

Conference handbook

***Enhancing higher education
through research***

Friday 22 January 2010

**A research conference organised by
the Centre for Learning and Teaching
University of Brighton**

Checkland building
Falmer campus

2010 Pedagogic Research Conference: *Enhancing higher education through research*

Friday 22 January 2010

9.30 – 15.00

Registration opens 9.00

Outside Asa Briggs Hall, Level 1, Checkland building

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Welcome

This is the third conference in this series and we warmly welcome all participants.

The conference aims to provide a friendly, informal environment in which colleagues from the University and partner colleges can present research, discuss research matters and share their experience. We also hope the conference will encourage the development of pedagogic research.

We are delighted that Professor Glynis Cousin, who is Director of the Institute for Learning Enhancement at the University of Wolverhampton, has agreed to give the keynote address at the conference.

We hope all participants have a stimulating, enjoyable and fruitful day.

Adrian Chown (Chair, Conference Committee)

Conference Committee

Centre for Learning and Teaching

Ming Cheng

Adrian Chown

Samantha Cochrane

Juliet Eve

Jennie Jones

Catherine McConnell

Charlotte Morris

Pauline Ridley

Gina Wisker

Conference location

The conference will be held in the **Checkland building, Falmer**, although some sessions during the day will be located in nearby rooms in Mayfield House (opposite Checkland). There will be signs to direct you to and between buildings.



Rooms

C218, Level 2, Checkland building: Keynote
Asa Briggs Hall, Level 1, Checkland building, Plenary
A402, Level 4, Checkland building: Seminar sessions
A404, Level 4, Checkland building: Seminar sessions
M115, Mayfield House, Level 1: Seminar sessions

Conference Programme

9.00 – 9.25	Registration and refreshments <i>Outside Asa Briggs Hall, Level 1, Checkland</i>		
9.30	Welcome <i>Room C218, Level 2, Checkland</i>		
9.35-10.15	Professor Glynis Cousin, Wolverhampton University, Keynote: <i>Enhancing Higher Education Research</i> <i>Room C218, Level 2, Checkland</i>		
10.25 - 11.10 1st parallel session	Sue Greener: E-modelling? Helping learners to develop sound e-learning behaviours <i>Room A402, Level 4, Checkland</i> <i>CLT: JE</i>	Laura Cecil, Mike Hall, Linda Hurley: Exploring the backgrounds and experiences of new HE undergraduates in Hastings, aged 21+, from non-traditional learning backgrounds <i>Room M115, Mayfield</i> <i>CLT: CMc</i>	Lucy Jones, Zoe Swan, Juliet Turner: Reinvigorating law within other disciplines; A study from the perspectives of the Business student <i>Room A404, Level 4, Checkland</i> <i>CLT:</i>
11.10-11.25	Break and refreshments <i>Please go to the room of your next session (11.30-12.15 below) for tea & coffee</i>		
11.30-12.15 2nd parallel session	Chris Sweeney: Mapping without a SatNav: using a concept map to develop an understanding of qualitative data <i>Room A402, Level 4, Checkland</i> <i>CLT: JJ</i>	Gaynor Sadlo: Learning through problems: some perspectives from neuroscience <i>Room M115, Mayfield</i> <i>CLT: MC</i>	Joanna Macdonnell: Exploring the role of Aimhigher in encouraging progression to Higher Education <i>Room A404, Level 4, Checkland</i> <i>CLT: AC</i>
12.25-13.10 3rd parallel session	Katie Piatt: The Best of Both Worlds: studentcentral and Community; Comparing controlled and social platforms for acquiring knowledge <i>Room A402, Level 4 Checkland</i> <i>CLT: MC</i>	Peter Burns and Marina Novelli: Building capacity in tourism through knowledge exchange and cross-cultural interaction: values and experiences of field-based education <i>Room M115, Mayfield</i> <i>CLT: AC</i>	Angela Rogers: Using arts based strategies in generative research <i>Room A404, Level 4, Checkland</i> <i>CLT: RM</i>

13.10-13.50	Lunch <i>Outside Asa Briggs Hall, Level 1, Checkland</i>		
13.50-14.35 4 th parallel session	Gina Wisker: Articulate: online support and development for academic writing for publication <i>Room M115, Mayfield CLT: GW, JJ</i>	Darrell Evans and Stan Stanier: A Question of Competitive Quizzes – What Happens Next? Using an interactive TV quiz format as a model for a formative assessment strategy <i>Room A402, Level 4, Checkland CLT: JE</i>	Charlotte Ramage: Constructing learning in the workplace <i>Room A404, Level 4, Checkland CLT: AC</i>
14.45-14.50	Plenary <i>Asa Briggs Hall, Level 1, Checkland</i>		
14.50-15.05	Afternoon Tea <i>Outside Asa Briggs Hall, Level 1, Checkland</i>		
15.30	Close		

Keynote Address

Room C218, Level 2
Checkland building
9.35 - 10.15



Professor Glynis Cousin, University of Wolverhampton ***Enhancing Higher Education Research***

Abstract

This session will combine presentation with discussion to argue the case for intra- and cross-institution pedagogic research. I will firstly offer examples of practitioner-based research in order to illustrate its benefits and to explore what might constitute good quality higher education research that can make a difference to teaching and learning. I will suggest that we take seriously Seale's (1999:31) position that "research is a craft skill" that is "relatively autonomous from the need to resolve philosophical or epistemological debates" and open up a discussion as to what that might mean for practitioner-based research. Drawing on my book *Researching Learning in Higher Education*, I will offer for discussion a set of principles that could support our thinking about issues such as an ethical framework, trustworthiness, researcher reflexivity, intellectual underpinning and data presentation.

References

Cousin, G. (2009). *Researching Learning in Higher Education*. New York: Routledge.
Seale, (1999). *The Quality of Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.

Seminar sessions (including abstracts)

10.25 – 11.10

First parallel session

(1) E-modelling? Helping learners to develop sound e-learning behaviours

Sue Greener, Senior Lecturer, Brighton Business School

Introduction

The learning and teaching relationship, whether online or in the classroom, is changing. Mentis (2008) offers a typology of teacher roles gathered from current literature on e-learning including instructor, designer, guide, mediator, curator and mentor, which offer the university teacher a striking range of ways in which to develop relationships with students in the mutual development of knowledge and understanding.

Relation to learning, teaching, assessment

What teachers say and do in their face-to-face classes has always had a major impact on not only what is learned but also how it is learned. Bandura suggests that most human learning is done by observing and imitating others' behaviour (1977) provided the potential learner attends, can retain, reproduce and wants to do these things. If we aim to integrate at least the affordances of VLEs into teaching design for blended learning, one of our considerations must be how the teacher uses the VLE in front of the learner.

Context

There is no doubt that teachers are increasingly uploading materials and weblinks etc into VLEs to support learners (or are made to by institutional policy). However there is less evidence that teachers are role-modelling effective e-learning to their learners. Some of this is about competence, but it is rare for a teacher to lack the ability to learn basic technology use. More of this reluctance is about fear and anxiety, to be shown up as incompetent in class to what are considered the net generation.

Research process / methodology

This paper is based on a study of HE teachers in the UK involving grounded analysis and will explore the concepts and behaviours implied in the role-modelling of effective e-learning in the classroom, drawing on qualitative data from teachers and learners involved in using VLEs and other Web resources in face-to-face sessions.

Findings

The study proposes a shift in HE teachers' roles and behaviours concomitant with the explosion of VLE usage in universities (Greener 2008). This paper goes further and offers behaviours for online skills development in HE and suggestions for using the web pro-actively in class to role model learning rather than teaching and to fit the purposes of Higher Education.

Implications and transferability

Role modelling learning using technology in the classroom will be of interest across a number of subject disciplines where web resources can add value to debate for learning. Fundamentally this paper is about conceptions of teaching and learning.

Background references

Bandura, A. (1977). *Social Learning Theory*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall.
Greener, S. L. (2008). 'Identity crisis: who is teaching whom online?'. Paper presented at *European Conference on E-Learning (ECEL)*, 2009, Agia Napa, Cyprus.
Mentis, M. (2008). 'Navigating the e-Learning Terrain: Aligning Technology, Pedagogy and Context.' *The Electronic Journal of e-Learning*, 6 (3), 217-226.

(2) Exploring the backgrounds and experiences of new HE undergraduates in Hastings, aged 21+, from non-traditional learning backgrounds

Laura Cecil, Lecturer, Education

Mike Hall, Principal Lecturer, Applied Social Science

Linda Hurley, Senior Lecturer, Education

Introduction

This discussion will introduce the small research work (CLT-funded) we are undertaking as a team at the University Centre Hastings, using qualitative methods to explore the experiences of year 1 undergraduates, from non-traditional learning backgrounds, starting the degree in Applied Social Science.

Relation to learning, teaching, assessment

Exploring students' expectations, motivation, previous learning experiences and ongoing experiences, plus barriers and facilitators to learning.

Context

University Centre Hastings is a new centre that has been established in the last 4 years to address social and economic development within the area. Participants are current year 1 undergraduates now starting the degree in Applied Social Science.

Research process / methodology

Two rounds of 1:1, semi-structured life-histories interviews focusing on education and learning. Timings: first interviews took place within the first 2 weeks of the course start and the second round will take place at the end of the first semester, late January 2010.

Findings

Not yet identified but will have outline issues to present for discussion and feedback. Also, reflections on the process, to date.

Implications and transferability

Identifying ways to understand and facilitate people's transition into and learning within higher education, for support services, practitioners and learners, where appropriate. Implications are likely to be that more, in-depth research is needed, but initially there may be useful insights relating to information, advice, guidance

and support that could be disseminated to partners (e.g. Sussex Coast College that offers access courses from which many undergraduates progress into UCH), for learning support services and for the management and delivery of learning and teaching. This work also has implications for understanding how staff and learners act in and on what higher education is, as well as what constitutes educational 'good practice'.

Background references

These are some of the key texts that inform this inquiry:

Askham, P. (2008). 'Context and Identity: exploring adult learners' experiences of higher education.' *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 31 (1), 85-97.

Fuller, A. (2007). 'Midlife "transitions" to higher education: developing a multi-level explanation of increasing participation.' *Studies in the Education of Adults* 39 (2), 217-235.

Haggis, T. (2004). 'Meaning, Identity and "motivation" in HE: expanding what matters in understanding learning in higher education?'. *Studies in Higher Education*, 29 (3), 335-352.

Trotter, E. and Roberts, C. (2006). 'Enhancing the early student experience.' *Higher Education Research and Development*, 25 (4), 371-386.

(3) Reinvigorating law within other disciplines: A study from the perspective of the Business Student.

Lucy Jones, Principal Lecturer, Brighton Business School

Zoe Swan, Lecturer, Brighton Business School

Juliet Turner, Lecturer, Brighton Business School

Introduction

On numerous undergraduate degree programmes students are expected to undertake study of modules which are not perceived as 'core' to their studies. Law pervades many areas of study and there is an increasing need for students on a diverse range of courses to study aspects of the law. This session considers ongoing research into the study of law by undergraduate students on business courses. However, we believe the findings are relevant to students who study law on diverse other courses, and perhaps also to most students who are required to study aspects of a subject 'outside' the main focus of their degree.

This seminar/presentation will present the findings of the first stage of the research aimed at gaining a deeper understanding of student perceptions to the study of law.

Relation to learning, teaching, assessment

The research focuses on evaluation of the teaching and learning approaches when delivering a module outside of the student's main degree discipline. The research evaluates issues such as preferred learning styles and perceptions of law in relation to other modules within the student's degree programme.

Context

Writers such as Skwarok and Monseau have highlighted some of the issues that can arise when delivering a compulsory module such as law, to non-law students. However, the research being carried out at the University of Brighton represents a new and innovative look at the issues, using a starting point of the student's perception of the subject.

Research process / methodology

The research consists of a questionnaire survey undertaken by 231 first year business students **about** to begin the module. A second stage of the research, to be presented at a later date, then utilises focus group sessions and a post module questionnaire to reflect on the module throughout the year.

Findings

The findings have been illuminating. Whilst many writers have commented on students viewing a module such as law as distinct from a student's main discipline, students themselves come to the module interested in studying law and perceive it as an integrated part of their degree programme. The findings also explore issues such as preferred learning styles, motivation for studying their chosen degree, background knowledge of the module and perceptions of the module in comparison to others studied as part of the degree programme.

Implications and transferability

The findings from the first stage of this research project contain reflections that will be of use to all those teaching modules outside of the student's core degree programme.

Background references

Skawork, L. (year). *Business law for non-lawyers: setting the stage for teaching, learning and assessment at Hong Kong Polytechnic University*.

Monseau, S. (2005). 'Multi-layered assignments for teaching the complexity of law to business students'. *International Journal of Case Method Research and Application*, December 2005.

11.30 – 12.15
Second parallel session

(1) Mapping without a SatNav: using a concept map to develop an understanding of qualitative data

Chris Sweeney, Senior Lecturer, Education

Introduction

I propose to use the session to explore concept-mapping as part of a research method.

Relation to learning, teaching and assessment

As concept mapping can be used as part of both teaching and learning, the use of such maps to assist recall of learned information is very powerful. Used in conjunction with qualitative methods, mapping can provide an alternative method that leaves both a personal but also a permanent trace as a research resource. The map can be used as an aide-memoire when revising for any assessment, as it can be used also for data analysis within a methodology.

Research process/methodology

This will involve creating a map in real-time, showing how the process works. The ethical implications of this will then be discussed. Some of the background literature will then be discussed in order to demonstrate the history of using such maps for research purposes.

Findings

This will look at the practicalities of using such maps during a research process. How easy are these to use and understand? How well can the data be transferred from the map to the research notes? At what level does the analysis need to be carried out in order to make sense/use of the data gathered? Most importantly, how does the map play a part in advancing the research analysis?

Implications and transferability

Some of the implications include how well a concept map can be used on closed interviews and the management of such data. Transferability will focus on how easy it is to move data from one the map to the analysis.

Background references

- Cañas, A., Novak, J., et al. (2004). 'Uses of Concept Mapping in Teacher Education in Mathematics.' Paper presented at *First International Conference on Concept Mapping*, Pamplona, Spain.
- Machin, J., Varleys, J., et al. (2004). 'Exploring the use of concept chains to structure teacher trainees understanding of science.' *International Journal of Science Education*, 26, 1445-1475.
- Mavers, D., Somekh, B., et al. (2001). 'Interpreting the externalised images of pupils' conceptions of ICT: methods for the analysis of concept maps.' *Computers & Education*, 38 (1-3), 187-207.
- Mayer, R. E. (1979). 'Can Advance Organizers Influence Meaningful Learning?'. *Review of Educational Research*, 49 (2), 371-383.
- McAleese, R. (1998). 'The Knowledge Arena as an Extension to the Concept Map: Reflection in Action.' *Interactive Learning Environments* 6, 251-272.
- Miles, M. and Huberman, A. (1984). *Qualitative data analysis: a sourcebook of new methods*. Beverly Hills and London: Sage.

Novak, J. and Cañas, A. (2006). *The Theory Underlying Concept Maps and How to Construct Them*. Florida Institute for Human and Machine Cognition.

(2) Learning through problems: some perspectives from neuroscience

Gaynor Sadlo, Professor of Occupational Science, Health Professions

Abstract

Learning through problems was considered by the founders of PBL as a natural, effective way to learn for human beings (Barrows 1979). This theoretical paper begins to explore this hypothesis through the application of current understandings from neuroscience, using the history of ideas research methodology. The focus here is how PBL may facilitate development of what are now regarded as various forms of intelligence - cognitive (IQ), emotional, social, spiritual and heart intelligence. Recent theories of Mental Synthesis supports the use of subject integration to stimulate the formation of new concepts, which form when separate 'ensembles' of neurons (separate items of knowledge) become synchronised within the pre-frontal cortex. This learning may 'feel' difficult because learning occurs when new dendrites are formed, changing the structure of the brain through increasing the number of connections.

Collaborative learning in small groups is supported by emotional and social intelligence research. Emotional Contagion (empathy) activates Mirror and Spindle cells when students observe each others' feelings and reactions. The importance of a relaxed supportive atmosphere during PBL tutorials is supported by neuro-cardiology research: cognition is enhanced when stress is low because the heart sends more blood to the cortex. The emotional aspects of learning (mid-brain) can reign over logical decision-making (cortex) in terms of heightening motivation and effort in the group setting. PBL has the potential to help students identify their autonomic physiological responses to negative emotions they might feel in response to a problem, for these are 'felt' in the body. PBL effectiveness can indeed be explained through growing understanding of the neurology of learning. Brain imaging studies are being designed to reveal these effects more directly in relation to learning through problems.

(3) Exploring the role of Aimhigher in encouraging progression to Higher Education

Joanna Macdonnell, Lecturer, Arts and Media

Introduction

Aimhigher, the initiative to encourage participation in Higher Education by non traditional students, brokers a range of activities at University Centre Hastings for pupils from Years 9 – 13. A small scale research project is in progress to investigate whether the Aimhigher activities on offer to pupils from Hastings,

Rother and Eastbourne are influencing pupils' decisions to consider Higher Education as a realistic option.

Relation to learning, teaching, assessment

The HE experience offered to Aimhigher pupils at widening participation activities are critical to their understanding of HE, the discoveries made and myths explored form lasting opinions. Therefore as facilitators of Aimhigher activities how should we approach pupils with little understanding of University? How can we encourage progression to Higher Education through these activities?

Context

Longitudinal studies have been carried out by Aimhigher; the Universities within Sussex continually track the pupils in the Aimhigher programme's progression to Higher Education Institutes within Sussex. This study aims to discover which, if any, parts of the Aimhigher programme are influential in the decision making process of current and recent Aimhigher students and what, if any, other contributing factors are taken into consideration when making these choices.

Research process / methodology

The research is examining through narrative enquiry, case study and life story analysis the Aimhigher experiences of pupils from each of Years 10, 11, 12 and 13. Additionally Foundation Degree Students from levels 1 and 2, who themselves were Aimhigher pupils will form a focus group to discuss the influencing factors and their own reasons for progressing to Higher Education; this will be compared to the experiences of other 'non traditional' students who did not have the opportunity to participate in the Aimhigher initiative.

Findings

This seminar will explore the work to date. Personal professional experiences will also be used as vignettes to ground the research in a professional reality, with examples of media work produced during "Media Taster Days" used as an illustration of the content of some of the activities available to Aimhigher pupils from Hastings, Rother and Eastbourne and to demonstrate the possibilities of what is achievable in a few hours.

Implications and transferability

The research findings will inform and influence further Aimhigher offerings made by the Media Department at UCH. Discussion and dialogue will be welcomed at the conference to consider the implications of the findings across the university and its partner colleges.

Background references

Action on Access, (2009). Available at <http://www.actiononaccess.org>.

Hatt, S., Baxter, A., Tate, J. (2007) University of West England Measuring Progress: an Evaluative Study of Aimhigher South West 2003 - 2006 *Higher Education Quarterly*, 61 (3), 284 - 305.

'House of Commons Public Accounts Committee', (2009). *Widening Participation in Higher Education Fourth Report of Session 2008-09*. London: The Stationery Office Ltd.

Thomas, L. (2001). *Widening Participation in Post Compulsory Education*. London: Continuum.

12.25 – 13.10
Third parallel session

**(1) The Best of Both Worlds: studentcentral and Community;
Comparing controlled and social platforms for acquiring
knowledge**

**Katie Piatt, Senior Learning Technologies Developer, Information
Services**

Introduction

Social platforms, such as Community@Brighton, Facebook and Twitter provide new models for knowledge acquisition, separate from traditional learning platforms such as studentcentral. This ongoing research attempts to compare and model the differences in the ways students acquire knowledge between these structured and collaborative learning environments.

Relation to learning, teaching, assessment

Looking at the benefits that traditional learning environment models such as Blackboard offer and comparing with those of social networking models with a view to inform tutors to make effective choices of/or combinations of tools.

Context

At the University of Brighton we work on ways to maintain the structured and controlled course management system of Blackboard but to seamlessly integrate other tools and services into that framework as painlessly for users as possible. The primary way we help offer a choice between Blackboard and social networking is the provision of our integrated university social networking platform, Community@Brighton (based on Elgg).

Research process / methodology

The particular research I'd like to focus on in the session is the development of a physical analogy for the two kinds of models under discussion. Participants will be encouraged to engage and discuss this, with a view to find a way to best inform colleagues of the implications of the changes these new models can bring to their teaching.

Implications and transferability

The paradigm of learning environments is changing, and this work aims to help tutors make sense of where we are to make the best use of the technology available and the needs of their students for the future.

Background references

An overview of Connectivism:

Weller, Martin. (year). 'Using learning environments as a metaphor for educational change'. *On the Horizon* 17 (3), 181-189.

(2) Building capacity in tourism through knowledge exchange and cross-cultural interaction: values and experiences of field-based education

Peter Burns, Professor of Tourism and Development, Service Management

Marina Novelli, Principal Lecturer, Service Management

Introduction

Tourism acts as a metaphor for the complex relationship between the Majority World and, through three key issues of wealth creation, growth, and redistribution, the rich tourist generating countries. It has long been acknowledged that this relationship is symbiotic, but symbiosis does not necessarily deliver equitableness.

Relation to learning, teaching, assessment

The present paper examines ways in which personal values and attitudes can change as a result of knowledge exchange and cross-cultural interaction through a form of philanthropy. The empirical work is based on UK student fieldtrips to The Gambia as part of an innovative blended learning approach to teaching tourism's socio-economic impacts.

Context

The driving vision behind the fieldtrip was that if the exchange (in its cultural as well as pragmatic, literal sense) was to be less of a benefice and more of a benefit, then values, cross-cultural interaction, innovation, and knowledge exchange have key roles to play in ensuring an activity that left more than just footprints or that simply satisfied the educational needs of students from the rich North.

Research process / methodology

The fieldwork was developed in collaboration with a local organisation – the Association of Small Scale Enterprises (ASSET) – and local students were invited to participate in the module thus presenting an opportunity for cross-cultural exchange outside the normal framework of commercial hospitality. The data was gathered from students through pre-fieldwork questionnaires, end of module questionnaires, reflective statements, and focus groups for two sets of outbound students.

Findings

It was found that not only individual attitudes and behaviour changed, but also the values and strategies of the responsible university department.

Implications and transferability

The paper presents findings about expectations and experiences and the value of experiential learning for both the UK students and The Gambian participants which can be of use to a number of disciplines where fieldwork is an essential component

Background references

Anderson, D., Lucas, K., Ginns, I. (2003). 'Theoretical Perspectives on Learning in an Informal Setting'. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching* 40 (2), 177-199.

Atyeo, H. (1939). *The Excursion as a Teaching Technique*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Jung, B., Tryssenaar, J. (1998). 'Supervising Students: Exploring the Experience Through Reflective Journals'. *Occupational Therapy International*, 5 (1), 34-47.

- Lisowski, M., Disiner, J. (1987). 'Cognitive Learning in the Environment'. *Environment Education Digest No. 1*. www.ericdigest.org/pre-927/secondary.htm. Accessed 1.11.09.
- Orion, N., Hofstein, A. (1994). 'Factors that Influence Learning During a Scientific Field Trip in a Natural Environment'. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching* 31 (10), 1097-1119.
- Raths, L. (1939). 'Some Evaluations of the Trip'. *Educational Research Bulletin* 17, 198-208.
- Riggs, E. (2004). 'Field-Based Education and Indigenous Knowledge: Essential Components of Geoscience Education for Native American Communities'. *Culture and Comparative Studies*. Published online www.interscience.wiley.com, 296-313. Accessed 30.10.09.
- Schellhammer, F. (1935). 'The Field Trip in Biology'. *School Science and Mathematics* 35, 170-173.
- Smith, V. (ed.) (1989). *Hosts and Guests: the Anthropology of Tourism* (2nd edition), Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Sorrentino, A., Bell, P. (1970). 'A Comparison of Attributed Values with Empirically Determined Values of Secondary School Science Field Trips'. *Science and Education* 54 (3), 233-236.
- Wright, S., Suchet-Pearson, S., Lloyd, K. (2007). 'An Interwoven Learning Exchange: Transforming Research-Teaching Relationships in the Top End'. *Northern Australia. Geographical Research* 45 (2), 150-157.
- Xie, P. (2004). 'Tourism Field Trips: students' views of experiential learning'. *Tourism Review International*, 8 (2), 101-111.

(3) Using arts based strategies in generative research

Angela Rogers, Research Fellow, Creativity Centre, InQbate CETL

Introduction

The session will present the case for arts based strategies, including collaborating with artists, as generative research tools and demonstrate the use of a soundscape in an ongoing research project looking at creativity in learning and teaching.

Relation to learning, teaching, assessment

The research project is in the early stages of an attempt to elicit concepts of creativity - in learning, teaching and professional practice - from university lecturers involved in professional courses e.g. nursing and midwifery, pharmacy, education etc.

Context

There are a number of factors in the current drive for creativity in higher education in the UK when, possibly for the first time, we are preparing students for a life about which we can make very few predictions. There is however, little consensus about what this means for students and teachers. The Creativity Centre is a partner in an ESRC research network looking at creativity in professional practice in the context of higher education.

Research process / methodology

Teachers from the SN&M and PABS have been interviewed about their conceptions of a creative professional, a creative teacher and a creative learner. Statements from these interviews will be recorded by artists and put together as a soundscape (on December 7th) for members of the ESRC network and the original interviewees. Their responses combined with their contributions to a

collaborative concept map will provide the basis for the next stage of the research.

Findings

The findings so far indicate that conceptions of creativity are largely still associated with the arts and therefore thought to require particular skills from teachers. Notions of creativity, initiative and academic achievement are conflated in relation to students. Teachers note a contradiction in the demand for creative professionals and the constraints of the professional curriculum.

Implications and transferability

These methods are relevant and widely applicable across all areas of the university.

Background references

Banaji, S. and Burn, A. (2006). *Rhetorics of Creativity: A review of the literature*. London: Creative Partnerships and the Arts Council of England.

Barrett, E. and Bolt, B. (Eds.). (2007). *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry*. Melbourne: I.B Taurus.

Knowles, G. and Cole, L. (2008). *Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research: Perspectives, methodologies, examples and issues*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

13.50 – 14.35
Fourth parallel session

(1) Articulate: online support and development for academic writing for publication

Gina Wisker, Professor of Higher Education & Contemporary Literature, Centre for Learning and Teaching
Jennie Jones, Research Officer, Centre for Learning and Teaching

Introduction

Writing can be an isolated process and academic writers frequently experience challenges to their maintenance of momentum, quality of writing, and sense of community. This paper reports on early research into the specific effectiveness of Web 2.0 and other technology supported writing development for academic publication for postgraduates and academic staff, suggesting that some specific writing capabilities can be supported through Web 2.0 and other technology supported opportunities, writers can be 'nudged' across conceptual thresholds into good writing, and that research communities can be built and nurtured through such practices. Early action research reported here involves email based interviewing, blog posts and other qualitative journaling responses and has accompanied the delivery of a writing for academic publication master's module at the University of Brighton, support for international PhD students studying at a distance and online CPD for educational developers.

Relation to learning, teaching, assessment

Quality writing involves raising conceptual levels of written engagement with, and articulation of, ideas and arguments, developmental reflection, organisation and presentation. Successful production of academic writing for qualification, internal consumption and publication enables knowledge building, peer support and sharing, helping build research communities. Academic literacies at the postgraduate and professional levels require further development in the context of increasing need to craft academic writing in dialogue with experts, articulate critical, conceptual thoughts and arguments in a research context, develop a writer's voice and overcome 'stuck' places in the writing process. This project draws on literature for these areas - Digital Literacies in Higher Education (Lea, 2007 - 2009) exploring effects of blended e-learning on students' literacy. Previous research which explores effects of e-learning on literacy (Kress, 2003), and on students' academic writing courses (Goodfellow, 2006; McVey, 2008; Peretz, 2005). These new literacies develop in dialogue - and sometimes conflict - with existing literacy and pedagogic practices. Conceptual threshold crossing theory (Kiley and Wisker 2008, 2009) helps identify moments of perceived transformation of writing processes.

Skills and confidence using Web 2.0 technologies, online learning and teaching are proving useful to the development of writing skills and research community building, and need developing further to stimulate and critically accompany learning. This is particularly so for ways in which they offer familiar but transformed, new and unfamiliar ways to support and encourage academic writing development. These technologies enable desirable practices (Gilster, 1997; Tapscott, 1998; Eshet-Alkalai, 2004; 2005; Duffy, Peter and Bruns, Axel, 2006)

Context

There is increased sector pressure for postgraduate qualifications, academic publication, and research community building, leading to a focus on developing the quality of postgraduate, professional and academic staff writing.

Research process / methodology

This is a pilot study in three contexts exploring a continuum of forms of support and writing practices and using conceptual threshold crossing theory to identify moments of perceived transformation of writing processes. It reports on early research into the specific effectiveness of Web 2.0 and other technology supported writing development for academic publication for postgraduates and academic staff. Early research involves email based interviewing, blog posts, qualitative journaling responses, and examination of textual dialoguing between those engaged in the writing process and those tutoring. It has accompanied the delivery of a writing for academic publication master's module at the University of Brighton, support for international PhD students studying at a distance, and the delivery of a CPD course for educational developers.

Findings

Findings to date indicate a continuum of developmental support through online and e-learning practices suggesting that some specific writing capabilities can be enabled through Web 2.0 and other technology supported opportunities, and that research communities can be built and nurtured.

Implications and transferability

This early work is part of a larger planned project. Articulate explores experiences of postgraduates, academic staff and educational developers as they encounter and respond to demands of writing for qualification and publication. It provides academic writing support, initially through further development of Brighton University's Web 2.0 technologies, community@brighton and studentcentral, as well as the development of textual dialoguing for formative development, enhancing technology skills of postgraduates, academic staff and educational developers through interactive processes (blogging, critical friends, joint writing) enabling writing development. Action research reinforces effective learning (in e-learning, Web 2.0 technologies, academic writing for publication) and draws good practice from across the sector.

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(2) A Question of Competitive Quizzes – What Happens Next? Using an interactive TV quiz format as a model for a formative assessment strategy

**Darrell Evans, Professor, Brighton and Sussex Medical School
Stan Stanier, Learning Technologies Group Manager, Information
Services**

Assessment has been shown to motivate student learning with formative assessment playing a key part in guiding students' abilities to direct their own studies and encouraging a deeper approach to learning. Many methodologies have been used in higher education to ensure students have access to a variety of formative assessment opportunities. Since its inception BSMS has been keen to integrate numerous opportunities for students to continually monitor and challenge their learning and our experience suggests that when students are comfortable with the question format they relax and their knowledge and understanding is able to be demonstrated. As students are highly familiar with many of the quiz formats on television and websites, we have used this style of approach in the anatomy teaching and received positive feedback from students. We have now, in collaboration with colleagues in LTG, taken these developments a stage further in order to introduce increased levels of interaction by designing an online quiz package that focuses on TV quiz formats to ask anatomically-related questions. In view of the success of the never ending quiz (NEQ) on studentcentral, we have blended a competitive element into the quiz whereby we use league tables of individuals and teams alongside each quiz, thereby hopefully, enhancing participation through competition between tutor groups. A database containing a large number of images has now been developed and the delivery interface has been put in place. The quiz has been released via studentcentral to first year medical students and its use is being tracked. We are using a multiple approach to the analysis of the research including questionnaires, focus group and student achievement. Overall the aim has not simply been to develop one quiz system and provide a "leader board" interface, but to build a service that can be used across subjects as well as across institutions where appropriate.

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(3) Constructing learning in the workplace

Charlotte Ramage, Principal Lecturer, Nursing and Midwifery

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to present the findings of a small scale study, part funded by the University of Brighton CLT, exploring the experience of nurses learning in clinical practice through the use of work-based learning.

Relation to learning, teaching, assessment

The following questions influenced the direction of enquiry:

- Is there a learner profile that explains differences in how learners manage their learning through work-based learning?
- How do learners construct their practice knowledge in the workplace?
- What kinds of knowledge and skills are developed through work-based learning?
- How does work-based learning compare with traditional modes of study from the perspective of the learner?
- What models of mentorship facilitate / hinder learning through work-based learning?

Context

Higher education institutions have recognised the shift in positioning of education from exclusive delivery in the university to include training and development in the workplace and responded to these new challenges by developing flexible modes of learning that encourage collaborative working between 'industry' and the university. Work-based learning is one of the ways in which universities respond to the workplace discourse on flexible workforce needs (Zamblyas 2006) through the provision of a flexible structure for the accreditation of learning through work. How and what individuals learn through work, though, remains an area that is little researched (Nixon 2008). This study attempts to add to this body of knowledge.

Research process / methodology

The paper reports on the findings from an ongoing case study exploring the experience of learning in the workplace through the use of work-based learning. In part 1 the experiences of the educational adviser in supporting work-based learning was explored and reported in (Ramage 2006). Part 2, reported here, involved the exploration of the experience of the learner learning through work.

Descriptive data was collected through in-depth face to face interviews. The interviews were recorded and the data transcribed verbatim and analysed using the grounded theory analytical techniques of constant comparison. The sample included 3 work-based mentors and 8 practitioners enrolled on work-based modules.

Findings / Implications and transferability

The findings reveal significant data on the problematic tensions arising from nurses endeavouring to learn and work in the workplace. The learners describe the process of constructing their knowledge in the workplace that clearly reflects constructivist theory and builds on Kolb's reflective cycle with an additional component that includes the dissemination of knowledge and skills. This finding was strongly indicative of growing self confidence in their knowledge base and professional competence which included enhanced interpersonal competence through greater networking skills and collaborative working with other professional disciplines. Knowledge and skills were deeply learnt and there was evidence of transferability in the narratives shared about how they wished to continue their development and what kinds of opportunities they had grasped since completing their work-based module. The significance of the work-based mentor is profoundly felt and had consequences for the progress of the learning when the role was neglected or difficult to access. This supports the work of Billet (1996) and Miller and Blackburn (2004). The data gathered from the learners revealed several categories: the impact of work on the construction of learning, the construction of practice knowledge through work-based learning, the construction of new ways of being in practice and a core category constructing learning through work-based learning. This latter category revealed a social process of 'Becoming an intentional learner' which reflected a transitional experience from passive to proactive learner in the workplace. This category will be reported in this presentation. The core category addresses the expectations the learner had of the learning experience and how they managed the various stages in development of their learning through identification of their learning needs, searching for the knowledge to underpin and defend their practice, constructing a learning space in the workplace and the ways in which they realised their learning and came to believe in the learning process and their capacity to manage their own learning.

The session will be discursive to encourage dialogue on the applicability, relevance and usefulness of the findings to participants representing a range of disciplines.

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Poster

Displayed in Asa Briggs Hall area

A Work-in-Progress Survey of Student Creative Process Documentation (Workbooks/Sketchbooks/Journals etc.) in the field of Photography/Art & Design Education across FE & HE.

**Claire Scanlon, Lecturer, Art Design & Media, Northbrook College
Paul Grivell, Course Leader, Art Design & Media, Northbrook College**

Abstract

This CLT funded research project aims to develop a better understanding of the student experience of transition between levels in FE/HE through comparison of their creative processes documentation in (course prescribed) formats such as journals, sketchbooks and workbooks (or their equivalent) across pre-degree and undergraduate Photography courses in the field of Art & Design.

In sampling a range of student approaches employed across a diversity of level 3 and level 4 programmes the survey aims to critically frame prescribed approaches in the context of seeking to enable and enhance student creativity.

Alongside photographic documentation of student approaches (in the form of sketchbooks, journals, workbooks etc), students are invited to engage in a discussion about their understandings of the role of documentation approaches they routinely employ. This dialogue is supported by a structuring questionnaire framing the debate and offering written responses. In addition audio recordings supplement the written and visual documentation of the sessions. This material is to be collated and archived prior to analysis.

At this point in the research we are gathering this data.

The poster will evidence work in progress, indicating initial findings/ directions/ tendencies.

Important information

Contacts on the day: Adrian Chown, Samantha Cochrane, Tracy Kellock (Centre for Learning and Teaching, M104, Mayfield House, Falmer)

Office contacts: Alison Curry, Rebecca Wells (CLT office 01273 643115)

The conference will close at 3.30pm and no conference or office staff will be available after this time.

Weather and travel issues: In the event of severe weather, it is important to check with the conference organisers whether they advise travel to the Falmer site. Please email S.L.Cochrane@brighton.ac.uk and A.J.Curry@brighton.ac.uk from 7a.m. on the morning of the conference or phone the CLT office from 8.30am onwards on 01273 643115.

Parking and Falmer site contact: FalmerParking@brighton.ac.uk,
Tel: 01273 643545

Lost property: Email S.L.Cochrane@brighton.ac.uk