpose of higher education.

Paper:
What Are Universities For?

Andy Bissett, Sheffield Hallam University, UK

Abstract
Governments in the UK have expanded higher education (HE) and attempted to redefine its role and purpose. A 2003 white paper The Future of Higher Education envisages HE's predominant role as contributing to economic activity. Furthermore, the HE system has itself been increasingly 'marketised' and detached from state funding.

These changes have been attended by a worrying wave of departmental and subject closures, often in world-class departments. The key concern addressed in this paper is that the HE curriculum in the UK might be changing in unintended ways, with harmful consequences.

The current corporate plans of sixteen English universities are analysed for trends, dimensions and factors of interest, especially those that might affect the content of the curriculum. The findings imply that losses in the curriculum may be linked to the attempt to redefine the role of HE.

Keywords
higher education; curriculum change; liberal curriculum; government policy; marketisation.

Introduction
The Government-inspired target of a 50% participation rate of eighteen to thirty year-olds in higher education (HE) has heightened pressures and has generated new tensions. This move, which some commentators have characterised as a shift from 'élite' higher education to a 'mass' higher education system (Smith 2006), has not only raised many practical (logistical, pedagogical, financial, managerial) problems; it poses the question of the role and purpose of higher education in society. The same Government that set the 50% participation target has publicly attempted to redefine the role and purpose of HE in its 2003 white paper The Future of Higher Education. In this view, HE's predominant role is to contribute to economic activity.

The wave of critical discussions concerning the changed character of higher education (Barnett 2003; Bottery 2000; Collini 2003; Walker, Nixon 2004). reflects not only the increased pace of change in higher education but also a questioning of the more instrumental view of higher education promulgated at government level. Much of this literature has as its focus the dimension of not just how teaching and research takes place, but more profoundly what is taught and researched. Ultimately the question is posed: what are universities for?

Curriculum in UK Universities – reason for concern
What is taught in UK higher education has changed greatly since the Second World War. New disciplines and the explosive growth of science and technology are obvious features, but public policy and the wider cultural and commercial environment all have their effects. There are pressures both subtle (Barnett 2003; Sennett 2006), and deliberate (Bottery 2000), to 're-tool' higher education so that it may flexibly service short-term and fast-changing economic needs. The quasi-market in HE (Flynn 1999) combined with anxieties about revenue has thrown into question the assumption of a broad, 'liberal' curriculum across higher education, an assumption that generally seemed valid throughout the 20th Century. This is most graphically demonstrated by surprising and unwelcome
threats to the existence of well-established, even world-class, academic departments. For example, departmental closure has threatened at Durham (East Asian Studies in 2004), Exeter (departments of Chemistry and also Music in 2005), Reading (Physics in 2006), and Sussex (Chemistry in 2006). Pressure for closures at Keele in Economic and Management Studies (in 2007) provide a stark contrast to the radically broad curriculum and role originally envisaged for that university (Gallie 1960). Such closures are invariably motivated by fiscal considerations rather than concerns about academic achievement.

Methodology
The current corporate plans of sixteen English universities were analysed for trends, dimensions and factors of interest, especially those that might affect the content of the curriculum. This is an initial ‘positivist’ reading: further analysis will use critical discourse analysis (Fairclough 1995).

The plans were an average of 30 pages in length and typically covered a four or five year span. The earliest start year was 2004, the latest finish year is 2015. Table 1 at the end of this paper summarises some relevant characteristics of this diverse group of higher education institutions (HEIs).

General Findings
A close reading of these corporate plans reveals at least as much as much similarity as there is difference. On reflection this should not be surprising, as all of these HEIs are operating within the same market, a market that is, moreover, regulated to a certain extent within the UK. Consequently some commonly occurring themes and some notable differences are discussed below.

The content of the plans is a mixture of the aspirational and the operational (detailed, concrete) aspects of each HEI. (This corresponds to the often-used distinction between policy that is ‘expressive’ and policy that is ‘instrumental’). The aspirational dimension of the reports is reflected in formulations such as ‘intends to’ or ‘aims to become’, or general terms such as ‘excellence’ or ‘high quality’. Sometimes, as in the case of Essex, detailed spreadsheets outlining student numbers and targets are appended. Often, as in the case of Bath or Coventry, projected growth is expressed as percentages or target numbers. The most ambitious plan in both senses – expressive and instrumental – is that of Manchester, an already large HEI which sets itself the goal of becoming one of the top 25 HEIs in the world by 2015.

A Major Theme - Growth
All the plans express an imperative for expansion, usually motivated by the need to increase income. This is not surprising given the reduction in HEFCE support per capita of roughly 40% in real terms during the 1990s. A parallel motive that often appears is to develop prestige along with growing research revenues. Postgraduate (PG) numbers and international markets were invariably targeted, on the grounds that full economic cost recovery (FEC) was more possible for these markets. Undergraduate (UG) and sub-degree markets were also frequently slated for expansion, the latter in the form of foundation degrees, vocational or CPD activity. In both the UG and sub-degree markets ‘feeder streams’ were sought through regional partnerships with FE colleges and secondary schools. Uniquely, Manchester’s plan even specified primary schools in Greater Manchester for outreach work ‘to encourage participation from under-represented groups in the community’ (Manchester 2006: 10). Linking increased student numbers with a commitment to widening participation frequently occurred. Where the HEI is positioned as ‘élite’ (e.g. Cambridge, Manchester) special commitment is highlighted concerning the sensitive issue of widening participation. The level of tuition fees charged at this more distinguished level of the HE system and the concomitant graduate indebtedness is perceived as a strong disincentive, so widening participation is invariably linked to the question of developing bursaries to support economically or socially disadvantaged students. Where the HEI is located in a particularly diverse local community (e.g. Bradford) then once again much attention is paid to this dimension in the strategic plan, but with an emphasis on serving all members of the community equally, and celebrating such diversity.

Even for HEIs at the highest levels funding is of concern, especially as they make per capita comparisons against other institutions that they perceive to be competing globally at that level.

Strikingly, Bournemouth sets itself a target of income that is less than one third derived from HEFCE by 2012, and Middlesex desires to have less than 25% of its income from HEFCE by 2015. These two institutions, as do several others, motivate such figures in terms of the wish to become more autonomous, less affected by the vagaries of Government policy.

The more research-intensive HEIs usually set targets for research students, and express a desire to at least maintain if not increase research income. The post-1992 universities often express a desire to increase research
income, but this is usually coupled to the need to work with business in applied research rather than fundamental inquiry of the type that tends to be funded by the research councils. This is most strongly reflected in Coventry’s strategic emphasis on growing ‘applied research’. In almost all the plans consultancy, IPR, start-ups and spin-outs (business germination and incubation) are enthusiastically embraced as potential generators of income streams.

Key growth targets and strategies are summarised in Table 2 at the end of this report. The imperative to increase revenue is a key driver towards dropping some elements of the curriculum and placing greater weight on others. Some lesser themes are summarised next. Some of these also capture the direct pressures upon the curriculum; some are of interest in helping to complete the overall ‘picture’.

**Minor Themes**

**Foundation degrees** were explicitly mentioned in the plans of Bath, Bournemouth, Brighton, Greenwich, Leeds Metropolitan and York; Middlesex’s plan implicitly notes the trend. Thus all but one (Coventry) of the post-1992 HEIs expresses and interest in foundation degrees. Of the pre-1992 HEIs, interest is expressed only by two of the smallest, namely Bath and York.

Expanding the **physical infrastructure**, or at least rationalising existing estate, is usually discussed alongside the projection of increased student numbers. The relative difficulty of securing capital funding for these projects is often noted. HEIs such as Bath and Durham desire to use their location in ‘heritage’ cities in order to attract students, although this type of location can also hamper physical expansion. A similar advantage is noted by HEIs in London – ‘one of the world’s great cities, which is a magnet for students from all over the world’ (Middlesex, 2005: 4)

The ubiquitous theme of **regional engagement** is expressed in terms of ‘good neighbourliness’ (enriching the region economically, culturally, and in social capital) and forming valuable collaborations with local businesses, these being a potential source of consultancy income, IPR development, or collaborative research. Aspects such as community involvement and voluntary work by staff and students are strongly endorsed by most of the strategic plans.

Almost two-thirds of the corporate plans analysed here discussed providing **the NHS** with vocational education. This is not surprising given that the NHS – the largest single employer in Europe and the second largest in the world – represents a huge market. In investment terms, healthcare might represent a ‘defensive’ sector; the demand for it is broadly immune to other trends. Some leading research universities – Essex and Leicester being two examples keen to identify themselves as such – are actually planning to derive key sources of income from highly vocational NHS funded sub-degree education. This is some way from cutting-edge research.

The ‘skills ladder’ human resources strategy of the NHS is likely to provide the University with many opportunities for involvement in the training and development of hospital workforces, including the provision of new foundation degrees, certificates and diplomas, and CPD programmes.

(Leicester 2004: 18)

Collaboration with other HEIs is especially favoured for the NHS orientation, and Essex proposes to heavily collaborate with FE colleges in its region to this end. Remarkably, Essex’s plan projects that on collaborative and validated programmes (predominantly healthcare, with approximately 90% students originating in the home and EU areas) FTE student numbers grow from 1835.4 to 5872.4 (+ 220%), giving an overall FTE growth of 47% in the period 2005/06 – 2009/10.

Another leading research HEI, Exeter, is helping to set up new medical and dental schools. York and Hull jointly set up a medical school in 2003. Essex is joining with the University of East Anglia and other education providers in East Anglia to set up a new medical school for the East Anglia region (where none currently exists). The opening of a medical school by Brighton and Sussex universities is imminent.

**Inter- and multi-disciplinarity** is a prominent theme. This might reflect a current tendency for disciplines to converge, often under the influence of the new possibilities of digital technology (genetic science and creative arts being two fields currently affected this way). More commonly the impression is of the hope to generate previously unexploited synergies between different organisational and subject groups within any given HEI. Usually the details were not specified, and a sceptical reading of these aspirations might conclude that this was an instance of
‘magical thinking’. A more generous interpretation would be that HEIs did not want to miss out on exciting new research possibilities, an example being Durham’s desire to:

Support and develop existing and emergent, perhaps multi-disciplinary, research groupings, not necessarily mapping onto existing departments

(Durham 2005: 7)

The plan for Essex also remarks that this HEI historically ‘always incorporated emerging disciplines and an international outlook, including curriculum design’ (Essex 2007: 1). Interestingly, the plans for just over half of the HEIs did not mention this theme.

**Collaboration** – regional, national, international is a consistent theme, appearing in all the plans studied. Smaller HEIs (e.g. Bath and York) were often concerned to achieve ‘critical mass’ in research, teaching and knowledge transfer by collaborations and partnerships. Many HEIs – especially, but not only, the post-1992 universities – propose securing recruitment streams via partner regional FE colleges.

**Employability** of graduates is noted as an important ‘selling point’ in more than two thirds of the plans. Exeter and Leicester posit their graduates as a distinctive group forming a source of leadership at many levels of society, an élite in fact, although they do not use that term. Manchester highlights this issue in terms of ‘employer satisfaction’ with its graduates.

**E-learning**, predominantly as a way to reach new markets, was mentioned in just under 70% of the corporate plans, and other infrastructural streamlining using information and communication technology for supplying such functions as management information and student records was mentioned by around one third of those examined.

**Lifelong Learning** was explicitly mentioned by nearly two-thirds of the plans; presumably this reflects a Government initiated concern. Furthermore its emergence is seen ‘as response by employers and employees to the pace of change in an increasingly knowledge-based economy’ (Middlesex 2005: 3). Finally, this concept represents a good, long-term, income stream.

**Fundraising**, often in connection with alumni relations, is mentioned in three-quarters of the plans. Brighton sets a benefaction target of £1m per annum, Durham’s target is £5m per annum by 2010, Manchester casts its eyes towards the enviable situation of world-class universities with their ‘massive endowments’ (Manchester 2006: 4), and Coventry invests in customer relationship management software and a system called ‘Raiser’s Edge’.

**Streamlining** internal organisation and closer fiscal monitoring and control, often deploying the word ‘rigorous’, is another common theme mentioned by 75% of the HEIs whose corporate plans were studied. Also in the ‘businesslike’ dimension, marketing and internal and external communication are frequently mentioned in these sixteen plans. Concern is often expressed for HEIs to make efficient use of financial and capital resources. Around half of the plans discuss re-aligning organisational structures to reflect the imperatives of the strategy, and a similar number specify cyclical monitoring, reporting and reviewing processes (usually annual) to keep check on progress and performance. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and benchmarking are often proposed in this context. Year-on-year improvements in KPIs are often specified. These frequently use student satisfaction surveys as drivers for improvement.

**Environmental friendliness** is often discussed. The word ‘sustainable’ is used in every plan and appears to have taken on a talismanic quality. Sometimes it is used to refer to an income stream or other aspect of performance; at other times it is employed in the specific environmental sense, and energy consumption and carbon footprints are explicitly discussed by some HEIs.

Five HEIs, including Bath, Essex, and Greenwich, express an intention to become involved with the 2012 London Olympic Games. But this desire extends even to the geographically remote universities of Exeter and Durham. Some wish to use the games as a source of work experience or as a volunteering destination for their students, some hope to contribute by offering their sports facilities as ancillary training grounds. No doubt there is also a desire to gain favourable publicity by association – the ‘halo effect’.

**Discussion – Effects on the HE Curriculum**

Around half of the plans analysed here specify plan-based, incentive-driven budgeting, to align operations with strategy. A somewhat ominous side to the plans for expansion and building of successful research and teaching is sometimes expressed in terms of the imperative to *align operations with the strategy*: areas of the curriculum that cannot support growth or otherwise specified levels of achievement are to be targeted for shrinkage or closure.
Brighton’s plan promises that the HEI ‘Will deal decisively with any parts of the curriculum that cease to be fit for purpose’ (Brighton 2007: 4). Leeds Metropolitan’s plan prescribes that:

The burden of proof will be on all courses to argue their case for inclusion in prospectuses … The winding down of those courses which are not be included will be swift … Courses will not be allowed to wither on the vine.

(Leeds Metropolitan 2004: 6)

The euphemism ‘priorities’ is frequently deployed in connection with possible shrinkage of the curriculum. A way of ‘operationalising’ these imperatives is commonly to allow incentives and rewards to be driven by ‘priorities’. For example, Manchester couches matters thus:

In evaluating performance and allocating resources … the University will give priority to strategies and outcomes that help to position Manchester in particular fields of research as a world leader. Conversely, less ambitious aspirations or goals that fail to contribute [to this plan] will be regarded (and resourced) as lower priorities … an annual cycle of planning and accountability that will persist, year-in and year-out, at all levels of the University … provides for the re-calibration of goals, strategies, targets and [KPIs] … Operational Plans will inform plan-based incentive-driven budgeting

(Manchester 2006: 5)

The pressure – essentially an artefact of the increased ‘marketisation’ of HE, but also of the twin reduction in unit-of-resource state funding – to maximise income from successful areas, to minimise less thriving operations, and to seek out new revenue streams, all within what is (as most of the corporate plans remark) a highly competitive environment, may produce malign and unforeseen effects upon both what is taught and researched, and also therefore the academic personnel who follow those disciplines. In short, this ‘marketisation’ may yet transmogrify the curriculum of English universities in unintended and difficult-to-reverse ways. This possibility again raises the question: ‘What are universities for?’. Significantly, most of the strategic plans noted here retail some version of a mission that includes promoting humane, civilised and cultural enrichment of society, as well as contributing to its economic development. Assuming that this is not lip service, it is a hopeful sign that the mission of providing a broad, liberal curriculum for the wider benefit of society will not completely disappear under the weight of economic instrumentality.

But the instrumental handling of HE has a worrying potential to undermine the broad, liberal curriculum that has (until recently) characterised most UK universities – the word ‘university’ signifying ‘many branches of advanced learning’, according to the OED definition. An increased differentiation and specialisation within the HE system need not be, per se, a retrograde tendency. But if it happens in an uncontrolled and haphazard way then profound damage may be done to the project, expressed in the HEIs’ strategic plans, to contribute to society in the broadest sense.

A countervailing tendency might be identified; Bradford, for instance, intends to grow student numbers by 13% by December 2009 (from 2004) by broadening its portfolio to meet demand for interdisciplinary combinations and subjects. Whether such market-driven innovations can persist in the longer term, as have some traditional disciplines, remains to be seen. Nonetheless it is a hopeful sign for the continuation of a broad curriculum in HE that many HEIs seek innovation through inter- and multi-disciplinarity.

Markets, over the longer term, may be efficient mechanisms for matching supply and demand. In the shorter term they are prone to over-reaction and overshooting (Malkiel, 1999). Such fluctuations may not provide the best safeguard for a well-balanced system of education and cultural nurture that has evolved over centuries. The short-term damage that markets may inflict could result in a long-term loss of capacity from which it may be very hard to recuperate. Moreover, even if such a sophisticated and advanced capability could be reconstituted, it is likely that the market mechanism expressed through global competition would ensure that other competitors would already be addressing the demand.

**Conclusions**

An intellectual enterprise such as higher education does not stand still. Appeals to ‘the good old days’ ring hollow - such days never existed. As ever, innovative approaches by some universities are spawning new subject areas. Nonetheless there is reason to be concerned that what is taught and researched in UK universities may be narrowing under the impact of little-understood and unintended changes fostered by an increasingly marked-driven and economically focussed system. Higher education has always contributed to economic activity along with many other aspects of society. A highly instrumental environment that emphasises this dimension at the
expense of others may not be the one in which universities as repositories and nurseries for 'many branches of advanced learning' can flourish.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEI</th>
<th>SIZE (STUDENT FTE) approx. 2008*</th>
<th>AFFILIATION</th>
<th>PERIOD OF PLAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bath</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>1994 Group</td>
<td>2006/07 – 2008/09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bournemouth</td>
<td>18,000</td>
<td>University Alliance</td>
<td>2006 – 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bradford</td>
<td>14,000</td>
<td>University Alliance</td>
<td>2004 – 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brighton</td>
<td>21,000</td>
<td>Million+</td>
<td>2007 – 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambridge</td>
<td>29,000</td>
<td>Russell Group</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coventry</td>
<td>19,500</td>
<td>Million+</td>
<td>2005 – 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essex</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>1994 Group</td>
<td>2006/07 – 2010/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exeter</td>
<td>16,000</td>
<td>1994 Group</td>
<td>2006 – 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenwich</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>Million+</td>
<td>2006 – 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leeds Metropolitan</td>
<td>39,000</td>
<td>Million+</td>
<td>2004 – 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leicester</td>
<td>15,500</td>
<td>1994 Group</td>
<td>2004/05 – 2007/08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manchester</td>
<td>39,000</td>
<td>Russell Group</td>
<td>2006/07 – 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middlesex</td>
<td>23,000</td>
<td>Million+</td>
<td>2005/6 – 2009/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sussex</td>
<td>12,500</td>
<td>1994 Group</td>
<td>2006 – 2007</td>
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Table 1(above) *Source: HESA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEI</th>
<th>PREDOMINANT GROWTH STRATEGY</th>
<th>KEY PARAMETERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bath</td>
<td>Broad Spectrum</td>
<td>PG +15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bournemouth</td>
<td>Market Responsiveness</td>
<td>PG (Research) +20% by 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bradford</td>
<td>Broad Spectrum</td>
<td>FTE +13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brighton</td>
<td>Broad Spectrum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambridge</td>
<td>Research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durham</td>
<td>Research</td>
<td>PG (Research) +13% per annum; Research income +12% per annum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coventry</td>
<td>Applied Research</td>
<td>Triple applied research income by 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essex</td>
<td>Research + Vocational</td>
<td>FTE +11% per annum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exeter</td>
<td>Broad Spectrum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenwich</td>
<td>Regional Expansion</td>
<td>FTE +5% per annum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leeds Metropolitan</td>
<td>Market Responsiveness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leicester</td>
<td>Research + Vocational</td>
<td>QR funding +5% from RAE2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manchester</td>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Double external grant income by 2015; 5 Nobel Laureates on staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middlesex</td>
<td>International Growth</td>
<td>Turnover +5% per annum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sussex</td>
<td>Broad Spectrum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York</td>
<td>Broad Spectrum</td>
<td>Research, Consultancy and CPD with industry double to £5m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2

References

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Sally Bradley* & Graham Holden* Developing Academic Leadership Through Secondments

*Sheffield Hallam University, United Kingdom

Keywords: developing academic leadership; secondments; Teaching Fellows

Short biography of authors:

Graham joined the Learning and Teaching Institute in June 2006 bringing considerable experience of undergraduate course management and innovation in LTA. Since 2006 Graham has led the Assessment for Learning Initiative (TALI) at Sheffield Hallam. TALI is a university wide quality enhancement initiative supported through a network of faculty based teaching fellows and secondments.

Sally is part of the Academic Practice team looking at professional development for teaching and learning support staff, beyond the Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching. This is a natural extension of her previous role as a researcher looking at Personal Development Planning for students.

Abstract:

A literature search under the term “academic leadership” produces numerous articles on executive level leadership: Deans and Pro Vice Chancellors. But where are the seeds of leadership sown and nurtured? Where do academic leaders start? How do they develop these executive leadership skills? UK Professional Standards offer Descriptor 3 as a measure: through supporting and promoting learning through mentoring and leading individuals. This is still an enormous step for emerging academic leaders who often act as change agents without power (i.e. budget or status).

This paper will examine how these new and emerging leaders are developed through secondments, teaching fellowships and temporary principal lecturer roles in one post-1992 institution. New leaders are charged with dealing with educational change in complex organisations (Stacey, 2007) through promoting dialogue (Shaw, 2002) from which change emerges (Seel, 2006). These conversations take the academic outside the comfort zone of their own subject discipline. The paper will examine the needs of developing leaders and evaluate the impact their secondment has had on their own professional development. It will evaluate the use of retreats and guest speakers as well as local arrangements of mentoring and peer support.

Two groups of staff are the focus of the study; research-informed teaching secondees and Assessment for Learning secondees both experiencing different development opportunities. The research-informed teaching secondees met with Professor Alan Jenkins to discuss the broad concepts of the research teaching nexus at the start of the initiative. This has been followed up by a leadership development session using open space technology (Owen, 1997); peer supported abstract writing for pedagogic conferences and a 24-hour retreat halfway through the secondment. The Assessment for Learning secondees came together at the beginning of the secondment for a 24-hour retreat using Open Space Technology to develop themes and action plans for the forthcoming year and a session led by Professor Sally Brown to articulate their plans. A follow-up development session will discuss the notions of leadership and what academic leadership means to them as leaders of change in their Faculties. Facilitation of combined group activities affords the development of communities of practice within the area of educational change.

The role description requires the secondee to develop and disseminate good practice within their own Faculty and across the institution, support individuals and project working within the initiative, alongside co-ordination of staff development activities to promote excellence in practice. These responsibilities have, in the past, been associated with Developers within specialist Educational Development units.

The session will conclude with the evaluation process and address the lessons learnt which can be applied to the wider academic community for preparation for leadership.

Indicative References:


Robert Burgess* & Joanne Wood* The Odd Couple: Leadership and strategy from the Vice-Chancellor’s office

*University of Leicester, United Kingdom

Keywords: leadership couple and organisational culture; institutional leadership

Short biography of authors:

ROBERT BURGESS is Vice-Chancellor of the University of Leicester. He is a sociologist who has engaged in research on higher education including observational studies of staff and students. He is currently Chair of UCAS, the Higher Education Academy and the implementation group on the Honours Degree Classification.

JOANNE WOOD is Administrative Officer (Special Projects) in the Vice-Chancellor’s Office at the University of Leicester. Her administrative responsibilities include: research and development activities; committee work; and staff and office management in the Vice-Chancellor’s Office. Currently she is producing a book with Robert Burgess for the University’s 50th Anniversary.

Abstract:

Institutional leaders are often portrayed as if working alone or as part of a team with the Chief Executive being the first among equals. This paper begins by briefly examining a number of models that have been used to understand the role of the Vice-Chancellor in UK universities and argues that they do not capture the reality of the situation. The paper moves on to focus on the concept of a ‘leadership couple’ working together to develop leadership, strategy and vision within an organisation (Gronn, 1999). The authors, who work together in a Vice-Chancellor’s office, discuss their respective roles, the development of their relationship over time and the ways in which they complement each other. They argue that the quality of the relationship between the couple facilitates the ways in which they can develop their respective roles and their effectiveness within the organisation, drawing on examples of their day-to-day work to illustrate professional practice.

The authors discuss the reasons for developing their relationship in order to overcome the fragmented nature of the Vice-Chancellor’s working day and his role. They illustrate different ways in which they work together to bring about change and shape, re-shape and develop the organisational culture of a University. Drawing on illustrative material taken from diaries and their own observations of their working lives, the authors consider ways in which time management and prioritisation occur, the ways in which they develop projects and promote strategies for the development, implementation and achievement of ideas. In addition, they explore the ways in which their vision for the organisation is developed by collecting information, shaping, developing and implementing ideas, strategies and plans.

The authors evaluate their effectiveness as a ‘leadership couple’ based on the synergy of their relationship where ideas can be developed in an informal, safe environment as trust is at the heart of their work. Finally, the authors draw on their experience of working in a range of social situations to suggest ways in which a seemingly different ‘couple’ can form a partnership and a team to take up organisational challenges in the twenty-first century. Altogether they examine how the ‘leadership couple’ can educate other participants about the expectations of leadership as well as about the ways in which their needs and those of the ‘couple’ can be fulfilled. In conclusion, they explore the characteristics of a leadership couple and the way they contribute to the development of a university.

Indicative References:

Wanwadee Chaichankul* 
*The Educational Administration for Rajabhat Universities in Thailand in the Future
*Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University, Thailand

Keywords: educational administration for Higher Education; leaders' roles; global trends

Short biography of author:
Education: B.Ed., M.Ed. in English; PhD.Candidate - Education for Locality Development
Work: English Lecturer both in Bachelor and Graduate School, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University, Bangkok, Thailand.
Recent Experience:

Abstract:
The research was designed to evaluate new directions for Higher Education Management in Thailand and other countries and to develop new directions for theadministrational management of Rajabhat universities in the future, in five areas comprising: administration, academia, research, finance and budgeting, and human resources.

The process of change in Management needs effective leadership. A leader's duty in an educational institution is to provide a system where the lecturers achieve the desired learning outcome not only because they are empowered, competent and accountable, but also because they care. The co-administrators must exercise visionary leadership responsive to emerging learning needs of the nation; ensure adequate resources; promote appropriate technology; create and sustain a climate conducive to enhancing learning. The 21st century educational world is becoming highly competitive in many aspects. The leader's primary role is to foster an organisation committed to a culture of excellence in public service, with the emphasis on human resources being most important for our country.

This article aims to assist higher education institute leaders to improve their leadership practice in terms of competency and commitment, at whichever level it begins, regardless of conditions prevailing and resources available. In the context of “forty Rajabhat universities in the global community”, it aims to explain the challenges facing administrators in promoting higher education as well as in developing international links to implement and develop their organisations, taking into account the locality, the philosophies, the targets and the administrative trends of their universities.

Indicative References:


Rebecca Clothey* & Ellen Scales* Leading Virtually: Programme administrators and leadership online

*Drexel University, United States

Keywords: leadership online; sustaining effective online instruction; purposeful use of technology

Abstract:
Leadership in online programmes presents administrators with unique challenges for building and supporting faculty development. Intertwined with administrative course evaluation are student achievement and student satisfaction, instructor interaction and instructor competency, and retention issues that may document instructor effectiveness or lack of student involvement (Tobin 2004). Beyond syllabi and student evaluation, the concept of “presence,” the visceral component of the instructor being there, requires explicit direction (Roblyer and Ekhami 2000; Richardson and Swan 2003).

How do administrators, especially administrators new to online program direction, evaluate performance of instructors and lead their team of instructors to improve programmes? Deans, department chairs, and program directors rely on their current faculty and adjunct instructors to transition to this new learning environment, although research finds that “University faculty are often being pressured to teach online courses” (Sunal et al 2003). Administrators build new programmes around existing programmes with top-notch campus faculty, yet rely on adjuncts, who need to be recruited, trained, and developed for online teaching positions (Puzziferro-Schnitzer and Kissinger 2005).

This workshop presents a review of current research on best practices in online education, including instructor preparation, student retention, student satisfaction, and the concept of learning communities. Presenters, who lead online higher education programmes enrolling over three-hundred students and employing over thirty online instructors, will address the role of the administrator in transitioning to online higher education programmes and the responsibilities of the administrator to the instructors within the programmes, and more important, to the students who enrol and evaluate the instruction. Presenters will share their research into effective program management and oversight, with qualitative data that enlivens the quantitative data of previous studies. Participants will create administrative guidelines for leading online programmes and distinguish characteristics in teaching profiles that facilitate effective online programmes.

Indicative References:


Sandy Cope*, Karin Crawford**, Sally Bradley*** & Andrew Rothwell**** Leading, Listening and Guiding for Professional Development: Approaches from three universities.

* University of Derby, United Kingdom  
** University of Lincoln, United Kingdom  
*** Sheffield Hallam University, United Kingdom  
**** Coventry University, United Kingdom

Keywords: Continuing Professional Development; management; leadership

Abstract:

With the changing landscape of Higher Education, universities and their academic staff are increasingly required to evaluate and re-evaluate their professional roles. As roles and requirements change, continuing professional development (CPD) for all staff is critical to underpin changes in strategic direction. For leaders therefore, one key question might be ‘CPD for academic leadership of what?’ Strategic direction, subject health, public/private collaborative ventures, external engagement? Or, leadership in change management itself, to underpin the flexibility for staff to cope with thinking outside of the box?

There has long been debate about leadership or management, but perhaps a more pressing question is, will the complicated organisational structures of universities allow for any type of leadership at all beyond a local level. Will complicated structures inhibit how transformational leaders can be in their efforts (Muijs et al., 2006). Follett (Hatch, Cunliffe, 2006, p34), and researchers like Wenger (1998) when talking of communities of practice believe that people, their feelings and their personal lives can not be taken out of the equation, and that social communities (which are by definition local) in organisations are the key to success. However, Berger and Luckmann (2006) emphasise that ‘symbolism (language and conversation) – not structure - creates and maintains social reality because it forms the domain within which intersubjective meaning is constructed.’ If organisations are ‘social constructs whose stability is created by continuous reconstruction’ (Hatch and Cunliffe 2006, p43) then we can actively change them through our interactions with others. Can CPD be the mechanism for such change? The ‘chemistry of a work team which encourages innovative approaches with an eye to the immovable limits of the organisation is a vital part of getting “out of the box”’ (Cangemi and Miller, 2007). This approach would support the flexibility needed for future leaders. However, working within the box is comforting for individuals as they ‘know where they are’ and ‘what is expected of them.’ Psychologically this may prove difficult to change as ‘some of the individual learning and shared understandings developed by groups become institutionalised over time, (such as) organisational artefacts or embedded systems that endure for a period of time.’ (Walton, Guarisco, 2007, p 361). Universities are by their very nature steeped in traditional systems and artefacts that we take for granted.

So is it leadership, management or culture where change to underpin vision begins? Do we need to lead, listen or guide? These three approaches to professional development are presented from three different universities, and the journey of the action research approach for each is shared. The implications, facilitating factors and inhibitors to each approach are discussed.

Indicative References:


Muijs; Harris; Lumby; Morrison; Sood (2006). ‘Leadership and leadership development in highly effective further education providers. Is there a relationship?’ Journal of Further and Higher Education. 30. (1). 87-106.


**Lewis Elton** *(University of Gloucestershire, United Kingdom)*

**Conceptions of Leadership**

**Abstract:**

Recent research on academic leadership (1) ignores two fundamental differences between universities and business – in universities the prime motivating factor is not financial success but excellence, and the success of a university is measured in decades rather than years. Hence detailed long term planning is difficult, if not impossible; as recognised by Birnbaum (2) in his ‘cybernetic model’, in which stability and change depend not "on an omniscient and rational agent but on spontaneous corrective action". How might a Vice-Chancellor today return to such a form of governance? There cannot be any research evidence as yet; this is a time for tentative predictions.

The classical form of academic leadership was superbly expressed by Ashby(3), not surprisingly in a slightly veiled fashion:

“If a British university president has a bright idea (and he does have bright ideas in his early years of office), it would be the height of ineptitude to publish it to its faculty, and fatal to issue a directive about it. He must unobtrusively - if possible, anonymously – feed it into the organisation, at quite a low level, and watch it percolate slowly upwards. . .

While, however, it may be possible for a Vice-Chancellor to return to the wisdom of Ashby, s/he is likely to be frustrated by the refusal of the body of academic staff to return to their past roles, as many – possibly the majority – have accepted their new role of ‘employees’.

What advice might Ashby give today?:

“If a British university president has a bright idea (and he does have bright ideas in his early years of office): Not only is this still so, but so is likely to be the sympathy of academic staff and students who rarely want things to continue as they were under the "old man" – rarely a woman;

"It would be the height of ineptitude to publish it to its faculty, and fatal to issue a directive about it": How to avoid such ineptitude is likely to be unchanged;

“He must unobtrusively - if possible, anonymously – feed it into the organisation, at quite a low level.” Such extreme caution may be unnecessary – many academics today look for change – but the right change (4).

There is one other requirement, much more important now than in Ashby’s day:

“Keep the students on your side”. This may involve recognising their legitimate needs as ‘customers’, but linking this to their role as junior members of the academy.
Indicative References & Notes:


(4) The move towards ‘teaching only’ posts is generally not considered a ‘right’ change, the growth of the ‘Scholarship of Teaching and Learning’ movement is.
Lynne Gornall* & Jane Salisbury** Researching 'Working Lives': Narratives of collaboration, leadership and capacity-building in Wales

* University of Glamorgan, United Kingdom
** Cardiff University, United Kingdom

Keywords: HE; collaborative research; interprofessional learning

Short biography of authors:

Dr Lynne Gornall has researched and published in the area of 'New Professionals' in HE teaching and learning. With an original base in Cultural & Communication Studies, she is now engaged in a number of innovative and interdisciplinary projects at the University of Glamorgan.

Dr Jane Salisbury is a lecturer and researcher in the School of Social Sciences at Cardiff University. Her most recent publications arise out of funded fieldwork with managers and lecturers in Further Education colleges in Wales.

Abstract:

How can we lead collaborative, peer-group teams in the modern research environment?

How do academic staff manage the tensions of changing demands in their working lives, and develop professionally?

What is the proper role for 'ownership' in relation to the products of collaborative academic research?

These areas will form the basis for the conference presentation, including discussion of some of the problems of leadership and knowledge production in collaborative settings. The material will be drawn from 'Working Lives', a research initiative to build research capacity, teamwork and leadership in Wales. This interdisciplinary research collaboration was funded as a Bursary from the Welsh Education Research Network (WERN) in December 2007 and involved six people from three Universities. The team developed a pilot data-set of lecturers' working lives in HE and FE, in the context of the recent pay harmonisation ('New Framework') Agreement, the NFA. The project was led by the University of Glamorgan, and 'Working Lives' was designed to underpin further significant group projects.

In employment research terms, this was an innovative team, drawing in specialists from Social Sciences, Educational Policy, Business School Human Resources staff and Enterprise/Knowledge groups. The research leader is an experienced project manager who has brought the team together in the context of exploring the lives of others. Within the team, members' expertise and experience reflected the 'teaching' or 'research-intensive' bias of their HEIs. Reflexively, the programme's objectives concerned academic career progression and the development of a research skillset for the group itself.

In practical terms, the team set out a four-month agenda for fieldwork, innovative methods and group development. Discussions pushed the boundaries of subjects and disciplinary framing (see Tett and Riddell eds, 2001), creating an enhanced environment for inter-professional learning. WERN is funded by the Welsh HE Funding Council (HEFCW), the Economic & Social Sciences Research Council (ESRC) and the Welsh Assembly Government, and from a research development perspective, the project built on academic strengths at Cardiff (in educational and social policy, FE sector manager and staff roles), Glamorgan ('new professional' careers in HE, and enterprise and leadership models) and Newport (human resources management and professional practice).

In Wales, the context is the Assembly Government's 'Learning Country' policy as well as its 'collaboration' strategy for education and research. If Wales is to take its full place in a world economy built on knowledge, the team argue, then teachers as front line professionals are the key resource and knowledge capital for the country. These are leadership and career development issues, and it is proposed that the 'relational capital' of peer-led teamworking may be a model with wider applications – but it also has issues. Understanding 'working lives' is thus part of a project of highlighting linkages between 'education and economy', and of helping to transform through research and professional development this "small, clever country of Wales". For HEIs and individual academics, the organisational/management and professional/leadership issues arising from inter-institutional working are intense. 'Working Lives' presents one set of narratives for discussion.
**Angie Hart* & Andrew Church* Research Leadership for the Community-Engaged University: Opportunities and challenges**

*University of Brighton, United Kingdom

**Keywords:** community-engaged university; community of practice; research leadership

**Short biography of authors:**

Angie Hart is Professor of Child, Family and Community Health in the School of Nursing and Midwifery, University of Brighton. She is also Academic Director of Community-University Partnership Programme (Cupp), and an NHS Practitioner.

Andrew Church is Professor of Human Geography and Associate Academic Director of Cupp at University of Brighton. He teaches and researches in a multidisciplinary School.

**Abstract:**

Within the UK and beyond, there is a growing emphasis on universities developing mutually beneficial relationships with the communities in which they are situated. Many of the current UK initiatives that encourage university staff to partner up with other organisations and individuals focus on developing local economic capacity and on assessing local economic impact. Even in those cases where clear cultural or social benefit is the aim, university-wide structures to articulate and support such activity systematically, are still relatively rare in this country, although in the US and in Australian universities they are more developed (Lerner and Simon, 1998; Maurrasse, 2001; Sunderland et al., 2004). In the UK, significant steps forward came in 2007 when The Higher Education Council for England funded two multi-million pound initiatives – Beacons (see [www.publicengagement.ac.uk](http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk)), and South East Coastal Communities Project (see [www.brighton.ac.uk/cupp/Coastal%20Communities](http://www.brighton.ac.uk/cupp/Coastal%20Communities)) - to help universities and their partners develop social and community engagement, at both a strategic, and an operational level.

As part of this picture, we have seen that community groups and local statutory providers can gain considerable support from working with university academics in their vicinity, with research and evaluation advice being particularly sought after. Such relationships are also often highly beneficial to academics, many of whom find ‘grass roots’ links with local communities helpful in furthering research and teaching agendas. However, developing productive academic research leadership which satisfies the demands of the current HE research climate and promotes such university-community engagement is very complex. We consider the opportunities and challenges that promoting community-engaged scholarship bring about.

This session shares our experiences of establishing the Community-University Partnership Programme (Cupp) at the University of Brighton, and outlines the vision of academic leadership that we have developed through the functions of Academic Director and Associate Academic Director. We introduce the Community of Practice (CoP) development work that we have undertaken, arguing that it is a dynamic mechanism for providing research leadership in the context of community-engaged research. While outlining the generalisability of CoPs, we will highlight how a particular example, focused on learning and applying messages of resilience for disadvantaged children and families, is rising to the leadership challenge of research and practice development across traditional agency boundaries, engaging parents, carers and practitioners in research and service development, alongside academics. We also consider the challenges of research leadership for community engagement in multidisciplinary schools and across faculties. Finally, we summarise some of the overall critical success factors behind Cupp’s academic leadership and reflect on the lessons we have learnt during its three year history.
Faheem Islam* The Impact of the Case Method on Developing Country Executives’ Changing Views of Teaching and Learning for their Managerial Skills Development

*Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), Pakistan

Keywords: case method; executive teaching; changing views

Short biography of author:
Dr Faheem Islam is Associate Professor in Management Strategy. He completed his PhD from Cambridge University, UK and has worked in Pakistan, Singapore and Brunei.

Abstract:
The case-method has been touted as an instructional approach that challenges Teacher Education students’ thinking and their abilities to transfer what they are learning to the classroom setting. There is a growing body of research that examines the impact of the case method on student outcomes (Lundeberg, Levin, & Harrington, 1999). In a comprehensive review of research on the case method in Teacher Education, Smith (2005) found three categories of outcomes measured, including changes in students’ cognition, reflection, and pedagogical knowledge.

The Rausing Executive Development Centre (REDC) under the aegis of the Suleman Dawood School of Business at Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), Lahore, Pakistan conducts a wide range of executive development programmes to respond effectively to the development needs of managers and leaders around the country. REDC is a member of UNICON, the International University Consortium for Executive Education, which is an organisation of leading business schools worldwide with a serious commitment to executive education and management development.

REDC offers both Open-Enrollment and Client-Specific programmes designed to suit the needs of today’s upwardly mobile managers. Management is considered a skill rather than merely a collection of techniques and concepts. The case method of learning has been adopted as the main pedagogy in teaching to executives in REDC, which is unique in Pakistan. A case is a statement of conditions, attitudes and practices which exist at some particular time in a company’s history. A typical case session in REDC comprises individual reading, analysis and decision on a given case, followed by discussion on the same in small groups of 4 to 6 participants. After the separate group discussions all the participant groups come together in plenum and discuss and deliberate the case situation which is coordinated by an instructor. A typical case method class size is between 25 to 35 participants. After three or four case sessions the participants reflect back, coordinated by the instructor, on what they have learnt from the previous sessions. The objective of case based teaching is to simulate the functions of a manager: participants analyse, deliberate, debate and discuss particular their business situation and make decisions. In REDC, a follow-up reflective session is therefore organised, the expectation being to successively enhance the participant’s earlier individual learning and preparation on the case situation.

Many executives attending programmes in REDC are exposed to the case method of learning for the first time. This paper, based on survey feedback from the program participants at REDC, investigates how the managers view effectiveness of case method, compared with other methods of learning, such as lectures and business simulation games, in enhancing their managerial capabilities. The paper also presents how the sequential steps of individual preparation of a case followed by group discussion, class participation and reflection sessions are perceived by the managers to be effective in enhancing their learning and skills development.

Indicative References:
**Samina Malik* Emerging trends: Women in higher education leadership in Pakistan**  
*International Islamic University, Pakistan*

**Keywords:** leadership; higher education; women

**Short biography of author:**

Dr Malik has been working as Assistant Professor in the International Islamic University, Pakistan.

**Abstract:**

The study has been designed to find out the factors helping in shaping the leadership capabilities of women in education, particularly with reference to higher education in Pakistan. It is assumed that specific contextual factors influence the emergence of women leaders. Research studies also highlight the significance of unique and specific socio-economic factors that shape women’s successes (Klenke, 1999, Cubillo, Brown, 2003).

In this complicated and challenging area dominated by men, a few selected women rise to leadership positions within higher education in Pakistan. It is significant to know what stimulates them to rise and what ‘ladders’ have been used for this purpose? How they shape their minds to meet leadership challenges and how they prepare themselves to face the difficulties of leadership in a male environment? These are some of the research questions that are explored in this research study.

The researcher is stimulated to work on the growing trends of female leadership. A mechanism of interacting with ten successful female leaders through semi-structured interviews is adopted to investigate how they attained their positions of leadership. The women were allowed as much time as they required to recount their stories. Broader areas covered by interviews include their educational background, career ladder, legal support and organizational management.

It is a small-scale study with a sample size of ten therefore; findings must be taken as suggestive rather than conclusive.

Women in this study have provided insights into the major influences that shaped their career paths.

**Indicative References:**


Conceptions of Leadership

Charlotte Mbali* From the Case-Load of a Union Leader: Female academic careers; performance measurement; para-university employment rights; management gags (Full Paper)

*University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Short biography of author:

Charlotte Mbali has been working for 15 years in South Africa in academic staff development at a large public university (now the University of KwaZulu-Natal). The core work has involved developing courses at diploma and Master’s level in Higher Education pedagogy, with special interest in mentoring, assessment and language. Research includes both quantitative SPS-based investigations of student trends, as well as qualitative research based on student meta-learning in various disciplines, with a preference for co-publishing with students she has supervised in Master’s dissertations. However, for iPED, the offering is based on ten years experience of leadership in a Higher Education union, activities which have a synergy with academic development in that both are focused on enhancing work, the worker and the working environment.

Paper:

From the Case-Load of a Union Leader: Female academic careers; performance measurement; para-university employment rights; management gags

Charlotte Mbali, Centre for Higher Education Studies, University of KwaZulu-Natal, and National Secretary of National Tertiary Education Staff Union (NTESU)

Abstract

To investigate the realities of Higher Education Leadership and look closely at the points of engagement between unions and Management. What are some of the current issues on which they engage? This presentation will focus on some issues arising in the proposer’s “case-load”:

- Para-University employment in projects: ‘big on’ vision and weak on labour rights
- The trend towards performance micro-management ‘nailed’ to inappropriate measurements
- Where Management tries to gag public comment by academics on University matters
- The obstacle race for women of balancing family and academic career

The term “case-load” is used because each of these is not just a debatable issue, but come to the agenda as a “case” because a union member has raised a grievance.

To make the session more interactive, it is intended to anchor discussion of each of these on a lightly fictionalised case-study.

Keywords

Labour rights, performance management, female academic careers, academic freedom

Introduction

In some taxonomies, decision-making is placed at the highest level of achievement. In Bloom’s cognitive taxonomy (1956), evaluation is above synthesis. In the classic study of Perry (1968) into student development, it is the final level of commitment that signifies maturity in a young adult. But other thinkers, such as Minogue (2005), mount arguments against a rationale for higher education based on its “practical purposes”. Such a view of the intellectual disinterest of academic endeavours ignores the fact that practical qualifications are amongst the fastest growing and most lucrative in the world, (i.e. the M.B.A. whose market pitch often states the value of its courses for “decision-makers”).

So if decision-making is so prized as an intellectual achievement, how come it is so difficult to package its findings in the academic products that count – the journal article or the conference presentation? Those who observe, measure, categorise, quote, deconstruct, or even synthesise, thrive in the discursive modes of these products. But if one is determined to disclose some hard won discoveries of decision-making, then the traditional format is problematic. For it is more necessary to work in developmental mode, sharing the particularities of cases, so that
the readers/participants can follow, or hopefully go beyond, the processes of relevant decision-making. So the texts below consist of four lightly fictionalised cases that have occurred in the work of a higher education labour union in South Africa.

**Case 1 - Para-University Employment**

A female field worker was employed on a two year contract on a research project led by some prominent researchers at the University. The project was donor-funded and the money went to a trust set up by the lead researchers to further the aims of such research.

Half-way through the contract the field worker was called in by Management and told that she had to do deskwork at the research office rather than stay in the field. The reason given was “tensions with colleagues”. Her story was that she had clashed with a trustee’s wife on a matter which was outside the research project and she was being punished for this. Two months after she reluctantly started the deskwork, she was given one month’s notice. She called the Union and challenged this. Management did not specify any disciplinary event to justify this early termination of contract, but said that for “operational reasons” they were not justified in using salary money on the deskwork, rather than fieldwork which was the primary purpose of the project.

On further investigation by the Union, it was observed that the termination letter was written on University note-paper whereas the original job-offer came from the project. When this was investigated, project Management claimed that University Human Resources office had agreed to act as “agents” for the project, but no documentation was available to prove the legal status of this. Then project Management agreed that they would have to use their own lawyer on this matter as legally speaking the trust was the employer. At the next meeting, having discovered the cost of such litigation, they agreed to settle with their aggrieved employee. But the employee now presented a list of further grievances. She had been residing near the fieldwork, and the change of job location to the centre meant she had occurred travel costs. The project had not been paying the medical aid subscription or pension on a par with University rates, and she had totted up the loss to her. She also disclosed to the Union that there were several other colleagues, fieldworkers in this project, who were similarly dissatisfied with their contracts minus benefits. This project was “big on” research vision but miserly on worker rights.

The Union now faces a challenge arising from this particular case: to what extent should para-University employees be recruited to the Union? In any University, maybe a third of its workers may be employed on short-term contracts. One would not want to do away with the flexibility, which provides jobs for people like young mothers and research students seeking part-time teaching. But when the proportion of such work increases, Unions start to voice concerns about the “casualisation” of University work. In some cases, this has lead to some individuals spending their entire career in such contracts, and ending up aged 60 with no pension.

An allied problem is the quest for the “enterprise University” which leads to policies of income generation which allow these para-University enterprises to be set up. One rationale for such enterprises is that they can move more quickly than the sclerotic bureaucracy of the University which can take about two years to create posts and fill them. Another rationale is that the trust can then keep more of the “value-added” for the trust own purposes rather than paying back to the University. But from a labour perspective, this “value-added” should not consist of the money gained from depriving employees of normal benefits. Our most fruitful interaction on this issue was working with one of the departments that tends to generate such donor-funded projects to ensure that the specifications for future employees included benefits equivalent to those of full-time University staff. Then the fieldworkers or researchers can sustain a viable career in such contract work. And interestingly University Management has also moved firmly to rein in such projects (some were profit-making for their initiators) so as to ensure that enterprises that use the name of the University pay in an agreed ratio of income to central University funds.

Some questions:
1.1 What limits should be put on University enterprise?
1.2 Should Management and unions be concerned about casualisation of Higher Education work?

**Case 2 – Performance Management**

Traditionally, academic salary scales at University X had 10 notches at each scale. Employees advanced one notch per year. More than one third of academic employees were at the top of scale, having been more than 10 years at that scale without promotion to the next for various reasons, including

1) Not having a high enough research count because of being involved in heavy teaching and marking loads.

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2) In departments with too many personnel changes, or too many high flyers, lower ranking academic staff had to undertake much of the ‘chores’ of a university department.

3) Having too much to do beyond the University either in community outreach or in professional/clinical work

University Management, picking up the corporatist fad, for “performance management” decided that this was a tool to use to improve employee “output”. They abolished the old notches, and fixed 5 measurement points within each scale. The middle one was to be the norm, the two above were to be for those employees with high ratings and the two below were to be for those with low ratings. The annual pay negotiations were to be only around the % increase for the norm of each scale. However this would provide a tight budget because the Performance Management system standardized all raw ratings around a bell-shaped curve for each Faculty, with 50% at the norm and the others equally distributed around that norm. Because there was some anxiety about how the measuring would be done, and who would do it, it was agreed that a measurement tool (altered from an initial a University suggested template of 30 Likert scale questions) would be agreed by consensus with each department. For each employee, this questionnaire would be answered by line-manager, by two colleagues, by a more junior academic and for the general work ethos items also by a general staff colleague (for example a departmental secretary). The line-manager who receives the student evaluations would fill in items that required student responses.

One department, (IT) which was particularly keen on this scheme volunteered to pilot-test it. Their work is already closely monitored and quantified. For instance, there is a weekly count of how many inquiries the HELP desk solves. But when they met to decide how to capture this work for performance management they disagreed about whether the quantity of calls solved was the appropriate measure or the depth of engagement with the problem that resulted in better skilling of the user. They put in both questions in their evaluation tool and pushed on with the scheme. When the final awards after the counting were done, there were some very thrilled young individuals who had earned higher than the norm, who would under the old system still be stuck at a lower level within the scale. However in the next year, some of these same individuals, evaluated by different colleagues (there is a lot of turnover in IT), found that their pay dropped even taking into account the annual increase in the norm – because they had been bumped into the lower Likert ratings.

Meanwhile, the academic departments had commenced with the scheme. At least two departments, including the Maths department, would have nothing to do with evaluation. They voted to put everyone on the same scale on the norm. They said they did not want to waste time doing sums about the unquantifiable. Other departments had an ‘away-day’ when they wrestled with the wording of their evaluation tool. For some, this revealed deep divisions among staff about the proper quantification of research output, about how to count community outreach, and whether some teaching should be counted as more valuable or more onerous than others, and how internal University service should be counted, such as service on Senate committees, on Faculty library committee, or on outreach work such as visits to catchment schools or planning orientation day. They then worried that they did not know each other’s work well enough for fair evaluation, so that a claims and evidence portfolio would be necessary for each employee to compile to circulate to the evaluators.

Another department diverged from the University template in how many of the question items should depend on the student evaluations.

In the Faculty of Commerce, a senior manager suggested that as the University salary was not the key income generator for so many of them, he would prefer to fix the norm at the second lowest Likert scale, and then specify tasks which would attract bonus pay each year – such as doing the timetable, or organizing orientation, or vacation tutorials for at-risk students. This suggestion was gladly agreed to, but ran into opposition by University Management, on the ground that such tasks should be part of the job.

Another department was chary of the tick-list system and suggested “open” comments would give more feedback to improve performance, but they were persuaded to desist from this when it was realised that open comments would be more likely to reveal the evaluator and the whole system was supposed to operate within an anonymous peer review (otherwise it might stir up personal quarrels).

University Management, who had initially supposed they could utilise the same 30 item tick-list for all academics, were amazed at the diversity of response. They thought the unions would object at unfairness if the tool was not the same for everyone.

Questions
2.1 Is performance management of this type likely to incentivise staff or demoralise them ?
2.2. What type of performance management system do you think a union should support – if at all ?
Case 3 Management Gags

A strike at a University, which was triggered by failed pay talks, also revealed that there was much staff dissatisfaction with a new management team in charge of a difficult merger. During the strike, a notice was sent out by the Director of Public Relations (DPR) forbidding staff from talking to the Press about the strike and its causes, which unions immediately called a Management Gagging. Subsequently a prominent academic at another University wrote a letter to the Press criticizing the DPR, in his capacity as President of the National Sociological Association for suppressing free speech on a matter of public concern. The DPR then started legal action to clear his name, a legal action allegedly paid for by the insurance which the University has taken out to cover such risks of litigation against university Executive Managers. The DPR lost the case, with costs, when the judge upheld the right of employees to criticize Management in public. This is a landmark case as previously there had been several cases, in South African Universities, of staff losing their jobs for “bringing the name of the University in disrepute”.

Questions
3.1 Do you agree with the judge’s decision?
3.2 Do you think it is right for a University to pay premiums to cover the risk that an aggrieved Manager needs to initiate a legal action?
3.3 What are acceptable limits of confidentiality concerning management in a public University?

Case 4 Comparison of Female and Male Academic Career

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Kogila</th>
<th>Navine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Graduated – B.Com</td>
<td>Graduated B.Sc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Graduated Hons + tutoring</td>
<td>Graduated Hons.+ lab demonstrating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>M.Com part-time + lecturing</td>
<td>M.Sc full-time (research project money)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>M.Com (lecturing + pedagogy)</td>
<td>Graduated M.Sc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Lecturing (+ M.Com )</td>
<td>Started Ph.D. (plus some tutoring)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Lecturing (M.Com + marriage)</td>
<td>Exchange year in India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Lectured 1 semester. Birth of twins</td>
<td>Resumed Ph.D. (plus some tutoring)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Part-time lecturer .Graduated M.Com</td>
<td>Completed Ph.D. while on junior lecturer post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Got junior lectureship-Ph.D.reg</td>
<td>Got senior lecturership +post-doc research grant. Started publishing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Lecturing +young woman researcher grant (+Ph.D)</td>
<td>Lecturing .Got married. Module manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Lecturing (+Ph.D.)</td>
<td>Lecturing ( + another research grant+ baby)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Lecturing</td>
<td>Lecturing ( +2 publics per year now) In charge of access to B.Sc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Resigned. House move</td>
<td>Sabbatical in USA (twins born there) Went to a few faculty development workshops there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Another child born</td>
<td>Research project plus lecturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Completed Ph.D.</td>
<td>Promoted to Associate Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-43</td>
<td>Some private college contracts</td>
<td>Served as Head of Department for 3 years Plus a sabbatical in India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Senior lecturer</td>
<td>Obtained post as full professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Too old for research grant to do research on private colleges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kogila’s career is typical of women who have to begin their academic careers on contract work, whereas her twin brother was able to move quickly from Ph.D. into a permanent post. Although she won a research grant aged 30, she took seven years to complete her Ph.D. as the years coincided with her years as a mother of young twins. She has a stronger interest in pedagogy than her brother and, aged 24-25 had tried to complete a diploma in teaching for Higher Education, but although she completed some of the courses she was not allowed to formally register because she was also doing her M.Com at the time, and by the time she finished this and got a full-time lecturing job, she had to register for Ph.D. Compared to her brother, she took much longer achieving her higher degrees because she was doing these concurrently with teaching contracts. After relocation because of her husband’s career moves, while her children were small she took sessional teaching jobs in nearby private business colleges for 10 years. Age 43 she returned to her home-town with her family when she got a full-time
senior lecturer post at the University. After 2 years of settling back into an academic career, she realized she needed more of a research record in order to climb up to the level of Professor. But she was blocked from getting young Black researcher grants because of the age limit of 45. She also found she was more interested in pedagogy research in her discipline, but could not get credits for the courses she had done 20 years before and moved straight on to a Master of Education dissertation about private colleges. She is still stuck at senior lecturer level and casting around for a grant to do research on private colleges.

Questions
4.1 What can Management do to remove the academic career obstacles for working mothers?
4.2 To what extent can unions both assist the individual employee, whilst also formulating a long-term strategy to improve the system?
4.3 How do labour concerns impinge on such deep social structures as gendered child-rearing?

Conclusion
This paper is conceived as a dialogical event where readers/participants can interact over the questions. It is not intended to present finished, packaged research using any of the established methodologies of research. The questions are designed to act as a stimulus to consider what type of decision-making is necessary for Executive Management and Union leaders in Higher Education.

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Peter McCaffery* Sashaying Along the Ice Floe: Leading and celebrating diversity

*London South Bank University, United Kingdom

Keywords: diversity and widening participation

Short biography of author:
Peter McCaffery, ProViceChancellor at London South Bank University. Peter has over twenty-five years teaching and research experience across a range of institutions from FE College to Ivy League. An Idlewild International Teaching Fellow at the University of Pennsylvania and Research Associate at the Philadelphia Social History Project, Peter pioneered new modes of inquiry into political corruption in the American City. Awarded a Winston Churchill Travelling Fellowship in 1997-98, his research on international university innovators, change management, performance management and professional development has been published widely in broadsheet newspapers and professional magazines. Nominated by UUK for the Cabinet Office Top Management Programme, Peter is also a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development and the Chartered Management Institute as well as the Leadership Foundation for HE. He is currently working on a new edition of The HE Manager’s Handbook: Effective Leadership and Management in Universities and Colleges (Routledge, 2004).

Abstract:
Universities have experienced unprecedented changes in their role and function over the past quarter-century. On the one hand, they have had to become much more accountable for the way they manage their affairs and on the other they have been obliged to cater to the needs of a mass student clientele rather than those of a privileged few, while simultaneously developing knowledge transfer, diversifying income streams, improving research rankings and so on. They have indeed been extremely successful in responding to government pressure to do “more” (i.e. teach more students) with “less” (fewer resources) while simultaneously maintaining “quality”.

The record of universities in addressing equal opportunities, diversity and widening participation however, is a much more uneven one.

This session will focus on the leadership challenge in equality and diversity and what individual leaders and managers can do to meet it. It will cover inter alia the context of Diversity And Widening Participation; what is Diversity And Widening Participation – and what they are not; what is the nature of the leadership challenge; how can I make a difference as a university leader and manager; what works and what doesn’t work and how can we learn from others.
Marina Tomàs* & Georgeta Ion** The Visibility of Women in Contemporary Universities (Full Paper)

*Universidad Autonoma de Barcelona, Spain  
**Open University of Catalonia, Spain

Short biography of authors:

Marina Tomàs: Teacher of Faculty of Sciences of Education. Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. Author of ten books of Management of Education and twenty articles of Organizational culture, education, leadership and woman opportunities

Georgeta Ion: Professor of Educational Sciences Department of Open University of Catalonia. University Assistant at University of Bucharest. Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences

Main research fields: Organizational culture in universities, leadership of woman in University

Paper:

The Visibility of Women in Contemporary Universities

Marina Tomàs, Universitat Autonoma de Barcelona, Spain  
Georgeta Ion, Open University of Catalonia, Spain

Abstract:
The present paper presents the first steps of a research project carried out by Universitat Autonoma de Barcelona (UAB). The project we present aims to offer a conceptual approach to the visibility of women in the university organization.

Two types of categories, formal and informal, are presented through 4 dimensions: participation, decision making, power and excellence. This study tries to contribute to covering the existent emptiness by incorporating a gender perspective in universities and the visibility of women in leadership tasks. The methodological approach is a formative and intuitive one. There are four instruments used to identify the dimensions and manifestations of visibility of the professors in the University: document analysis, sociograms, focus groups and in-depth interviews.

The paper presents a survey concerning the gender perspective in Catalonian Universities, including the newest institutional approaches and a first list of the manifestations and categories of visibility so as to identify and analyze the visibility of women professors.

Keywords: university, gender study, academic women, qualitative research, leadership, expertise

Introduction

The last half century has brought about an increase in the number of women in all levels of education all over the world. Nevertheless, in spite of the highest levels of education, their qualifications are not translated into options and corresponding occupational opportunities for positions of status and authority within the university (Brooks, 1997a). In relation to the experience of women in universities, it is generally observed that there is not a very evident dynamic. This phenomenon is due to the tendency to face a 'cold climate' in universities (Ramsay, 2000; Mukherjee, 2000; Joyner.. Preston, 1998). Other authors talk about a 'glass ceiling' which the women have to face (David, Woodward, 1998). The barriers to the promotion of women in universities are well-known (Joyner, Preston, 1998; Brooks, 1997a; Shakeshaft, 1989; Ramsay, 2000). For example, at university, men publish more than women (Smulders, 1997; Indiresan et al, 1995) which perhaps has to do with university structural aspects (Brooks, 1997a) or with the fact that women do not offer sufficient time for their professional development, as their responsibilities are divided between household and work.

The underlying causes are complex. Feminist studies emphasize the power processes in universities and academic institutions. In several institutions, processes of change in leadership practices began after the 1990s, as Hearn (1998) shows management and organization of learning have been monopolized by men historically and universities do not face up to this challenge. Many university structures maintain a patriarchal form of organizational culture (Townley, 1993). Several studies explore the relationship between gender, university and leadership. These studies have aroused interest and proved the necessity of more investigations that go beyond the unequal participation of women and unequal pay, promotion opportunities and look at the ideological structures of universities, processes and their foundations (Morrison et al, 1992).
For Ardener, (1989) the concept of 'visibility' is used to explore the trajectories of the academic career race of men and women in a sample of Indian universities.

Dube (1989) states that in the majority of social sciences, women were invisible because their contributions were not recognized or were "absent", or were not taken seriously. This absence or 'invisibility' of women must jointly be considered with their 'visibility' as passive beings (Ardener, 1989). The visibility of men is related with an active attitude and authority.

The afore-mentioned study makes reference at the same time to the labour positions of men and women. In one of the departments under study, the majority was represented by men who have the level of associate professor while women occupied only assistant positions, although women had the same or superior experience and publications.

The professional trajectories of women in universities are structured formally by practices of promotion and to informal networks and particular forms of visibility related to energy.

**Women in Catalan universities**

A simple glance at universities suggests that there is something problematic in this absence. If the latest statistics on Catalan universities are reviewed, it can be seen that women represent only 34% of university professors, and, what is more, this percentage decreases as one goes up the professional ladder—to 17% in the case of heads of university departments. Furthermore, the differences are even more noteworthy as regards the percentage of women in academic administrative positions.

If we are interested in feminine representation with regard to academic positions of management, the differences are still better-known. Considering the distribution of teachers in Catalan universities from the point of view of category and gender, in January 2005 (Torres, Cazalla, 2006: 7), as in the rest of Spanish universities, it can be stated that teaching staff in Catalonía continue to be mainly masculine, so that only one out of each three people pertaining to this professional group is a woman (4,561 women professors of 13,294 people). There are also differences related to professional category. 36% of professors with no stable contract (associated, collaborated, lecturer, visitor) are women, and less are titular and senior teacher.

The numbers demonstrate that at beginning of the 21st century women are not so present in institutions of higher education as far as educational and investigating personnel (especially in the elevated professional categories) are concerned and to a lesser extent, with regard to management positions. The situation is such although the cohort of students is feminine in its overall nature (with differences according to typology of studies and areas of knowledge) and it is women who obtain most of the university degrees.

Faced with this situation, one should consider the reasons that justify these numbers with the intention to determining what barriers, difficulties, obstacles or stumbling blocks the university professors come across.

It is possible to state, therefore, that the permanent teaching staff of the public universities is especially male. Figures do not differ too much when the gender of the management position holders is considered.

Sensitive to this reality, on March 22, Spain, passed Statutory law 3/2007 for the effective equality of women and men in order to:

"to make effective the right of equality of treatment and opportunities between women and men, particularly by means of the elimination of the discrimination of women, whatever their circumstance or condition, in any of the scopes of life and, singularly, in the political, civil, labour, economic, social and cultural spheres, in the development of articles 9,2 and 14 of the Constitution, so as to live in a more democratic, fair and supportive" (article 1).

In accordance with the afore-mentioned Statutory Law, the UAB has elaborated the “first plan of action for the equality between men and women” which has been followed by the other universities of the Catalan university system. This plan contemplates five scopes of action: 1) access to education and investigation in equality of conditions, 2) access to work and the professional promotion in equality of conditions, 3) organization of the conditions of work taking gender into account, especially for the conciliation of professional and family life, 4) promotion of the perspective of gender in the content of education and investigation and 5) of the balanced representation in different bodies of decision making within the University.

In order to make the plan real and visible, all the organizational units of the University (Departments, Faculties, Research Centres, etc.) have debated and approved of strategic plans to reach this general mission.
**Methodology**

This study tries to contribute to covering this emptiness by incorporating a gender perspective in the study of universities and the visibility of professors. However, in agreement with the adopted approach, it is not our aim to limit the study of the different positions that women and men have to the category of gender. We understand gender as a constituent dimension of the same, which cannot be avoided in the analysis of the organizational culture. We share the Alvesson and Billing (1992, 1997) concept, that recognize the masculine role in the definition of the interests, values and the effective patterns of behaviour in the organizations of our society.

Two types of categories, formal and informal, are presented through four dimensions: participation, decision making, power and excellence. This study tries to contribute to covering the existent emptiness by incorporating a gender perspective in universities and the visibility of women in leadership tasks.

The main objectives of the project are the following:

- To identify the perception of the university community of what it means to be a university expert
- To identify the manifestations that form each one of the 4 established dimensions
- To investigate the causes of the low presence of women in university contexts of greater investigating, educational and management prestige.
- To elaborate a comprehensive list of the manifestations and categories of visibility so as to identify and analyze the visibility of future women professors
- To elaborate a set of instruments to identify the greater or smaller visibility of women as opposed to men in university, in similar conditions, for each one of the indicated dimensions.

The methodological approach is a formative and intuitive one, which provides the change of attitudes and conduct of participants to the research. At the same time, the proposed study has a holistic-global character of the concept of visualization, next to the assumption of the paradigm of complexity, that supposes newness in the studies made until now.

There are four instruments used to identify the dimensions and manifestations of visibility of the professors in the university: document analysis, sociograms, focus groups and in-depth interviews. Feminist and post-structuralist theories highlight the subjective nature of the researcher and the fundamental connection between method, methodology and epistemology. An interpretative focus has been chosen for our investigation.

The qualitative paradigm of investigation is preferred by various authors. Raddon (2002) used the biographical method, the multiples responsibilities of women and forming connection between work and life were explored through an in-depth, semi-structured interview. An inventory was constructed by Young (2004) to identify whether managers’ self perception were masculine or feminine Qualitative methods were used by Madsen (2006) to investigate the backgrounds, experiences and perceptions related to becoming leaders of ten women US university presidents.

In our research, in order to achieve the objectives, we also use a qualitative methodology based on: in depth-interviews, focus groups, sociograms and documentary analysis.

We employ the following questions:

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<tr>
<th>Question type</th>
<th>Technique/ Instrument</th>
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<tr>
<td>Who are the experts in this department/ university? Who has visibility?</td>
<td>documentary analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who has power in department? Does she have visibility?</td>
<td>sociograms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the explanation of women’s visibility? The expert women profile is similar or different to the men expert profile? Are the 3 dimensions enough to explain visibility?</td>
<td>in depth interview Focus-group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are women teachers more visible then women -researchers?</td>
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</table>

The documentary analysis focuses on primary and secondary sources such as: papers, webs, statistics, documents about women and men equality, Journals, *curricula vitae*. One of our objectives is to identify the members’ perception in relation to the group’s informal power. Our assumption is that this is not a relation between the formal power in the department and the powerful person. To identify this perception, we have constructed an instrument based on a sociometric test. Gonzalez (1997) defines the sociograms like a method which studies the social structure through measuring the attraction between the group members. In our research study we replace the *attraction* with *power degree*.

The in-depth interview is one of the most common methods in the qualitative methodology. We have decided on a focused interview. The difference consists in the researcher’s privileged position that has prior knowledge of the studied context. Weiss (1994) describes the utility of this method though identifying the cognitive and affective sources of the members faced with a concrete situation.
The focus group is planned for 8-10 people whose main objective is to create a dialog context in which each member expresses his opinion about the topics under investigation.

Findings
The successful academic devotes all of their time and energy to the university (David et al., 1996; Goode, 2000); networks both in and out of working hours (Poole, Bornholt, 1998); is guided into and through their career by a mentor (Heward et al., 1997); builds a reputation through research (Bagihole, 1993; Heward et al., 1997); is career-oriented, productive, hardworking and enthusiastic, and publishes in the right publications (Harris et al., 1998); has a linear career path (Poole & Bornholt, 1998); gains the majority of their experience within the university environment, particularly with a prestigious faculty or field (Luke, 1994), focuses on research rather than teaching, administration or the caring, pastoral role and has a particularity high research output in the early years of their career (Heward et al., 1997).

In our research we have identified three main fields that define the visibility of women in the university: expertise, power/leadership and participation.

Expertise was defined as a capacity to be recognized like an expert in one’s academic field of specialization, membership of a review board, number and quality of high level research where she is involved, the number and the quality of the right publications where she publishes. An interesting question we asked was: ‘who creates expert status? is it a result of an objective work experience or the others’ creation?’; is it a real merit or a result of perception?

Fabra, Ma. Lluisa (2008) considers that an “expert person is that one that works on the same task successfully, that brings innovation to the same task and is recognized by the context”. The fact that the context highly determines the recognition or visibility of the expert person it leads to a person being considered an expert if they are recognized as such by their fellows. Hence, the importance of expertise as a dimension from the point of view of gender. The context, traditionally consisting of men, considers that the expert person could be only a man. The feminine perspective is new and positive discrimination is necessary to change the situation.

Another indicator of visibility we have defined is women’s power/leadership in university. Some writers, especially feminist ones, suggest women have special qualities of leadership (Gardner, 1990, Rosener, 1990, et al), others find no difference to men. (Grant, 1988, Bass, 1996).

Fabra, M.L. (2008) indicates that the experience that women have in exerting power is not a good reason why power generates aversion to them. The assumption of power on their part will lead to the gradual disappearance of the aversion to power by demonstrating that power does not have to be destructive. Little by little this aversion is disappearing and demonstrates that power does not have to be destructive. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to persuade women to exert power.

On the other hand, it is suggested that women develop leadership of a more transformational type (Helgesen, 1990, Segall, 1993, Cranwell, Ward, 2001) and this style is seen as especially suited to leading under circumstances of change (Leighton, 1992, Ramsden, 1998, Ramsey, 2002).

In our investigation we are interested in demonstrating what women’s leadership style is in Catalan universities, what are the ways of exerting power at both an informal and formal level and what the mechanisms for influencing the other member’s behaviour are. We are also interested in defining a leadership profile of the women leaders. At present, we are designing the categories based on which instruments will be built.

The questions we would like to find an answer to, through these instruments are as follows:

Do women have lower or higher expectations as far as improving their professional category is concerned?
Are promotion systems gender-free?
Considering the main obstacles to promotion, which are the most difficult to overcome according to gender?
Do men or women find higher positions more attractive?
Does participation in research groups depend on gender?

Until now we have considered the following indicators related to expertise:

- Number and type of publications
- Mass media participation
- Quality of teaching process
- Quality of research projects
- Participation in congresses and conferences
- Leadership in academic community
- Contribution to the development of knowledge
- General recognition

As regards power, we have considered:
• Level of expectations according to professional category
• Promotion system
• Obstacle to promotion
• Benefit of position
• Selection and participation in research projects.
• Research group affiliation and reasons for the decision
• Power of influence (from the background or explicit)
• Type of power

As regards participation, leadership and decision making:
• Presence or absence from the scenario
• Exposure management
• Leadership styles
• Motivation to accede to leadership tasks

Conclusions
The study is in a preliminary phase and this is the reason why conclusions cannot yet be drawn. Nevertheless, we have reviewed and compiled information that allows us to state the following:
The contemporary University, capable of facing the multiple challenges of society must also face the challenge of women’s visibility in all areas of knowledge and in all contexts of government and participation.

At the university level, there are a lot of strategic measures projects, of plans or political journals and activities carried out with a view to obtaining that greater visibility. While in the twentieth century the focus was on incorporating women into university life, nowadays it is about totally integrating them into all levels of academic responsibility: research, teaching, transference and management.

Visibility depends on the perception of the community. The perception of something or somebody is bound by the recognition that we give to things or, more than that, to the acquired cultural values. The culture that the scientific community shares determines the recognition and therefore the visibility of the teaching staff. It is necessary to modify the cultural values of the scientific community into values that recognize the presence and the value of what women do in universities.

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## Annexes:

### Total students, Women, % women

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### Taula núm. 1: Alumnat que va acabar els estudis universitaris a Catalunya segons tipus d’estudi i sexe. ANY 2002

Font: elaboració pròpia a partir de dades de l’Estadística d’ensenyament superior a Espanya. INE.


Font: Observatori per a la igualtat de la UA (www.uab.es/observatori-igualtat)
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Font: Observatori per a la igualtat de la UAB (www.uab.es/observatori-igualtat)
**Chris Wroe* The Art of Leadership, the Institutional ‘Horse Whisperer’ and Culture Change (Full Paper)**

*Sheffield Hallam University, United Kingdom

**Keywords:** academic leadership; organisational change; communities of practice

**Short biography of author:**

Research-informed teaching secondee for the Faculty of Organisation & Management, Doctoral Programmes Admissions Tutor, Senior Lecturer in Strategic Management at Sheffield Hallam University.

**Paper:**

**The art of leadership, the institutional ‘horse whisperer’ and culture change**

**Chris Wroe, Sheffield Hallam University, UK**

**Abstract**

This paper presents an argument for a facilitative leadership approach to initiate the cultural change required to enable a proactive, considered adoption of a HEFCE funded initiative on the ‘research-teaching nexus’ (Trowler & Wareham, 2007). It suggests that, where there is a lack of formal authority, the legitimacy to initiate efforts to change behaviour is more closely allied to that of a ‘horse whisperer’ (Rickards, 2000) in that it is dependent upon the perceived ability, integrity and benevolence of the agent involved (Schoorman et al., 2007). Initiatives adopted by the author focusing upon a cultivation of ‘communities of practice’ (Wenger et al., 2002) and the facilitation of a ‘dialogue’ through which organisational goals and culture can be re-considered are then described and analysed for their significance. Although this is only the first year of a two year initiative, initial findings suggest this is a useful approach to facilitating culture change.

**Keywords:** facilitative leadership; communication; culture change

**Introduction**

‘Culture is an abstraction, yet the forces that are created in social and organizational situations that derive from culture are powerful.’ Schein (2004: 3)

“The relationship between teaching and research is among the most intellectually tangled, managerially complex and politically contentious issues in mass higher education systems”

Scott (2005)

The debate over the ‘research-teaching nexus’ (Trowler & Wareham, 2007) can be seen to challenge some ‘culturally accepted’ and entrenched attitudes existing within certain university departments that result in clear division of responsibilities between ‘active researchers’ and ‘teaching staff’. Whereas the pedagogic argument highlighting the necessity to understand the interconnected nature of research and teaching as both leading to learning (eg. Scott, 2005; Barnett, 2000 and Elton, 2005) may be introduced into policy documents it can not be expected to result in significant changes in practice unless there is a fundamental change in organisational culture.

As Faculty representative on the initiative the author has a genuine interest in the degree of enthusiasm of his colleagues to discuss the topic of ‘research informed teaching’ and what it means in practical terms. However, it has to be recognised that this interest in the ‘success’ of the initiative need not be shared by other colleagues and that apathy is to be expected if the following factors are taken into account :-

- The proportion of academics from the Faculty that attend the annual LTA conference or any LTI seminars has been consistently less than 20% over recent years and it is always ‘the same people’ attending.
- Since taking on this role in September 07 there has not been one enquiry as to what the initiative is about or what is hoped to be achieved.
- At a recent conference focusing upon Research Informed Teaching organised by the four Faculty representatives fewer than 10 colleagues submitted papers for consideration and less than 20 colleagues attended any of the sessions organised.

It is therefore reasonable to suggest that a high degree of apathy exists with regard to the potential consequences pertaining to the initiative and low motivation to enter into a debate.
Consequently, it follows that in order to facilitate a change in organisational culture there is a necessity to cultivate ‘communities of practice’ (Wenger et al., 2002) to encourage staff to be willing participants (Brew, 2006) in pedagogic debate. Through creating this ‘space’ to allow for a meaningful dialogue to take place this could be seen as providing a form of ‘legitimacy’ to the efforts of the author as a facilitator of cultural change.

In the absence of any formal ‘authority’ and the evident apathy of the majority of academics, the approach to leading this initiative within the Faculty needs to be based upon facilitation. Consequently, this has helped determine the appropriate research approach for this situation - an approach that necessitates a belief in the ability, integrity and benevolence (Mayer et al., 1985; Schoorman et al., 2007) of the author that could be argued to parallel the approach of the ‘intelligent horse whisperer’ and ‘creative leadership’ (Rickards, 2000). Some of the key aspects common to both (adapted from Rickard’s article, table 1.) are listed below:-

- The fundamental process is one that shifts behaviours from being unacceptable (wild or troubled) to being acceptable (co-operative) by introducing helpful (‘benign’) structures leading to ‘join up’ (conditions of acceptance and trust) and ‘follow-up’ (conditions of mutually beneficial leader/follower activities).
- The process works by co-operation not coercion and strives for mutuality and ‘win-win’ outcomes. The leader/horse whisperer helps build ‘a platform of understanding’ to ‘listen’ to what is being said and to understand the ‘language’ being used.
- The leader establishes a non-threatening ‘space’ and invites participation within a warm, supportive environment. There is a co-creation of a shared future and learning is through the right kind of doing. Leadership is through invitation only, the emphasis is upon freedom not restriction.
- The strange (trust) is made familiar and the familiar (fear) is made strange as the leader/horse whisperer signals that ‘problem solving’ is not about blame and therefore unwanted behaviours are accepted and tolerated patiently. It is about mutual learning and mutual discovery so the developmental learning rests upon good communication.

It is also worth noting that unlike the ‘unbroken’ horse there are many colleagues who have been ‘broken’ (i.e. disillusioned) by a ‘history’ of previous initiatives that have resulted in no obvious benefit and so may experience a natural disinclination to enquire much further into ‘yet another one’. Finally, there is a definite ‘ageing profile’ of academics that could also be a contributory factor to a lack of motivation for potential changes to current practices – ‘if my retirement is ‘on the horizon’ do I really want the ‘upheaval’ of new ideas and approaches?’.

In order to encourage a good level of participation from fellow academic colleagues within the Faculty the author has engaged in several initiatives to facilitate the ‘academic dialogue’ to take place in a ‘non-threatening’ atmosphere. This has resulted in the following activities - the creation of a special interest group, exploratory interviews with the subject group leaders, involvement in MBA and Postgraduate programme reviews and discussions with several members of staff. Further details of these initiatives are included in the Methodology section.

**Methodology**

> “Action research aims to contribute both to the practical concerns of people in an immediate problematic situation and to the goals of social science by joint collaboration within a mutually acceptable ethical framework.”

Rapoport (1970: 499)

As it is the author’s role within the secondment to help colleagues in his Faculty to engage with the issues surrounding the research-teaching nexus, he is necessarily involved in the process of action research with the desired goal being to facilitate a change in culture. In keeping with Rapoport’s definition there is a focus upon the practical concerns within the current situation and clarity as to the ‘purpose of dialogue’ being aimed towards a mutual understanding of potential benefits - the collaborative creation of a meaningful and useful dialogue. The approach is one that emphasises the potential benefits offered by this new initiative whilst also recognising that in current practice some of its aims are being attained.

**Research approach**

In order to identify with (and to be identified with) the ‘research-informed teaching’ initiative, the author made contact with each of the Subject Group leaders within the Faculty and sent brief details as to its purpose (i.e. the issue of the ‘research-teaching nexus’). Open-ended interviews were then conducted to determine, through their perspective, the extent to which their group was strong (or weak) with respect to how integrated ‘research’ and teaching was, according to the four criteria outlined below, and to what extent this was an issue for them:

1 criteria included within the SHU LTA 2006-2010 strategy document that are related to the framework outlined in the seminal work of Jenkins et al. (2007: 29 Figure 1).
• integration of discipline research into the curriculum (i.e. reference to own and others’ research within their teaching)
• learning and teaching research to inform practice (i.e. use of alternative approaches to more effectively communicate material and enhance learning experience)
• students doing their own research and engaging with the research of others (i.e. the involvement of students as researchers and provision of research skills)
• policy and strategy research and evaluation (i.e. use of evidence informed research to inform strategy development in areas such as e-learning, plagiarism, student attendance, assessment and learner support).

They were also asked to nominate members of their subject group whose current practice could be promoted as an example of good practice for others to take insight from - these would be written up as case studies for wider distribution. Each interview was scheduled for 40 minute, though often the interviewee preferred that the interview continued for an hour or longer once they were actively engaged in the discussion. One Subject Leader decided it would be more useful for the author to talk with a member of the subject group and a couple decided it would be preferable to either postpone the interview or substitute this with a brief presentation by the author at their next group meeting. However, the vast majority (10 out of 14) were enthusiastic about taking part in some form or another and made reference to the importance of the initiative.

In the year before taking on the role, the author had set up a special interest group within the Research Centre for Pedagogical Innovation & Research focused upon Experiential Learning & Creativity. In the first session, which focused on Experiential Learning & Creativity, there was a consideration of ‘the three structural elements’ Wenger et al. (2002) refer to in their article with the following decisions being taken :-

• domain - the purpose of the group relates to sharing experiences and insights, to learn and develop understanding of experiential learning activities and the use of creativity and fun within learning and teaching and a willingness to take part in experimental sessions. A fundamental value being ‘a lack of expectation on the contribution of participants’ but a hope they would choose to actively engage in debate and activity.
• community - membership is open to anyone interested in discussing pedagogical issues and existing members are encouraged to recommend others to join the group. There is a very interesting mix of people from all four faculties that includes academics and others. Interest in topics determines attendance and no prior experience is expected/necessary.
• practice - members are invited to run sessions that enable discussion around experience, insight and innovative ways of thinking that have relevance to teaching and learning. The sessions are presented by experts in their field whose sessions are always well prepared.

This group provides a ‘vehicle’ through which the author is able to host 3 or 4 sessions each year on subjects related to new ideas/approaches of relevance to teaching and learning - the sessions last year related to Experiential Learning & Creativity, Mind Mapping and Sensory Experience and this year, related to Use of Appreciative Inquiry, Reflecting on Colour and Age Transitions. In encouraging cross-Faculty membership amongst all who are interested in the sessions being run there is a real sense of anticipation as to the various perspectives that will be presented and what unexpected insights and experiences will be shared amongst those in attendance. Consequently, although not specifically targeting ‘research-informed teaching’, this ‘vehicle’ does facilitate a useful dialogue on ‘all things pedagogical’ within its focus upon ‘experience’ and ‘creativity’.

Findings

The author, in his role as Doctoral Programmes Admissions Tutor, has had the advantage of meeting the majority of Subject Leaders previously regarding organising Supervisory Teams for prospective new doctoral students and consequently, this may well have helped when it came to organising the interviews. They had already a good idea of the author’s character and that they could expect a professional, focused interview - this was evidenced by one of the interviewees who chose to thank the author for the excellent job done with regard to the doctoral admissions when asked ‘is there anything else you’d like to add?’ at the end of the interview. Consequently, this previous assessment of competence and integrity influenced the cordial ‘atmosphere’ for this totally separate occasion.

1 during the interval between organised sessions the author will send out to the membership occasional emails that include jokes or puzzles or interesting facts with two purposes in mind - firstly, to signify that the group is still ‘active’ and secondly, to encourage a sense of ‘fun’ and ‘non-work related’ focus (even though reflections upon learning and teaching is clearly significance to academic practice).
The interviews with subject leaders provided a great deal of useful information relating to the various perspectives as to what the initiative was about or what it should be about. Amongst all Subject Leaders there was a common concern that there was insufficient time for them to reflect upon issues such as this and an agreement of its importance - the interview was seen as 'a useful opportunity to reflect'. There was a sense of pride as they reflected in what ways they were 'measuring up to the criteria' and a readiness to highlight members of their groups who represented exemplars of 'good practice'. In very many ways the interview became their 'vehicle' for an 'appreciative inquiry' (Cooperrider, D. L., Srivasta, S. 1987) of their group's achievements and of its members special contribution - either relating to novel approaches to teaching, establishing an international research reputation or other factors.

One Subject Leader was very keen to emphasise that the primary priority for members of his subject group was to be at the leading edge of research into their subject area and that there was a far lower priority upon how this was delivered to students (i.e. pedagogical concerns). He also 'bragged' that none of his subject group would take on the 'A.E.O. role' (the focus of which is bringing awareness of 'good pedagogic practice' and awareness of quality issues to the attention of the Subject Group). However, this particular interview was 'extended' well over an hour by the growing enthusiasm of the individual concerned who later requested a transcript to 'demonstrate the extent to which his subject group was responding positively to the new initiative'! As a consequence of entering into the dialogue he found a great deal on which to have pride with respect to the 'practice' matching the intended aims of the initiative.

One factor the author feels is very significant in facilitating any change process is the choice of appropriate language, particularly metaphors. As Akin & Palmer (2007) in their excellent article clearly demonstrate there needs to be 'alignment' between the language in use and the change it intends to achieve - the example often used being the phrase 'if it ain’t broke don’t fix it' resulting in a perspective that does not see improvement as a goal, as clearly as it would recognise the need for repair. With respect to the interviews with Subject Leaders the ‘tone’ of the emails deliberately conveys a serious request to discuss with them (i.e. open to a co-creation or co-discovery) how they see their Subject Group in relation to the criteria provided - “to make best use of this initiative for the Faculty I need to draw upon your experience and by doing so it will guarantee some ‘deliverables’ that are of real benefit to us all.”

The deliberate use of the words ‘fun’, ‘experiment’ and the ‘familiar/friendly’ tone within the emails relating to the special interest group help set up an expectation of an ‘out of school’ adventure. The use of jokes, puzzles and odd facts serves to reinforce this ‘message’.

The pre-existence of the group provides a clear demonstration of the interest in pedagogical questions on the part of the author and consequently, can be argued to add credibility to the perceived ‘integrity’ with respect to pedagogical research. The fact that there is no funding or reward for running the group can be argued to add credibility to the ‘benevolence’ of the author in organising the sessions. Finally, as there is a focus upon ‘experimentation’ and the ‘unexpected’ there is not the pressure upon the author to prove his ‘ability’ (beyond ensuring the sessions take place). Consequently, the running of this group should enhance the level of trust in the author according to the research of Schoorman et al. (2007) amongst members of the group and it is possible this could transfer across to the ‘Research-Informed Teaching’ initiative. Some comments received from members indicate that there is a real benefit being provided by this opportunity for non-threatening, collegial, unpredictable, experimental ‘fun’ sessions that are always enjoyable and often provoke new thoughts or actual possibilities.

“... I am fascinated by experiential learning and I think that what this group does is so important - it helps to sharpen thinking apart from anything else.” (Prof. D.W.)

“... a breath of fresh air on a windy day.” (Prof. B.G.)

“In the diary already! Looking forward to the session.” (Assistant Dean).

“... and I love your bonkers emails, shining away like a good deed in a naughty world !” (Dr. S.N-B)

A key benefit for one member was coming across a colleague belonging to a different Faculty whom she had never previously spoken with who happened to have ‘an answer’ to a problem she was currently engaged on and getting fairly desperate about! In this instance, the content of the session was of far less significance to her than making this contact.
Conclusions

Achieving cultural change takes time and is not that easy to measure in any ‘deep learning’ sense. What has been presented here is the essence of an approach that draws upon the work of Rickards (2000) suggesting a usefulness in his findings relating to ‘intelligent horse whispering’. It identifies within the author’s efforts some common ground with respect to a careful ‘listening’, desire to ‘learn the language’ and achieve clarity in communication (whilst having an acute awareness of the significance of different ‘tones’ and ‘metaphors’ for specific purposes); a genuine concern to facilitate ‘movement’ that is beneficial to the other party and a willingness to be a co-creator or co-developer of a new reality focusing more upon a sense of ‘leadership’ than ‘a leader’. Initiatives to facilitate movement in the organisational culture have then been explored - the interviewing of Subject Leaders and the creation of a special interest group - and consideration has been given to the need to establish a degree of trust that is based upon colleague’s perception of the author’s ability, integrity and benevolence.

The evidence is anecdotal and insufficient to make any significant claims as to the ultimate validity of this approach - however, as the research progresses through the coming year(s) the compelling ‘conceptual’ case will, it is hoped, gain a greater evidential base to provide it with the necessary support.

References


Farzana Aslam*, Ewan Russell*, Sidney Tyrrell* & Jim Tabor*  
Teaching and Learning of Mathematics in Schools and at University

*Coventry University, United Kingdom

Keywords: mathematics; more maths grads; teaching and learning

Short biography of lead author:
Dr Farzana Aslam is currently working as Subject Coordinator in the Faculty of Engineering and Computing at Coventry University, UK. She received her PhD in Physics (Laser Photonics) from the University of Manchester, UK and her MPhil. and MSc., also in Physics, from Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad.
She has received several awards on her research, has published her work in peer-reviewed journals and has also presented several papers at international conferences.

Abstract:
The crisis in teaching and learning of mathematics was highlighted in the Smith report (2004) and three areas of concerns were indicated: curriculum and qualifications; a serious shortage of qualified teachers and the lack of an appropriate infra structure for the continuing professional development of teaching and learning in mathematics. Furthermore mathematics is defined as a “strategically important and vulnerable subject” (HEFCE 2004/2005) and has seen a fall in activity from 1999-2000 to 2003-2004.
As part of the ‘more maths grads’ pilot project we have been working in local schools and colleges. We have been investigating teaching methods to stimulate learning in schools and their applicability, or otherwise, to the University context. ‘more maths grads’ is an ambitious and wide ranging project funded by Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), that aims to increase the numbers of students in England taking mathematical sciences courses and mathematics related courses in higher education. Coventry University; Queen Mary, University of London; University of Leeds; and Sheffield Hallam University are collaborating to pilot the project in their regions while tailoring their approaches to meet local requirements and investigate the curriculum needs at undergraduate level.
The project engages university academics, employers, teachers, parents and pupils at all levels through production of career materials, fairs, talks, activities and work experience projects, and interventions are made to support teaching and learning of mathematics. The paper will showcase the wide variety of work undertaken so far and its impact on the teaching and learning of mathematics.

Indicative References:
Robert Barbour* Practical Suggestions for Facilitating Supervision of Interdisciplinary Professional Doctorates( Full Paper)

*Unitec, New Zealand

Short biography of author:
Dr Bob Barbour has first degrees in Social Science. His interdisciplinary DPhil explored how students learn using a multi-media environment as a learning tool. He has subsequently taught: undergraduate and graduate courses in Computer Science, graduate courses in Education, and supervised Masters and doctoral research in Science, Education, Computer Science and Information Systems. He is currently the thesis supervisor for a professional doctorate on which he also teaches coursework. He is published in Medical, Cybernetics, Education and Complex Systems Journals. His current research work is in group behaviour in a networked desktop driving simulation.

Paper:
Practical suggestions for facilitating supervision of interdisciplinary Professional Doctorates.

Robert H Barbour, Unitec, New Zealand

Abstract
Doctoral education is the highest level of academic filter for identifying people able and willing to operate under substantial time constraints while performing in highly focussed and creative ways. This paper takes ‘as described models’ of the traditional doctoral degree in the North American, Japan, European and Commonwealth contexts (Golde, Walker 2006; Avison, Pries-Heje 2005; Nerad, Heggelund 2005) and a transition context (UNITEC 2000) as a basis for considering future doctoral research-based supervision processes. The preparatory work takes the form of taught courses. The ways in which the current realities of supervision are being continually reviewed and modified in response to fiscal pressures are described. Practical extensions of existing doctorate supervision models (through the appointment of critical-point co-supervisors) are employed to show what might be expected as academic institutions move to accommodate a post-modern critique of their supervision processes. The paper concludes with suggestions as to the management and institutional ethos required to support newer interdisciplinary pedagogies (Froment, Kohler, Purser, Wilson 2006; Barbour 2005) through the mechanism of associate supervision agreements.

Keywords: associate supervisor, interdisciplinary preparation, metaknowledge, protocols for engagement, post-modern critique, hegemony

Introduction
Professional doctorates can be viewed as an academic response to the claims of business and commerce to commodify intellectual creativity (Lyotard, 1984), a scarce attribute even at doctoral level. The expanding web-enabled global village has contributed to greater awareness of the hegemony of centres of academic activity (Green, 2005). Scholarly selection of the most able students for both research careers and for meeting academic succession requirements motivates most traditional and current doctoral level programmes. In many educational systems, a doctorate is necessary in order to ‘research and lecture in a university’. On simple demographic grounds, the most able people on the planet and most new doctoral candidates are likely to have cultural backgrounds in South, Central and East Asia. Degree granting institutions in those regions do not yet have adequate capacity to meet the growing demand for doctoral education. Consequently, academic administrators in those institutions are highly selective of a narrow range of discipline specific abilities. Such surplus capacity as may exist in western nations has not been made widely available in the spirit of international partnership, as can be seen in differential fees structures.

Ongoing changes in social expectations such as:
- wide availability of access to doctoral level studies for western citizens,
- the governance of tertiary institutions (where fiscal constraints are such that the social service aspect of doctoral education has been eroded by an accounting mentality)
- students’ expectations (the payment of fees is assumed to have a consequent degree certificate awarded or litigious actions will follow)
have led to changes in doctoral pedagogies in western nations to the detriment of able people outside current hegemonies.

The trends that have emerged are identified as academics adapted ill-fitting pedagogies (Phillips, Pugh 2000; Delong 1995) to the pressures resulting from changed expectations of the academic role, changed fiscal constraints, the drive towards ‘credentialing’ and the changes resulting from the development of the Internet and the Web.

A major change in the academic role has been the pressure towards engagement in civil affairs and in volunteer contributions to societies. This recent dissipation of intellectual energies has benefits that are yet to be seriously weighed against consequences for either academics or the communities they serve. Much needed research into contributions to societies. This recent dissipation of intellectual energies has benefits that are yet to be seriously weighed against consequences for either academics or the communities they serve. Much needed research into contributions to societies.

The consensus professional doctorate described by the National Qualifications Authority (2006) encapsulates current institutional responses to the expressed demand for more effective use of the professional adult’s ‘prior experience’.

Foci of the Paper
A major goal of the professional doctorate is for students to have carried out a program of preparatory work leading to an approved applied research proposal that will advance professional practice in a named discipline. The preparatory work takes the form of taught courses, an example from an existing New Zealand professional doctorate in Information Communication Technologies is outlined in the second section. The candidates are required to demonstrate a command of recent developments in the discipline as well as evidence of an in-depth grasp of a more tightly delimited application area. In the third section, the ways in which the current realities of supervision are being continually reviewed and modified are described. A practical extension of existing doctorate supervision models (through the appointment of critical-point co-supervisors) are employed in the fourth section to show what might be expected of academic institutions as they move to accommodate a post-modern critique in their supervision processes. The paper concludes with suggestions as to the management and institutional ethos required to support newer interdisciplinary pedagogies (Froment, Kohler, Purser, Wilson 2006; Barbour 2005) through the mechanism of both associate and co-supervision agreements.

Interdisciplinary Professional Doctorate in Computing
While employment in the computing industry is a prerequisite for enrolment in the program, an industry and academic pre-selection advisory group adjudicated on prospective students’ suitability. Students entering the program over the last four years have come from software development, enterprise resource planning systems, network engineering, control systems engineering, web applications development, technical documentation writing, geographical information systems, cellular and mobile technologies and computing education. The wide range of students’ interests in an existing professional doctorate program in Computing and Information Technology have led to the development of a program of study which is now in its fourth iteration. The topics in the taught courses for the program are outlined in Barbour (2005). This metaknowledge is Scott’s (2005) ‘advanced, advanced knowledge’.

The NZQA (a government appointed agency providing accreditation for graduate programmes in New Zealand) appointed a monitor from industry with an academic and administrative background. Annual monitoring visits are conducted where peer, student and administration reviews take place. Written reports are provided to NZQA and the employing institution. The level of micro-monitoring accorded this program is in stark contrast to a current near disinterest in academic activity in traditional universities and is a reflection of the close involvement of professional stakeholders in the computing industry.

Doctoral taught courses aim to have students present a focussed literature review of a specific topic of interest that presents a coherent picture of seminal research, major contributions to the field and current research interests. The review is presented in both oral and written forms to open critique from peers and an academic review panel. A second aim, related to and derived from the first, is to have students conduct and report on a literature search into historical and current approaches to the research area. Typically, this report includes both critique and evaluation of reported approaches and leads to a subsequent research proposal. The research proposal is more tightly focussed, typically on several research questions and associated methodologies. The proposal is intended to show the scope of current knowledge reported in the literature, gaps in that knowledge and ways in which current approaches can be applied to address the identified gaps. The majority of computing research is now published in a web accessible form, so using search engines, (Google for historical keyword searches and Google Scholar/Citeseer for tracking citations), are essential and actively taught skills. The referencing tool, Endnote, is used for record and synopsis building. These tools contribute to the build up of a
word-bank from which subsequent papers can be derived. Other metaknowledge or academic skills taught in the course are described in levels 8, 9, and 10 of Barbour, (2005).

**Interdisciplinary Studies**

The diversity of student backgrounds presents particular problems for doctoral pedagogy since the areas of intersection of background knowledge are necessarily minimal, to the extent of having a restricted shared vocabulary. Students rapidly grasp the necessity for care in the use of jargon and a change in the level of thinking is encouraged by dealing with fundamental issues of computing philosophy and computing theory that bear upon whatever disciplinary specialisation supports the student’s entry into the program. Students report this change in focus is challenging but helps them better position their research within the discipline. Computing and Information Technology (CIT), broadly conceived, touches upon almost every aspect of human activity. It is no longer possible for the historical model (of a single academic supervisor for doctoral level research within CIT) to function where such a wide range of interdisciplinary knowledge may be required. The major reference disciplines of computing span Information Systems, Computer Science, Management, Social Science and Mathematics. In the last century it was the practice to seek collegial assistance and collaboration for doctoral supervision. Institutional competition for student enrolments militated against collaboration in the last decade of last century and in the early years of this century.

This loss of commitment to the collective academic enterprise will be further exacerbated by the demography of incumbent academics. Research-active supervising academics, as a professional group, have an average age of over 50 in most New Zealand and western tertiary institutions. There is a serious generational gap between current supervising academics and the replacement cohorts. Unless steps are taken now, the academic legacy of the knowledge required for the successful supervision of research academics will be lost. This situation will arise from the dearth of new academic entrants into advanced professional tertiary study but also because of the five years currently needed to take an academic from completion of a doctorate to the subsequent independent supervision of doctoral research. Clearly, given the expected exodus of academics in the ‘baby-boomer cohorts’ over the next two decades, formal education in doctoral level supervision and in research collaboration will be a necessary part of the resolution of this impending shortfall in research supervisors.

The Tertiary Education Commission and Bologna Handbooks encourage collaboration (40 mentions in the Tertiary Education Investment Guidance document, 2008-2010) between colleagues, yet no process is suggested by which this collaboration may be extended to research supervision, particularly in the disciplines closest to the professions. Supervision resources are scarce and highly valued. The next section advances a mechanism for initiating new associate supervision support. It also suggests ways of extending and legitimating possibilities within and between tertiary institutions for inputs of disciplinary expertise through the co-supervisor role.

**Facilitating Access to Expertise**

The associate supervisor role legitimates the process of assisting new supervisors in learning the interdisciplinary supervision role. A preliminary step I have found useful, and indicative of showing more than just willing, is to have prospective associate supervisors select one current student’s topic of interest. The interested associate supervisor then reads into the literature, which is likely not to be in the same field as that in which their own PhD was earned, and publishes a review of the area in a local Journal. The student and primary supervisor can thus be assured of the associate supervisor’s acquired knowledge and thus ability to contribute to the supervision process as more than just an interested participant.

The legitimated co-supervisor role meets three needs:

- providing a mechanism for inculcating supervision knowledge and skills to the student during the doctorate process in a collegially supportive way
- ensuring that student supervision needs are met through access to the interdisciplinary expertise available in, say, the tertiary catchments of significant urban regions and more widely to expertise accessible through the Internet, not just in a single institution
- ensuring inter-generational continuity in knowledge about the pedagogy of research supervision for the co-supervisor.

We may expect that there will be an increasing use of web-based communications through video conferencing. There will also be an expanding use of web services for file exchange through growing confidence in electronically signed documents. It is increasingly the case, faced with quality assurance requirements, that academics are providing hard copy annotated review of student material. These delivery mechanisms only go some way to meeting the need for the transparent process, knowledge and delivery elements of supervision. As a first step in
ensuring that access to expertise is enabled, data about academic and research expertise must develop from ‘folk and village’, ‘mates and buddies’ level to a much more global view.

**Details**

To move a step beyond ‘academic nepotism’ we need an initial voluntary database of national post-graduate supervisors, including the titles of theses supervised to completion and academic papers published during the last five years. Among the criteria for entry into this database are: successful involvement in three doctoral supervision processes, one of which was supervised to completion as first supervisor and willingness to act in a support role as a co-supervisor for an indicated period of time (3 years for full time and 6 years for part time students). This national database is intended to inform academics and students about potential collaborators and potential supervisors.

A second voluntary database of academics holding doctoral degrees and also having published papers is created for those people willing to act as co-supervisors. These online repositories are to be made available to participating regional academic communities. Once established, it is expected that the databases will be self-sustaining needing only clerical support. National Education administrations can promote this process by advocating post-graduate supervision panels (with three supervisors: a primary supervisor, a supervisor in training and a co-supervisor) in recognition of the necessity of adequate post-graduate supervision. The promotion and legitimation of these processes can be ensured by adequately funding the associate and co-supervisor roles. Government needs to provide the funding to support the collaboration process which will extend beyond current collegial arrangements.

**Outcomes:**

- Increased and more efficient use of current academic expertise
- Capturing and disseminating legacy knowledge and supervision expertise for the next generation of academic and professional researchers
- Increasing collaboration essential for supporting disciplinary and interdisciplinary research such as in Information and Communication Technology disciplines
- Increased pool of academic supervisors with expertise in collaborative research in the face of a shortfall in academic numbers following the retirement of current academic educators

**Requirements for co-supervisors during a supervision process**

A role of the co-supervisor is to provide up-to-date discipline specific expertise to the student and supervising team. While primary supervisors are to meet face-to-face with the student on a regular (perhaps weekly) basis, co-supervisors contribute academically on at least three occasions.

- to read, consider and report, within a period of two weeks from receipt, on student developed research proposals in relation to a current state of knowledge. Specifically, making written suggestions addressing the academic adequacy of the literature review, the coherence of the research questions, the research design, the data collection and the analysis techniques
- to read, consider and provide a written report making annotated suggestions, within a period of four weeks from receipt of the completed first draft of a thesis, to ensure that the substance of the thesis is sound within the areas of the co-supervisor’s disciplinary expertise.
- to participate through joint authorship, in the preparation and publication (at suitable national conferences) with the student and the supervisor, of two papers developed from the supervised research: one focussed on the literature review and a second developed from the design/findings/contribution of the thesis. The student is to present the papers in person at a conference with first authorship.

**Legitimation**

Successful engagement with doctoral research students is a time consuming and intellectually demanding activity that includes reading, thinking and preparation time and extends well beyond the actual contact hours. The task of successfully contributing to a student’s reading into a literature, reflecting on a research proposal and evaluating doctoral level material within and between disciplinary contexts is at the highest level of human pedagogical activity. Against an academic institutional context of scarce resources, discipline leaders must plan for and account for the allocation of scarce academic time to post-graduate supervision activities. It is proposed that a possible negotiated-transfer-of-expertise allowance be considered between administrators, within and between institutions, to ensure potential conflicts arising from demands on the supervisor’s time are avoided. The transfer could be made directly from the research student’s enrolled administrative unit to the contributing administrative unit. These two units may be in the same or different institutions.
The paper concludes with suggestions as to the management and institutional ethos required to support newer interdisciplinary pedagogies (Barbour 2005; Scott 2005; Green 2005) through the mechanism of associate and co-supervision agreements.

**Securing co-supervisor contribution**

Supervising doctoral students, examining and assessing interdisciplinary research are essential to ensure that the desirable goals of the authors of the Bologna Papers and the authors of ‘Envisioning the Future of Doctoral Education’ are achieved. The possibility of finding the breadth of expertise for interdisciplinary studies in a single institution is remote as is suggested above. Thus, co-supervisors will have to be sought outside the institution administering the thesis process, where the resident academics provide the face-to-face supervision. As discussed earlier, agreements between educational institutions as a collective will be required to ensure that release of time is available to facilitate the wider distribution of access to expertise. Academics could continue to provide free mutual collegial assistance, as has occurred in the past, or by establishing international clearinghouse facilities to ensure that the administration of remuneration from host to host institution occurs in a timely and efficient fashion. It may be that UNESCO or some other international body could facilitate the process. An institution with global aspirations and deep pockets may decide to act as a clearing house. Another type of institution may form a cartel with like-minded institutions to capture the most able minds and thus the remuneration derived from expediting the supervision process. More entrepreneurial educators may choose to make interdisciplinary supervision a career choice, becoming experts in reading proposals, drafts, and finished theses. Working as an interdisciplinary supervisor of professional doctorate students has led me to concur with Nerad and Hegelund’s (2005: 27-28), listed characteristics for future-oriented doctoral programmes. I think that our program meets the first four characteristics, essentially through pedagogical strategies, to provide for experiences that broaden the vocabularies of our students. The question of wider contextual change advocated by Nerad and Hegelund is much more fraught and has an implicit hegemonic commitment that should not be taken at face value, given changes in current global demography.

**Summary**

Among the many changes in tertiary education systems across the world is a gradual agreement on the length of doctoral experience. The proliferation of variants of the doctorate indicates increased complexity in social expectations of the most able citizens. Among this growing range of advanced learning, characterised by a shared interest in ‘evidenced new knowledge’, is the so-called taught professional doctorate. This paper has described some points of pressure on the doctoral process. The growth of interdisciplinary supervision has led to changed demands on supervisors who have responded by seeking co- and associate supervisor assistance. There are no current mechanisms to facilitate these processes. We are still reliant on the goodwill of fellow academics. That goodwill is stretched when academic managers are required to micro-manage academic roles. Suggestions have been made that may legitimate the process of acquiring supporting expertise while at the same time ensuring an adequate succession of academic research supervisors. There is much reported descriptive material on national degree structures and agreement on the broad parameters of the doctoral experience. There is little or no research on the pedagogies involved in facilitating interdisciplinary supervision or on the managerial strategies that will ensure the principled goals underlying the Bologna Handbook are achieved.

**References**


**Tina Bass**  
*A Social Constructionist Pedagogy: How it might be useful in elevating debate on Corporate Social Responsibility amongst undergraduate business students*  
*Coventry University, United Kingdom*

**Keywords:** postmodern; business; teaching

**Short biography of author:**

Tina is employed by Coventry University as a Senior Lecturer in Strategy & Applied Management in the School of Business, Environment & Society. In her short career she has taught across an array of programmes at every level within Higher Education, from Foundation (pre-degree) to Postgraduate/Post-experience. She previously spent several years as a Senior Administrator at Coventry University and prior to that worked within the Leicestershire Employment Service. Her research interests are focused upon exploring the teacher/student relationship in Higher Education and the importance of this in developing Corporate Social Responsibility.

**Abstract:**

This paper will outline the teaching approach of a Business School lecturer who has operated out of a loosely Postmodernist framework for more than a decade. This paper will question the relevance of her approach to undergraduate business teaching, and the debate will then be widened to encompass notions of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). From the very local setting of Coventry Business School, this paper will consider how a Social Constructionist pedagogy might help us to engage with some of the most important questions concerning business today.

Within the strictures of Module Descriptors, Learning Outcomes, Assessment briefing documents and all of the other ‘quality’ paraphernalia that undergraduate teaching is shaped by in the UK, how is it possible to inject some playfulness, irony, disruptions and challenges into the curriculum; a sense of the infinitely complex and unknowable mechanisms that simultaneously bind and repel human beings to/from each other? How is it possible to trigger ontological and epistemological debate amongst those undergraduates who would rather be anywhere-but-here? At the most parochial level how is it possible to get undergraduates to switch off their mobile phones and engage?

The author has successfully taught students from levels ‘Z’ – ‘M’. She is currently teaching students at undergraduate levels 1, 2 and 3 but does not teach Corporate Social Responsibility. This is because there is no scope within the existing framework to formally teach CSR to undergraduates: it is noticeably absent from undergraduate business courses either as an optional module or as an embedded part of the curriculum. The author asserts that this is because the discourses of CSR are incompatible with the way that undergraduate business is taught. The underpinning ‘truth’ of the business curriculum is the economic one that “the business of business is business” (Friedman 1970), whilst discourses of CSR encompass a far-sighted approach, global concerns, and a consideration for all stakeholders (both current ones and those that might emerge in the future), that makes it very difficult to bring the two together in any kind of harmonious partnership.

Locally and nationally there is an increased awareness of individual responsibility towards recycling, Fair Trade etc, combined with a growing unease at the financial and political power of big business. Alongside this, the UN is encouraging corporations to voluntarily sign up to a Global Compact that is effectively an ethical code of conduct. The tensions arising from these competing discourses do not seem likely to go away and may be set to become increasingly evident.

Not all discourses are equal and some are vastly more privileged than others. Discourses on what is appropriate knowledge for undergraduate business students will be shown to be intimately linked to discourses of education and discourses of capitalism. Discourses change over time and all of these are open to debate, negotiation and social construction. This paper will demonstrate that teaching offers an opportunity to open up particular possibilities for change, to challenge received taken-for-granted, and to elevate those discourses that are currently marginalised.

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**Victoria Bazin**  
*Poetry and Employability in English Literature*  
*Northumbria University, United Kingdom*

**Keywords:** assessment for learning; embedding employability

**Short biography of author:**

Dr Victoria Bazin is a senior lecturer in English Literature at Northumbria University. She is also a fellow of Northumbria's CETL on ‘Assessment for Learning’ and works with the CETL on supporting initiatives on assessment-related projects. Her research is predominantly in the area of modern American poetry though she has also published work on contemporary British women's writing.

**Abstract:**

This paper is based on the development of a new Level 3 module on Modern American Poetry in the English degree programme at the University of Northumbria. It is part of a wider initiative, issuing from the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, promoting the development and evaluation of Assessment for Learning (AfL) in modules and programmes across the university.

The module is a response to recent pressure, both internal and external, to make employability skills central to undergraduate education. English in particular is often seen as a strongly non-vocational degree requiring an injection of generic employability skills. However, this is being challenged within the discipline and employability has been a substantial focus in the work of the English Subject Centre ([http://www.english.heacademy.ac.uk/explore/resources/careers/index.php](http://www.english.heacademy.ac.uk/explore/resources/careers/index.php)).

Beginning with definitions of ‘employability’ as these have been framed within the discipline, the module takes as its object of study an area of literature that is often seen as being somehow detached from the ‘real world’. What could be more alien to the employability agenda than the study of poetry?

Using the principles of AfL (McDowell et al, 2005), I have adopted a new assessment approach which challenges the notion that English cannot and does not adequately prepare students for employment. I have developed a more authentic assessment task, moving away from the traditional essay, to foster peer learning and to allow students to take more control of the direction of their learning and reflect on their experience. It is hoped that this will help students to engage critically with poetry whilst simultaneously foregrounding for them the skills that they possess. Research has shown that Humanities graduates require help to articulate employability-related skills and qualities (Allan, 2006).

Students work in small groups to compile a poetry anthology. They have access to a new kind of space within the CETL which has successfully emphasised for them the change from ‘normal’ practice in a teacher-centred classroom. The first piece of summative assessment is an introduction to the anthology which is assessed on an individual basis. The introduction serves to justify the choices made and to explain the students’ own understanding of modern American poetry. The second piece of assessment reflects upon the choices made, the necessary omissions and the ways in which the anthology constructs a poetic tradition.

The student response to the module is being evaluated and this will provide some indication of its success in meeting the aims and highlight any other unanticipated effects, whether positive or negative. This will be viewed both in the context of employability and in relation to the discipline.

**Indicative References:**


Billy Brick* Screen Capture Software: How useful is it for student feedback?
*Coventry University, United Kingdom

Keywords: screen capture software feedback; Camtasia; student satisfaction

Short biography of author:

My interests include computer assisted language, Web 2.0 technologies and their significance in education, English for academic purposes, German-English translation and language and society in Britain. I am currently managing the Languages Centre at Coventry University.

Abstract:

In the UK National Student Survey (since 2005), students have consistently reacted negatively to questions regarding the quality and helpfulness of the feedback they receive on their written work. A recent report (THES 2008) stated that “the Higher Education Academy’s assessment team has confirmed that it gets more requests for help to improve the system of feedback in universities than on any other issue”. A number of recent papers (e.g. Hyland and Hyland, 2006) have discussed students’ reactions to traditional written comments from the tutor, but little investigation has been carried out into how students may feel about supplementary spoken feedback or the influence this may have on student motivation.

This workshop builds on the work of Stannard (2007), who looked into the possibility of using screen capture software to enhance communication between tutor and student. We suggest that feedback in the form of a media file may provide a richer learning experience for students by employing “dual-coding”, as defined by Paivio (1986), and may also provide new opportunities for lecturers to ‘model’ academic and professional behaviours.

The workshop will demonstrate a new method of providing feedback on language students’ written work via wmv files, created using Camtasia screen capture software and delivered to students within Blackboard Vista. Participants will initially learn how to create and edit short videos using Camtasia. They will then learn how to use the software to provide feedback on student assignments and the various ways of delivering this to students via Blackboard Vista. The workshop will also report on students’ evaluation of this new method, and provide opportunity to discuss pedagogical issues associated with providing feedback, including student motivation, and learning styles and preferences.

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**Heather Conboy** & **Alan Brine**

* Cultural Aspects in Adopting Web 2.0 to Support Student Engagement (Full Paper)
*De Montfort University, United Kingdom

**Full Paper**

**Keywords:** Web 2.0; student retention; organisational change

**Short biography of authors:**

Heather Conboy is E-Learning Co-ordinator for Humanities at De Montfort University. She currently teaches in the TEFL programme, e-learning related elements of the PgCE HE and is responsible for E-Learning development within the Faculty of Humanities.

Alan Brine is the Technical Services Manager at De Montfort University Library Service. He is responsible for cataloguing and acquisitions operations, as well as all aspects of IT provision including maintaining the library network and associated systems, and training and support. He is an active member of PTEG and CILIP.

**Paper:**

**Cultural aspects of adopting Web 2.0 to support student engagement**

**Heather Conboy, Humanities, De Montfort University**

**Alan Brine, Library, De Montfort University**

**Abstract**

In this paper, we highlight work within a UK University seeking to explore Web 2.0 approaches for enhancing the student experience, particularly with regard to transition and retention, by involving a broader range of staff than is usually associated with ‘e-learning’. We present a thematic analysis of feedback from staff regarding attempts at awareness raising and the implementation of emerging technologies. We highlight lessons learnt from this experience and ongoing initiatives. The overall exercise resulted in mixed engagement and interest but with an overall increase in staff literacy levels. The work draws on literature and debates surrounding cultural aspects of Web 2.0 and the increasingly fuzzy boundaries between formal and informal learning.

**Keywords:** Web 2.0; professional development; student retention; informal learning.

**Introduction: Web2.0 in Higher Education**

Web 2.0 approaches present both opportunities and dilemmas for Higher Education. Many UK universities appear to be embracing these emerging technologies within their strategies. Yet a variety of key issues surrounding implementation of Web 2.0 approaches are still being explored and debated: among these are privacy, ownership and literacies to mention a few (JISC 2006a; JISC/Mori 2008; Trinder et al. 2008; Franklin, van Harmelen 2007). Furthermore, although there is potential for new ways of learning and working, it is becoming clear that staff engagement with Web 2.0 and its associated themes can be more about cultural adaptation and changes in ‘mindsets’ than about the technologies themselves. Franklin and van Harmelen note:

“Although Web 2.0 is not the only change agent: Web 2.0 will affect how universities go about the business of education, from learning, teaching and assessment, through contact with school communities, widening participation, interfacing with industry, and maintaining contact with alumni.” (Franklin, van Harmelen 2007).

Our exploration of Web 2.0 for supporting student engagement and retention stemmed from a larger institutional Pathfinder project on Web 2.0 implementation. In this paper, we focus on the impact of development strategies for support staff in two sites within the university. We considered whether we could utilise Web 2.0 approaches to bridge perceived gaps between formal instruction and more informal connections across the institution. Such approaches might also prove useful in dealing with other concerns to the HE sector, such as engaging diverse groups of learners, and for supporting employer engagement, and part time, flexible and work-based learning (HEFCE 2005).
A vast range of issues affects student retention (NAO 2006; Longden 2006; University of Ulster 2006) and, as such, we do not expect technologies to resolve all of these issues. The particular aspects of student engagement we hoped to influence were in enabling staff and students to connect; providing ways for people to better manage information; and promoting collaborative learning environments that might strengthen links between students and their learning institution. This is also in line with recent efforts within universities to accommodate student preferences for the use of technology in more informal learning and the redesign of our physical learning spaces to aid collaborative working (Oblinger, 2006).

**Web 2.0 as a specific cultural approach?**

Dodds breaks down the term Web 2.0 into four dimensions or groups of potential affordances, comprising: communities and users; openness and open data; networked services, such as del.icio.us.com for sharing bookmarks; and new dimensions incorporating a broad range of creative uses (Dodds 2008). From the learner perspective, these approaches create potential for expanding learning beyond the lecture hall.

Engagement with Web 2.0 approaches can also be conceptualised as a new ‘mindset’, not only from a temporal perspective, but also from a paradigmatic perspective (Lankshear, Knobel 2007). Lankshear and Knobel adapt O’Reilly’s (2005) notion of web 2.0, drawing parallels with other literature that conceptualises today’s youth as ‘digital’ natives. The main themes of this new mindset echo Dodds’ description above, drawing attention to the relationships between people and organisations, the openness and fluidity of both virtual and physical spaces, as well as viewing tools as mediators capable of prompting new (as opposed to reproduced or similar) ways of working and learning.

“This is not to imply that people operating from the second mindset cannot and do not compartmentalize time and space and/or dedicate long stretches of time within a particular space to a single task or purpose—for clearly they do. It is, however, to say that a lot of contemporary literacy activity is conceived and undertaken “on the fly” and simultaneously with other practices.” (Lankshear, Knobel 2007: 15)

What this suggests is that these technologies engender new, broader, literacies. They do not supersede the first mindset. It is clear that if students and staff are using these tools, they need to have developed understanding and some engagement with such literacies. Although informal learning is recognised as an important and integrated element of in the world of work (Lave and Wenger 1991; Eraut 2000), some researchers have advocated that we now recognise that there are false distinctions between formal and informal learning in educational discourses (Selton-Green 2004, Scanlon, 2005).

Research also indicates that there are issues to be addressed surrounding students’ expectations and the uses of emerging technologies in education. Students want to find information, relevant for them at the point they need it and expect speedy responses on all aspects of their courses (Scanlon et al, 2005). At the same time, as Siemens reminds us, the trend towards increased access and an ever increasing ‘deluge’ of information can lead to chaos and disorder (Siemens, 2006). There is an issue here of both time and resource management on the part of students. Given the diverse needs and levels of digital literacies among our students (Trinder et al 2008; JISC 2006a), it makes sense to be proactive in dealing with inclusion and literacy issues, by engaging a broader range of staff to build bridges and understanding across institutional groups.

**Institutional Approach**

**Linking Physical and Virtual Space**

The notion of increasingly fluid boundaries between formal and informal learning also extends to linking up physical and virtual spaces. A recent JISC report noted that

> “Following two decades of rapid technological change and increasing student numbers, flexibility in the design of learning spaces has become essential. Technologies that are as far as possible mobile and wireless will support a wider variety of pedagogic approaches, and make those spaces more easily re-purposed” (JISC 2006b).

Higher education is seeing the development of student-owned, flexible learning spaces which has moved forward the debate on physical and virtual spaces so that “barriers surrounding the use of IT are being re-assessed and priority given to enabling, rather than controlling, access to learning” (JISC 2006).

De Montfort University’s ‘Learning Zone’ was launched in February 2007, and anecdotal observations to date have shown that this has had a motivational effect on students learning and their innovative use of IT. Different patterns
of collaborative work are emerging and students have embraced wireless technologies with access to the wireless network and presentation spaces, (including plasmas screens and other technology), increasing in demand. Parallel research by JISC has indicated that there is widespread use of technologies for students personally, both on and off campus, and that there is a growing need for spaces that facilitate collaborative and social learning (JISC 2008). De Montfort’s Learning Zone delivers an IT enabled space that allows the user to choose how they want to use IT, whether fixed or wireless. Students are seeking to use technologies how they want to use them and they are blending informal and institutional technologies to support their individual needs.

This project provides an opportunity to identify how this innovation in traditional space aligns with innovations in virtual space and interaction takes place between staff and students. The development of these new open, participative physical spaces accords with developments in user-centred, read/write technologies. Moreover, innovations in physical and virtual space become interdependent extensions of each other.

**Engaging support staff**

We began by trying to understand the range of literacies, perceptions and dimensions of professional development that would be most suitable for support staff. The role of academic-related and support staff is critical and often understated in developing capacity for creativity and innovation. Engagement with web 2.0 technologies might also lead staff to make more informed decisions for directly or indirectly affecting student retention and transitions. However, we wanted to engage staff in a way that would enhance rather than simply add to or confuse current practices and so that they would be able to take initiatives appropriate to own areas of work.

The questions:

1) What were staff views and attitudes towards Web 2.0?
2) What would be the impact of awareness raising and informal engagement?

As regards the first question, we sought a better understanding of staff (baseline) perceptions and literacies. To this end, a questionnaire with open-ended questions was distributed to key student-facing staff and departments across two sites: the Library and one Faculty. It was also followed up by brief interviews with some staff, as well as with representatives of the student union. Staff were asked about:

- Current communicative practices, types of channel and content of information exchange
- Current knowledge and literacies and attitudes toward technology,
- Satisfaction with communication channels and whether or not there are perceived gaps in student-student and in staff-student communication channels.
- Thoughts on using Web 2.0 tools and suggestions for how they thought student engagement and retention could be improved using technology, both through staff contact and student-to-student communication.

We tried to identify real or perceived difficulties, barriers and gaps in extant communications systems, principally where electronic communication with students could enhance retention and transitions, particularly for first year students. From this predetermined framework, data was analysed using a qualitative thematic analysis (Patton, 1990).

**Baseline perceptions and literacies**

An analysis of the main themes reveals that ‘baseline’ skills were generally low with several people having heard about rather than engaged in the use of emerging technologies. Most of these staff had not previously been associated with what we consider e-learning or had minimal contact with students. Staff had an array of dedicated roles, which point to an extremely wide variety of communication needs, both as receivers and communicators; they also needed to engage in an assortment of both academic and support-type activities. Some of this work required using the online systems already established for these purposes.

Questions about the current provision of support revealed tensions between the perception that most information was already available online and the perception that where systems were made available for students, and when staff took initiatives to contact students, students didn’t take advantage of these. A frequent example given was that students didn’t always consult their university email. Many staff also mentioned difficulties in targeting specific groups of students. When asked why people used these channels (email), the most frequent answer was ‘making sure that the student got the information’. One member of staff specified “convenience and organisational demands”. Another commented:

“The problem with much existing infrastructure is that it is too broad-brush, and many students will feel that either it is not relevant, or are unable to wade through everything and locate the stuff that is relevant
to them…. I think we need to work at department level or lower …I wonder whether we should be logging into bb, but with an interface that is perhaps Dept based rather than module based”

Descriptions of students’ technology use generally reflected the current image of ‘digital natives’ who “were constantly texting, with many staff suggesting “more use of mobiles”. On the whole, staff felt that not only was it desirable to have more flexible and varied provision to cater for disparate needs and student preferences, but that it might also be possible to work ‘smarter’ in tracking queries and in closer working across departments and faculties. In brief, it was felt that initiatives should make communication more motivational for students; the number and types of channels of communication should be increased and, furthermore, those channels should be promoted, particularly around just-in-time information and informal engagement. Some expressed hope that a Web 2.0 approach could facilitate this.

The survey revealed the complex communicative environment of many administrative staff in their liaison with students and other staff across the institution (Whitchurch, 2006). The building of elaborate and stable networks is clearly hindered by the variation of roles and tasks that are required. By the same token, staff reported also needing just-in-time information. Therefore, we need to appreciate the ways in which individuals select and manage networks and find their own place therein (Nardi, Whittaker, Schwarz 2002). "People do not come together in some cyber world but make decisions and networks intentionally depending on their needs’, whether these be informal, formal, external or internal (Nardi et al. 2002). The challenge is in enabling and motivating people to develop and better manage these personal networks.

![Image 1. The main themes from staff surveys](image)

**Staff use of virtual spaces**

The second part of our investigation involved awareness raising and staff professional development, in tandem with pilot student peer-to-peer and student-staff networks. The overall aim was to empower students and to raise awareness and encourage the utilization of channels of communication and sources of information for students, which include Web 2.0 technologies. Motivation for staff and closer engagement with students was central.

The project has been an interesting process from a staff point of view. Before the launch of the Pathfinder project the library had launched its own electronic reference service, which was not widely used and only a handful of staff could support the service. This has now changed and many more students are now using this medium to get help and support for their studies. In addition, library staff are now more adept at using a range of other office tools that support these functions.

Web 2.0 introductory sessions were held in the library and although initially experiments to launch a library wiki as an experiment did not engender a great deal of interest it can now be clearly seen that more engagement has taken place. Usage is becoming much more common across a broad section of staff. Whereas knowledge of Web 2.0 technologies had initially been very low, teams now have their own wikis where they upload details on the processes used within the teams. A number of further specific web training sessions have been held on
podcasting, blogging, wikis and other related technologies (including Web and content-creation tools). What is surprising is that later initiatives have been in response to a demand from staff to use these technologies.

The department has also developed its own e-strategy to embed technological developments into the work of teams so that it is a focus across the service. The strategy has been shared with the university to inform on progress and plans that the library has to take forward its own use of Web 2.0. There are explicit plans in relation to using Web 2.0 technologies for both teaching and learning which are embedded in team objectives within the library service, including, for example, investigations into the best use of mobile technologies within the library for both staff and students. The most important lesson to date for the library is to ensure that anything delivered or undertaken should be fit for purpose. Useful and practical applications are only now beginning to evolve.

Response by the Library staff seems to have been more dynamic than administrators within the Faculty site. This may be due to heightened awareness among Library staff of the many (global) attempts to harness Web 2.0 for library use. Within the faculty, there were some successes, with evidence of staff producing new online materials for transitions. There is evidence that students have engaged with ‘new materials’ provided for them. However, this was tempered by the fact that administrators selected to use the virtual learning environment, mainly for one-way information dissemination rather than two-way communication. Even so, awareness has increased with some, but not all, staff having engaged in training. The overall resistance is perhaps a reflection of entrenched processes and ways of working. One lesson drawn from this is that technological engagement will need to be recognised by staff as a valid activity with management support.

In summary then, improved literacy levels were noted, more online teamwork ensued and there was increased demand for further training from staff, along with the resulting changes in strategy. The processes and procedures have been different in each of these areas and have delivered different outputs, but each is appropriate to its purposes and focus. These isolated successes may be partially due to the ‘exploratory’ nature of the work. There was no obligation on staff to participate in training sessions. However, this approach has demonstrated that with some awareness we have created a certain ‘demand’ for further staff development.

Other lessons
1. Some forms of technological engagement (blogs and wikis for projects) may not be recognised as a legitimate activity. Unless fully embedded and recognised as legitimate to processes, initiatives are seen as simply ‘extra’ to what staff are currently doing.
2. From both the student and staff perspective, technology usage needs to be kept current, requiring co-ordination between different groups to ‘manage’ the overall student experience.
3. From an institutional perspective, time and effort is needed to co-ordinate technology issues and to ensure the most appropriate technology is being employed. Time is also of essence in allowing staff to explore and reflect on possibilities.
4. Face-to-face contact and personal communication remains crucially important, so the emphasis needs to be on ‘raising the game’, rather than transferring services elsewhere.

Conclusions

In this paper, we explored integrating institutional and non-institutional virtual spaces as well as virtual and physical environments in an effort to gauge how Web 2.0 can best be harnessed to enhance student retention. Throughout this discussion, we have frequently used the notion of ‘broadening’: Broadening the number of people involved, broadening the types and fluidity of virtual and physical spaces, as well as broadening our conceptions of learning. But it has become clear that taking this approach also involves thinking about how to work smarter in connecting up these strands, in other words, ‘upping the ante’ rather than reproducing the status quo.

Although some attempts were less successful, we have learnt from this exploration of Web 2.0. We found evidence that a wider range of staff are willing to engage in these initiatives once given the opportunities to do so and once they are empowered to make decisions over the deployment of technologies. It is anticipated that this initial engagement of staff will be followed with more focussed professional development in line with institutional strategies, particularly in the area of professional development. We also need to continue engagement with students to incorporate their perspectives regarding peer interaction and student-created materials and initiatives. Therefore, we do not see our efforts to engage staff with Web 2.0 approaches to learning as an isolated activity, but as part of ongoing and recently invigorated institutional strategies for enhancement of the student learning experience and in tandem with other related efforts at student retention.

This exploration has shown that with ‘time’ it is possible to engage staff. With and understanding and engagement with both the technological and the cultural aspects of Web 2.0, staff may be able to share in and facilitate
students in creating personal learning environments. The challenge is to translate these into effective strategies for enhancing transitions.

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© 2008 Heather Conboy & Alan Brine
Kathy Courtney* & Lynn Clouder* Is Interprofessional Teaching in Higher Education an Option?
Coventry University, United Kingdom

Keywords: interprofessional teaching in higher education; student-centred teaching; team-based teaching

Short biography of authors:
Kathy Courtney works as an Educational Developer, based at the Centre for the Study of Higher Education at Coventry University. Kathy has been involved in supporting the implementation of the Interprofessional Learning Pathway at Coventry. She has worked extensively in collaboration with academic staff, librarians, careers staff and technicians with the aim of improving student online learning.

Lynn Clouder is Director of CiPeL (Centre for InterProfessional e-Learning). Lynn is particularly interested in research and evaluation in the complex field of inter-professional education and is keen to develop collaborative partnerships with other CETLs, further education and other higher education institutions in the UK and internationally.

Abstract:
There has been an interprofessional approach to both practice and learning in Health and Social Care for some years. Key aspects of this approach are based on patient-centred care, increased collaboration between healthcare professionals and giving patients themselves and their carers more of a voice. Where previously different health and social professions interacted with a patient separately, interprofessional practice promotes a team-based approach to patient care, with greatly increased communication channels between the professions for the benefit of the patient.

This paper explores the idea of interprofessional teaching in Higher Education, by identifying parallels that exist between the contexts of Higher Education and Health Care. In Higher Education, interprofessional practice translates into an approach that could be more explicitly student-centred, with different professional groups working more closely as a team for the benefit of students. The student’s voice would be strengthened, and there would be a place for greater input from those who are supporting students with disabilities, such as note-takers.

Teaching in Higher Education already has a multi-professional dimension to it. Academics teach in their respective subject areas, but they are increasingly supported by subject librarians, careers personnel, learning technologists and instructional designers. It has long been recognised that involving students in peer assessment, peer teaching and self-assessment and research is beneficial. Why not bring these diverse aspects of higher education practice together in the form of an interprofessional approach to teaching? This would give greater recognition to professional groups who already contribute to student learning. It would increase the student-centeredness of current teaching practice and may help improve the student experience and student retention figures.

Modules on interprofessional practice in Health Care are already being offered at a number of Universities. These may be used as a stepping stone towards interprofessional teaching. It could be argued that interprofessional teaching in Higher Education is a sensible way of giving recognition to the allied professions whose domains of expertise appear to steadily increase in size and complexity, with the advances in technologies, globalisation and changes in employment practices. Interprofessional teaching in Higher Education is a concept that is worth exploring.
Sarah Driver * The Academic Reality of the Commercialisation of University Research

* Rhodes University, South Africa

Keywords: academic research and intellectual property

Short biography of author:

Sarah Driver is a lecturer at Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa. She has a particular research interest in matters relating to intellectual property, although she has many years of practical and academic experience in the law of succession which is her other major research interest. She recently completed an LLM in intellectual property law and she is presently researching for a PhD in South African patent law.

Abstract:

The relationship between academic research and the commercialisation of innovation is an issue which gives rise to a diversity of opinions. Inherent tensions arise in this context between the traditional academic value of research as a source of knowledge as opposed to the objective of making a profit. If one proceeds from the assumption that it is in the public interest for real or potential intellectual property assets flowing from publicly funded research to be commercialised, this view equates public interest with corporate interest. By treating the fundamental purpose and function of academic research as a commodity, the traditional academic value of research as a source of knowledge can be undermined.

This paper will address the current situation in three jurisdictions: the United States of America, the United Kingdom and the Republic of South Africa. In the United States of America, a uniform government policy regulates inventions emanating from universities and this has been given expression in the Bayh-Dole Act. The intention of the Bayh-Dole Act is to facilitate the patenting and licensing of inventions arising from federally funded research. In the United Kingdom, there is no uniform government policy that regulates the commercialisation of inventions arising from publicly funded research. Nevertheless, universities in the United Kingdom do exploit the commercialisation of inventions arising from academic research through the medium of specially constituted corporate entities. In the Republic of South Africa, in the absence of a uniform government policy until now, some universities have followed the route taken by universities in the United Kingdom. All of this is about to change, however, as the South African National Department of Science and Technology recently published the Draft Intellectual Property Rights from Publicly Funded Research Bill. The potential ambit of the Bill is far wider than that envisaged by the Bayh-Dole Act and the practice in the United Kingdom as it includes other forms of intellectual property such as copyright, designs and trade marks. Moreover, onerous responsibilities are placed upon universities and researchers in order to police the acquisition of intellectual property rights.

Drawing on the literature that has analysed the success or otherwise of the experiences of the developed economies of the United States of America and the United Kingdom, this paper addresses concerns and potential risks that arise in a developing economy such as the Republic of South Africa. In particular, this paper considers the unintended consequences that are likely to flow from a 'lock down' approach to intellectual property rights arising from publicly funded research. Far from being a catalyst in university-to-industry technology transfer as has been the experience in the United States of America and the United Kingdom, this paper argues that the proposed legislation in the Republic of South Africa has the potential to stifle academic research and deter private funding.

Paul Grove* & Graham Steventon* Thinking Outside the Box: Enhancing structured creative learning in Second Life
* Coventry University, United Kingdom

Keywords: student-centred learning; virtual learning environments; Second Life

Short biography of authors:

Dr Graham Steventon is a Senior Lecturer and Course Director for Criminology undergraduate programmes at Coventry University. As a qualified architect, his interest in criminology developed initially through a Masters degree in urban design at Oxford Brookes University focusing on the crime preventive role of the police, and subsequently through a PhD in Sociology at Warwick University. His interests are in relationships between crime, its control, and the built environment and have been involved with research projects with communities. Paul Grove is an e-Learning Technologist in the e-Learning Unit at Coventry University. Originally qualified as a Graphic Designer he pursed his ambition to develop learning software through a Masters degree in Design at Coventry University. His latest educational development includes studying for his Masters degree in ICT and Education at Leeds University. His design skills and theoretical knowledge have helped him become a developer in virtual learning experiences.

Abstract:

The aim of this paper is to explore the role of structure in pedagogy, particularly in the context of student-centred learning in virtual learning environments. Traditional teaching may provide too much structure by presenting knowledge as a package pre-defined by the teacher to be accessed by students as and when needed, often with little encouragement to ‘think outside the box’. On the other hand, student-centred learning can involve too little structure, which may be disorientating for students (Lea et al 2003) with the potential not to meet the intended learning outcomes of the session, module or course. Virtual learning environments, such as Second Life, provide a valuable resource for creative exploration, emphasising students’ responsibility for thinking and learning rather than focusing on the role of the teacher (Cannon & Newble 2000; Milner 1991), thus developing understanding by engaging the student with the subject in a meaningful way (Ramsden 2003). They can, nevertheless, fall into the latter category by allowing activities to be initiated and implemented by students in a relatively unconstrained way. However, drawing on the principles set out by Biggs (2003) we argue that by establishing a clear structure to the student activity in Second Life that aligns with the intended learning outcomes of the module, it is possible to maximise the learning experience without eliminating creativity.

In this paper we discuss our ideas for the development of a virtual community in Second Life to be used as a learning object for a module on community safety taken by students on Criminology programmes at Coventry University. In line with the University’s ‘Learning and Teaching Strategy’ (2002), the module currently operates a student-centred pedagogy, which is structured around a series of themes on issues such as defining community safety and its theoretical and legislative framework, community safety interventions and community penalties. Weekly workshops allow students to explore issues and present ideas around briefings that relate to the module themes. The learning object is intended to enhance the learning experience for students by enabling them to engage with simulated ‘real-life’ scenarios in a setting that mirrors a typical dysfunctional community without having to negotiate difficult practical and ethical issues associated with actual ‘real-life’ situations (Childress & Braswell 2006). By assigning different identities to avatars within the learning object at critical stages of the module, students will be able to explore, define and create knowledge around pre-determined scenarios using role play, thus encouraging students to develop a multi-perspective and multi-disciplinary awareness of the issues they encounter. The structure ensures that students remain on track to meet the module learning outcomes without sacrificing their ability to play, to explore, generate and test out ideas, activities that place knowledge creation in the domain of the student, but in a controlled rather than a randomised way.

Indicative References:

Childress, M.D., Braswell, R. (2006) ‘Using Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games for Online Learning.’ Distance Education 27, (2) 187-96
Roy Hanney*  Thinking, Fixing, Delivering: Planning and delivering student-led creative projects

*University of Chichester, United Kingdom

**Keywords:** small-scale project management; student-led live projects; media practice education

**Short biography of author:**

Roy Hanney is Senior Lecturer in Media Production, an independent filmmaker, audiovisual artist involved with the promotion of local filmmaking opportunities for young people and emerging talent in Portsmouth, UK.

**Abstract:**

A literature review of small-scale project management approaches will reveal that little has been written on the subject, despite the fact that small-scale projects are by far the most common form of project enacted in business today.

Institutions and large scale organisations utilise small projects in order to accomplish a range of small order tasks while for SMEs and micro-businesses in the creative industries, the running of small projects may be an essential component of their core business. For the author the issue of small-scale project management not only relates to the organisation of practical departmental tasks and the effective delivery of academic research projects, it also impacts on the management, delivery and assessment of student-led practical projects. This latter topic is the drive and focus for the development of a model for small scale project management in this paper. Reviewing basic terminology such as notions of quality, creativity and innovation provides a framework for consideration of the optimum requirements for the planning and documenting of a small-scale project. The balance between managing the ‘process’ and undertaking ‘output’ delivery activities is a key factor when discussing the administrative burden that comes with implementation of creative projects in an environment where the project team may have little if any practical experience of delivering projects. The adoption of PRINCE2 as a conceptual, process-driven framework rather than a didactic overarching model allows for a flexible and reflexive approach to small-scale project management and the production of a level of documentation that supports student learning and enhances the quality of the project output. This methodology enables the student project team to gain transferable skills, enhances employability and offers tutors a clearer insight into the process of student productions.
Shaun Hides* Viral, Transgressive, or Anti-Pedagogies?: Significance, learning and instrumentality

* Coventry University, United Kingdom

Keywords: transgressive pedagogies; instrumentalism; e-learning

Abstract:

This paper emerges from the belief in the necessity of challenging a powerful orthodoxy within contemporary Higher Education: that e-Learning – re-configuring itself within the rhetoric of ‘social media’ (Web 2.0, digital repositories, etc.) - is transforming the intellectual landscape of the University. This image does conform in significant ways to the experiences of most of those engaged in teaching and learning; whether articulated positively (the increased flexibility and usability afforded by blended and digitally mediated learning), or in negative terms (students texting, emailing, and editing Facebook during lectures). Furthermore, it is now frequently asserted (e.g. Weshc), that students are increasingly disengaged, from ‘traditional’ academic experiences: lectures, seminars, essay writing, scholarship; and that this coincides with an increasingly instrumental relationship to their studies. Since students’ lives are also often characterised in terms of multi-tasking, non-linear career paths, decentred authority, consumerism, and above all, real-time ubiquitous information accessed via pervasive digital media (Purser 2000), this in turn engenders an image of ‘traditional’ academics as the increasingly isolated priesthood of an arcane, archaic religion. It also drives the response of the ‘e-University’ – which believes that it must at least keep pace with these trends - through the accelerated deployment of new and technologically innovative Virtual Learning Environments, so that it can capture the technophilic imaginations of students.

This tactic seems likely to be misplaced on two counts: first, universities, lacking the necessary flexibility and agility, will always struggle to ‘keep pace’ with change. Second, more profoundly, what is at stake does not lie in the space between ‘the i-Pod and its user’, but rather in the cultural-conceptual systems which give both technologies and their use, meaning. This implies that new pedagogic relationships, rather than new technologies, should be our focus.

Therefore beginning with the assertion of O’Gorman (2006); Postman (1996); and Weshc (2008), that it is at the level of students’ disaffection from traditional pedagogic rationales and practices that we should engage. This paper will argue that it is only through radically transformed and transformative pedagogies that Humanities and Social Science teaching can recover its significance for students. Further, that the opportunities afforded by VLEs etc. can only be realised through such transformed pedagogy. This paper will seek to map out a path from older manifestations of challenging pedagogic philosophies: pedagogy as subversive (Postman 1971), and transgressive (hooks 1994), to recent notions of rethought teaching and learning. The paper will focus on an exploration of what viral pedagogy might mean within higher education. Exploring the possibilities of assimilating and orchestrating the modes of ‘illicit’ learning and especially sharing (i.e. finding and passing on ‘cheats’) which surround game and open source cultures, to the purposes of serious scholarship; and examining how anti-pedagogy (Weshc) – for instance teaching academic writing through ‘how to plagiarise classes’ - might connect productively with the ludic pedagogy of the E-Crit programme (O’Gorman). In short realising that, if the net is not a set of technologies but a set of relationships, so too is learning.

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hooks, b. 1994 Teaching to Transgress: Education as the practice of freedom, London: Routledge
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**Geof Hill* & *Paul Dillon* Knowledge Management: A model to guide practice in research supervision (Full Paper)

* Queensland University of Technology, Australia

**Short biography of authors:**

Geof Hill is the Managing Director of The Investigative Practitioner. In his capacity of a management coach he has assisted several clients to progress their reflection on work based practices into practice based research and supported them as they present their propositions for doctoral research degrees.

Paul Dillon is an Education Administrator who has recently completed his doctoral research. He examined the application of the notion of Knowledge Management to Educational Administration.

**Paper:**

**Knowledge Management: a model to guide practice in research supervision.**

Geof Hill, The Investigative Practitioner and International Journal of Research Supervision, Australia

Paul Dillon, Brisbane School of Distance Education, Australia

**Abstract**

There are many aspects of the job of being a university academic, one of which is the set of responsibilities for supervising research. This individual element of academic practice is itself a multifaceted and currently much debated role.

Within research supervision discourse there has been a consistent and dominant proposition to see research supervision as pedagogy (Connell 1985; Parry, Hayden 1994; Manathunga 2002; Pearson, Brew 2002). More recently, the management aspects of the practice of research supervision have been emphasised (Vilkinas 2002) particularly by those outside of the Education discipline. This prompted Manathunga (2002) to refer to these models of research supervision as administrative models of supervision. In order to accommodate research supervisors who approach reflection on their practice from viewpoints other than the pedagogical, a model of multiple constructs of research supervision (Miller 2007) has been developed. Such a framework can also incorporate a view that research supervision is Knowledge Management.

The construct of Research Supervision as Knowledge Management was first proposed by Zhao (2001) and in this paper we develop this idea by using a model of Knowledge Management (Dillon 2007) as a reflective device for research supervisors and as a creative framework to contemplate future practice. The model is in keeping with Sveiby’s (2001) suggestion that knowledge management is about creating environments that enable people to create and share knowledge, and Snowden’s (2002) assertion, that the third generation of knowledge management is related to managing knowledge as both thing (object) and flow (process).

Dillon (2007), working in the context of an educational administrator seeking to implement the philosophy of Knowledge Management into an organisation, presented the relationship between administrator and employee as one that is driven by a view tempered by filters of context, need and relationship. The same can be said of the relationship between research supervisor and graduate student. In the pursuit of making a contribution to knowledge the two work together, their relationship influenced by their individual needs, contexts and their independent views of the supervisory relationship.

As the model is itself a product of one author’s doctoral investigation, supervised by the other author, it is also presented as a means of sharing doctoral knowledge to a broader community (Sveiby 2001).

The paper is also intended to model an approach to research supervision where the knowledge created by the doctoral student enhances the knowledge of the supervisor and in turn influences the supervisor’s practices.

**Key Words:** research supervision, knowledge management, practice based research

**Introduction**

Since the emergence of universities in the 12th century (Minogue 1973), the role of the university academic has undergone change. Initially the university masters had a responsibility to teach (Cullen, Pearson, Saha, Spear
Currently professors have responsibilities not only to teach but to administer, to engage with the community and to support research.

Because universities are aligned with the creation of new knowledge through research, there is a responsibility for many university academics, as part of their support of research, to ‘supervise’ research. This individual element of academic practice is itself a multifaceted and currently much debated role.

What is ‘good’ research supervision?

One of the debates within graduate education discussions about research supervision is focused on ‘What is good research supervision?’. The dominant discourse within this debate has suggested a position that research supervision is teaching or pedagogy (Connell 1985, Parry, Hayden 1994; Manathunga 2002; Pearson, Brew, 2002). While this view is strongly held by many university academics, and could be thought of as the dominant construct in the debate about research supervision, not all university academics support it. An alternative view (Vilkinas 2002) emphasizes the research management nature of research supervision, prompting Manathunga (2002: 82) to refer to that sort of research supervision model as “administrative” in contrast to the pedagogical models and suggesting that in this model academics saw supervision as “an extension of academics’ research functions and not a form of teaching”.

A multi construct framework for examining models of ‘good’ research supervision.

The two differing research supervisor views of supervision practices do not need to be seen as mutually exclusive. Both views can complement each other in discussions about what constitutes good research supervision within a broader multi construct view of good supervision (Miller 2007). Such a framework proposes multiple and different constructs of good research supervision and supports such constructs with reference to the range of strategies being advocated to assist research supervisors with their supervision. Having a multiple construct model enables a research supervisor to identify their personal constructs of good research supervision and at the same time become aware of other constructs. The alternate constructs to their own view may provide an additional edge to enhance their reflection about their practice. A multi construct reflective practice framework also creates capacity for additional constructs of good research supervision, of which research supervision as knowledge management could be one.

Knowledge Management

The concept of Knowledge Management has been attributed to Drucker (1969) who first voiced the opinion that the United States had shifted from an economy of manufactured goods to a knowledge economy. Drucker’s (1969) proposal established a discourse that explored the practices associated with trading in knowledge. Snowden (2002) distinguished between different moments in the development of this discourse by suggesting that pre 1995, the first age of Knowledge Management, the focus of Knowledge Management was on the structuring and flow of information to decision makers. Following the publication of the SECI model (Nonaka, Takeuchi 1995) a second phase of the discourse focused on the interaction between tacit and explicit knowledge and gave rise to knowledge programs attempting to disembody all knowledge from its possessors to make it an organisational asset (Snowden, 2002). This second age was also influenced by thinking about knowledge by philosophers such as Polanyi (1958) and Wittgenstein (1953).

Snowden (2002) postulated that we are currently in a third age of Knowledge Management which is typified by a distinction between information and knowledge and focuses on the relationship between stakeholders. He (2002:1) suggested that “the third generation requires the clear separation of context, narrative and content management and challenges the orthodoxy of scientific management” and indicated that the change did not require an abandonment of much of the previous work on Knowledge Management but rather an acknowledgement that much of the work had been focused on content and the management of knowledge as a ‘thing’ and the focus needed to shift to managing knowledge as a ‘flow’.

Stacy (2000) added to this concept of third age knowledge management by suggesting that Knowledge Management is determined by the heuristics:

1. Knowledge can only be volunteered. It cannot be conscripted.
2. We know more than we can describe or tell.
3. We know what we know when we need to know it. Much of our knowledge is tacit and becomes explicit with purpose.

Sveiby (2001) took the concept further by suggesting that Knowledge Management included creating environments that enable people to create and share knowledge.
Research supervision as knowledge management

The construct of research supervision as Knowledge Management is not new. Zhao (2001) proposed a view that research supervision was a process of knowledge management involving inputs, outputs and knowledge conversion processes. He contrasted this with a project management model that involved only input-output transformation process. He further deconstructed the knowledge conversion process to

a. Knowledge creation  
b. Knowledge transfer  
c. Knowledge embedding

and likened this to research supervision. His model did not as such offer Knowledge Management as an alternative to research supervision as pedagogy but embraced the position of research supervision as pedagogy and rearticulated it in terms of the then emergent literature on Knowledge Management. It also provided a framework by which a research supervisor could reflect on their practice in terms of candidate milestones, the university performance indicators, the overall length of time of candidature and the process of supervision.

Dillon (2007), working in the context of an educational administrator seeking to implement the philosophy of Knowledge Management, similarly focused on this third age Knowledge Management notion of the process and relationship aspects of Knowledge Management. He depicted the Knowledge Management relationship, in his setting, between the administrator and an employee, suggesting that both parties in a Knowledge Management relationship have understanding grounded in (usually tacit) personal epistemological and ontological worldviews. Information is filtered through each individual’s needs, context and view of the relationship. This philosophical core of beliefs and filters underpins their given behaviours with regard to any knowledge exchange, which in the current social view that knowledge is power, is influenced by individual perspectives of knowledge sharing. In this regard behaviours can be seen as those which empower through sharing of knowledge and those which actively attempt to create imbalance by restriction of knowledge.

At the outermost rim of the model is professional practice. This is what is observed and the model allows a practitioner to contemplate what lies beneath practice. While the model was developed in the context of an administrative relationship, its relevance to the supervisory relationship can initially be made evident by simply changing the titles of the model from ‘individual’ and ‘administrator’ to ‘student’ and ‘supervisor’ (see Diagram 1).

Diagram 1: A Knowledge Management Model applied to Research Supervision Dillon (2007)

This reframing of the model became evident to us during the process of supervision of this doctoral topic. As Paul (Dillon)’s supervisor, and in an effort to understand the dynamics of his model, I began to apply the model to the immediacy of our own student supervisor relationship. It helped the efficacy of the candidature that we were also implementing the emergent theory in our respective practices.

The model’s core of epistemology and ontology is a familiar worldview for research supervisors given their engagement with research paradigms. For the supervisor this (hopefully) is explicit knowledge, made so by the supervisors close work with research and research paradigms. For the student, at the outset of their candidature the knowledge would most likely be tacit knowledge and through the need to make explicit their investigation
methodology, would (hopefully) become explicit. In both examples we use the term *hopefully* in the sense of an ideal situation and at the same time recognize the potential for this single indicator as a reflective tool for both supervisor and student generating the questions ‘What is my epistemology?’ and ‘What is my ontology?’ One of the hallmarks of an experienced supervisor is their explicit recognition of investigative paradigms, hence their self awareness of their own epistemology and ontology. One of the hallmarks of a successful student is their gradual awareness of their investigative paradigm, the indicator of which becomes evident in their writing about their investigation and making their investigative paradigm explicit.

Argyris and Schon’s (1974) notion of “congruence” – the parity between one’s behaviour and ones espoused theories of action – is another way in which a research supervisor can reflect on their practice using this model. They can ask themselves whether their espoused research paradigm is evident from the ways in which they practice as a researcher and a research supervisor. More specifically, if a research supervisor claims to have a constructivist ontological view it is pertinent to ask how evident is this view in the ways in which they respond to their student’s development of their truths?

At the second level there are filters. For the supervisor it can be argued that a principle need by way of the organizational mandate is that the thesis be completed. This filter of need can have a strong influence over the student supervisor relationship. Many of the supervisory strategies, in planning or in hindsight, are found to be interventions to achieve a completion. While there has been some suggestion that not all students see non completion a failure (McCormack, 2005), the need to complete can also be seen as a filter for the student.

The traditional model of research supervision based on a notion of master and apprentice suggests a power imbalance. In contemporary models where the supervisor is positioned as a mentor the level of power enacted in a given relationship is a powerful tool for reflection.

Is the supervisory relationship an empowering one in which the supervisor encourages the student in their own (the student’s) endeavours or is the relationship typified by the traditional view of the supervisor as the expert and the student as the apprentice?

The Take home point

The practice of research supervision is often overwhelming and many come to this practice only with positive or negative experiences of being supervised to inform their practice. Any model is useful in helping deconstruct this complicated practice and facilitating a practitioner reflecting on their practice.

This particular model has the advantage that it directs attention to the core ontological and epistemological beliefs that are not only at the heart of research practice, but also at the heart of research supervision practice. It also draws attention to the emanation of power in the supervisory relationship encouraging the supervisor to explore empowering strategies such that the student empowered and takes ownership of their research.

Conclusion

Models are only intended to simplify otherwise complicated reality and this model helps to both deconstruct the working relationship between a supervisor and their student and also to provide a platform to challenge the repertoires of engagement within a given research supervision.

A research supervisor can ask themselves whether in their supervisory practice they have created environments that enable people to create and share knowledge (Sveiby, 2001).

References


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Rahat Iqbal*, Anne James*, Lisa Payne*, Michael Odetayo* & Hisbel Arochena*. Moving to Activity-led Learning in Computer Science (Full Paper)
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**Keywords:** activity-led learning; Computer Science; problem-based learning

**Short biography of authors:**
The authors teach and research in Computer Science at Coventry University, UK.

**Paper:**

Moving to Activity-Led Learning in Computer Science

Rahat Iqbal, Anne James, Lisa Payne, Michael Odetayo & Hisbel Arochena, Faculty of Engineering and Computing, Coventry University, UK

**Abstract**
There has recently been much interest in the idea of problem based learning, where students learn by solving problems without traditional lecture and tutorial provision. It is often the case that a combination of traditional and problem solving approaches are used, with some learning outcomes met by traditional methods and some met by problem-based methods. Proponents of the problem based approach state that it increases engagement and improves retention long term, in spite of some students finding the method difficult initially and even dropping out. Activity-led learning is a generalisation of problem-based learning. This paper explores the extent to which the method and its generalisation may have benefits for the subject area of Computer Science. In this paper, we present a method for moving to activity led learning in Computer Science. We consider typical practical activity in the teaching of Computer Science and evaluate how far these activities meet the criteria of activity-led learning. The adaptation of such activities for activity-led learning is discussed, with an assessment of what might be the advantages or disadvantages. It considers previous experience in the Computing arena at other universities. Recent local experience is also presented.

**Keywords:** activity led learning, activity theory, computer science

**Introduction**
There has recently been much interest in the idea of problem based learning, where students learn by solving problems without traditional lecture and tutorial provision. This approach is said to engage students better and enhance learning whilst promoting independence, group working skills and employability. Activity-led learning, which is a generalisation of problem-based learning, is an approach which is currently being promoted by the Faculty of Engineering and Computing at Coventry University. This initiative is an attempt to improve the student experience with a view to improving student engagement and achievement and thereby to improve retention rates (Wilson-Medhurst 2008)

With respect to the vision for learning and teaching in the Faculty of Engineering and Computing, we have provided the following definition of Activity Led Learning. It was decided to propose a definition of activity led learning that is deliberately broad. Our definition will evolve to some extent and will be open to local interpretation.

Activity Led Learning is a pedagogic approach in which the activity is the focal point of the learning experience and the tutor acts as a facilitator. An activity is a problem, project, scenario, case-study, research question or similar in a classroom, work-based, laboratory-based or other appropriate setting and for which a range of solutions or responses are appropriate. Activities may cross subject boundaries, as activities within professional practice often do. Activity Led Learning requires a self-directed inquiry or research-like process in which the individual learner, or team of learners, seek and apply relevant knowledge, skilful practices, understanding and resources (personal and physical) relevant to the activity domain to achieve appropriate learning outcome(s) or intention(s). To be appropriate, the learning outcomes or intentions must be consistent with the aims, outcomes and intentions of the programme of study with which the student is engaged.
According to the above definition, an activity can cut across a whole year of study (like project-led learning) or part of a module. The idea is that the activity drives the learning process rather than delivery being content led. So the activity is designed to enable the students (if they complete it to a certain level of competence) to demonstrate certain attributes, competencies, skillful practices, professional attributes such as team working and so on. It is not (necessarily) limited to one learning objective and could be focussed on course level outcomes.

An important motivation towards moving to activity-led learning is to create problem-solving students in the University. This motivation and endeavour has been described by many researchers in Higher Education (McKillop, 1997, 1998; Joughin, et al 1992; Savin-Baden, Wilkie, 2004; Savin-Baden, Major 2004).

Our approach has also been inspired by the work carried out at other institutes. At the University of Strathclyde efforts have been made to better engage the students through the development of student small group cohesion and interaction in lectures using hand-held voting devices (Boyle 2008). At the University of Manchester, a large level 1 module is taught wholly through activity led learning (Gough 2008). Uden and Beaumont (2002) have studied the area of Technology and PBL. Beaumont (2007) has found a number areas of computer Science as having been successfully subject to the activity led learning approach.

The rest of the paper is organised as follows: the next section presents a method for moving to activity-led learning in Computer science. Following that we discuss how the activity-led learning is applied to our different courses. After that we discuss the usefulness of the feedback given on activity-led learning as compared to the traditional type of feedback. Finally conclusion is given and future work is described.

**A Method for Moving to Activity Led Learning in Computer science**

The first step is to clearly identify what practical activity we do in the subject areas and whether all learning outcomes are covered by these practical activities. If not, we need to decide whether all our learning outcomes are appropriate. Given that, we identify which essential knowledge of our subject cannot be learnt through practical activity. After this exercise it should be possible to identify modules or areas ripe for activity led learning. Decisions need to be taken regarding the reduction of traditional delivery methods. Where can the lectures be cut and replaced by activity? Theoretical areas that cannot be covered this way should be identified and covered through traditional means. The specific activities should be developed ideally in conjunction with industry to leverage vocational content. Resources, both physical and human, must be identified and acquired. Staff need to be trained to identify suitable areas, develop material and, in particular, to facilitate the activity led learning.

The method is shown in Figure 1 (below).

**Applying Activity-Led Learning**

**Typical Practical Activity in Computer Science Teaching**

At many universities Computer Science is promoted as a practical, vocational subject. Indeed traditionally this has been an area where jobs have been plentiful, the vocational orientation thus supporting and encouraging the practical presentation of the subject. Computing is often seen as a broad area spanning the distance from business operation, human computer interaction, through systems analysis, software engineering, databases, programming, networks to computer architecture and engineering. With such a wide span, little wonder there are many and various practical activities that can be employed to help students learn about the subject.

At the more business end of computing, typical practical activity involves analysing and describing business operation and specifying new systems. Various professional methods and tools can used in such activities. At the software engineering level activities might include specifying systems in detail using appropriate methods and developing reliable software. Database practical activity can include designing the database for an organisation, setting it up and writing routines to query the data. Designing network infrastructures for varying scenarios and specifying suitable hardware and software also enter the field of suitable practical activity for Computer Science.

Computer Science has traditionally embraced practical activity so what is activity led learning going to add? The main difference between tradition practical activity and activity led learning is in the word “led”. The activity has to lead the learning rather than follow it. Traditionally we might provide some lectures, some tutorials and then set the students a task to complete. Thus we have taught the students the material they need before they do the task. With activity led learning they are set the task without having first been taught the supporting material. Through doing the task the student realises what they need to learn, locate relevant material and learn it, in order to complete the task. Research has shown that such an approach promotes deep learning, independent learning and engagement (for example, Wilson-Medhurst 2008). However a criticism is that some vital material may be
missed if the students fail to address some aspect of the task or if the task itself does not require knowledge or skills in that particular area. There are many issues which need to be taken into consideration during its introduction. For instance, Harvey and Drew (2006) point out that such practical approaches can be effective, provided students are well prepared and Teague (2007) points to computing students often not wanting to work collaboratively.

**Figure 1: A Method for Moving to Activity Led Learning in Computer science**

**Local Experience of Activity Led Learning**

We use activities that could be described or applied as activity led learning to a number of our modules. To meet the full definition of activity led learning some enhancements may need to be made. Within the department of computer science, we have adopted this approach to varying extents in the following modules.

**First level Personal Development Module**

Our level 1 personal development module is “taught” in a non-traditional way. Groups of five to six students meet each week with their personal tutor to cover some pertinent areas of their subject. Areas such as types of career, research skills, academic writing, group work, presentation skills are covered as well as some more technical areas such as protocols and languages for web systems development. An aim of the module is to develop group working skills and to settle the students into a good study pattern that will serve them well in the rest of their course. Only two lectures are given, one from a careers officer to explain the facilities that can be provided on-line or by the careers office to help them in their career search and the other is about the use of our on-line personal
Students have access to a networked PC to carry out specified activities during these lectures. In the case of all other topics learning occurs through the small group weekly discussion and associated tasks. Feedback from the students shows that they appreciate this module particularly because of the group working opportunity and emphasis on careers.

**Second level Group Project and Professional Skills Module**

The prime aim of this module is to develop students’ group work skills and to expose them to issues required for professional employment. Thus it covers issues such as project management, ethics and legal issues related to computing. The module uses a short series of lectures which introduce much of the necessary theory, supported by a fairly traditional series of related small exercises.

One theme in the module is sustainability: students need to be exposed to the concepts and dilemmas of sustainable development and to develop their ‘sustainability literacy’ skills. This is seen as being an aspect of professionalism and ethics and necessary for all graduates (SDU 2005). The British Computer Society’s accreditation guidelines specifically identify a requirement to introduce students to environmental issues and globalisation (BCS 2007). To encourage students to engage with this topic, and to investigate its relevance to IT for themselves, it was decided to use ALL. The scope of sustainability was introduced in a lecture but thereafter students were given an IT-based case study which they were required to investigate (Payne 2008). The use of wikis for this assignment made it particularly successful and appealing to students but it is clear that active investigation had been helpful:

“We actually learnt about the points we had to discuss and it was good”

“It gave us more in-depth knowledge on what sustainability [is] about”

“Allowed me to know more about the ways to keep a company sustainable”

The major activity in this module is, of course, a group project. This is a common feature in very many computer science degrees (e.g. Burd 2008) and has been used at Coventry University for about 20 years. Students are given a problem or case study for which they must develop a solution. The project, and module, culminates in a Trade Fair at which students must ‘sell’ their solution to module lecturers, other staff and students. All visitors contribute to the assessment.

This project work exhibits many of the qualities of problem-based learning. Students operate in independent groups with their work being monitored and subject to guidance through weekly meetings with tutors. They need to be active investigators in proposing and developing their solution. There are a number of staged deliverables (project plan, design presentation, trade fair and final report) which provide both vehicles for feedback and the impetus for the students to progress through the task. The project succeeds in developing students’ communication, professional and group work skills: students learn about, say, project planning and management. The module’s purpose is not to directly develop students’ technical computing skills: it has no IT content. The module requires students to integrate and apply their pre-existing understanding and skills. However inevitably students do develop technically but the nature and scope of this depends entirely on the case study set for each particular cohort and each group’s solution to it.

Student feedback is mostly very favourable:

“The teaching methods, the way the module was set up and the assessments as they were interesting.”

“I like the idea of working as a group. I feel this is going to be essential in later life and is good to be a part of a team. I like that we are given time in the tutorials to work on our coursework, and I also enjoyed the trade fair.”

“Learned how to work in a team; able to come up with ideas in a group; able to work on an interesting project”

**Third level HCI Module**

In this module, we have applied scenarios based teaching, learning and assessment methods. In the delivery of the course, we have identified seven topic areas that encompass the HCI curriculum and have introduced the notion of ‘topic cycles’ in which each curriculum area is introduced, researched and discussed before the students are assessed. The cycle applied to the seven topic areas involves the following steps: An introductory lecture, an
assessment briefing, group based research and discussion phase, support sessions with online resources and a final assessed seminar ((Iqbal, Every, 2005).

At the start of the course we divide the class into groups of between six and ten students each. Groups are provided with private discussion forums (on the University’s virtual learning environment) where they can communicate, store work, record decisions and arrange meetings. We encourage students to work cooperatively in their groups to discuss and ‘solve’ the scenarios which accompany each topic.

At the end of each topic cycle student groups are assessed by means of a short seminar in which they are asked to discuss a preset scenario.

The most valuable concern of this approach is to manage large classes on the one hand and to produce problem-solving students on the other hand. Most importantly, we as academic staff have experienced that this approach requires less time to cope with a large number of students especially if we compare with other modules having the same number of students. They require much more time to set assignments and tests, and also to mark them while providing feedback on the scripts.

**Third level Databases Module**

In this module we have applied scenario base learning in formative and summative assessment for one learning outcome of the module. The learning outcome concerned is that of understanding the environment and legal framework in which data systems operate.. Students have been presented with scenarios against which they have to answer a set of questions. Intricacies in the scenarios mean that students really have to think about complexities that occur in typical business operation. In this case material to support the exercises has been covered beforehand in lecture form however the activity encourages deeper understanding than would otherwise have been possible. Thus the activity leads to the deeper rather than the surface understanding.

**Third level Network Management Module**

In this module, students were presented with a long term assessment consisting of an open scenario for which they needed to use all the knowledge covered by the module objectives, as well as previous knowledge, in order to achieve a workable solution. Specific deliverables were set in the assessment, with students working independently for the final outcome. In order to facilitate the learning experience, several laboratory brainstorming sessions took place, where students could come and discuss with colleagues and staff in order to receive feedback on their ideas for different parts of the project. Also, some lectures were replaced by research seminars were students, having been briefed on the sections to be covered, worked in groups or individual in order to present part of the sections to the rest of the class, feedback by means of class discussions were given in such occasions. The student's presentations were also published on the module webpage in order to facilitate further discussions outside of the seminar timeframe. As a conclusion of the project, students handed in their proposed solutions on an individual basis, receiving individual marks and targeted feedback as to how to improve their solutions.

Students worked enthusiastically on the assessment attending most sessions and playing an active role in them. Discussions were lively and demonstrated a very good level of understanding of the objectives set. The student experience reported was that the activities / project made them highly motivated and that they could see the importance of it and how it would benefit them in their future work.

**Master level Network Planning and Support Module**

In this module, we have adopted a two-threaded approach (Linge, Parsons 2006) that consists of problem-based thread and a conventional lecture thread. For the problem based thread, students worked in small groups of four or five, and they were asked to take different roles (e.g., network designer, consultant etc.) in order to refine the user requirements and provide solutions to the problem. An important concern here was to ensure that the problem or scenario seemed realistic and involved both the technological focus and business orientation. This stimulated different students to investigate the whole scenario from different perspective by playing different roles, and each student in a group was trying to provide the best design options while paying attention to the overall output. Such realistic case studies based on problem based learning have helped the students to learn the module in-depth and in an integrated way.

**Student Feedback and Activity-Led Learning**

The use of activity-based assessments opens up the possibility of providing students with better feedback on their work. The UK annual National Student Satisfaction survey routinely points to students’ dissatisfaction with this
aspect of their experience (Rust 2008, THE 2008a). The traditional model of assessment leads to students completing an item of work and then some weeks later receiving back marked work with comments. This has been called the ‘delivery model of feedback’ (THE 2008a). Students regularly fail to collect marked work and even if they do collect it they may not read the feedback comments. A survey of first and second year computing students at Coventry found that only 47% of students always try to collect marked work and (contradictorily) only 75% claim that they always read the comments (Payne, unpublished).

“If I have a pass or at least 50% then why bother?”

Such problematic, ‘inappropriate’ attitudes are to be found elsewhere too (for instance, Rust 2008, THE 2008a). Activity-based assessment allows for better, more engaging, feedback. The packaging learning in such student-focussed ways almost always requires there to be regular progress or supervisory meetings. In the traditional model feedback is exclusively terminal and students may well see it as being relevant only to their past and not to their future learning (Rust 2008). The progress meetings embedded in project work provide a vehicle for on-going feedback to students, at a stage where its relevance is very apparent.

By providing feedback directly to students the process becomes much more of a dialogue. Students will engage better with the assessment process and are more likely to understand the criteria being employed. Such a dialogue is seen by some as being important in the encouragement and support of engaging students with their learning (for instance, THE 2008a and 2008b).

Conclusions

In this paper, we have proposed a framework for moving to activity led learning in Computer Science. We have discussed how activity led learning is being used in some of our courses. Activity based approaches attempt to promote ‘deep learning’ rather than ‘surface learning’. Such approaches encourage students to understand the scenario and relate new ideas to previous knowledge and also to everyday experience.

In future, we intend to investigate how varying group sizes and background can affect the approach. What are the different strategies or techniques available that can be applied to different situations in order to ensure effective and satisfactory delivery of a module? Another important issue that needs to be investigated within the framework of this research is how to accommodate the diversity of students

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Uden L. and Beaumont C. (2001), Technology and PBL , Idea Group


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**Rebecca O’Rourke* & Aisha Walker* What Technology Can’t Fix: Changing feedback practices in higher education**

* University of Leeds, United Kingdom

**Keywords:** assessment feedback; writing and technology; relationships

**Short biography of lead author:**
Rebecca O’Rourke is a Senior Lecturer in the Lifelong Learning Institute and Aisha Walker is a Senior Lecturer in ICT in Education. Both are members of the AWESOME project which is looking at ways in which technology may be used to mediate the development of academic writing.

**Abstract:**

This paper looks at giving and receiving feedback on assessed work in a UK HEI. We compare an anonymous survey of students which explores the current and general situation with two individual case studies of changed practice. We argue that whilst technology makes new pedagogic relationships possible, the real impact on teaching and learning comes from the relationships rather than the technology, and that the administrative and managerial dimensions of these pedagogic relationships are central to effective pedagogic change.

Assessment and feedback are important and difficult aspects of the pedagogic process. The major challenge is that ‘simple’ assessment processes serve several, sometimes contradictory, purposes. Assessment not only provides students with information about their progress – and how to improve that progress – it also creates the grades necessary to award final degree classifications. It sits therefore at the centre of a network of academic practices – both pedagogic and managerial – and is always a high stakes activity for its actors, be they academics, administrative staff or students. We began the stream of work from which this paper emerges knowing how contentious feedback was for students and tutors and seeking to understand the misperception and miscommunication we suspected underpinned the conflict we observed and experienced in our working lives. These competing claims upon assessment and feedback practices take place within a context in which issues of professional identity for higher education workers, and value for money for higher education customers, are becoming foregrounded and in which there is often recourse to technology as a promised solution for the ills and contradictions of 21st century mass higher education.

The first part of the paper reports on a survey of students in the faculty which tells a messy and complex story about the experience of being assessed. Students feel angry about the de-personalisation of learning, especially the fact that they rarely, if ever, receive individual feedback from a tutor who knows them by name and that feedback is not timely. The survey also demonstrates that, whilst students believe that electronic feedback on their assessments would mean they received feedback more quickly, overall, technology is seen as neither problem nor cure.

The second part of the paper presents two case studies of changed practice. The first is with on-site undergraduate students where the school carried out a consultation process with student focus groups which led to evaluation of existing practice and then to change. The new processes are designed to engage students, build relationship and respond to student identification of the importance of relationship in the personalisation of the giving and receiving of feedback on assessed work. The second looks at postgraduate distance students where technology is used to facilitate peer feedback and group or one-to-one tutorials between tutors and students. The two studies together demonstrate that whilst technology can support the development of relationships, it is the relationships rather than the technology that have real impact in the personalisation of assessment and feedback.

* Coventry University, United Kingdom

Keywords: threshold concepts; grammar; Linguistics

Abstract:

This paper, based upon the results of related research into the ‘troublesome knowledge’ encountered by undergraduate students on languages degrees when engaging in metacognitive reflections on grammar (Orsini-Jones and Jones, 2007; Orsini-Jones 2008), investigates whether students on a linguistics-based degree in English are encountering similar conceptual thresholds. The previous study had investigated whether the overarching grammatical structure of a sentence (the rank scale classification) was a threshold concept. It had hypothesised that each of the categories in the rank scale (morpheme, word, phrase, clause and sentence) was a component in the overarching ‘threshold concept’ of the structure of a sentence, where ‘threshold concept’ is meant as a ‘conceptual gateway’ or ‘portal’ that leads to a way of thinking about something that was previously inaccessible and possibly initially ‘troublesome’, as illustrated in Meyer and Land (2003; 2005).

The previous study had further hypothesised that, in the light of the data collected, although an overarching threshold concept had been identified (the rank scale classification) it could not be crossed unless its individual components were mastered.

The analysis of the data collected in academic years 2006-2008 caused a re-think of the original hypotheses, as it highlighted that while it was possible to help students grasp some of the grammar components (like morphemes and word classification) with tailor-made and targeted activities, the theoretical understanding of the concept of ‘phrase’ still eluded most students (Orsini-Jones and Sinclair 2007).

Initial findings appear to indicate that understanding the concept of ‘phrase’ has proven to be troublesome for students on a linguistics-based English degree too. This paper will investigate further whether or not these students encounter the same conceptual thresholds as their peers reading languages and what curricular actions could be taken to help them crossing the threshold concept(s) identified.

Indicative References:


Short biography of lead author:

Marina Orsini-Jones is Teaching Development Fellow within the Faculty of Business, Environment and Society and a member of the iPED network at Coventry University. She is particularly interested in researching Technology Enhanced Learning Environments. She has carried out research-led curriculum developments in Languages and English with the support of a variety of e-tools (e.g. the Virtual Learning Environment WebCT/Blackboard and the e-portfolio PebblePAD) for a number of years. She has published multimedia educational software and scholarly work on the impact of education technology on learning - including the impact of assistive software on the learning experience of blind and visually impaired students. She is currently investigating both subject specific threshold concepts in languages and linguistics and more generic thresholds relating to academic and professional competences across the disciplines (e.g. personal development planning and metacognition). Action research is her methodology of choice.
Jane Osmond* & Andrew Turner* Using Threshold Concepts to Open Up a Dialogue in Educational Research

*Coventry University, United Kingdom

Keywords: threshold concepts; pedagogic research; Design Education

Short biography of author:

Jane Osmond is Senior Research Assistant for the Centre of Excellence for Product and Automotive Design (CEPAD) at Coventry University. Her main duties are to develop and implement strategies to meet the following research aims of CEPAD including tracking student development of spatial awareness; identifying threshold concepts in design and enabling internationalisation of the design curriculum.

Andrew Turner is Principal Lecturer in Education Research and Development in the Centre for the Study of Higher Education (CSHE) at Coventry University where he leads the team of University Teaching Development Fellows and co-ordinates iPED Pedagogical Research Network. He is seconded part time as a Research Fellow at the Centre of Excellence for Product and Transport Design (CEPAD)

Abstract:

The aim of this workshop is to explore how the notion of threshold concepts can be used as a framework in pedagogic research to open up a dialogue with students and academic colleagues. The notion of threshold concepts was first introduced to characterise the idea that in certain disciplines there are concepts that "represent a transformed way of understanding, or interpreting, or viewing something without which the learner cannot progress" (Meyer and Land, 2003). Since the initial definition, the notion of threshold concepts has been further developed and threshold concepts have been identified across disciplines as diverse as health and accounting (Clouder, 2005; Lucas and Mladenovic, 2006) with an increasing body of literature focusing on threshold concepts both generically and within disciplines.

The workshop will provide an overview of the nature of threshold concepts, with examples drawn from ongoing research by the Centre of Excellence for Product and Transport Design (CEPAD) at Coventry University and more widely. The threshold concept research framework has been used successfully by CEPAD researchers as a lens to research Transport and Product Design courses in order to identify key concepts that students need to acquire in their development as designers. A key benefit of using the threshold concepts notion was to engage disciplinary staff and students in the research process, with the ultimate aim of identifying threshold concepts in design. Threshold concepts provided a 'way in' to conducting pedagogical research with a relevance for disciplinary staff who may not have previously had any engagement or knowledge of pedagogical research in a discipline relatively untheorised in relation to pedagogic theory (Osmond & Turner, 2008).

In the workshop an opportunity will be provided for participants to explore how the notion of threshold concepts might be used to open up a dialogue with research participants within their own disciplines and provide a point of inquiry for informing their own pedagogic research.

Indicative References:


**Pran Pandit** Making the Teaching of Literature in English Experiential and Relevant to Arab Open Learning Students.

*The Arab Open University, Kuwait*

**Keywords:** teaching literature experientially; making literature relevant to life; teaching English literature to the Arab world

**Short biography of author:**

Pran Nath Pandit has thirty five years experience in teaching at tertiary level in both conventional and open universities, as an Associate Professor/Professor at college and university level in India, and the Russian Federation, and then worked as Dean of the School of Humanities at the National Open University of India. At present he is teaching UKOU undergraduate English Literature courses at the Arab Open University in Kuwait where he specialises in mainstream and post-colonial English Literature. He has also taught and written coursebooks on English as a Foreign Language and for Communication, and has published articles and presented at international conferences on various aspects of multimedia pedagogy. He is also on the editorial board of The International Journal of Communication Practices.

**Abstract:**

This paper will address the learning needs of Arab learners of English Literature in the Arab Open University. It will show how English Literature course books adopted from The Open University in the UK are made relevant to Arab learners. The undergraduate programme deals with mainstream British and postcolonial literatures written in English or translated from other European literatures.

Students enrolled on the literature courses are from many Arab nations, and often have work and/or family commitments. A large percentage of the students are women. The admission process also allows mature students to enrol. Although these students have life experience to help them understand the issues discussed on the courses, they have only mediocre skills in the English language and little or no direct exposure to Western or foreign culture. The dissemination is based mainly on self study supported by tutor classroom guidance. This makes the task of teaching and transmitting eurocentric concepts to them challenging. In addition, the learning process becomes even more interesting as the teacher (the writer of this paper) is himself neither a westerner, nor an Arab, and has partly to learn from his students about their culture!

How can the classroom teacher make an alien culture accessible to students in the Arab world? What political and social understanding of the Arab experience or world view is required by a teacher to explain, adapt and make classroom teaching interactive and experiential? The paper will discuss these questions and show how the course is negotiated using the many points of cross cultural reference like the theories of the Palestinian critic and professor of literature, Edward Said, and novels like E M Forster's "A Passage to India" which provide bridges between Western and Eastern experience. Said's theory comes up for discussion in several works like the Romantic poetry of Coleridge, Shelley and Byron and the novel, "A Passage to India". Many of the Arab nations have experienced colonial rule under the French or the British. This helps as a starting point to engage the students in a discussion on Said's theory. Students react to Said's theory and to colonialism by stating that though colonial rulers sometimes misunderstood some of the beautiful and positive aspects of oriental culture, they also brought many modern benefits to the colonized countries which are visible in the many technological advancements all around.

Other important themes such as gender stereotype are also discussed. The changing roles of women in the Arab world are cited by the learners as a background to this discussion.

The class lectures are further enlivened by the use of films and audio material, a unique contribution to the students' learning, as these help students visualize the facts discussed, and stimulate interaction. My paper also discusses how the Learning Management System introduced in the university for e-learning will widen the scope for discussions outside the classroom by synchronous and asynchronous activity.
Norman Powell* Exploring the Relationship between Personalised Learning (PL) and Enquiry-Based Learning (EBL) in Enhancing the Student Learning Experience (Full Paper)

* University of Manchester, United Kingdom

Short biography of author:
Dr Norman Powell is the Research Associate for CEEBL (Centre for Excellence in Enquiry-Based Learning) at the University of Manchester. His role involves the development of pedagogical research in enquiry-based learning and an evaluation strategy for the centre, as well as supporting projects run by the centre. Recently, Norman was the Problem-Based Learning Officer in the School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering at the University of Manchester, where he was responsible for developing, implementing and evaluating Problem-Based Learning in electronic engineering curriculum.

Paper:
Exploring the relationship between Personalised Learning (PL) and Enquiry-Based Learning (EBL) in Enhancing the Student Learning Experience

Norman Powell, University of Manchester, UK

Abstract
PL has entered the educational lexicon through government policy for schools. At the University of Manchester it is characterised by: the choice of learners in what, when and how they learn; small-group or individual scale discussions with their tutors, with a great degree of interaction and self-expression.

EBL is an open, flexible, social and supported form of learning that values, stimulates and nurtures people’s natural capacity for enquiry.

Many of the features of EBL naturally express the characteristics of PL. Each of the characteristics of PL is taken in turn showing how EBL expresses them; these are supported with reference to practice in the University of Manchester.

This paper demonstrates how many of the aspirations of PL can be realised through the delivery of the curriculum by EBL in a way that enhances the student learning experience. Future research directions are discussed.

Keywords: personalised learning; enquiry-based learning

Introduction
PL has entered the educational lexicon through government policy for schools (White Paper 2005), representing a strategy to ensure that ‘every child matters’ (Milliband, 2004) and elaborated in CERI-OECD (2006) in which the link between PL and EBL has been made (CERI-OECD, 2006:31-46).

The origin of this idea derives from the manufacturing industries, with personalisation capturing their evolution from cottage industries, through mass production to the customisation of products for individuals. This idea has been transferred to the service industries, using technology to provide personalised services. The idea has been further transferred from the private to the public sector in the personalisation of public services such as the health service and more pertinently education (CERI-OECD, 2006:23).

Introduced at school level, the notion of PL has bubbled up through Further Education and the transition to Higher Education, as evidenced by the Lifelong Learning Networks adoption of the term Personalised Learning Plans (Ward;Richardson 2007). It is beginning to enter the discourse at Higher Education: for example, in a recent Teaching and Learning Review at the University of Manchester, one of the 8 task forces had PL as its theme.

The introduction of PL into the discourse of Higher Education presents the opportunity and challenge of defining it in this context and grounding it with established pedagogic theories and practices to ensure that its introduction does enhance the students’ learning experience.

At school level, PL has five components: i) the use of data from assessment to identify a learner’s needs; ii) teaching and learning strategies that build on individual needs; iii) curriculum choice that engages and respects
the learners; iv) a radical approach to school organisation; v) learning supported by the wider community (CERI-
OECD, 2006:24-26).

The recent teaching and learning review at the University of Manchester characterised PL by: the choice of
learners in what, when and how they learn; small-group or individual scale discussions with their tutors, with a
great degree of interaction and self-expression (Ulph, 2008). It also notes that PL is ‘theoretically aligned with
constructivism, social cognition and EBL’. This was validated by a literature review (O’Neill, 2007).

Methodology

EBL is an open, flexible, social and supported form of learning that values, stimulates and nurtures people’s
natural capacity for enquiry (Kahn; O’Rourke 2005). Many of the features of EBL naturally express the
characteristics of PL. In this theoretical paper, each of the characteristics of PL will be taken in turn showing how it
is expressed by EBL, referencing examples of practice at the University of Manchester. There are many examples
of EBL practice in Manchester, some firmly established, such as Problem-Based Learning in Medicine (O’Neill,
Baxter, Morris 2000), and others more recently developed and introduced, for example the projects supported by
CEEBL (Hutchings, O’Rourke, Powell 2006, Anderson et al. 2007). Where one example is used, others could very
easily be substituted.

Findings

Choice

Starting with an intriguing, complex and open-ended subject-related ‘scenario’ devised by the tutor, students
identify their own issues and research questions. Students decide on the resources that they will need to examine
and the experts that they will need to consult. They direct their own lines of enquiry and engage in active
exploration.

EBL allows for both individual work on sub-tasks and common work on an overall task. Students are able to work
at their own pace and in their own way, on issues that interest them. They can draw from a variety of resources
and focus on the ones that they find most useful and accessible. It also allows students to consolidate previous
learning in the light of the new context, which provides a test of that knowledge and an opportunity to refine it.

Over and above the development of personal learning issues and the choice of which sub-tasks an individual can
investigate, different examples of EBL offer different levels of choice. These range from the solutions that the
students offer to the same open-ended problem:

**Third-Year Robotics** students are asked to design automatic system for a specified industrial task. Whilst all the groups addressed the same industrial task, the solutions that the groups offered were
diverse and creative (Powell et al. 2007b);

and

**First-Year Chemical Engineering** students are asked to design a chemical processing plant at the end
of the year to integrate and reinforce their learning over the year. The task is constrained by the raw
materials and final product, but the paths and processes involved are open (Curtis and Ventura-Medina
2007);

through the scenario having choice for the students built in:

**First-year Geography** students chose to take on the role of different objects, such as pound coins or
ants, on their pre-registration fieldtrip to Keswick. This allowed them understand how the sense of a
place changes with different perspectives (Dodge et al. 2007);

to students’ freedom to define their project:

**First-year Computer Science** students had to choose and design a web-enabled database application
towards the end first semester, which they would go on and implement in the second semester. Tutors
were surprised by the ambition and creativity of the applications that were chosen. They were further
surprised when the teams succeeded in implementing these ambitious projects (Powell et al. 2007a).

and

**Third-year Life Sciences** students can apply to do an enterprise project, where they must first
individually develop a commercial idea based in their discipline, then as a group select which one to
develop into a business plan (Henery, Fostier, Speake 2007);

and
Interdisciplinary groups of Medical, Geography, Language, Education and Life Sciences students have to collaboratively find a research topic of social relevance that talks to each member’s discipline (Woods, 2007).

This element of choice is linked with self-expression and provides a powerful motivation for learning through the ownership of the task.

Scale

The scale of an EBL activity can vary from an activity in a single workshop to an extended investigation over two semesters, such as the Life Science Enterprise Project (Henery, Fostier, Speake 2007). However, scale in terms of PL relates not to the scale of the activity but to the size of the group interacting with the member of staff. Enquiries are usually conducted by small groups of students with the support of a facilitator, and this process serves to foster peer relationships as well as relationships with staff. Often programmes with large cohorts find it problematic achieving this small-group interaction with a member of staff. However, there are a number of different strategies that have been adopted to overcome this staff-resourcing issue.

Existing staff-contact time built into the programme, such as tutorials, can be used:

First-year Pharmacy students study a module on Pharmaceutical Chemistry, investigating the role of chemistry in the properties of different drugs in a therapeutic area of their choice (Freeman; Sattenstall, 2006)

and

The Computer Science activity described above links the first-year tutorial into a 20-credit, two semester module that develops professional, personal and learning skills (Powell et al. 2007a).

Programme resources may be focused into a central component of the programme:

The programmes in Electrical and Electronic Engineering have a second-year team project, the Embedded Systems Project. This is highly resourced in terms of staff-time; approximately 15 members of staff supervise 2-3 groups of 4 students. However, this is a highly valued activity for developing professional skills and exposing students to a challenging authentic project, which differentiates these programmes from other similar programmes (Barnes et al. 2006; Green 2007).

A lecturer’s time may be spread between groups, through a floating facilitator model:

In the third year module Design and Implementation of VLSI Systems, the class is divided into five groups of eight students to work on four problems over the module. During the EBL sessions, the lecturer moves between the groups, spending a portion of time with each, to facilitate their discussions (Powell et al. 2006).

An alternative model is to divide the scheduled contact time between the groups:

In the Robotics module above, the lecture rearranged the timetabled two hours per week lectures into four half-hour team meetings. Consequently, each team had one meeting per week for the three week duration of the EBL project (Powell et al. 2007b).

Post-graduate students may be employed to facilitate the small group discussions:

In Chemical Engineering the full first year of 200 students meet in a single flat room, partly divided by partitions, in order to work in groups through a series of open and closed problems. Post-graduate ‘demonstrators’ facilitate these groups, whilst a member of staff circulates between the groups (Ventura-Medina et al. 2007).

In some situations, it is difficult for student groups to meet face to face with each other or their facilitator. This may be through a combination of timetabling and location. These difficulties are exacerbated for interdisciplinary groups. In these situations the Virtual Learning Environment can be employed to provide a virtual space to hold synchronous and asynchronous discussions with the group and facilitator, as well as a space to store course information and resources collected by the group (Wood, 2007).

Supported small-group discussion is an important component of EBL. A number of strategies have been outlined here to achieve this for programmes with large cohorts. In the next section the nature of that interaction will be examined.

Interaction
The nature of the interaction between staff and students in an EBL session is very different from that of a traditional lecture. The tutor’s role moves from one of subject expert and lecturer to that of process guide and facilitator. The process of learning is very much brought to the foreground in this interaction and discussion may focus on the interpretation and contextualisation of the information that students have brought to the table.

The discussions are very much driven by the students. Consequently, the facilitator can gain a much more immediate appreciation of a student’s understanding of a subject and possible misconceptions and be in a position to guide the groups’ thinking through gentle prompting and questioning. Such interventions can be much more finely judged and critical to a student’s learning, hence provide a more effective use of staff time than the delivery of material the students can obtain through other sources.

Another resource that EBL exploits, which may be under-used in traditional forms of teaching, is that of the student’s peers. Often, a fellow student is in a better position to explain a new piece of knowledge than the facilitator. Having recently been engaged in comprehending an idea themselves, the difficulties and possible misapprehensions are still fresh. Explaining an idea is also beneficial to the explainer, as it can clarify and reinforce that learning.

The quality and individual appropriateness of these interactions can be rewarding for both staff and students:

A supervisor from the Embedded Systems Project talks about how rewarding they find this form of teaching and learning (Green, 2007):

“And it is one of the most rewarding things you can teach. I find project work and work like this the feedback is more immediate, on a weekly basis. … to meet a group, have done A, B, C, D and E, it rocks you back a bit and reminds you why you’re here.”

The appreciation of the collaborative learning experience is expressed by a third-year English Literature student (Hutchings, O’Rourke 2006):

“Our group really felt we had taught ourselves with each other’s help and we felt a real pride in our independent learning. I have acquired knowledge in a more creative way”

And the use of the tutor as an additional academic resource can be seen in another English Literature student’s comment (Hutchings, O’Rourke 2006):

“There were instances when we needed a second, academic opinion. We would ask for the help of our tutor…who was there to advise us…and point us in the right direction if our focus began to wander”

Clearly, the interaction of students and facilitator is central to EBL.

Self-Expression

The presence in the EBL group of a number of students will generate a diversity of potential responses to the material and a range of perspectives. The students will usually make decisions about what to include and how the findings will be presented – thus, in arriving at some point of closure, choice and creativity are within their ownership.

A level of self-expression is present throughout the EBL process. The discussions are led, and contributed to, by the students. So, from the very beginning, it is the students’ ideas and opinions that are heard. Later, when students report back the findings from their individual investigations, this is done in their own words, demonstrating their own interpretation and understanding of the material. Another source of self-expression is the variety of reporting and assessment forms that can be used. These can range from posters and presentations (Freeman, Sattenstall 2006; Woods 2007), including ‘Dragons’ Den’ events where students defend their business plan to a collection of members of staff with business experience (Henery, Fostier, Speake 2007), to demonstrations of websites and software that they have developed (Powell 2007a). In one example, the results of a participatory image-based research are presented, reflecting on the capturing, selection and interpretation of images (Miles and Kaplan 2006; Miles, Kaplan, Howe 2006). In another example the groups not only prepare and present teaching material for the other groups, but they also set the exam question (Ventura-Medina et al. 2006). All of these invite creativity and self-expression, in terms of both the content and the style of the reporting.

A key to self-expression is the latitude to make choices. The examples above (particularly the Life Science Enterprise Project and Computer Science) illustrate some of the choices and freedoms that the EBL process allows students to explore. Further, there is a shift from the students being passive consumers of knowledge, through actively engaging in the seeking and construction of that knowledge, to actively employing that knowledge for a particular task. Ultimately, as their competence and confidence in their discipline and the processes of enquiry develop, they can become producers of knowledge: a pinnacle of self-expression.

Discussion and Conclusions

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EBL can be seen to naturally embody the characteristics of PL, providing choice, small-scale interaction with peers and staff, and self-expression for the students involved.

EBL represents a shift away from more passive methods, which involve the transmission of knowledge to students, to more facilitative teaching methods through which students are expected to construct their own knowledge and understandings by engaging in supported processes of enquiry, often carried out in small groups. Support needs to be given to the actual framework to encourage an enquiry and the social dimension of learning. EBL is situated within the broader tradition of student-centred learning. This ensures that a wider evidence base is already in existence to substantiate the use of EBL, and indeed to support its further development.

There are other interpretations and implementations of PL that do not necessarily depend on EBL. However, it is arguable that by framing PL in terms of EBL, it has much more profound implications for pedagogy, how the students experience the delivery of the curriculum.

The characteristic of choice, for example, could be expressed at a higher level in the curriculum, namely choices students experience the delivery of the curriculum. However, taken at this level, once the choices are made, students may experience the delivery of that curriculum choice in a much prescribed manner, missing the finer grain opportunities for choice that EBL can offer.

At school level, an interpretation of PL has been the recognition of individual learning styles. The uncritical adoption of a single conceptualisation of learning style without recognising that this is a fragmented and contested area has been critiqued (Burton, 2007). EBL provides an open structure for learners to explore different ways of learning in situations that model professional life, providing an opportunity to explore their preferred learning styles through reflection on their experiences.

This paper has explored the relationship between PL and EBL, drawing on real examples of practice. It argues that many of the aspirations of PL can be realised through EBL in a manner that has a profound implications on students’ experience of the curriculum. However, further work is required to establish: to what extent these characteristics of PL are realised in EBL and how they can be emphasised; and how students perceive these characteristics and whether they do have a beneficial effect on their learning.

Acknowledgements

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References


Sue Rivers* Online Lurking and Learning: The emergence of a pedagogy of silence?
(Full Paper)
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Keywords: online lurking; lurking and learning; an emerging pedagogy of silence

Short biography of author:
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. She describes herself as a phoenix-like lifelong learner, constantly reinventing and upskilling herself professionally in order to meet the demands of the changing world of work. Her doctoral research into e-learning was conducted at the University of Sheffield; her thesis is entitled: "Conversations and Silence: Learning by Word of Mouse?"

Paper:
Online lurking and learning: the emergence of a pedagogy of silence?

Sue Rivers, Acting Dean, School of Life Long Learning, Coventry University

Introduction
This paper examines the significance of online silence for teaching and learning. Research into networked collaborative learning often involves analysing the content of online discussions in order to assess what learning takes place. However, in this doctoral research, the online programme studied featured widespread non-participation; sometimes referred to as ‘lurking’ or ‘silence’. Researchers studying collaborative work need to interpret and understand the role of periods of apparent inactivity as well as observable active study, even if it is difficult to conceptualise (Littleton, 1999: 182). It seems likely that participants in collaborative discussions will not verbalise all that they are learning and that learning takes place both in and outside of the discussions.

Theoretical Basis
Online silence as a space for learning
Silence is frequently associated with reflection. Reflection is said to be particularly important to professionals; both reflection after an event and reflection-in-action (a kind of spontaneous research) Schön (1983); Brookfield (1995). Buckner and Morss (1999: 37) acknowledge that reflective thought is important to a rich learning experience and recognise that in online learning students need to have sufficient time to reflect on issues raised in a debate before making their own contribution.

According to Harasim et al. (1995: 194) online learning promotes reflection, in that students can review and reread what has taken place as often as is needed for understanding and retention. Light and Light (1999: 170) support this view, suggesting that computer conferencing is good for quiet, reflective people. This particularly applies to those who wait for the argument to develop and tend to take time to think about it, or would like to go and research the issue before saying anything. However, this shyness can also cause some people to be too inhibited to voice their ideas or questions, albeit in writing, rather than face-to-face. In addition, as Hammond’s research (1999: 357) found, there are built-in paradoxes: the permanence of online messages may help reflection, but also inhibits potential contributors who do not want their messages available to permanent scrutiny.

Is online silence anti-social?
There are two principal types of online silence: (a) logging on to a conference and reading other contributions to a discussion but not posting up a contribution yourself (commonly known as ‘lurking’) and (b) not reading the discussion threads at all (for example by failing to log on). Feenberg (1989: 24) points out that asynchronous conferencing may mean that unusual delay is interpreted as a sign of rejection or indifference since there is no mechanical excuse for silence. He describes online silence as ‘a message that is both brutal and ambiguous’ (ibid: 34).

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The use of derogatory terms like ‘lurking’ tend to suggest that non-participation, particularly in the context of online collaborative learning, is fundamentally anti-social. However, Wenger (1998: 57) claims that our engagement with the world is social even when it does not clearly involve social interactions with others. Even when an individual is preparing a presentation alone in a hotel room, this is social because the audience is ‘there’: their colleagues are looking over their shoulder, representing accountability to their professional community.

The concept of ‘legitimate peripheral participation’ (Lave, Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998: 100) suggests that it may be ‘legitimate’ (i.e. acceptable) for a ‘lurker’ to read other participants’ messages, by way of apprenticeship, before becoming a full participant. Brookfield and Preskill (2005) suggest it is important not to mistake silence for inertia or disengagement and point to the value of reflective silence (ibid: 65). They believe that email (and, by analogy online learning) allows time for reflection (ibid: 122) and imply that students are ‘saying too little’ only when it becomes a problem for their learning (ibid: 178).

However, in the case of collaborative online learning, this fails to take into account the possible effect on other learners. Too much silence may hinder the learning of the rest of the group who cannot benefit from the very sharing of diverse opinions that the authors extol (Brookfield, Preskill, 2005: 3, 4 and 9). In this sense it could be argued that non-participation is fundamentally undemocratic as one person’s autonomous decision not to post messages (despite rules on minimum postings required) can decrease the richness of the others’ learning experience. Students may be ‘saying too little’ when it becomes a problem for the learning of others.

Methodology and Methods

Methodology

Analysing silence is methodologically challenging! In the researched programme, virtual ethnography (ethnography conducted online) was used in order to understand how online learning took place. Hammersley (1992:43-44) points out that ethnography is commonly justified in that, by entering into close and relatively prolonged interaction with people in their ordinary lives, we can understand their behaviours more accurately than by other approaches.

Virtual ethnography enables the researcher to gain a reflexive understanding of what it is like to be part of the internet and to learn through the same medium as informants (Hine, 2000: 10). Instead of being a detached and invisible analyst, it is possible to be active and visible within the field setting (ibid: 23).

The fieldwork involved spending nine months as an online student; learning, and experiencing life first hand, with a cohort of e-learners. The researched programme was conducted entirely online and did not involve face-to-face meetings or seminars. A key part of the programme was four months of intensive online discussions, moderated by a tutor but led by each of the students in turn. I participated fully in this programme, including taking the assessment along with my fellow students. This was not therefore ‘participant observation’ as such, but a very much more active approach for which I used the expression ‘participant participation’.

The data

The data consisted of my field notes and research diary as well as the transcripts of the seven online conferences which had taken place during the 4-month research period, including one particular exchange from the social area. In total this amounted to 191 individual postings by the conference participants. There were also transcripts of 14 interviews conducted with students and tutors.

The interviews incorporated critical event recall techniques (Tuckwell, 1980; Kagan, 1984; Kagan, Kagan, 1991; Lally, 2002; Steeples, 2004; Carr et al., 2006). This is a method of stimulating recall of an occurrence based on the premise that humans store up large amounts of information about events which they have participated in, much of the detail of which may be soon forgotten but can be recalled with appropriate stimulation. In the case of a group of learners, it may enable previously unexpressed aspects of the learning experience to be recalled and verbalised; for example, the interviewee is able to reflect upon and analyse the transcript extracts, and, in so doing, verbalise what was not directly observable from them (De Laat, Lally, 2003).

The rationale for using this technique, apart from its inherent value, was to triangulate other forms of analysis (Lally, 2002). This is due to the complexity of the learning processes involved in online networked learning and the desire to gain a fuller understanding of learning processes than might be possible by using content analysis alone including the need to probe the ‘thinking behind the text’ (ibid.).
Data analysis
A preliminary analysis of the content of conference transcripts was undertaken using categories emerging from the messages themselves, without detailed reference to the literature, drawing upon grounded theory (Glaser, Strauss, 1967; Strauss , Corbin, 1998). Further data analysis was carried out in the light of the literature review. The validity of this approach has been acknowledged by researchers in this field (McConnell, 2000; Lally, De Laat, 2002, 2003; Steeples, 2004; McConnell 2005, 2006). The advantage is that it allows for correction of errors by refining data collection and is flexible enough to allow the researcher to redirect the analysis as new issues emerge (Charmaz, 2000: 522-3). It is therefore particularly suited to research in new or under-researched fields, such as those in which there are significant gaps in theory, as is the case with online networked learning.

I read and re-read the transcripts of the online conferences and interviews to let themes emerge in a naturalistic way. I experimented with various grids or frameworks for analysis taking into account the work of Henri (1992) and Garrison and Anderson (2003). I designed and developed my own framework by listing my research questions, breaking them down into components and using these directly as the headings for analysis for both conference scripts and interviews.

I freely acknowledge that attempting to analyse silence is challenging and that there may be no foolproof way of knowing everything that was going on in and outside of the conferences. However, I would contend that my approach has made some inroads into this difficult and complex area.

Findings
Occurrence of silence
I defined online silence as a significant gap between postings, determined a ‘significant’ gap as three days or more and identified three categories of silence:

1. Total silence: no-one in the group posting to a particular conference
2. Individual silence: a particular individual not contributing to a conference
3. Partial silence: only one or two students contributing to a particular conference and the others were not.

Categories two and three are not mutually exclusive, that is, when one or two people are contributing but other individuals in the group are not, there is both partial and individual silence occurring.

During the four-month period covered by the conferencing I identified fourteen instances of total silence, ranging in duration from three days to fourteen days, the average length being 5.8 days. Individual silence was clearly acceptable behaviour for some students, notably Male 2 who only contributed four postings in total and did not participate at all in four of the seven conferences.

Partial silence occurred at the start of the first conference when the leader, Male 3, made five consecutive postings without any other student joining in. It took 20 days for all students to post a message. It is possible to interpret this as an example of legitimate peripheral participation, where new members were being introduced into the group (Lave ,Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998; Light, Light, 1999).

Partial silence was particularly noticeable in three of the conferences: Conferences 4, 6 and 7, where the tutor was at times forced to ‘become a student’ in order to sustain the discussions due to non-participation by a number of people, especially two of the male participants (Males 1 and 2) and, to a lesser extent, two of the females (Females 1 and 2). In Conference 6 only two students in the cohort (Male 3 and myself) participated. The final conference was structured differently to the others, with three linked threads, but only three students participated:

Online silence: evidence of learning
Interviewees found it difficult to say what learning had been going on in times of silence. Even when they were taken through the relevant conference scripts in interview and asked specifically about these times, they could not remember whether or what they were learning at those specific moments. However, the conference transcripts revealed some relevant evidence; for example, there was clearly some email contact between participants outside of the conferences, in order to share and solve particular problems, especially over technical matters. Almost all learners said in interview that, outside of the conferences, they looked up resources posted by others:

I did pursue about getting a copy of ‘E-tivities’ at one point...I looked at some of the stuff especially that Guardian article that [the tutor] mentioned. I read through that and I think I put some feedback on that one. Generally speaking if people put a link on I’d have a look.
There was evidence that people discovered resources outside of the main conferencing area, reflected, then came back to the conferencing with new thoughts and ideas to share with others:

Recommend reading "King Content" section of “E-Learning the Second Wave” recently posted as attachment to message of same title in [the café].

(Tutor, Conference 5).

Wow ... - that Article really got me thinking. I wonder if my own experience of e-learning relates much at all to what the author was talking about! What wave am I in - probably fallen off my ancient surf board by now!

(Sue, Conference 5).

I had been reading the book ‘E-tivities’ (Salmon, 2002) which suggested ways to respond to messages encouragingly, and gave the example of a reply which began with “Wow!” (Salmon, 2002: 59). I therefore started my posting using the same word to be positive and enthusiastic, with view to encouraging further dialogue. What I had learned in the silence outside of the conferences directly affected my activity in that conference.

Silence in the learning process is often associated with reflection, which is thought to be particularly beneficial for adult professional learners (Schön (1983); Brookfield (1995)). One of the benefits of computer conferencing identified in the literature is that it allows participants thinking time before posting (Buckner, Morss, 1999; Light, Light, 1999; Brookfield, Preskill, 2005). This view was supported by the evidence from the researched programme:

I wanted to contribute to and other things I felt well I couldn’t. I read quite a lot what was going on but I didn’t in all cases contribute to the message ‘cos I didn’t feel - possibly I needed time to think about what to say so possibly in some cases I didn’t have that time to do it.

(Male 1, interview).

Those who stated in interview that they needed time to think before posting were generally slow to post and the most silent online. They also tended to display reflective learning styles whilst online, which accords with research showing that computer conferencing is good for quiet, reflective people (Light, Light, 1999). These people clearly need silence as a space for their learning:

Sue: Was there any specific reason why you didn’t post something up if you actually logged on and read..?

Female 2: Yes, yes because I am very, very, very methodical. I sit and think about things for hours. I mean I would wake up in the middle of the night and I would be thinking about it. But I think that’s me.

(Female 2, interview).

Online silence: a hindrance to learning?

Whilst, for some people, silence may have been an opportunity to think and prepare before posting, for others it was clearly frustrating and bewildering:

I was a bit frustrated with people that they weren’t doing what they should be doing...I wanted regular contributions to be made and they weren’t being made...

(Male 3, interview).

In cases where the voices of participants are unheard there may be a feeling that the cohort has been deprived of the potential richness of all the possible views and experience which could have provided fulfilling collaboration:

I’m thinking about [Female 1] – who’s another person a very, very experienced person she’d already been on umpteen online things and is involved you know designing courses for [name] and all this stuff and I would have loved to know, ...more of what she had to say...

(Sue, when interviewing the Tutor).

Those who were contributing a lot felt that the non-participants were failing to take their turn and ‘saying too little’ and that this was a problem for the learning of the cohort. This seems in line with Brookfield and Preskill’s views (2005) that reflective silence may be valuable to individuals, especially to introverted or intimidated students but, by implication, too much silence can have a negative effect on learning. This is supported by the acknowledgement of one of the low posters:

Maybe I reflect a little too much and don’t do enough...I think it probably didn’t help because I was reflecting and not doing it, it really didn’t help.
Much is made of how power may be exercised, particularly between the sexes, by devices such as deliberate use of silence, interruption, setting the tone and showing expertise in ways that may be difficult to challenge (Dendrinos, Pedro, 1997). Although it may not be technically possible to interrupt in asynchronous computer conferencing, it is possible to dominate by indirectly preventing others ’speaking’. In the researched programme, this was not always gender specific; an example is the start of Conference 3 for which Male 1 was the leader:

*I think learner motivation is an important issue regarding online learning, so what do you all think?*

(Male 1, Conference 3).

*If we are looking at learner motivation we should consider...[gives long list of points]. This is not exhaustive but these are some points that quickly spring to mind. Others can add to this.*

(Male 3, Conference 3).

Here Male 3 came in before the tutor’s ‘obligatory second message’ and almost swamped the leader’s contribution by imposing his own content and method of dealing with the subject (listing). Arguably this is the equivalent of interruption online as well as an exertion of power.

If remaining silent amounts to ignoring the poster’s wish for (or perceived right to) a reply, online silence may also be the equivalent of face-to-face interruption, in that it amounts to exerting power. For example, I asked a series of questions at the end of Conference 4. These never received a reply from any of the other students and the conference ended in mid air with no summary from the leader. This left me with a feeling of being stranded or abandoned, with my questions left unanswered.

### A Pedagogy of Online Silence

The pedagogy of online silence involves balancing the learning rights of individuals with that of the group. It was clear in the researched programme that particular individuals did learn by, or despite, lurking. The tutor’s personal belief was that the most important thing was whether learning had taken place. This implied that, ultimately, it did not matter whether an individual had contributed little to the conferencing. These values were highly significant and may have prevented the tutor from actively encouraging greater participation.

It is impossible to collaborate on your own; therefore, on a programme for which collaboration is a fundamental requirement, online silence by individuals is antisocial if it deprives other people of group collaboration. This is in line with Brookfield and Preskill’s view (2005) that reflective silence may be valuable to individuals but too much silence can have a negative effect on learning. However, my findings go further and show that individuals are saying too little when it becomes a problem for the group’s learning.

Accordingly tutors need to balance the needs of individual learners with those of the group, so as to maximise opportunities for learning. They need to allow sufficient silence for people to reflect and learn whilst also encouraging optimum participation so that the group can benefit from the views and experience of others. If collaboration is a fundamental of networked online learning, institutions need to have a clear policy on how much contribution is required by individuals and learners should provide evidence of collaboration as part of their assessment. It should not be possible to pass the assessment without making a minimum contribution towards collaboration and assessment strategies should positively recognise and reward contributions towards collaboration.

This research shows the importance of silence in facilitating online learning and the effect of lurking on collaboration. It will enable those designing and moderating online discussions to plan for and manage silence in order to enrich learning communities.

### References

Shefalika Ghosh Samaddar* Teaching Quality Intellectual Property Management: An Indian case study

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Keywords: IP framework in Indian pedagogy; computer uses in education; Computer and Information Science education

Short biography of author:
Gold medallist in Mathematics, her M Phil is from University of Delhi, and M Tech from Indian School of Mines, Dhanbad. She is ranked among the top ten in her Post Graduate Diploma in Intellectual Property Rights. Presently pursuing her PhD from Motilal Nehru National Institute of Technology, Allahabad, she is involved in a number of research activities including a Government. 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’. She was the founder-editor of a double-blind peer-reviewed journal in Management and Information Technology – 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.

Abstract:
Creation, ownership and protection of Intellectual Property (IP) has become a complex system (Cornish, 1996) with the all pervasive technological changes in the fields of Electronics, Communications, Information Technology, Biotechnology, Nano-technology and Bio-informatics. IP legislation has undergone a sea-change after its compliance with Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). IP Management is being introduced into the curriculum through a number of full-fledged diploma and degree courses, in India facilitated by Legal Studies faculties. The course is of immense value even for the researchers, technologists, bureaucrats and other professionals for their survival in a knowledge economy. Due to the lack of a proper education framework other than Law, they fail to appreciate the newly devised management techniques to be implemented by a number of legal, techno-legal or digital/electronic mechanisms. This techno-legal approach in IP pedagogy could cater for a much wider section of users, and constitutes a new direction for study (Samaddar, 2008).

The paper aims to develop an open source based infrastructure (Samaddar, 2007a and Samaddar, 2007b) to facilitate a teaching-learning process in IP Rights and describes practical experience gained in teaching IP Management in India. While developing the syllabus, lecture plan, practical assignment and case study for the paper ‘Techno-legal Dimension of IP Rights’ for Information Security and Cyber Law, it has been observed that there are some conceptual gaps between the theoretical principles, the legislative framework and equivalent global aspects. These problems and some of their solutions, implemented successfully, are discussed as a case study in this paper. An innovative evaluation process and statistical feedback system is also developed through ‘Marks on Auction’ and a traditional questionnaire-based evaluation. The students are from legal, technical, science and commercial backgrounds. The students with a legal background were found to be uncomfortable with the assignments on the usage of available web services whereas the students from an engineering background appreciated the mini-project on semantic web services on copyright.

The course designed is a combination of the following:
- Survey course (IP as a faculty of law and its implication in the WTO-WIPO regime) aiming to extend learning breadth and complexity of application of IP Laws and rules.
- Specialized Course (Application sector wide in-depth study with economic implication) to give an overview of IP Law.
- Advance Seminars
- Practical courses:
  - Practical computer based assignment
  - Preparation of the case studies

The major objective of the course is to achieve a sound base of IPR Strategy for engineers and researchers in science and technology with the four above stated pillars (Samaddar & Chaudhari Banshi, 2007).

Indicative References:


Maggi Savin-Baden* Problem-based Learning in Immersive Educational Worlds

* Coventry University, United Kingdom

Keywords: problem-based learning; immersive virtual worlds; problem-based learning online

Short biography of author:

Maggi Savin-Baden is Professor of Higher Education Research and Coventry University and Director of the Learning Innovation Research Group. Maggi's current research is exploring the impact of innovative forms of learning in new spaces such as Second Life and new distance spaces. 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 doing an MSc in digital technology and learning to snowboard and ice skate.

Abstract:

Learning in immersive virtual worlds (simulations and virtual worlds such as Second Life) has become a central learning approach in many curricula. Most research to date has been undertaken into students' experiences of virtual learning environments, discussion forums and perspectives about what and how online learning has been implemented.

Background: This interactive poster will present a pedagogical approach for developing scenarios for learning in immersive worlds.

Description of approach used: A user-focused process investigated, developed and evaluated the linking of emerging technologies of 'virtual worlds' with interactive online problem-based learning, to create realistic immersive tutorials, using interactive virtual scenarios in Second Life as the primary focus for learning.

Results of work done: Four avatar driven and four information driven problem-based scenarios were developed and tested with students and their feedback was used to develop and improve them. Two avatar driven scenarios will be presented and critiqued in this presentation

Conclusion: Immersive virtual worlds offer different textualities that are increasingly ushering in new issues such as temporality and spatiality which are becoming not just contested but dynamic and intersected by one another. Developing open source pedagogically driven problem-based learning scenarios such as these may offer a new liquidity to learning which combines technology with pedagogy in ways that are mutually beneficial.
Mike Smith* & Kathryn Cook* Applying a Problem-Based Learning Approach to a Psychology Programme in Sport and Exercise Science
*Coventry University, United Kingdom

Keywords: problem-based learning; sport psychology; student feedback

Short biography of 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.

Abstract:
According to Savin-Baden (2000) problem-based learning (PBL) is an approach that is becoming widely used in higher education as it encourages students to become independent inquirers, whilst developing an understanding of other students' perspectives (Savin-Baden & Major, 2004). In a sport related module Duncan and Al-Nakeeb (2006) found that students were motivated to develop generic skills through active learning. However, a limitation of their study was that PBL was only implemented with third year students (Savin-Baden and Major, 2004).

The aim of the present study extends the work of Duncan and Al-Nakeeb (2006) by introducing PBL into all three levels of the sport and exercise psychology (SEP) strand of a BSc Sport and Exercise Science degree course. The SEP strand is one of six modules per year, with student numbers similar each year; level one (~60 per year); level two (~55 per year); level three (~35 per year). Each problem lasted approximately four weeks and was introduced in all three levels based on the McMaster model, which involved students working independently and in small groups with one problem at a time (Savin-Baden and Major, 2004).

To assess the PBL initiative, measures were taken at all three levels. Attendance, mean coursework and examination marks were calculated and compared to the previous year at their respective levels. Anonymous written student feedback was also collected during and at the end of the academic year.

Findings indicate that oral presentation marks increased in comparison to the previous year, 57% to 61% for level 1 and from 55% to 65% for level 2. For level 3 mean coursework mark remained stable, while mean exam mark increased 46% to 51%. Exam failure rate was reduced; year 1 from 27% to 18%, year 2 from 42% to 11% and year 3 from 30% to 5%. Finally, students attending 100% of teaching sessions increased across all levels (15% to 34% for year 1; 5% to 35% for year 2 and 13% to 19% for level 3).

Student feedback included, ‘Showed us we are capable of producing a good bit of work without being spoon fed’, ‘The tutorials motivated me to read more around the area and do work every week’, ‘Allows you to apply theories you have previously learned in real problems’, and ‘Working with a group gives us help from each other and incentive to do well so we don’t let the team down.’

Limitations are that it is a short term study and further investigation is required over a longer period of time. Also, the second year module was optional last year and is mandatory this year which may have influenced attendance and therefore academic performance. In addition, the problem delivery was by the same medium each time (i.e. paper based) and some students indicated they would like problems delivered differently, for example, via video or podcast. To address this in future some of the materials will be delivered by alternative mechanisms, including e-technologies.

Indicative References:
Savin-Baden, M. (2000) Understanding and Using Problem-Based Learning Strategically In Higher Education. Paper presented to the 8th Improving Students Learning Symposium, 4-6 September, UMIST, Manchester
Darrall Thompson* Graduate Attribute Assessment: Using online visual communication to engage staff and students (Full Paper)

* University of Technology, Sydney, Australia

Short biography of author:
Darrall Thompson is originally from the UK but emigrated to Australia and became a full time academic at the University of Technology, Sydney in '93.

His main research area is pedagogy, graduate attribute development and the use of technology in education. He has had many grants and publications in these areas and been responsible for the design and implementation of holistic assessment processes facilitated by software that he has also designed.

Darrall is now Director of Teaching and Learning and Senior Lecturer in the School of Design at UTS and Conjoint Senior Lecturer at the University of Newcastle in the Faculty of Science and Information Technology.

More info: http://datasearch.uts.edu.au/dab/staff/details.cfm?StaffId=2127

Paper:

Graduate attribute assessment: Using online visual communication to engage staff and students

Darrall Thompson, University of Technology, Sydney (UTS)

Abstract
Graduate attribute development is an ‘emergent pedagogy’ struggling to emerge. In this paper the context of attribute integration in higher education is discussed followed by a broad approach to the notion of attributes from Shakespeare’s ‘five wits’ to recent industry reports on employability.

Whilst mapping attributes against learning objectives is commonplace in documentation there appear to be few coherent approaches to attribute development in assessment criteria. Given that ‘assessment drives learning’, it is not surprising that Government and industry view universities’ attribute statements as ambit claims.

This paper explores research from a large Australian Government grant that is using an online assessment system with visual interface (ReView) to engage business faculties with attribute-coded criteria for assessment. Preliminary findings of interest relate to students’ awareness of graduate attributes and their engagement with self-assessment, the value of visual communication for feedback, the development of attributes across subject boundaries and the subtleties of writing explicit assessment criteria.

Keywords: graduate attribute assessment; online visual feedback; student self assessment; educational change; assurance of learning

Introduction
This paper addresses the conference theme of ‘Emergent Pedagogies’ and informs the question: Is there a way to engage staff and students in graduate attribute assessment? The term ‘graduate attributes’ is used broadly here and includes ‘key competences’ (Mayer, 1992), ‘employability skills’ (CBC, 1992), ‘transferable skills’ (Assiter, 1995), ‘generic attributes’ (Wright, 1995) and ‘key skills’ (Drew et al., 2002).

The indication that new graduates now face five or six career changes in their lifetime has caused some academics to take more account of the development of attributes as part of a shift from ‘content delivery’ to ‘capacity building’. For example, in this rapidly changing employment context, abilities in critical thinking, interpersonal skills, creativity, professionalism, problem solving and ethical attitudes become central to a responsible curricular approach at all levels of education. The speed of change and availability of information also provides an advantage to versatile individuals with the ability to apply their attributes to a variety of contexts and content domains.

Many academic departments have already been through the exercise of including attributes in curricula, with ‘boxes ticked’ to map them against learning objectives. However, whilst universities claim these attributes in describing their graduates, the educational changes required to validate such statements are slow to emerge;

Despite the lengthy history of the rhetoric of such policy claims, universities’ endeavours to describe generic attributes of graduates continue to lack a clear theoretical or conceptual base and are characterized by a plurality of view-points. Furthermore, despite extensive funding in some quarters,
overall, efforts to foster the development of generic attributes appear to have met with limited success’ (Barrie, 2004: 261).

Research indicates that mapping graduate attributes only to learning goals without integration in assessment criteria often results in “a representation of the teachers’ perspective and expectations, and may not be aligned with what the students both experience and perceive in terms of their development of graduate attributes” (Bath et al. 2004: 325).

Unfortunately, the resounding message from educational research that ‘assessment is the single most powerful influence on learning in formal courses’ (Boud, 2001:67), appears to have led to an increase in exams and their allocated percentage in curricula.

A serious approach to attribute development implies a reduction in the use of exams for a number of reasons (Thompson, 2006). An exam is an athletic event where the assessment method ‘drives’ the use of past papers and standardised answers as training devices. The knowledge ‘crammed’ has minimal retention and percentage marks and grades reveal nothing about the ongoing development of any of the graduates’ attributes.

The integration of attribute development across subject boundaries and throughout the stages of a student’s course of study is an important goal for higher education institutions. However, given that assessment drives learning, the achievement of this goal clearly relies upon explicit and visible links between assessment criteria and attribute development.

**Shakespeare’s ‘attributes’, a broad approach**

There are many opinions about the range of attributes that graduates need and few universities have made explicit the processes by which they are developed in a formal education context.

So which attributes should we attempt to assist students to develop? The approach underpinning this paper is that all formal educational activity is attribute related, including the construction of knowledge in the content areas of any particular discipline. In other words all criteria for assessment can be written and coded to the development of a range of attributes. For example whilst it is recognised that many exams are very poor vehicles for attribute development, they still develop attributes such as ‘the ability to reproduce memorised information within a time constraint’.

Shakespeare mentions ‘memory’ in his description of human attributes called the ‘five wits’ but he probably didn’t have in mind the memorising of past exam papers and reproduction of standard answers. His list of attributes:

1. Common sense;
2. Imagination;
3. Fantasy;
4. Estimation; and
5. Memory.

Common sense was defined as the outcome of the five senses working in collaboration; imagination was the “wit” of the mind; fantasy was defined as imagination united with judgment; estimation was to do with estimates of the absolute, such as time, space, locality, and so on; and memory was the “wit” of recalling past events.

The current plethora of exams would perhaps indicate that we are doing well with 4) and 5) but have forgotten about his first three (Thompson, 2006).

Closer to our time Edward DeBono suggested that everyone needs to develop their thinking attributes and suggested approaching problems using six ‘thinking’ skills cleverly explored in his book ‘Six Thinking Hats’ (DeBono, 1999).

The business world favours psychometric (personality) tests, often frowned upon in educational research contexts, but it is worth considering some of the more rigorous approaches. Particularly as the pressure on universities to produce employable graduates begins to include personal attributes. For example the modern equivalent of Shakespeare’s ‘five wits could be the ‘Big Five Inventory’ (Gosling, et al., 2003). This is a well supported taxonomy in psychometric research and is also known as the ‘Big Five Traits’ (for brevity the keywords in brackets have been derived from a number of lists and descriptions available in different texts:

- Openness to Experience (Creative, Versatile, divergent, lateral)
- Agreeableness (Warmth, Empathy, Sensitive communicators)
- Conscientiousness (Principled, careful, good self-regulation / self discipline)
- Extraversion (Active outgoing practical)
- Emotional Stability (emotions do not impact behaviour - research based)
Graduate employability is a key performance indicator increasingly applied to universities’ ‘output’ and the business world is becoming vocal in its criticism of graduates’ attributes. A study of design engineering graduates and their employers in the UK (Garner, Duckworth, 2000) revealed a deep dissatisfaction with graduate profiles. The employers’ criticisms included the following reflections about graduates:

- They need greater ability to take other people’s ideas on board.
- They have a lack of resilience to criticism.
- They have a weak ability to muster a reasoned defence of their contribution.
- They need to improve listening skills.
- They need higher-quality written, graphic, and verbal communication.
- They need to be able to be critical of their own work and contributions.

(Garner, Duckworth, 2000:208)

More recently, the need for action in the business education context is reflected in a report by the Business Council of Australia (BCA, 2006: 25). The report suggests that universities should be teaching critical thinking and ethical approaches together with the practical skills needed for employment. Further, the report suggests that such development become a core focus for both university undergraduate and postgraduate courses, noting:

Companies were concerned that education and training systems were not providing people with appropriate skills in areas that were increasingly vital in creating the type of workplace culture in which innovation thrives. In particular, a number of companies noted that management education was focussed on finance and marketing but was not providing graduates with the ‘soft’ skills such as teamwork, that enabled innovative use of these capabilities.

(BCA, 2006: 25).

This and other reports (AIG 2006: viii) send a strong message to universities that a broad range of transferable attributes are vital for young graduates entering a rapidly changing world of work.

However, the inertia surrounding these contexts is also compounded by the requirement on most academics in Australia to increase their research output, rather than focus on anything to do with teaching.

**Research Context and Methodology**

**Business Faculties building on a Design School strategy**

A grant of $203,000 was awarded in 2007 to a project team that included the four Associate Deans Teaching and Learning from the only business faculties in Australia with accreditation from the American Association of Colleges and Schools of Business (AACSB). The author is also a Project Leader for this grant and Director of Teaching and Learning for the School of Design at the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS). The project involves online criteria-based assessment software (ReView) designed by the author and implemented in the School of Design as part of a graduate attribute integration strategy.

The success of the approach taken in a design school context was the basis for the intention to develop a Business oriented graduate attribute integration process using ReView. There is ongoing evaluation and regular communication with partner institutions, a reference group and an international group that includes academics from the UK and the AACSB accrediting body.

In reference to the work of Rust, O'Donovan and Price (2005), the project employs a social constructivist approach whereby the acquisition of knowledge about assessment processes, criteria and standards is achieved via active engagement and participation by both students and Business educators.

The context of each of the four institutions involved in this study is very different with regard to the integration of attribute development and prior educational initiatives.

In order to delimit the scope of this paper, the evidence presented here is based on:

- the analysis of student pre and post surveys across all four institutions
- an initial analysis of students’ engagement with self assessment
- the early analysis of video interviews with academic coordinators and tutors involved with the project.

There is no attempt to describe the process by which faculties and departments or schools in the four institutions derived the categories of attributes used to code the assessment criteria for assignments or units of study.
Description of the ReView online system

ReView is a criteria-based assessment tool that assists staff in making explicit the assessment criteria aimed at the development of university selected 'attributes' across different subjects or units in a course of study. It also enables students to 'self-assess' their own work against those criteria and monitor their own development of the discipline-specific attribute categories. The following screen shot in Figure 1 shows a marking screen from a Faculty of Business subject after the student’s self assessment and the marker’s assessment against the criteria.

Figure 1 - Marker’s view of the marking screen from a Faculty of Business subject.
A: Selectable list of students (obscured here for ethics de-identification), B: Colour-coded symbols next to the criteria represent one of five attribute categories in this particular university example, C: Data ‘sliders’: The black line is the tutor’s slider. The turquoise triangles on the top edge of the data slider are from the students’ own self assessment (done prior to tutor marking and not visible until tutors have marked), D: ‘Total’ data slider: the black bar can be dragged causing the marks and bars on other criteria to move in proportion for benchmarking purposes.

Figure 2 - Students view of a screen portion showing the tutor’s feedback (broad translucent grey vertical bars on the grading scales) and the student’s own self-assessment (triangles above the grading scales). The student view does not display specific percentage numbers (however, these are visible in the lecturer/tutor view shown in Figure 1).

Figure 3 - A subject profile allows staff and students to understand more clearly a subject or unit of study breakdown of the assessment criteria in relation to the five attribute categories in this particular Business Faculty example: Communication and Interpersonal skills, Attitudes and Values, Business Planning and Practical Skills, Business Knowledge and Concepts, Critical Thinking and Analytical Skills. Pie charts can also display the attribute emphasis of individual tasks within the subject.
Features of the ReView system:
• Assessment criteria can be selected and edited from a database of graduate attribute categories. For each assessment task, additional assessment criteria can be added, coded by graduate attribute category, and thereby integrating them with graduate attribute criteria.
• ReView automatically generates online (and paper-based marking sheets if required).
• Click-and-drag ‘data-sliders’ automatically show marks for each criterion and calculate weighted totals for each task. Both granular judgments (through individual criteria) and holistic judgments are integrated using the ‘Total Slider’ (see Figure 1).
• Each criterion is colour coded to a graduate attribute category displayed for both tutors and students.
• Students can self-assess against the criteria with similar data-sliders and these self-assessments can be viewed together with the tutor’s grading.
• ReView is web-based, subject coordinators can see tutors’ marks and comments when they are entered (24x7) and can intervene before feedback is published.
• A ‘results profile’ displays a bar chart for tutors of each student’s progress in developing graduate attribute categories across the range of tasks and subjects entered.
• When the ‘Total’ data-slider is moved, it moves the individual sliders against each criterion and recalculates the task weighted marks, making it easy to alter marks whilst keeping the tutor’s assessment of each criterion.
• The students’ view of their marks is activated only when the subject coordinator clicks the ‘Publish Marks’ button.
• Students can view a pie chart of the attributes assessed in each task and subject as well as their own bar chart of progress against each graduate attribute category as reflected in their journey through different levels of a degree programme.

Findings
The following brief extracts of findings come from early analysis of surveys and video interviews across all four institutions in subjects or units that are using the ReView online system.

Table 1: Online Survey Questionnaire:
Q2a Do you think that the opportunity to assess your own work in this subject is important? (Prior to ReView implementation)

<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
<th>N</th>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1,502</td>
<td>89.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,684</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
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</table>

Students indicated by majority (47.8%) that the reason was to do with better understanding subject content, with 35.1% identifying the reason as self-improvement.

Table 2: Online Survey Questionnaire:
Q3a Have you heard of the term ‘graduate attributes’? (Prior to ReView implementation)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Graduate Attributes</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1,087</td>
<td>76.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,420</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 23.5% who had heard of the term half indicated that they thought that the term related directly to employability.

Student comments from a survey having used ReView in one 1st year subject
Positive comments:
• “The software was useful in encouraging me to critically analyse the quality and standard of work I had submitted. My final score in self-assessment was very similar to the actual score I received”.
• “I found it very useful to be aware of the specific attributes that graduates have to develop and the areas they have to be applied in.
• “Make it compulsory that all Tutors must use it!”.
• “Makes clearer what is required for a good mark and what results in a poor mark”.

Negative comments:
• “I saw I over-estimated the quality of my work. This was indicated to me visually. So what? How about a feedback comment for each of the criteria. A triangle here and a triangle there is not explicit feedback.”
• “We need to be able to see what the graduate attributes mean rather than just knowing that we’ve completed something which is related to one or all of them”
• “This is the first time I have heard anyone use Graduate Attribute Development and seen the categories - and I have attended all the lectures and tutes for this subject”.

Table 3: Paper-based survey analysis of three iterations of a single subject

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions relating to assessment and online engagement</th>
<th>2006 Pre-RevView</th>
<th>2007 ReView Pilot 1</th>
<th>2008 ReView Pilot 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q3. This unit of study helped me develop valuable graduate attributes (eg. research inquiry skills, communication skills, personal intellectual autonomy, ethical, social and professional understandings, information literacy etc.)</td>
<td>84.6%</td>
<td>81.8%</td>
<td>88.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8. Feedback on assessment assisted my learning in this unit of study</td>
<td>56.4%</td>
<td>73.8%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q10. Online learning (eg. with Blackboard) supported my learning in this unit of study</td>
<td>70.3%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>90.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In analysis of the data in Table 3 it should be noted that these data are provided by three different groups of students (stable at approximately 60 each year) so care needs to be exercised when making comparison between these scores. The subject is also not exactly the same in each year and there are broad ranges of factors that influence these data.
However, the figures show an increase across three iterations of an individual Unit of Study, using the three questions associated with assessment and graduate attributes. It should be noted that 80 - 90% ratings are considered high in these surveys. In a brief analysis of student comments from the USE survey, in 2007 there were 5 unsolicited positive comments about ReView and in 2008 there were 15. The negative comments went down from 6 to 4.

Student Self Assessment
The following data is drawn from early analyses about students’ engagement with self-assessment using the ReView software in one particular Economics subject.

It was not obligatory for students to do self-assessment, which they could do prior to handing in their assignment up to the time that their tutors’ marks were published. The following table gives an indication of the degree to which students underrated their performance against the stated criteria compared to the tutors’ allocated percentage marks:

Table 4: Analysis of students underrating of their own assignments against criteria

<table>
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<th>Criteria assessed by tutors:</th>
<th>Criteria self-assessed by students:</th>
<th>Criteria underrated by students:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2,440</td>
<td>1,870 (76.6%)</td>
<td>632 (33.7%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of students enrolled and completing a written assignment: N=244

In other data for Table 4, there were 24 (12.8%) students who self-assessed and gave themselves a High Distinction (a total mark between 85% and 100%). These figures imply that a majority of students are engaging with the criteria in a thoughtful manner. There is evidence now emerging that students who self assess on a second assignment are much closer to the tutor’s grading against criteria than in their first assignment.

The following comments are early notations from the research staff conducting video interviews and focus groups. The videos have not yet been transcribed and analysed but the comments reveal some interesting issues.

Positive comments:
Quote: “It has been the most enjoyable marking experience I have had in 15 years of teaching.”
• One of the best things about ReView is that it makes explicit that which was implicit in thinking about Learning Goals and writing criteria and aligning them with Graduate Attributes.
• Staff and their students, were more aware of graduate attributes as a result of their participation in this project, and would use ReView again.
• ReView provided detailed feedback that students read, independently of the process of collecting their marks.

Negative comments:
Quote: "How can students be expected to self-assess, when the teachers have different individual expectations for awarding HDs or Ds, C, etc."
• If ReView had spell-check, and a tool to weight the criteria separately/differently, and a larger comment box, it would be more likely to attract users.
• There are too many different online tools and students resented having to learn to use so many virtual bits and pieces (as do their teachers).
• ReView was not the ‘silver bullet’ they were hoping for.

Conclusions
Whilst the data is preliminary, there are some interesting issues raised. The origin of the project came from a successful approach to attribute development, using ReView in a School of Design, whereas this project is located in business faculties. A similar analysis of self assessment to the one published in this paper can be found in (Thompson, 2007), where design students underrated 46% of criteria. It is tempting to begin making comparisons between student cohorts in different faculties but the author’s reflection on this project to date is that there are hugely complex and interacting causes and effects, impossible to interpret from tables and percentages.

For example, the data on student self-assessment reveals a vast differential that is just as likely to be influenced by the teacher’s conceptions or a host of other factors. The student and staff comments relating to misunderstandings about the assessment process clearly point to a need for academics to include their tutors, and students, in a more thorough engagement, perhaps using the assessment criteria as a ‘fulcrum of engagement’.

An issue impacting the project was that the implementation of graduate attribute teaching and assessment had previously met with responses ranging from reluctance to resistance. Focusing on the negative aspects evident so far, it seems that student reluctance is based in their central focus on percentage marks or skills for entry to employment. Teacher resistance responses are, in part, related to the premise that the content of a subject and its assessment should be based only on discipline specific content. The assessment of ‘additional’ attributes is seen to be a distraction or unnecessary extra work. Lack of awareness about a program’s graduate attributes is also an issue. The ‘grass roots’ emergence of the ReView online system has in part happened because of a perceived timesaving aspect and the convenience of online marking for tutors, and coordinators of large subjects.

However, staff weariness with online systems is also evident from the video interviews and focus groups as a negative influence. This effect varies from institution to institution. For example at two of the universities involved in this study they each have two or three different logins and passwords for various university systems, and for security reasons these change every three months. It is vital that any new system conforms to the most ubiquitous authentication system, and if possible a ‘single sign-on’ system should be introduced.

In reviewing the comments to date, the process that the ReView software appears to catalyse is the making explicit that which is implicit through a more careful approach to the wording of assessment criteria and their colour-coding to attribute categories. It is important to note that software, as one of the participants quoted, is not a ‘silver bullet’ to solve all our problems. But whilst this could also be a paper-based process, the convenience associated with online marking and feedback seems to bring a fresh context that enables a new approach.

With regard to further phases of this project, there is no doubt that more work is needed. Weaning students off percentage marks to focus them on formative criteria-based feedback is no mean task but there are early signs that some business staff and students realise the value of this approach. The wording of criteria requires supporting concepts and the criteria stems database in ReView will be helpful in guiding staff toward appropriate language which matches the levels of learning and range of attributes that can be included.

In conclusion, the top-down assurance of learning related to Graduate Attributes needs to be met with a bottom-up explicit integration of it in assessment criteria. It would seem that a web-based system that facilitates this alignment through a clear visual interface carries enough benefits to outweigh the inertia that has plagued this particular emerging pedagogy.

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Sarah Wilson-Medhurst* & Peter Samuels* Activity Led Learning: Establishing a contemporary faculty-wide approach to Engineering and Computing education

*Coventry University, United Kingdom

Keywords: activity led learning pedagogy; communities of learners; employability

Short biography of author:

The authors are a Teaching Development Fellow and a Senior Research Fellow within the Faculty of Engineering and Computing at Coventry University.

Abstract:

Activity Led Learning (ALL) is a pedagogic approach in which the activity is the focal point of the learning experience and the teacher’s role shifts from provider of knowledge to facilitator. This presentation will explore the pedagogical, social and physical influences which have led to the working definition of ALL currently being used by a Faculty of Engineering and Computing.

The Faculty is committed to developing communities of learners through employer and profession focused, activity led education. The provision of a new building provides the Faculty with a unique opportunity to modernise its teaching, learning and assessment practices in a way that demonstrates greater leadership within the UK HE sector. The relationship between ALL and the design of social learning spaces (Oblinger, 2006; JISC, 2006) will be discussed.

The requirements which led to a definition of ALL will be described with particular reference to the need for softer skills in order to enhance graduate employability and professionalism (McCowan and Knapper 2002). The definition of ALL will be explained. The pedagogical theories relating to ALL will be discussed with particular reference to Social Constructivism epistemology (Matthews 1998), Activity Systems Theory (Engeström 1987), Experiential Learning (Kolb 1984), Problem-Based Learning (Merrill 2007) and Communities of Inquiry (Wenger 1999).

The pedagogical strategy for implementing the definition of ALL, in order to bring about positive change in the culture of teaching, learning and assessment within the Faculty will be explored. The evaluation of pilot projects which have used this approach will be discussed with particular reference to the key benefits anticipated by the use of the approach.

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