First Research and Scholarship in College Higher Education Conference
Papers, Presentations and Posters
Organised by the Scholarship Project 24 June 2015

Edited by John Lea
March 2016
First Research and Scholarship in College Higher Education Conference
Papers, Presentations and Posters
Organised by the Scholarship Project 24 June 2015

Edited by John Lea
March 2016
Contents

1 Foreword.................................................................................................................................5
2 Editorial ...................................................................................................................................6
3 Articles ....................................................................................................................................8

3.1 Scholarship and national security: enhancing cyber security teaching in college higher education
Jonathan Eaton, Newcastle College ......................................................................................... 8

3.2 Developing frameworks to promote scholarship as a means of supporting teaching quality and effectiveness: a case study from within and across institutions
Laura Hills, The Open University, Deborah Meakin, Hull College Group ........................... 15

3.3 Engaging those employers
Liz Knight and Leila Mars, Peterborough Regional College ................................................. 22

3.4 scholarNet – capturing and recording scholarly activity
Deb Swift and Peter Greenall, Blackpool and The Fylde College ........................................ 32

3.5 What are the motivators or barriers that affect further education lecturers’ engagement with continuing professional development?
Samantha Jones, Bedford College ............................................................................................. 42

3.6 Integrating research meaningfully into the student learning experience
Cathy Schofield, HE lecturer in Psychology, Truro and Penwith College ............................... 50

3.7 Fostering an institutional scholarly culture: a case study from Newcastle College
Jonathan Eaton and Laura Gower, Newcastle College ........................................................... 56

3.8 Mending the gap in professional education.
Helen Casey, New College Durham ............................................................................................ 62

3.9 Sector agency case study - Teaching with moving image resources: a scholarly approach in further education
Alex Morris, Learning On Screen - British Universities Film & Video Council ...................... 69

4 Extended Abstracts .................................................................................................................. 78

4.1 North East College Regional Scholarship Network
Richard Hodgson, New College Durham, on behalf of the North East College Regional Scholarship Network .......................................................................................................................... 78

4.2 Towards a curriculum for teaching research skills and methodology at undergraduate level and developing student-led research
Alex Day, Peter Symonds College .............................................................................................. 81

4.3 A study of UK policy and Singaporean practice in tertiary arts education, with special reference to creative skill development relevant for the digital industries
Dr Andrew Gower, Principal, Morley College ........................................................................... 85

4.4 Oxbridge Open Delivery Model: allowing scholarship to thrive in college higher education
Susie Kentell, Blackpool and The Fylde College ..................................................................... 88

4.5 From Heifer so Lonely to Flightless Bats in New Zealand: a perspective on collaborative research approaches at a land-based college
Dr James Littlemore and Dr Wanda McCormick, Moulton College ..................................... 93

4.6 Project management for creatives: when the project is your life
John Fitzsimons, Exeter College ............................................................................................... 96

4.7 Towards a regional higher skills policy
Ben Verinder, Chalkstream Communications on behalf of London Capital Colleges .......... 100

4.8 Organic staff - student collaboration
Chris Rowley and Steve Johnstone, North Lindsey College ................................................ 103

5 Posters.................................................................................................................................... 105

5.1 ‘Higher Teaching, Higher Practice’: Developing the Excellent HE Lecturer
Dr Tanya Carey and Dr Richard Pearce, Warwickshire College Groups .............................. 106

5.2 Developing a Higher Education Infrastructure to Support Teaching & Learning
Dr Ann Coterill and Tom Evershed ......................................................................................... 107

5.3 Game Changing: teaching to achieve high performance learning in the context of college based higher education
Steven Raven, Warwickshire College Groups ........................................................................... 108

5.4 Lesson Observations Designed for college based higher education
Dr Tanya Carey, Dr Richard Pearce, Thea Philcox, Helen Kinghorn ..................................... 109
Further education colleges in the UK have been consistently providing higher education opportunities for students throughout the post-war period. There are many reasons for this, including providing widening opportunities for ‘hard to reach’ students, often located in higher education ‘cold spots’ around the country. Many of the courses are also professional and technical in nature, aimed at providing local companies with an appropriately highly skilled local workforce.

In March 2015 the Association of Colleges, working alongside the Higher Education Academy, the Quality Assurance Agency, and the National Union of Students, was successful in bidding for catalyst funds from the Higher Education Funding Council for England for a project aimed at strengthening the profile of professional and technical higher education provided by English further education colleges. This quickly became known as the Scholarship Project.

I am very pleased to be able to present to you this collection of papers, presentations and posters originating from the College Higher Education Research and Scholarship Conference held in London on 24 June 2015. This was the first national event organised by the Scholarship Project, which attracted more than 100 delegates and included presentations and posters from across the range of college higher education provision in the UK.

The Association of Colleges was proud to sponsor the event and in the process provide an opportunity for those working in college higher education to both showcase their work and provide a forum to debate and discuss their on-going scholarly activity. It was clear from the delegate feedback that the event contributed enormously to the development of a thriving community of research and scholarly practice. This publication aims to continue that work by bringing together in written form a cross-section of some of the work presented at the conference.

I hope you enjoy it and that it continues to fuel debate and scholarship.

Martin Doel CBE, Chief Executive, Association of Colleges
Non-university based higher education (HE) may be small as a percentage of the total HE provision in the UK (around 10%), but it is not unimportant. It is certainly significant in providing local students (many of whom will be ‘non-traditional’ and ‘first generation’) with opportunities to access HE courses that they might otherwise not avail themselves of. And it is certainly significant for the colleges when working in partnership with local companies to help supply them with a highly skilled workforce. It has not been without its detractors, however, who often point to the fact that a further education college (FE) environment is unlikely to be able to provide a sufficient HE ethos or culture. This issue was succinctly conveyed in a workshop I was running a few years ago by one of the participants (an FE lecturer who was undertaking a small amount of HE teaching in her college), who commented that her most difficult task was in trying to capture a distinct sense of HEness – which prompted me to explore this idea in more detail (Lea and Simmons, 2012).

The Scholarship Project continues this work by exploring the various ways in which the word ‘scholarship’ can be put to work in helping to capture that sense of HEness. In the first few months of the project several things have already become abundantly clear. Chief among these is that the word scholarship has no single meaning, and that far from this being a problem, it should be welcomed; welcomed as a means to celebrate the enormous range of exciting and often very innovative work being undertaken by lecturers, students and employers in college settings. Allied to this seems to be a certain amount of disquiet about the idea that what colleges need to do to capture HEness is try to emulate the research-intensive universities. Apart from this being nigh on impossible for many colleges (indeed, for many universities), in contrast to this view, there seems to be growing confidence that what colleges do can be both robustly scholarly but also distinct.

The first College Higher Education Research and Scholarship Conference (June 2015) provided a national platform to showcase some of this distinct HEness. And it has been a pleasure to edit this volume, which brings together some of the work which was presented. The first section includes nine articles where the authors have expanded on the ideas they presented in the conference workshops. The range is enormous, including a discussion by Jonathan Eaton from Newcastle College on how the concept of ‘Student as Producer’ (Neary and Winn, 2009) has been utilised on courses offered at his college; a demonstration from Liz Knight and Leila Mars on how Peterborough Regional College has been successfully working in scholarly ways with local employers; and a discussion by Sam Jones from Bedford College on issues surrounding continuing professional development for both FE and HE teachers in college settings.

The second and third sections contain shorter pieces which showcase some examples of ongoing work. In these cases the authors were limited to around 1,000 words (for the second section), or the reproduction of a poster presentation (for the third section). Once again the range is enormous, including a short report from Richard Hodgson on the establishment of a North East regional scholarship network among three colleges; a discussion by Jonathan Fitzsimons from Exeter College on the need for project management skills for students studying on creative courses; and a poster presentation of a lesson observation scheme from colleagues at Warwickshire College Group.
This is the first of what I hope will become an annual publication and I invite readers to consider contributing to future volumes. You can do this by looking out for the call for papers for the Scholarship Project research and scholarship conferences, which will be held in June each year.

References


Acknowledgements
I am extremely grateful for the enthusiastic way in which the authors of the various pieces in this volume engaged with me to bring all this work together and for keeping to the deadlines set. I am also grateful to Lizzy Willmington and Tahmina Begum from Association of Colleges for working diligently on the layout and presentation, and in providing a workable timetable for the completion of the project. I am also extremely grateful to Helen Galley, who undertook the proofreading and checked the referencing, and to Nick Davy, for suggesting the idea in the first place and for his continuous support throughout the process of putting this volume together.

John Lea, Scholarship Project Research Director, February 2016
3.1 Scholarship and national security: enhancing cyber security teaching in college-based higher education

JONATHAN EATON, NEWCASTLE COLLEGE

Background

Cyber attacks remain a Tier 1 national security threat in the United Kingdom. As leading providers of technical higher education (HE), colleges have a key role to play in developing the next generation of cyber security experts. Newcastle College undertook a pedagogic enhancement project funded by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the Higher Education Academy (HEA) to further develop their FdSc Cyber Security programme through piloting new approaches to deep industry engagement and staff development.

The project aimed to develop a model of foundation degree students acting as agents of knowledge exchange at the interface between academia and industry through working with sector practitioners and experts. Students also served as co-developers and co-deliverers of outreach workshops within an inclusive academic community. Engagement with industry partners provided opportunities for staff to maintain the currency of their technical skills through structured placements and development opportunities.

Introduction

In recent years, the relationship between the education sector and the national security agenda has grown increasingly close, whether in terms of training, research or counter-radicalisation (Gearon, 2015; HM Government, 2015). This natural synergy offers an opportunity for colleges to align their curriculum and scholarly ambitions to support an area of national strategic importance.

This paper presents an overview of a project developed at Newcastle College from December 2014, which sought to reinvigorate teaching and learning in cyber security and, in doing so, to support the National Cyber Security Strategy and deliver meaningful outcomes for students. The project has broader applicability for other curriculum areas in terms of innovative pedagogic practices and employer engagement.

Context

In 2010, the threat of hostile cyber-attack on the UK was rated as a Tier 1 threat to national security. Tier 1 threats are defined as “risks [considered] to be those of highest priority for UK national security looking ahead, taking account of both likelihood and impact” (HM Government, 2010: 27). The UK National Cyber Security Strategy, published in 2014, advocated the Government’s desire to position the UK as a secure location for pursuing...
business opportunities in cyberspace. In doing so, it recognised the need to build resilience against cyber attacks and ensure relevant education and training opportunities were delivered to strengthen the capacity of the sector (Cabinet Office, 2011). This ambition can only be realised through close working between law enforcement, intelligence agencies, businesses and education providers.

A recent update on the progress of strategy implementation notes that the UK is currently on target to exceed £2 billion of cyber security exports by 2016 (Cabinet Office, 2014: 8). The growth of the cyber security sector therefore contributes to both defending our national interests from hostile attack and driving economic growth and prosperity. There is a clear role to play for college HE providers in ensuring that the next generation of cyber security graduates possess the relevant skills and attributes to contribute productively to the ever-changing cyber landscape.

Active cyber security learning in a vocational HE context

In 2014, Newcastle College successfully won funding from BIS and HEA for an innovative project to enhance teaching and learning on the FdSc Cyber Security programme. The implications of this project have significant implications for the ongoing debate around the nature of research and scholarship within a college setting (Healey, Jenkins and Lea, 2014; Eaton, 2015). The FdSc Cyber Security programme was launched by the Digital Skills Academy at Newcastle College in September 2014. It was created as a response to industry and student feedback around the relevance of computer forensics programmes, and an awareness by staff of the employment opportunities afforded to graduates within the booming cyber security sector.

Entitled Active Cyber Security Learning in a Vocational HE Context, the project sought to rediscover the often overlooked revolutionary concept of the foundation degree by repositioning an existing programme at the interface between academia and industry (Quality Assurance Agency, 2010). The design of the project recognised that a truly valuable foundation degree relies upon the industry currency of curriculum content and delivery, which is inextricably linked to the expertise of academic staff. This is particularly pertinent in the case of technical disciplines where industry practice is in a constant state of evolution and change. Emerging concerns around the attributes and employability of science, technology, engineering and maths graduates also shaped the project concept. A recent report on the need for graduates who possessed the appropriate professional skillsets to thrive within specific technical job roles which do not yet exist was particularly influential (Medhat, 2014). Feedback from local and regional employers emphasised the need for graduates to evidence skills relating to operating within a commercial climate, as well as possessing technical expertise in their discipline. Within the context of cyber security, employers are frequently keen to recruit graduates who are as at ease with communicating risk to a non-specialist audience, as they are in protecting an organisation from a data breach. The project therefore sought to nurture a well-rounded skillset in cyber security students and enhance their employability upon graduation.

Students as agents of knowledge exchange

At its core, the project focussed on re-energising pedagogic practice through breaching the perceived barrier between academia and industry. The college sector has a rich and vibrant heritage of working closely with industry to shape educational provision and meet regional...
needs (Association of Colleges, 2015). Yet it can be argued that employer links are most frequently used to inform curriculum design rather than impacting directly on pedagogic practice and the student experience.

To bridge the perceived gap between industry and academia, a model of students as agents of knowledge exchange was developed. This model recognised that students would, upon graduation, physically cross from academia into employment. Yet the essence of a foundation degree demands that this interface be permeable rather than serving as a terminal event in the student journey. Working with a group of industry partners, the project team designed a series of intensive phases of deep engagement between students and employers. The industry partners represented different aspects of the cyber security sector, and included a multinational corporation, a national IT services organisation and a leading provider of counter-surveillance technical measures. Each phase was characterised by industry-led activities which immersed the students within their professional sphere through, for example, guest lectures, live briefs and industry-standard exercises within a professional setting which conform to the concept of high impact pedagogic practices (Kuh, 2008). These activities were selected to encourage students to move temporarily into industry, either physically or metaphorically. Student experiences as industry practitioners were captured and celebrated through capstone activities at the conclusion of every phase. Capstone activities were selected to showcase the attributes developed during each section, including presentations to industry practitioners and a search for covert surveillance devices within a Newcastle hotel.

---

Figure 1: Students as agents of knowledge exchange model

The need to develop a pipeline of future talent for the cyber security sector is recognised by the UK Government (Cabinet Office, 2014: 19). For this reason, FdSc Cyber Security students and staff co-developed and co-delivered a series of outreach workshops aimed to engage and interest potential students in the opportunities offered by cyber security. These
workshops allowed students to disseminate their experiences as industry practitioners and develop professional skills relating to communicating to a non-specialist audience.

**Student engagement**

Partnership working was integral to the design and delivery of the project, both with employers and students. The involvement of students was closely aligned with the HEA Framework For Student Engagement Through Partnership (HEA, 2015). The adoption of new pedagogic practices necessitates a constant focus on the student experience to ensure that any innovation has a positive impact on student satisfaction and outcomes.

The project team acknowledged that traditional processes and structures for engaging with the student voice did not necessarily facilitate meaningful partnership working and, in some cases, reinforced existing hierarchies. For this reason, the project embraced an existing initiative utilised elsewhere across Newcastle College, in the form of student internships. These offered funded opportunities for students to participate in research and enhancement projects on an extracurricular basis. The provision of bursaries originated as a response to feedback from the HE student body, which clearly demonstrated that many undergraduates faced a hard choice between enhancing their CV and undertaking more hours of part-time work to support themselves and their dependents. The concept of funded HE student internship opportunities has broad applicability across the college sector.

Five student internships were offered across the duration of the project. These were advertised to undergraduates who had progressed from foundation degree studies to enrol on our BSc (Hons) top-up programmes. In essence, these students understood the specific nature of foundation degree programmes, but were sufficiently removed from them to serve as mediators between academic staff and the FdSc cohort. The interns functioned as integral members of the project steering group, presented the project at internal and external conferences, and contributed to the project evaluation. While not members of the participant FdSc cohort, the involvement of students as interns has clearly improved their employability through evidencing skills in report writing, presenting and project management. Indeed, one intern has secured employment as an Information Security Consultant through meeting an employer at a project event. Interns have consistently challenged academic staff to explore differing perspectives on the student experience, including those of international and mature students.

**Working in partnership with industry**

The experience of the project team in working in partnership with employers has potential implications for other institutions. Unusually employer engagement was carefully structured and managed through the overarching project framework with each participating organisation aware of the expectations around their involvement. Partnership working was most effective where it was secured at director or executive level, thus ensuring that the organisation concerned was fully committed to mobilising all necessary assets in support of the project. Inevitably, working closely with industry partners requires a degree of sensitivity to the commercial demands placed upon their time which are far harder to anticipate than the rigours of the academic calendar.

Positive engagement with the industry partners spread beyond the parameters of the project to include the sponsorship of a graduation ceremony, facilitation of additional development
opportunities for staff, and access to a prestigious trade show. Engagement with employers can too often be narrowly focussed on particular disciplines or themes. It was pleasing to note active engagement spreading to encompass other areas of activity, such as the hire of specialist facilities at our Aviation and Automotive Academies, and industry engagement with students at these facilities. Colleges should be unafraid to explore how partner organisations can engage with the wider institution beyond their specific discipline.

The terrifying pace of change in the cyber security sector, as threats are detected and neutralised on a daily basis, necessitates close working between educational providers and industry practitioners. Other technical disciplines are subject to the same challenges. While colleges have traditionally recruited academic staff with industry backgrounds, the rapid pace of technological change demands a more robust approach to ensure that teaching staff maintain currency in their knowledge and understanding of professional practice. Moreover, enhancing the employability of graduates requires a subtle understanding of the commercial world in which they will be seeking employment. Engagement with industry partners facilitated two week-long secondments for members of the teaching team. The purpose of these was twofold. Firstly, they provided an opportunity for staff to develop their skills within an industrial setting. Secondly, the secondments served to further strengthen the relationship between the institution and employers. During these, academic staff developed technical solutions to practical problems facing the partner organisations, allowing them to undertake applied research within an industrial setting and contributing to the scholarly profiles of the individuals concerned. Inevitably, these secondments will have a positive impact on future curriculum and assessment design through mirroring existing industry practice. Yet it must be acknowledged that they were supported through external funding and the framework of the wider project. The key challenge for colleges in the future is to develop a self-sustaining model for staff secondments to industry which contribute meaningfully to curriculum development and the student experience across all curriculum areas.

It is noteworthy that a number of connections with industry and employers throughout the project were facilitated and mediated by college alumni. The potential of alumni was unrecognised during the planning stage of the project. Yet several mobilised resources or invested their own time in securing the success of the project. It would be advisable for colleges, either at institutional or departmental levels, to undertake a mapping exercise of alumni to understand the potential connections which could be utilised for future projects, development opportunities and industry engagement.

Impact

The long-term impact of the project will be subject to internal and external evaluation. Perhaps the most interesting data will concern the employability prospects of FdSc graduates upon graduation and any increase in recruitment to future cohorts. Student satisfaction as recorded through module evaluations does demonstrate a significant increase which may be attributed to the project. The interns attached to the project have clearly valued their exposure both to the inner workings of the institution and to industry partners.

The impact of the project on academic staff was less anticipated. Through presenting at internal and external conferences, developing technical solutions for partner organisations and exploring new pedagogic approaches, the teaching team have significantly enhanced their scholarly profile. The challenges facing the cyber security sector are widely
acknowledged by Government, law enforcement and industry alike. Emerging networks at local, regional and national levels embrace academic staff who are directly involved in preparing the pipeline of future graduates into the sector. These emerging networks overcome a traditional barrier to college HE staff in accessing existing disciplinary peer review networks (Simmons and Lea, 2013: 3).

The project had a substantial impact on the wider institution through demonstrating a case study of good practice in partnering with industry to re-energise curriculum development and delivery. Events hosted by the project, including a regional employer breakfast meeting and the second UK Workshop on Cyber Security Training and Education, provided a platform for the institution to showcase its capacity for HE delivery. Moreover, the project demonstrated the commitment of the institution to a niche area of specialisation, which is particularly timely given the current cycle of FE area reviews.

Conclusion

While this paper has examined a specific project aligned with the current national security agenda, there are a number of implications which may be considered by other college HE providers in interrogating their own practice. The delivery of HE cyber security programmes at undergraduate or postgraduate level demand considerable investment in specialist facilities, resources and staff, which may lie beyond the capacity of many college HE providers. Nevertheless, there is clear scope within the broader counter-radicalisation agenda, including the Prevent initiative, for colleges to develop research projects which have national impact and value.

The FdSc Cyber Security programme was launched prior to the funding call being released. The synchronicity between the two opportunities was unexpected. Yet the institution had been ably positioned by the forward-thinking curriculum planning of the Digital Skills Academy in response to an emerging skills gap within the cyber security sector. An awareness of Government policy around cyber security was therefore of critical importance for designing a programme to respond to industry needs and Government priorities. Other priority sectors are likely to gain ascendancy over the coming years, not least the eight great technologies articulated by the UK Government as areas of significant future growth and innovation (Willetts, 2013). College HE providers should consider their agility and responsiveness in developing niche provision to service future areas of economic growth. Internal mechanisms for collating industry intelligence, horizon scanning and analysing Government policy will therefore be of paramount importance.

The timely development of the FdSc Cyber Security programme, in response to emerging Government priorities, employer needs and student feedback, was secured through the possession of foundation degree awarding powers. The nature, purpose and extent of degree awarding powers are a matter of considerable debate across the HE sector, and are likely to feature in future HE legislation. The project outlined in this paper offers a powerful statement in support of the need for appropriate college HE providers to hold their own degree awarding powers. As college HE provision becomes increasingly specialised and tied to regional and national economic priorities, colleges will require the ability to develop and deliver innovative provision in a timely fashion to shape the graduate workforce of the future.
References


3.2
Developing frameworks to promote scholarship as a means of supporting teaching quality and effectiveness: a case study from within and across institutions
LAURA HILLS, THE OPEN UNIVERSITY, DEBORAH MEAKIN, HULL COLLEGE GROUP

Abstract
Although the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) is now a widely used term within higher education (HE), there has been criticism that the dominant view of SoTL is drawn from research-intensive universities and is therefore not as relevant to college HE staff “whose focus is primarily on teaching and learning and who have [a] high number of taught contact hours” (King and Widdowson, 2009).

This paper focuses on the development of two complementary frameworks to promote SoTL in college HE, particularly as a means of supporting teaching quality and effectiveness. The first is Open University Partner Scholarship Network, of which Hull College is a member, which seeks to provide resources for SoTL for its validated institutions, many of which are college-based. The second is the that developed by Hull College to encourage engagement in SoTL amongst its HE teaching staff.

Introduction
SoTL is now widely accepted and promoted across HE as a means of improving the student experience and providing a basis for the professional development of academics. Although once seen as an activity of the dedicated few (Walker et al 2008), SoTL is now enshrined in the professional standards for HE (Higher Education Academy 2012) and there is an expectation that “all teaching staff engaged in the delivery of higher education programmes have relevant knowledge and understanding of current research and advanced scholarship in their discipline area and that such knowledge and understanding directly inform and enhance their teaching” (Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), 2013: 2).

This impetus for engagement in SoTL has also been felt within college HE. However, Healey et al (2014) point to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) definition of scholarship, which focuses on the development and maintenance of the intellectual infrastructure of subjects and disciplines (REF, 2012: 48) as typifying the “predominance of the yardstick which measures the quality of scholarship by how closely it approximates the kinds of original research which typify academic departments in the most research-intensive universities” (Healey et al, 2014: 10). This view of scholarship is not necessarily relevant to staff whose focus may be on vocational education training (Williams et al, 2013) or who have a high number of taught contact hours (King and Widdowson, 2009). Consequently, in a recent sector-wide study of SoTL, Fanghanel et al (2015) call for an approach to SoTL which recognises the greater diversity of institutions engaged in HE teaching across the sector.

These contrasting views of SoTL can come into particularly sharp focus within the context of a relationship between a validating institution and a validated partner. In particular, questions arise as to which view of SoTL should predominate, what expectations are there on individual
college HE teachers to engage in SoTL, and what support should be provided. This paper argues, however, that it is possible to develop frameworks to promote and support SoTL which address the requirements of quality, but which are also appropriate to the needs and circumstances of colleges. It presents the Open University and Hull College as a case study of one such approach.

The Open University: SoTL as a driver of quality

The Open University is the UK’s largest distance education provider with 200,000 students. Although the vast majority of these students study part-time and at a distance, 42,000 students are currently studying at one of the Open University’s 25 validated partners, primarily within the UK but also in Germany, the Netherlands and Greece.

The Open University’s role as a validating institution is to work with partner institutions in order to enable them to offer programmes leading to Open University-validated awards. Partner institutions take responsibility for the day-to-day quality assurance and management of their own academic programmes with groups of experts from the Open University making peer judgements about the quality of institutions and the learning programmes that they offer.

In one of the very few research papers on the relationship between quality assurance and SoTL, Ottewill and Macfarlane argue that there is, or at least should be, “a close relationship between the pursuit of enhanced quality in higher education and adoption of a scholarly approach to educational practice” (Ottewill and Macfarlane, 2004: 232). However, for the Open University, the role of SoTL in quality assurance and enhancement, either of its own provision or that of its validated partners, is implicit rather than explicit, reflecting the situation Ottewill and Macfarlane found in the HE sector as a whole. Indeed, Harvey and Newton (2004), writing at the same time, argue that quality review had more to do with compliance and accountability and “has contributed little to any effective transformation of the learning experience” (Harvey and Newton, 2004: 157). Of course, much has changed within the HE sector in the past decade. There has been an increased focus on the student as consumer and with quality increasingly seen as a proxy for value for money. The role of SoTL has also gone from something of a fringe activity to a recognised part of academic induction and increasingly integral to recognition and promotion (Chalmers, 2011). Despite this, Lodge and Bonsanquet (2014) claim that institutional quality is still determined largely by research output rather than by the educational experience of students.

If, as Lodge and Bonsanquet assert, there is a “valid and evidence-based approach to understanding quality in higher education” (Lodge and Bonsanquet, 2014: 15), then the case for an increased role to be given to SoTL is to make explicit the underlying goal of SoTL to enhance the quality of the learning experience through rigorous evaluation of practice. Within the context of the relationship between validating and validated partners, what is needed, however, is an approach to SoTL which promotes a “rigorous evaluation of practice” while acknowledging the institutional context of the partner institutions.

Hull College: the institutional context for SoTL

Hull College Group (HCG) is one of the largest further education colleges in the UK and comprises Hull College, Goole College, Harrogate College and HCUK Training. The group has over 27,000 students, including a significant number of HE students, and is a member of the
Mixed Economy Group of colleges (MEG) and the 157 Group (a consortium of the largest UK colleges). The engagement of HE in FE delivery has developed over many years and awarding body partnerships are held with the Open University, Huddersfield University and the University of Hull.

The delivery of the HE provision at HCG has changed emphasis over time and a diversity of awards have been included in the provision (including higher nationals, foundation degrees, top-up degrees, Bachelors (Hons) degrees, Masters degrees and teacher education qualifications - PGCE, Cert Ed). Presently, the majority of the provision is through direct delivery. Employer engagement in the course of curriculum development at all levels is an underpinning theme at HCG together with widening participation for the student body; these principles are identified particularly with respect to foundation degrees as indicated in foundation degree characteristics (QAA, 2014b) and the qualification benchmark (QAA, 2010). Engagement with professional statutory and regulatory bodies is also considered; for example, degrees at HCG have accreditation arrangements with the Royal Institute of British Architects and the Architects Registration Board providing professional integration within the curriculum. Combining these aspects while developing curriculum are scholarship activities in themselves and incorporate definitions and references to scholarship other than SoTL. The definition of scholarship included in the strategy for scholarship and research at HCG does not refer specifically to SoTL:

Maintaining and extending knowledge in a subject area through reading, active contribution to the interpretation of research and participation in professional practice, learned societies and through consultancy (Hull College Group, 2013: 3).

Activity relating to this definition reflects the findings of Fanghanel et al (2015) and embraces guidance from the QAA (2013); review of the strategy would benefit from the inclusion of SoTL and encompasses the wider outlook of SoTL development within the HE sector.

Supporting quality improvement, the development of teaching delivery is a consistent expectation and focus within FE, SoTL might be considered as part of this. Professional body support for teachers in post-16 education, including FE colleges, has been under the auspices of the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) since 2014, which promotes and supports practitioner research (ETF, 2015a). Previously this opportunity was available via the Institute for Learning (IfL). The Society for Education and Training (SET) website now provides an archive for Fellowship Research Programme outcomes, many of which are examples of SoTL (ETF, 2015b), and provides a platform for dissemination as advocated by King and Widdowson (2009). There has been engagement with the IfL and SET professional bodies among HE teaching staff at HCG, which is a positive indication that SoTL activity has been part of continuing professional development (CPD), but has not necessarily been captured. Changes to statutory requirements have affected membership of SET, but the combined association of this group of staff through these bodies does provide implicit evidence of SoTL activities and is a primer to build upon. Furthermore, discipline and pedagogic developments through staff affiliations to subject associations and learned societies are additional opportunities for development through SoTL.
Developing an institutional framework for SoTL

During the development of the HE provision at HCG a number of established processes have combined to provide a structure for the promotion and support of scholarship, research and for undertaking higher level qualifications. These areas support documented guidance for the pedagogical effectiveness of staff (QAA, 2013).

The processes relate to:

- Recognition of the experience and discipline background of staff in relation to the teaching area and level of delivery they are involved in; this is reviewed every three years with recommendations for continuing scholarship and research.
- Financial support for individuals to gain higher level qualifications and attend short courses and support for attending conferences, including presenting papers and networking.
- Internal opportunities for the sharing of work, scholarship and research, including bulletins from the curriculum areas, an annual journal and two annual HE conferences, one of which is dedicated to learning and teaching.

During the process to achieve foundation degree awarding powers (FDAP) work to compile a profile of staff was undertaken at HCG. A questionnaire was constructed to collect pertinent information which was self-reported from staff. Information was collated, as required, (QAA, 2014a) and included: qualifications, teaching level, engagement with aspects relating to scholarly and pedagogical developments of discipline areas, outputs of research and scholarly activity, employment experience and professional practice, staff development, curriculum development and assessment design experience and engagement with other HE organisations. This information also provided an organisational overview and allowed for a useful analysis of activity; further information captured subsequently enabled monitoring of changes and development of wider contexts for HCG including strategy review for enhancement, learning and teaching and research and scholarship.

Analysis of the published guidance for pedagogical effectiveness of staff (QAA, 2013) against themes arising from the exploration of staff profile data led to a proposal of areas which form a more structured framework for CPD for staff. This included methodology, pedagogy/student learning, subjects/disciplines, networking, communication and outputs and reflections through mentoring or coaching to encompass research and scholarship development in a flexible set of units or modules. Referring to the activities and outcomes arising from the definition of King and Widdowson (2009), the areas described here can be developed to specifically draw out SoTL activities, with detail from the staff profile providing additional background and identifying work and resources for dissemination.

Supporting scholarship across institutional boundaries: the development of the Partner Scholarship Network

As the case of Hull College demonstrates, college HE has developed its own models of SoTL which reflect the nature of the institutions themselves. The approach taken in this study was to try to find a way of promoting and supporting SoTL as a means of quality assurance and enhancement which took this institutional context into account. The principal purpose of the Partner Scholarship Network (PSN) (Hills, 2015), therefore, is to provide resources to validated
institutions to engage with SoTL and also to encourage the sharing and dissemination of SoTL between partner institutions.

To do this, two key factors were taken into account: the first was to base support on a college HE model of SoTL, and the second was to consider what standards might contribute to successful engagement in SoTL within the context of college HE.

The definition of SoTL offered by King and Widdowson (2009) is particularly pertinent here as it recognises the need for SoTL to develop and enhance teaching and learning, but within a context where contributions to major research databases (REF, 2012) may not be desired or appropriate:

An activity or activities with the potential to:

- create or affirm knowledge and/or expertise of a subject or discipline
- develop or enhance understanding of a subject or discipline
- develop or enhance methodologies for the delivery of a subject or discipline

To be accepted as Research & Scholarly Activity this activity must be shared with peers, disseminated across the institution and possibly beyond and archived in ways which are easily accessible to staff (King and Widdowson, 2009: 9).

The issue of standards is a difficult one within SoTL, and particularly within college HE. Proponents of SoTL have had to fight hard against claims that SoTL lacks rigour (Fanghanel et al, 2015) and there is recognition, as evidenced by the growing number of SoTL support websites and publications, that there is a way to ‘do’ SoTL. However, as this paper has made clear, notions of SoTL also have to be in keeping with the nature of the institution. Therefore, a pragmatic approach has been used to devise a SoTL support framework for the PSN, drawing on existing work at the Open University, and reflecting broad notions of what we understand by successful engagement in SoTL, particularly Glassick et al (1997): “A work of scholarship must be characterised by clear goals, adequate preparation, appropriate methods, significant results, effective communication and a reflective critique” (cited in Williams et al, 2013: 17).

As such, the structure of the PSN focuses on the following areas:

- sharing SoTL news and activities
  - PSN news forum
  - PSN forum
- SoTL support
  - what is SoTL?
  - getting started
  - choosing the right research methods
  - analysing your data
  - working with others
  - relating your research to the wider context
  - disseminating your research
  - examples of SoTL, and where to go for help
The PSN: creation of a critical mass?

The study of SoTL at Hull College indicates that there is both a wealth of expertise within institutions but also a desire to further promote and support staff engagement with SoTL. Within the context of validation, both the Open University and validated partners have much to gain from an approach to SoTL which emphasises its relationship with teaching quality and effectiveness. The design of the PSN, launched in April 2015, is intended to provide partner-wide support, which could be adapted to the needs of the individual institution and generate a space for discussion and the sharing of good practice. Development of a web-based resource such as this is proven to require a period of time and engagement in the initial stages. The network has not been as well used by institutions as had been hoped and promotion to increase awareness of SoTL and the PSN to encourage participation will continue. Through this study the resource has been confirmed as providing a useful framework for SoTL which supports institutional processes and practices at HCG.

Conclusion

The work undertaken at Hull College indicates that implicit engagement with SoTL occurs; while some of this has been undertaken in compliance with professional updating, there is much scope to broaden this and to encourage staff awareness of activities they are already engaged with which they can develop through SoTL, combining this with their discipline practice. It is also apparent that there are benefits in collating information regarding staff activity, making more explicit the rich picture and diverse experience of staff and what they bring to their teaching and learning delivery. Additionally, opportunities for scholarship and research are indicated, including that which impacts on vocational, professional and practice-based work which contributes to the strengths of college HE.

References


3.3 Engaging those employers
LIZ KNIGHT AND LEILA MARS, PETERBOROUGH REGIONAL COLLEGE

Background context
Peterborough Regional College (PRC) is one of the four pilot colleges selected to be part of the £2.75 million Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) Catalyst Fund project focused on developing a scholarship framework for college higher education (HE). The college and its designated University Centre Peterborough (UCP) deliver higher education to over 850 students.

Introduction
Currently, the scholarly model being adopted by the Catalyst Fund project is that of Boyer (1990). The central tenet of his work is four scholarships of equal importance – teaching, discovery, integration and application. For Boyer, scholarship is not solely defined within a research context as is typical in universities and within the Research Excellence Framework (REF 2012). A future Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) would also appear to support the re-defining of teaching within HE and the value of pedagogic development. The Higher Education Policy Institute’s UK Student Academic Experience Survey 2015 highlights that more undergraduate students believe a trained teacher is more important than a research active lecturer (overall 39% compared to 17%). All students surveyed recognised the importance of industry or professional expertise. Further education (FE) colleges delivering HE have apparent strengths in both of these areas.

This article focuses on the curriculum benefits offered by employer engagement, both for teaching and, ultimately, students. Again, this is not limited to scholarly activities recognised by REF. Since the introduction of foundation degrees and a raft of reports including the Leitch Review of Skills 2006, Higher Ambitions, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) 2009 and Skills for Sustainable Growth in 2010, there has been a clear focus on the need for effective employer engagement and employability. As highlighted in the SWOT analysis table on page 29. The apprenticeship agenda has been a crucial element of this Government’s educational policy with an overall target of three million apprentices by 2020 and a commitment to providing higher and degree level apprenticeships to address the UK skills gap. The Skills Funding Agency has been asked to support 20,000 higher apprenticeships and around £60 million has been allocated for additional funding until March 2016. In the 2015 Summer Budget announcements Chancellor George Osborne was cited:

While many firms do a brilliant job training their workforces; there are too many large companies who leave the training to others and take a free ride on the system,” he said. Aimed at larger businesses, Chancellor George Osborne’s decision is a “radical, and frankly long overdue, approach” (Ruthven 2015: 1).
It is apparent that the Government expects all employers to up-skill their workforce via apprenticeships funded by the levy which was confirmed in the November 2015 Autumn Budget as follows:

[The levy]...will be set at a rate of 0.5% of an employer’s pay bill. Each employer will receive an allowance of £15,000 to offset against their levy payment. This means that the levy will only be paid on any pay bill in excess of £3 million... (Gov.uk 2015).

Policy decisions such as these, combined with the removal of student number controls, rising fees, reduced disability support allowance and removal of the maintenance grant mean that more than ever gaining employment after university is key. Established HE institutions have developed effective collaborative arrangements with employers, often research-linked, but where does that leave college HE? What can the sector do differently and what can it do better? The University of Stirling refers to three arms of employer engagement: receiving a service from the university, working in partnership and influencing the curriculum. It is the latter that PRC has focused on and an excellent example is the college’s relationship with the company Compare the Market where the course and modules have been modified to meet current industry needs. PRC has gone further, working alongside Compare the Market to support continuing professional development events for the city and scoping opportunities to stage a national coding exhibition in 2016. Compare the Market want to inspire ambition city-wide and address the skills deficit. They appear to be working towards an emergent “community of practice” (Wenger 2011) with PRC and the city, involving industry experts, new business, students and employees engaged in a variety of innovation-based activities to boost growth.

The Peterborough context

Peterborough’s data is broadly in line with the national picture (see Table 1 below) although it has slightly more small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Although it has more people employed in the elementary occupations than the Eastern Region or UK as a whole (14.7% compared to 10.8% and 10.5% respectively), it has fewer people employed in the professional and associate professional and technical roles (see Table 2). This may in part be due to the qualification profile of the citizens of Peterborough which is lower for both national vocational qualifications (NVQ4) and degree and higher qualifications when compared to the Eastern Region and UK (see Table 3). At the recent Peterborough Business to Business (B2B) 2015 Exhibition event, 16 employers from a range of sectors commented on the lack of skilled people in Peterborough to fill their vacancies, citing difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff; possibly a contributing factor in Compare the Market’s temporary web development presence in London. As a result of conversations throughout the event, willing employers committed to deliver skills workshops and one-to-one mentoring for graduates in partnership with the college at UCP.

To further respond to changing work-practices, SME profiles of Peterborough and ‘new work’ demands, PRC has linked to a business and enterprise start-up project and secured guaranteed places for students to attend seminars and workshops on building business plans and financial forecasts for their own companies.
The new work sector – teaching, engineering and computing – has significant staff shortages. Historically, a high concentration of the new work sector, aka digital and high-tech industries, normally leads to an increase in employment overall and improved engagement with global markets making these firms attractive to councils and chambers of commerce. The Centre for Cities Small Business Factbook 2015 (Centre for Cities, 2015) reiterates the findings below (Table 1) but also highlights that SME expansion in Peterborough between 2011-2014 was above the national average and patent applications were higher than the national average at a rate of 6.4 (per 1,000,000 population) as opposed to the UK average of 3.8; figures which suggest a strong entrepreneurial and innovative culture in Peterborough.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business counts (2014) Enterprises</th>
<th>United Kingdom</th>
<th>East</th>
<th>Peterborough</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Micro 0-9</td>
<td>1,998,850</td>
<td>88.30%</td>
<td>201,660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small 10-49</td>
<td>218,060</td>
<td>9.63%</td>
<td>20,850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium 50-249</td>
<td>37,655</td>
<td>1.66%</td>
<td>3,565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large 250+</td>
<td>9,080</td>
<td>0.40%</td>
<td>865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,263,645</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>226,940</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Business Activity Size and Location (ONS)

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment by occupation (Dec 2014) % all in employment who are</th>
<th>United Kingdom</th>
<th>East</th>
<th>Peterborough</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managers, directors and senior officials</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate professional and tech</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative and secretarial</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled trades</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring, leisure and other service</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales and customer service</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process, plant and machine operatives</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Annual Population Survey
Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification levels NVQ</th>
<th>United Kingdom</th>
<th>East</th>
<th>Peterborough</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% with NVQ4+ - aged 16-64</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>29.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% with NVQ3+ - aged 16-64</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>53.6</td>
<td>48.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% with NVQ2+ - aged 16-64</td>
<td>72.3</td>
<td>72.7</td>
<td>67.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% with NVQ1+ - aged 16-64</td>
<td>84.2</td>
<td>85.8</td>
<td>79.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% with other qualifications (NVQ) aged 16-64</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% with no qualifications (NVQ) - aged 16-64</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree/A Level/GCSE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% with degree or equivalent and above - aged 16-64</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% with higher education below degree level - aged 16-64</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% with GCSE, A Level or equivalent - aged 16-64</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% with GCSE grades A*-C or equivalent - aged 16-64</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% with other qualifications (GCSE) - aged 16-64</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% with no qualifications (GCSE) - aged 16-64</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


It is apparent that what is needed from early action research activities and discussions with businesses in Peterborough is an effective dialogue between employers and the wider business community. HE is not simply about updating skills but actually ensuring that students add value to the companies that they engage with and input new knowledge. For many the new higher apprenticeship agenda is confusing. What employers understood degree provision to look like, the stereotypical perception of the knowledge-push lecture theatre, is outdated. Recent reports on employer engagement suggest this may be a misconception held by both students and academic staff (Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) 2014; Stein and Irvine 2015). UCP graduates are now expected to be resilient, autonomous and responsive.

So, how have we changed what we do at PRC and UCP in light of the above? As identified within the QAA report on emerging practice in 2014 we have enhanced student employability and engagement with employers. In addition, recognising that those employed within the ‘new work’ sector mostly practice on a consultancy or freelance basis, we are linking with a small business initiative to support and develop new workers with this flexibility. Opportunity
Peterborough is an economic development company that bridges the gulf between the private and public sector and is helping us to frame relevant conversations in context. Our engagement with Chamber of Commerce and Opportunity Peterborough means that we are in tune with employer needs and the city’s agenda.

PRC and UCP attends B2B employer events with students and develops their networking skills by encouraging them to engage in scholarly activity with the business sector. As many employers claim graduates are lacking business acumen, we aim to develop programmes to tackle this and with higher apprenticeships in sight we hope both will combine to produce more work-ready graduates. We re-branded and changed the language of assessments and recruitment fairs without ‘dumbing down’ the academic message. Our new degree in computing is currently in the design phase and will reflect industry needs to such an extent we hope that other companies re-locating back to London will become an old story. The content of employability days at UCP (bi-annual) is now informed by feedback from both employers and students. Even our study excellence programme (study skills) has been tweaked and enhanced to incorporate these recommendations.

Higher apprenticeships - who knows?

One loose informal model of higher apprenticeships has already been highly successful here at PRC and UCP under the guidance of the business management faculty (Lord Ashcroft International Business School (LAIBS)). In partnership with Perkins Engines, UCP supported 12 students from Level 4 Foundation Degree Business Administration right through to the full BA in Business Administration. Working closely with Perkins Engines' management team and LAIBS tutors, students racked up a hugely commendable score of 2:1s and firsts. Feedback from Perkins Engines was that a huge improvement was made in current knowledge being added to the business and that staff retention was noticeably boosted by this form of personal investment in students by the company.

It would seem that despite Government marketing of formally structured higher apprenticeships, here at UCP the message has not yet quite reached the ground. Students surveyed as part of primary research for this paper claimed to know little about higher apprenticeships, or even of their existence, despite being personally targeted by UCP intramail. This would suggest that not only does the Government need to strengthen its message of choice at a national level, but locally employers, educational institutions and student collectives need to get wise to the complexity of higher apprenticeships and the potential for more diverse learning in Peterborough.

Quoting UCP’s in-house engineering expert: “Industry doesn’t want grease monkeys, it needs specialists and managers. There will be buy-in for any new type of apprenticeship but modules need to be tailor-made for industry otherwise employers won't be interested. Some established qualification bodies may crash because their courses are just too rigid” (Mars, 2015).

We know - action research and our knowledge claims

The collaborative mode of knowledge-making described above is exactly what makes a distinct action-research approach necessary and possible for our chosen area. We need this way of working for UCP to validate our knowledge claims and support their diffusion via Peterborough’s knowledge economy to policy bodies such as the Association of Colleges, Higher Education Academy, BIS etc.
According to McNiff and Whitehead (2010: 48) “knowledge claims are to do with how you have taken action to improve your practice”. Our own knowledge claims, or what we know as an organisation, can be summarised in the following nine succinct points:

- UCP recruits trained teachers who have industry/professional expertise to serve students needs.
- Tensions are now visible as the choice of university places increases but the cost of HE means low-income families are opting out of formal HE (Sheriff, 2015).
- Allowing employers to influence the curriculum leads to up-to-date courses completed by graduates who are then able to make the transition to ‘work-ready’.
- Developing the business acumen of students prepares them for work and makes them more employable.
- Peterborough’s barrier to meeting recruitment targets and retaining staff would be overcome by supporting more aptly skilled graduates who maintain loyalty to their firm.
- Employers want graduates to have a new type of identity.
- The change or improvement that UCP seeks is to supply the right graduates for Peterborough’s economic stability and attach them to the Peterborough region via professional and economic reward.
- Organisations that serve changing employer and student needs require adaptive models for continual informed change, especially in light of Peterborough’s transition to a circular economy (Peterborough DNA 2015).
- Action research is an adaptive research methodology and process that sits neatly within UCP’s epistemological framework.

Following the action-research methodology we place our knowledge claims at the core of our Employer Engagement Action Cycle to form our own participatory model of action-research that runs through change, planning, finding out, evaluation and reflection. The standards of judgement and identified criteria we use to validate our knowledge claims are formed collaboratively with our various stakeholders for an informed and rigorous validation process. Our benchmark at UCP for this is simple; quality learning for sustained growth for Peterborough.

Scattered about this model are the very action-based events which make us the vibrant and innovative hub we are: conferences, recruitment fairs, networking events, work-based projects and worksite visits. It is these events which generate data to build new knowledge and form our unique way of knowing about employment engagement at UCP.

**2015 Computing and Engineering Undergraduate Exhibition**

Our most spectacular example of an action-based event to improve practice was the 2015 Computing and Engineering Undergraduate Exhibition, the measure of improvement being scale and scope – this was a small poster session with coffee in 2014 which developed into a full-blown industry and employer live event the following year. In May 2015 undergraduate students from UCP showcased their major project work and staff provided an overview of the curriculum as well as new developments. Guest speakers from Peterborough’s leading firms and the Institute of Engineering and Technology (IET) presented awards for the best projects, provided talks on industry standards and networked with students. This was followed up by
One Compare the Market director was pleased to note that over the past two years summer placements had turned into full-time positions at the company. He highlighted the co-design of current computer courses between employers and course leaders as beneficial and meeting industry requirements. He added that the modifications to the courses which involved study of user experience and test room development techniques had led directly to the improved quality of student projects.

Staff were especially proud of their achievements. The Engineering Faculty boasted that the BEng integrated degree had achieved 100% employment for its students. The Head of Computing said the emphasis on the personal attention given to individual students, modules being led by industry leaders and placements (six in 2015) as further evidence of excellence in the area of enhanced student learning. One employer, a Web and IT Development Executive at Distribution Supplies Ltd. (Peterborough), was impressed in the improvement of the exhibition, which in his day as a UCP student had simply been a poster session. He credited the influx of more employers to this change of format. As an employer, he cited the exhibition day as a chance to meet and interview potential recruits in a way that elicited more open and real conversation. He explained further saying: “Doing away with the strict interview time gives me more space to talk with students giving me a real sense of where they are at and, at the same time, I feel they aren’t pressured into lying to me to get the job.”

Student projects being demonstrated included a social media computing app used to promote communication between HE students and summarise academic documents, creating key points with citations and links to related articles. Computing and engineering students were asked if they could identify the most important skill for employment they picked up during their studies at UCP; their answers included time management, academic writing and programming.

One former student has been so successful that he is now seeking to recruit a graduate apprentice to support his work. The main area for development for new graduates in his view was the business acumen and budgeting knowledge that he has needed to develop his own business.
**A SWOT analysis of our employer engagement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Strengths</strong></th>
<th><strong>Opportunities</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employability</td>
<td>Labour market intelligence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alumni case studies</td>
<td>Existing events and activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist industry staff</td>
<td>Progression opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector that innovates and responds to change</td>
<td>Community impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum enhancement</td>
<td>Press and marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved teaching – National Student Survey 2014/15 results (UCP 91 %)</td>
<td>Staff and student continuing professional development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open and collaborative approach</td>
<td>Corporate social responsibility – willing employer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well-connected to the business sector via Opportunity Peterborough and the Chambers of Commerce</td>
<td>Peterborough’s skills needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to utilise a multi-way dialogue to develop curriculum</td>
<td>Connection between schools and employers via HEFCE’s National Networks for Collaborative Outreach scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement with all stakeholders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peterborough has an innovative and ambitious approach to new agendas e.g. the Circular Economy and PRC/UCP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Along with other HE providers, PRC/UCP are key to developing the above with regard to a coherent skills and qualification agenda</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Weaknesses</strong></th>
<th><strong>Threats</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Failure to deliver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource</td>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Messaging – internal and external</td>
<td>Ethics and intellectual property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of coordination and oversight</td>
<td>Damage relationships that exist for the college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsiveness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion**

Recent and proposed HE reforms related to external quality assessment and teaching and learning means it is difficult to identify clear roles for employers. The speed of previous reforms have also failed to identify employers roles in a more competitive and more market orientated HE system.

Employers remain confused about the higher apprenticeship agenda, their roles and responsibilities, and sometimes do not always see the additional value graduates can bring.
to an organisation, for example, curiosity regarding systematic research enquiry, new knowledge and fresh practices. Across some sectors, such as engineering and construction, there is a tendency to want immediate recruitment but there are not yet sufficient numbers of students to progress from Level 3. Construction also has a boom and bust cycle so it is harder to plan to meet these needs.

In stark contrast to this ambiguity, it has become apparent that we need to continue to address the employability and transferable skills of our graduates and recognise, as Boyer (1990) identifies, that the knowledge we acquire can and should then inform our delivery. It is crucial we engage with our target audience earlier and identify local and regional career opportunities with firms such as IAG Insurance.

Following positive acknowledgement of our responsive approach, UCP is to be given the opportunity to develop a bespoke degree by its awarding partner that will truly meet the needs of the computing and technology industry in Peterborough and the ‘new work’ sector. The official development of this degree began in January 2016 and employers will be key stakeholders in the curriculum and module design.

As an organisation, we are aware there are risks attached to PRC’s proposal. There is no doubt we create internal competition for provision of higher apprenticeships and the degree offer. Possibly, we may further confuse employers. If we harm the process by not maintaining long-term relationships with every individual employer, we must try to mitigate damage by seeking feedback and engagement from a number within that sector. Our efforts aim to balance the needs of large employers with those from the SME sector who have a significant presence within Peterborough. Action research requires managed risk-taking and a willingness to learn from failure but continual monitoring and embedded evaluation should buffer any short-term quakes and prevent long-term reputational damage for UCP.

Our strategic approach holds plenty of complexity but is simple enough to encourage free flows of knowledge and relationship. Linking back to Boyer (1990), we aim to synthesise two of his scholarships in our pursuit of optimal employer engagement; application/engagement and teaching/learning. While still paying service to discovery and integration, which are at the heart of our ‘new work’ sector, we pledge to maintain fluidity in our action research practice, keeping a keen eye on our duty to nurture the circular economy and innovation fit for a globally recognised Smart City of 2015 (Centre for Cities 2015).

References


3.4

**scholarNet – capturing and recording scholarly activity**

DEB SWIFT AND PETER GREENALL, BLACKPOOL AND THE FYLDE COLLEGE

**Introduction**

In 2011 Blackpool and the Fylde College (B&FC) launched its web-based social scholarship site scholarNet. scholarNet was designed to provide a space in which academic staff capture, reflect upon and share scholarly elements of practice which support the learning experiences of students and develop and enhance the curriculum. This paper outlines the approach taken to provide academic staff at B&FC with an online space in which to facilitate collaboration and scholarly engagement at the team, subject and organisational level.

**The Blackpool and the Fylde College context**

B&FC is a general further education (FE) college with a history of service to the community and vocational excellence. It was formed from a merger in 1957 between the School for Fishermen, established in 1892 in Fleetwood, and the Blackpool Technical College, established in 1938. The college has a long and very successful history of providing higher education (HE) for the local, regional, national and, in some cases, international populations. The college currently supports around 3,000 HE students studying towards a range of programmes including 13 full honours degrees, 35 foundation degrees, 29 associated top-up or completion degrees and nine higher nationals.

The college operates across four main campus locations at Bispham in the north of Blackpool; the University Centre campus, in central Blackpool; Lytham Sixth Form College at the southern end of the Fylde coast, and our Fleetwood Nautical Campus, specialising in maritime and offshore provision. The college is the fourth largest provider of college HE nationally and our recent Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) Review achieved two commendations, no recommendations and 11 areas of good practice. This is coupled with an Ofsted *outstanding* (grade 1) in 2013, placing B&FC as one of the leading colleges in the UK. HE programmes are validated by a number of university partners including Lancaster University, University of Salford and Liverpool John Moore’s University. The college is currently undergoing QAA scrutiny for foundation degree awarding powers.

**History and development – SARAD to scholarNet**

In 2009 the college secured funding from the Higher Education Funding Council for England’s (HEFCE) Teaching Quality Enhancement Project and the Higher Education Academy (HEA) to design, pilot and disseminate a tool which would support the development of scholarship and research in college HE settings. The project aimed to define scholarship relevant to college HE through an extensive review of relevant literature, staff surveys and focus groups.

Having established a working definition and clearly identified categories of scholarly activity, the Scholarship and Research Audit and Development Tool (SARAD) was created to:

- Audit and quantify scholarship within the institution and to provide evidence-based individual, school and institutional scholarship profiles.
- Enable academic staff to engage in reflective activity that enables them to identify their scholarship development needs, thus informing institutional strategy and operation in terms of providing scholarship and research development support.
- Enable academic staff to identify and rationalise their current professional profile in terms of the UK Professional Standards Framework.
- Support individual application to the HEA for professional recognition and individual membership (associate and fellow).

Conceptually grounded in the work of Ernest Boyer, the SARAD tool was structured around the four scholarships of discovery, integration, application and teaching (Boyer, 1990). There is clear alignment between the categories identified within the SARAD tool (Figure 1) and Boyer’s four scholarships, however these relationships are multiple and not mutually exclusive.

Figure 1: SARAD tool categories of college HE scholarship

One of the many challenges that face college HE lecturers is that of supporting students to become independent learners and thinkers with the ability to undertake analysis and critical evaluation and to recognise the contestable and troublesome nature of knowledge. In order to do this effectively, lecturers themselves must develop a deep understanding of their subject area and an enquiring approach to their own pedagogic practices. Some college HE lecturers do this very well, particularly those with experience of higher qualifications such as Masters and PhDs, while others may recognise their own weaknesses and lack of experience and may need support to develop academic and scholarship practices.
The SARAD tool was designed to help all college HE lecturers firstly to identify and define their current academic profile, and secondly to provide them with an accurate understanding of their current expertise, strengths, weaknesses, skills and knowledge gaps in terms of their own scholarship and academic practices.

Engaging in the process of reflection through the SARAD tool helped lecturers to identify where they stood in their career development. The ethos of the SARAD tool was principally aspirational and motivational as lecturers were encouraged to identify their academic and career-oriented goals.

The SARAD project continued through 2009/10 with engagement from 12 local colleges, then part of the Lancashire Lifelong Learning Network. A full project report was produced and dissemination activities were carried out nationally during 2009/10 facilitated by HEA. As the project ended a full and critical evaluation took place in the B&FC HE Directorate, concluding that although this model and framework was useful in identifying and capturing scholarly practices, it had a number of significant drawbacks in that it was paper-based, time-consuming and WORN (Written Once, Read Never). Another significant drawback was that the framework was focused on the individual and missed the opportunity to share personal reflections on scholarship with the wider academic community, a key feature of effective scholarly practice (Shulman, 1993; Hutchings and Shulman, 1999). There was a clear recognition from the B&FC HE Directorate that improvements and developments in technology could address some of the weaknesses identified in the critical evaluation.

Around this time, the explosion in the use of mobile and internet technologies, coupled with the wide-scale adoption of social networking technologies such as MySpace, Facebook and Twitter, meant that people were beginning to use online mechanisms to interact in new ways. Individuals and groups were sharing information about their lives online in an asynchronous manner and it was felt that this could be conducive to discussing and sharing scholarly academic practices.

The SARAD tool was private, individualised and intrinsic and what was needed was a shared, collaborative, public mechanism which would enable staff to recognise their scholarly practice in the site of their pedagogic and curriculum practices. To address this, a “social scholarship” tool in the form of scholarNet became the focus of development. In designing scholarNet, a number of factors required consideration in order to ensure that the site maximised opportunities to enhance scholarly practices within college HE.

Continuing professional development (CPD) versus scholarship

King and Widdowson (2009: 28) suggest in their research that a rather narrow conceptualisation of scholarship as CPD may still exist in college HE due to the historically situated focus and ethos of FE organisations which are not research-intensive, focusing instead on the higher skills needs of employers and widening participation. This is echoed by Gray, Turner and Carpenter (2014) where classifying scholarly activity and research as staff development has led many to conflate the two terms. Although this terminology may resonate, they (Gray et al) go on to argue that it ultimately acts as a self-fulfilling prophesy in delineating these activities as training. The focus on CPD, rather than research and scholarly activity within the prevailing discourse and practice of colleges, presents the danger of pursuing a reductionist approach to the development of academic practice, restricting the emergence of a traditional HE research culture (Young, 2002; Harwood and Harwood, 2004; Turner et al, 2009).
It was therefore clear that the development of scholarNet needed to focus primarily on supporting the establishment of college HE lecturers as HE academic practitioners while enabling “conversations and creativity central to research and scholarship” (Gray, Turner and Carpenter, 2014: 15) to thrive.

Confidence and capacity for scholarship

Although the constituency of staff in college HE is diverse, it is widely recognised that some staff come from more professional technical and vocational backgrounds with limited experience of academic practices related to scholarship. Staff working in college HE often have varying levels of experience, confidence and competence and, therefore, capacity for scholarship. To help address this scholarNet needed to embrace the prevalence and ubiquity of social networking in everyday life, replicating the social conditions and informal interactions within a professional, collaborative context.

This approach also presented the opportunity to capture informal and incidental learning, which although it happens by chance has the potential to be highly beneficial if formalised through “conscious attention, reflection and direction” (Marsick, Watkins and Lovin, 2013: 213) within scholarNet. The collective and connected nature of this approach is also considered to promote the further development of a “self-critical and cohesive academic community” (QAA, 2015), a key criteria which colleges are required to demonstrate in the pursuit of foundation degree awarding powers.

Making the invisible visible

In HE institutions, the workload of a lecturer is split between teaching and research. While this split varies, both elements are contractually binding with research allocation being explicitly linked to outputs which are quantifiable against the Research Excellence Framework.

In colleges, because the definition of scholarship is broad, reflecting Boyer’s four scholarships, this often means that scholarship is integrated in practice and is therefore less visible and tangible. That is not to say that this form of scholarship is in any way less valuable or beneficial. For managers, this creates a dilemma due to their responsibility to ensure the appropriate deployment of resources while achieving the best value for money and the highest return on investment.

scholarNet needed to provide a means of making the invisible visible, not only to enhance the scholarly culture of the organisation, but to enable all stakeholders to see a demonstrable impact of the time invested in scholarship and research.

Academic CV maintenance

While the primary focus of scholarNet was considered to be the development of scholarship capacity and a stronger HE community culture, this ambition in itself was not felt to be enough to encourage staff from across the organisation to engage. Maintaining current scholarly CVs centrally has always been somewhat problematic and annually updating word documents was unsatisfactory for staff, managers and the institution as a whole.
Scholarly CV entries in particular were difficult to continually update, with many staff only updating annually or in some cases much more sporadically. It was difficult to capture private scholarship which was taking place under the radar, never reported on, or captured anywhere, let alone shared. Academic CVs are an essential part of validations and revalidations of curriculum and are a key component of professional statutory and regulatory bodies accreditation processes; they are critical in ensuring appropriate academic staffing profiles associated with delivery. The requirement specification for scholarNet, therefore, needed to incorporate a facility to enable staff to manage and maintain their CVs by embedding elements of scholarly reflection where appropriate.

In summary, our analysis indicated that scholarNet needed to be an online space which would help staff to recognise scholarship, individually and collectively, thereby enabling personal confidence and capacity for scholarship. The new system needed to begin to create an inclusive and accessible research culture for all, including those who work part-time, and where those at the beginning of their scholarship journey would feel as at home as their more experienced and confident colleagues. We needed a system with social interaction elements to support the growth of the "self-critical and cohesive academic community" (ibid.) and to begin to establish and grow communities of practice and interest groups. We needed a web-based tool which staff would find easy to navigate and would use regularly, capturing, recording and sharing the scholarship which exists as part of day-to-day academic practices. In doing so the tool would also facilitate institutional oversight to support strategic planning of scholarship development and enhancement, while providing a valuable mechanism to enable staff to manage their academic profiles and CVs.

From vision to reality

In 2010 a team of student software developers worked in collaboration with subject discipline staff from the School of Engineering and Computing to create the conceptual design and underlying data model for scholarNet; in effect creating a blueprint for development supported by research into social networking technologies and practices and engagement with college staff.

In 2011 work began on bringing the blueprint into a working website, realising the vision of ‘social scholarship’. In January 2013, the scholarNet site was launched at the B&FC Annual HE Conference; a sustained programme of staff development was provided post-launch to support its introduction and use. The booklet and online guide describes the site thus:

scholarNet has been designed and developed to help you to capture and record all your scholarship and research activities in one place. scholarNet provides you with the facility to share reflections with others, and to follow and comment on other colleagues' posts, similar to Twitter, helping to foster and maintain a scholarly community. scholarNet is aligned to the UK Professional Standards Framework for supporting teaching and learning in HE and provides a platform for scholarly engagement both as an individual and as a member of a scholarly community. It is a web-based application compatible with tablet devices such as iPad and is a useful tool to evidence engagement with scholarship and research. (Greenall, 2011)
scholarNet

Upon entering the site, users are asked to log in with their standard college credentials. The first page provides brief summaries of recent reflections which have been shared with the community. Users can then navigate their way through the site using intuitive visual icons linked to the following sections:

- **My scholarNet**: view personal notifications associated with staff or projects they are following and maintain personal academic profile.
- **Scholarly Activity**: add, view or edit their scholarly activities and reflections and the number of research and scholarly activity hours they have recorded.
- **Scholarship Research and Development Scheme (SRDS) Projects**: view the blogs of research projects which are currently funded internally within the college.
- **My CV**: maintain and update their CV.

My scholarNet

On the My scholarNet page, staff are invited to establish their personal academic profile. This offers an excellent opportunity for initial reflection and helps concentrate the mind on the qualifications; teaching and learning experiences and achievements; interests, and lines of scholarly enquiry that an individual would like to publicise. These profile statements are an excellent way to critically self-reflect on areas for future development in terms of experience and qualifications; they are also an ideal way for people to find out about each other and identify similar research interests and possible synergies with other subject disciplines and their curriculum. This area also provides the facility for users to follow other staff within the organisation ensuring that notifications are received as new posts are shared.

Scholarly activity

Clicking on the scholarly activity button provides users with a list of personal scholarship activities which have been recorded. Activities and the associated reflections can be searched, viewed or edited if required. Based on the SARAD categories (Boyer, 1990; Hutchins and Shulman, 1999; Kreber and Cranton, 2000) the areas of scholarly activity identified on the scholarNet site are:

- **Research**: incorporating action, case study and evaluative research.
- **Scholarly authorship and design**: incorporating curriculum development, resource authoring, books, journal publications and learning resources.
- **Peer review**: incorporating journal reviewing, developmental teaching observations, artistic critique, external advising and external examining.
- **Industry consultancy and employer engagement**: incorporating industrial visits, industrial updating, liaison for curriculum development and industrial placements.
- **Academic reading**.
- **Evaluation and reflection**.

When individuals need to add an activity they simply select an activity type from the list and record their scholarship in four simple steps.
In step one, users simply add the details of the activity including the year in which it took place, the activity name and description, the start and end dates and the number of hours involved. Individuals can then choose whether the entry appears on their CV and whether the activity is complete or whether this will be added to in the future.

In step two, users are required to select the UK Professional Standards Framework outcomes (areas of activity, core knowledge and professional values) which are aligned to the activity. This element of recording the activity is considered as vital to support staff in engaging with the framework which represents their professionalism as a HE practitioner. Users are able to use scholarNet to build their account of professional practice which is required for professional recognition and fellowship with the HEA.

In step three, users are asked reflect on their activity. This element is essential to the success of scholarNet in that individuals are able to engage in activities which Mezirow (1991: 104-105) proposes are essential for learning and development to take place. Mezirow identifies that through the three levels of reflection on content, process and premise of activities, individuals are able to reflect on both teaching and learning-based experiences and research-based knowledge on teaching and learning in order to capture the scholarship which integrates the two. Teaching and learning is both a cognitive, individual process and a socially constructed activity which is situated within specific contexts (Putnam and Borko, cited in Burden, 2010); through engagement in reflection on a range of scholarly activities staff are able to more effectively exhibit the integration which characterises scholarship-informed teaching and learning.

Critical reflection is recognised as a powerful instrument in facilitating professional learning and development in that it entails “a state of doubt, hesitation, perplexity, or mental difficulty, in which thinking originates” (Dewey, 1933: 12). The reflection page is designed to provide a space for individuals to critically reflect on – and to work through – scholarly issues and problems discussing content, process and premise. These reflections have the potential to transform tacit knowledge, often gained from experiences in teaching and learning, into explicit knowledge drawing on experience and research (Schön, 1991; Sternberg and Horvath, 1999) which others can share and learn from. The scholarNet site facilitates this sharing and learning process, which individuals undertake, partly in their heads, privately and cognitively, through social enactment with other colleagues as part of a learning community (Lave and Wenger, 1991). This process is described by Hubermann as being where individuals “tinker” with new or amended techniques within their own context and then share the outcomes with others where it “becomes more systematic, more collective and explicitly managed…and transformed into knowledge creation” (cited by Hargreaves, 2000: 231).

When engaging in the critically reflective process which scholarNet facilitates, individuals have the potential to engage in self-study (Wilcox, 2009), an effective approach to the scholarship of teaching and learning. Self-study has the potential to take individuals beyond reflective practice in that it is “a marvellous way to respond positively to the things that take us by surprise, allowing us to turn disorienting dilemmas of practice into positive prompts for transformative learning” (Wilcox, 2009).

The scholarNet site takes the personal processes involved in reflective practices and makes them public, leading to another series of processes that need to reside outside the individual. Reflexivity, attending systematically to the context of knowledge production, has the potential to become a tool for connecting self with others, enabling critical discourse among the members of a particular community, in this case academic staff at B&FC.
At the close of the reflection page individuals are asked to make a decision to share with the community or to maintain the reflection as private. This is an important feature of the scholarNet system. Sharing the outputs of scholarly activity through the creation of a product or an artefact is well documented (Shulman, 1993; Hutchings and Shulman, 1999). Shulman argues that work that is valued is work that is presented to colleagues. The failure to make this wider connection weakens the sense of community (Shulman, cited in Glassick et al, 1997). Staff are encouraged to share reflections as this can more readily facilitate the types of connections and discussions which scholarNet was designed to encourage and make possible.

However, some staff may not feel that their scholarly reflection is ready to be shared with the community; having the option to keep their reflections private until such a time as they are confident to release them is considered an important aspect of developing personal scholarship confidence and capacity.

In step four, some activities require users to complete feedback which may be used centrally to evaluate the effectiveness of a given training provider or event organiser. At this stage the scholarly activity section is complete.

Scholarship Research and Development Scheme Projects

The Scholarship Research and Development Scheme (SRDS) offers individuals or groups of staff the opportunity to apply to support the funding of small scale action, case study and other research and scholarly projects. Each year the SRDS projects, with abstracts, are published on scholarNet and staff can link-up and engage with research projects that are both historical and current. This facility has the potential to foster cross-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary work for both staff and students. Within scholarNet, users can follow projects of interest in order to receive notifications of new activity.

My CV

As referred to earlier, the maintenance of an up-to-date, current and extensive CV is an essential feature of academic practice; the scholarNet site has a section where practitioners can manage and maintain their academic CV at any time. Personal details, qualifications, employment history, subject specialisms, membership of professional bodies and external examining can be added to the page and edited. A real strength to the CV function is the link to the scholarly reflection and scholarly activity pages in scholarNet where entries from all the categories of scholarly activity, excepting academic reading and evaluation, will be pulled through into a PDF generated form. We have chosen to exclude academic reading and evaluation and reflection from the CV facility because academic reading and personal reflections are not appropriate for inclusion in an academic CV. This functionality is further integrated into the college SharePoint intranet, where managers are able to view the current CV of any member of staff engaging with scholarNet.

Conclusion

As of November 2015, scholarNet has 251 active users with 2,018 reflections posted, of which 1,260 are shared with colleagues. Active usage has risen from 162 staff in 2013/14 to 251 in 2014/15 – an increase of 55%. The number of reflections posted has risen exponentially from
1,082 in 2013/14 to 2,018 in 2014/15 – an increase of 87%. More reflections are now shared with the wider academic community; shared reflections have risen from 745 to 1,260 – an increase of 69%. The wide range and scope of scholarNet postings reflects the diversity of scholarly practices undertaken by staff to support the curriculum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of postings</th>
<th>Scholarly activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>237</td>
<td>Action research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>172</td>
<td>Scholarly authorship and design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Peer review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>330</td>
<td>Industry consultancy and employer engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>763</td>
<td>Professional event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>413</td>
<td>Academic reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>216</td>
<td>Evaluation and reflection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1: Summary of scholarNet postings**

The response to scholarNet within the college has been incredibly positive and has had a demonstrable effect on scholarly identity, confidence and capacity. The asynchronous approach to social scholarship has served to remove barriers between academic disciplines, encouraging staff to work collaboratively and co-operatively outside of their normal context. The B&FC HE Directorate continues to evaluate the effectiveness and usability of scholarNet with a view to securing further enhancements though ongoing systems and staff development.

**References**


Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) (2013c) *Guidance on scholarship and the pedagogical effectiveness of staff: Expectations for Foundation Degree-awarding powers and for taught degree-awarding power*. Gloucester: QAA.


3.5 What are the motivators or barriers that affect further education lecturers’ engagement with continuing professional development?
SAMANTHA JONES, BEDFORD COLLEGE

Introduction
My research is aimed at understanding what motivates both college higher education (HE) and mainstream further education (FE) lecturers to engage in continuing professional development (CPD), and the barriers that can potentially limit their engagement. I have conducted research in an FE college, which I will call Mortmain College for the purposes of research anonymity. This research has suggested that both college HE and mainstream FE lecturers often choose not to engage in CPD. In this paper, I explore the barriers and motivators behind this decision and argue that development in scholarship is required across the sector.

CPD in context
Further education has been described as the sector of endless change, or the ‘Cinderella sector’, with colleges run under neo-liberal management styles, with regular cuts to funding. Because FE falls outside the 4 to 16-year-old funding ringfence, the Association of Colleges estimates that 16-18 funding has taken a cut of 8%. Between 2010 and 2014 the adult learning funding budget was cut by 35% (Tickle, 2014), with a further 24% cut expected for the 2015/16 academic year (Howse, 2015). These cuts to funding will, most likely, impact on CPD budgets, and this may potentially reduce the effectiveness of CPD by narrowing the opportunities offered to lecturers.

This reduction in opportunities in a sector with a diverse teaching staff can potentially create barriers to engaging with CPD. Wlodkowski (2003) calls for relevant learning models, where deliverers of CPD reflect lecturers’ needs and values because if individuals are unable to identify their own needs and values in the CPD, they will have a less positive attitude towards it and it will become less effective. This is a view supported by Peel (2005) and Villegas-Reimers (2003) who argue that needs, norms, cultural beliefs and practices all need to be considered or evaluated in order to create effective CPD. To create relevant learning models for both college HE and mainstream FE lecturers, I would argue that the present models of CPD need to be broadened. While all lecturers would benefit from vocational or industrial learning or updating, HE in FE lecturers may benefit from forms of CPD more akin to traditional forms of academic scholarship.

This pluralist view of CPD, of academic and vocational models, respects the ‘dual identity’ of all FE lecturers. This is a term coined by Robson (1998) to create a clear professional identity for lecturers who often have competing career identities. This duality of identity was championed, in terms of CPD, by the Institute for Learning (IfL) which advocated lecturers’ development of vocational and subject-specific knowledge, or dual professionalism (Kelly, 2013). FE lecturers’ relationship with their subject specialism and initial career (Career One) is widely acknowledged across the literature reviewed as a distinctive characteristic of the sector.
This complex relationship with lecturers’ initial careers indicates a need for diverse, contextually relevant methods and models of CPD. However, it could be argued that lack of focus on the pedagogies of the sector inhibits its development. Young and Guile (1997) argue that changes to the curriculum, and their resulting pedagogic adjustments, are ignored by CPD programmes in the sector, while Wahlberg and Gleeson (2003) discuss the “yawning gap” in knowledge about vocational pedagogic practice. Similarly Ofsted (2003) has also criticised the lack of the subject-specific nature of FE’s initial teacher training. This lack of knowledge about, and training in, subject-specific pedagogy arguably creates difficulties in generating contextually relevant CPD.

A second barrier that the sector has failed to overcome is the issue of who owns CPD, and whose priorities shape the agenda. Orr (2009) discusses how the IfL’s initiative to hand responsibility for CPD to lecturers failed to result in changed practice, or improve lecturers’ control over their CPD. Similarly, the East of England Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training (EECETT) (2008) concluded that CPD models used in the sector are owned by the organisation, rather than the individual, in practice being one-off staff development sessions meeting organisation priorities.

This suggests that there are structural barriers in FE that originate in a seemingly shared understanding that CPD is a management-driven activity, without clear pedagogies, which responds to the needs of the organisation only. This is supported by the contentions of EECETT (2008) and Orr (2009) that a lack of organisational support is one of the barriers to CPD within FE. This is widely viewed as being problematic for the sector and there is broad agreement that leadership support for CPD is central to its effectiveness. Villegas-Reimers (2003) argues that leadership must give the time and financial support for teachers to be the designers, implementers and participants of CPD.

The literature has many suggestions for best practice which could be used to create a context-rich learning experience for lecturers. Putnam and Borko discuss the application of “situative theory”, contending that “knowing and learning are situated in physical and social contexts” (Putnam and Borko, 2000: 12). This would suggest that learning through research, in the classroom and in the vocational workplace would be useful learning methods for all FE lecturers.

Situative learning necessitates a move away from one-off CPD sessions. It suggests that time and sustained practice will be important considerations in effective CPD and that teachers need sufficient time to engage with this. From their data, Powell et al (2003), argue that extended practice has an impact on knowledge, professional practice and evaluation.

The opportunity to evaluate learning and to critically reflect on practice is a benefit that presents itself when situative CPD takes place over a sustained period of time. However, both Kelly (2013), and EECETT (2008), have documented the difficulties that FE lecturers have in reflecting critically. One way to present sustained, situative, and critically reflective CPD over a period of time, is through active learning and experimentation. Garet et al (2001) conclude that giving teachers opportunities for hands-on learning in a coherent, content-specific manner is more likely to produce enhanced learning and skills. These opportunities need to be created in both academic and vocational CPD.

Another way to ensure context-rich CPD is to allow lecturers to update their skills with others in colleges, industry and university, allowing lecturers to choose who they feel provides relevance in their context. Collaborative CPD is widely recommended by scholars in this field.
and Cordingley (2015: 242) points to a body of evidence that peer-supported CPD works “as well for conscripts as for natural enthusiasts”. Villegas-Reimers (2003) concludes that teachers should be encouraged to work collaboratively from the beginning of their careers.

In summary, effective CPD needs to be personally and professionally relevant to meet the myriad needs of FE lecturers. Yet the diversity of lecturers and contexts within the sector is not well-researched in terms of either the pedagogy, or the development of its teaching staff, which suggests that more research is required in these areas. Secondly, ownership and selection of CPD in the sector is, in practice, limited, whereas research data points towards autonomous, critically-reflective models of CPD being the most efficient.

My research took place in a large, general FE college. Over the last six years the arrangements for CPD at the college appear to be typical around the sector, focused on conferences, which aim to offer staff a generalised update on teaching, learning and policy. These include training presentations to all lecturers, generally in large cohorts and workshops updating policy and college priorities. There are also opportunities for vocational or industrial updating; opportunities to return to industry, or receive industry-specific training, with the view to keeping skills and knowledge up to industry standards. To improve understanding of the ways in which the college’s staff conferences created barriers or motivated staff to engage with CPD, qualitative data was sought from the staff. This data was obtained through two methods; a series of semi-structured interviews, followed by a series of CPD interventions.

The qualitative interviews took place with seven lecturers from across the college and represented a convenience sample – a sample of the population that is easily accessible to a researcher – and care was taken to reflect the diversity of the college’s provision. The CPD interventions took place with five lecturers, all of whom have been anonymised to protect their identities and allow them to freely express their experiences. Two lecturers, Matthew and Freddie, took part in the interviews but were not selected for the CPD interventions as their circumstances changed over the period the research. The CPD interventions themselves aimed to understand whether the data from the interviews was what Argris and Schön (1974: 6) call espoused theory, or whether it translated into theory in use.

The following participants were selected for the interventions:

Roger: an advanced practitioner of over 10 years’ experience, teaching on HE and vocational courses. Roger planned to use the researcher as a mentor in his CPD intervention, with the aim of developing a coaching philosophy in his team.

Marian: a lecturer in her first year after completing her Certificate in Education. She teaches on vocational and HE programmes. Having recently started a BEd, and lacking confidence in her academic written work, Marian planned to use the researcher as a tutor, submitting drafts and receiving feedback on her academic work.

John: a vocational teacher of more than 10 years’ experience with strong Career One links, teaches entirely on vocational courses. John planned to return to a Career One setting to update himself on new MOT legislation and receive training on a new piece of equipment that has recently been delivered to the college workshop.

Paul: a lecturer with a PhD and more than 10 years’ experience, presently teaching at the college’s sixth form centre. Paul wished to create a community of practice with his peers, with the aim of sharing subject-related practice.
Darrell: a new advanced practitioner of less than four years’ teaching experience. Darrell teaches on both vocational and HE programmes. Darrell lacked confidence in grading lesson observations, which was made unsure when supporting lecturers to improve their grades. Darrell planned to shadow two members of staff when conducting graded lesson observations, in order to observe, discuss and compare grading.

Planning for these interventions was designed to be collaborative (Villegas-Reimers, 2003), and both the intervention and the evaluation were agreed between the participants and researcher to ensure quality (McNiff and Whitehead, 2011).

A final semi-structured interview was conducted at the end of each intervention to discuss the participants’ experiences.

Findings

Seven key strands of thinking about CPD were identified which can be further sub-grouped into factors which led to impact and factors which blocked effectiveness.

a. Factors which led to effectiveness

Participants regularly discussed how important it was for them that their CPD had an impact on their students, and much CPD was chosen along these lines (Guskey, 2000; Kelly, 2013 and Joyce and Showers, 1998). “I need to be able to show that it [the CPD] has impacted learners” (Paul). The lecturers were sensitive to the differing needs of all students in an FE and in a college HE environment and felt that their CPD needed to reflect their cohorts. It was clear that when these differences were not addressed, such as in the large training sessions favoured for the staff conference, barriers were created. At this point the sessions become “a morning completely wasted” (John), “patronising” (Paul) and were felt to offer ideas or initiatives that were “not going to work” (Matthew).

Lecturers saw their peers as a tool for learning, indicating a connective professionalism (Young and Guille, 1997). Experienced teacher Paul found that he was “past the point of updating on my own” and felt there was more benefit to him from creating a community, built around his subject area, to share and develop ideas with. Vocational lecturer John considered those still working in his Career One industry as his peers and used them as teachers to update his vocational knowledge. John regularly returns to his Career One setting to update his subject knowledge, often at weekends and holidays.

Career One appears to create complex relationships with CPD for the lecturers. For those lecturers with a membership to a national governing body, a greater sense of “enjoyment” (Roger), or a “wow” moment (John), seems to come from attending their CPD. Indeed, most lecturers, regardless of national governing body membership, express a preference to update in their vocational or academic subject area to “inform their teaching practice” (Freddie).

Conversely, for some lecturers, Career One can create a negative relationship with CPD. Matthew worked in an industry where “most companies view it [CPD] as dead money”, and he has carried this view of CPD into his subsequent career in FE. Paul was very clear that even if he felt that he had the time to engage with CPD, he still would not see a value in it.

The acknowledgement of the influence of Career One, and the practices from the related
industry or academic level of delivery, are central to the creation of context for lecturers. Data suggests lecturers were motivated by CPD which improves their practice and that this should be linked to context. There was a general theme, summarised by HE lecturer Roger, that “it motivates me to be a better teacher”. Secure subject knowledge was seen by both college HE and mainstream FE lecturers as important, and most agreed with Freddie that they benefited from “being informed and ahead of practice”. For most, but not all, lecturers the preference for subject-specific updating has links to Career One professionalism and this identity appears to increase all lecturers’ self-efficacy and self-esteem which reflects the work by Day et al. (2006). John recalls that, when in industry, CPD “was part of my job and made me a better technician”, which made him feel “more of a professional.”

It could be contended that it is the association with Career One that drives lecturers to exercise considerable levels of agency to access CPD they consider to be beneficial. Lecturers not only displayed agency in continuing to follow CPD programmes alongside covering for sick team members, introducing new courses, and coping with the first full year of teaching, but also negotiated their local environment to create CPD opportunities outside the college. This comprised CPD events including further academic qualifications, vocational updating and engaging in training courses.

The benefit to the staff of much of this CPD, whether academic or vocational, is an increase in professional confidence. All participants who completed their CPD interventions make similar observations in this regard. Whether it is improved confidence in using new equipment, or in supporting staff and students to develop, Marian sums up the typical improvements experienced: “I feel much more confident dealing with learners’ work and making a judgement on referencing and writing style”.

b. Factors which blocked impact

Compulsion to attend CPD events, a theme in all the interviews, appeared to create a view of CPD as a “trawler that catches fish; one big net to scoop up the lot” (John). The autonomy to choose CPD which appeared appropriate to the lecturer’s needs was an important element in a positive attitude towards learning (Wlodkowski, 2003) as “the resistance […] comes about because you are obliged to do it” (Freddie).

The lecturers demonstrated their resistance through a variety of responses. While some just found it irritating (Paul), others took action and “didn’t go back after the tea break” (Matthew) and some didn’t go at all (John), suggesting emotional, as well as physical, withdrawal. This negativity creates blockages not only for the lecturers who do not want to attend the CPD event, but also for lecturers who do. Marian found the fact that “everyone comes in, sits down and switches off” in whole-college CPD created a barrier for those who wished to engage.

The whole-college approach was not the only barrier encountered by lecturers; money, time and workload also presented challenges to engagement. EEETT (2008:14) data indicates that 59% of teachers felt time was a barrier to CPD. The data from the participants at Mortmain College supports this, with 57% of the sample identifying workload or time as a barrier to CPD. Several of the planned CPD interventions did not start, or were not completed as originally planned, as time and workload prevented it.

Perhaps unsurprisingly in a sector dealing with cuts to funding (Tickle, 2014), 86% of interviewees gave examples of CPD requests refused by line managers due to the lack of
budget. This is a greater percentage than the 33% of refused CPD requests recorded by EECETT (2008:14) and perhaps reflects the worsening economic position of the sector.

However, these figures conceal a more nuanced picture revealed by the staff. It appeared that some staff only chose to engage with elements of learning they found relevant to themselves and chose to work, rather than participate in CPD, on these occasions. It was also evident that where CPD is valued then some participants overcame these barriers. Lecturers often update themselves during the year and in their own time; HE in FE lecturers Roger and Marian were willing to self-fund to access their chosen CPD. However, their responses to this experience vary. Marian, who self-funded her BEd, feels that this lack of support from the college has demotivated her and will result in her leaving. Roger, conversely, sees self-funding as an opportunity to negotiate with the college to fund other related CPD.

This more nuanced picture continues to develop across the range of identities lecturers appear to develop (Fejes and Köpsen, 2014) which may influence the CPD with which they engage (Peel, 2005, Wlodkowski, 2003 and Villegas-Reimers, 2003). John chose vocational updating for his CPD intervention as he felt understanding the equipment presently used in industry should be his priority and would have the biggest impact on him and his students. Marian’s choice is also influenced by Career One. Having worked in an industry that values experience and skills over academic qualifications, she found herself without the requisite skills to confidently support the students she was teaching on HE programmes. She chose an intervention to address her Career One deficit and develop her academic abilities, indicating development of a new, emerging, identity.

**Conclusion**

Although only a small-scale study, this research points to significant factors in developing CPD in the FE sector.

The importance of recognising the context around FE students when delivering CPD, and measuring the impact of the CPD in terms of the students, were factors that promote engagement with CPD. Where lecturers saw students considered in CPD, staff appeared more likely to engage; where little understanding was shown of the sector’s students, motivation dwindled. The impact on students appeared to be important to all lecturers at some level. This suggests that stressing the onward benefits to the students could be a way to motivate lecturers to engage in CPD.

Context in relation to Career One, vocational, subject-specific or academic backgrounds was equally important. Whether this was creating a connective professionalism (Young and Guille, 1997), updating with national governing bodies, or developing new identities, the data indicates that lecturers respond best to CPD that reflects the identities they associate with. This data indicates support for a more individualised approach to lecturer development.

A more individualised approach may also increase motivation (Wlodkowski, 2003). Motivation appeared to improve where lecturers see a link, either to improving self-confidence, to the practice in the college, or to sharing with peers, but where this link was not evidenced it appeared that motivation dropped. The drop in motivation is compounded when lecturers are compelled to attend development sessions. Where lecturers were obligated to “endure” (Paul), motivation was low, and the data suggested that compulsion was a key concern for lecturers and that it should be minimised. However, where personal interest was higher,
lecturers’ motivation improved and they were able to display significant agency to access CPD. Data suggests HE in FE lecturers chose to engage with qualification-based programmes outside the college programme, as did vocational lecturers whose preference was vocational scholarship. This suggests that a CPD programme offering some diversity of opportunity is likely to result in higher levels of lecturer engagement.

Sharing and collaboration in different forms was chosen by many lecturers as a development method, as was context-specific CPD, reflecting the vocational practice or identity of the lecturers. Lecturers chose CPD to improve their confidence in neglected areas of practice and focused on their students, although were sometimes unsure how to measure impact on both. This data offers clues as to CPD methods that may produce higher levels of engagement.

Where lecturers chose not to engage with CPD, time, workload and money were given as the barriers. However, the data gives a picture of the variable impact of these issues with some lecturers more able to overcome these obstacles than others. Perceived value and levels of agency appear to be the differentiating factors between whether lecturers overcame barriers or not.

The context in FE in relation to lecturers, students and teaching is diverse. However, the data suggests that it is this diversity that needs to be addressed in order to provide CPD opportunities that will be valued by all lecturers. This approach necessitates a move away from the compulsory ‘one size fits all’, to models that allow lecturers to share and collaborate on development that has meaningful outcomes for themselves and their students.

References


3.6 Integrating research meaningfully into the student learning experience

CATHY SCHOFIELD, HE LECTURER IN PSYCHOLOGY, TRURO AND PENWITH COLLEGE

Introduction

With the teaching-research nexus high on the agenda of UK higher education (HE) policymakers, university administrators and faculty, this paper aims to outline how this may be interpreted through interventions designed to enhance students’ scholarly activity in a sector not renowned for its research activity – further education (FE) colleges.

The student-focused application of the teaching-research nexus is research-informed teaching which has been a much desired aim within HE teaching in the UK for some time. It has been promoted through the Higher Education Funding Council for England’s (HEFCE’s) funding initiative, the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund (TQEF), for “the development of learning and teaching strategies and research-informed teaching” (Higher Education Academy (HEA), 2013: 3) with a specific funding strand open to the ‘less research-intensive’ institutions (Department for Education and Skills, 2004). There are many interpretations of the terms research-informed, research-led, research-engaged and research-enhanced teaching. Some may interpret this by ensuring that the information imparted to students is based on empirical evidence. Others may apply the concept through their teaching practice being grounded in pedagogic research. Alternatively it may be that the students become actively engaged in research through lecturer-devised activities; the latter will form the subject of this case study.

College culture

Although FE colleges do not normally have a rich research culture, as the mainstay of their business is FE provision, this does not mean that the lecturers working on HE courses are not invested in the aim to make their delivery research-rich. In line with the House of Commons Select Committee on Science and Technology (2005), who claim that they “do not require that all teaching staff are research-active, but we do expect to see current research findings and research methods included in teaching”, many colleges provide rich research-informed teaching programmes (Healey, Jenkins, and Lea, 2014).

Indeed it is the structure of college HE that makes their provision ideally suited to provide research-rich activities, most notably due to the small cohort and class sizes, both of which are dimensions known to enhance student performance (Gibbs, 2010). In addition to this the variety of assessment methods available and open interpretation of the curriculum offered in their HE teaching, in comparison to the tighter curricula they are faced with within their FE teaching (Young, 2002), allows for teaching teams to be creative in both these aspects of course delivery; flexibility that might be unwieldy in larger institutions.

When it comes to curriculum design one issue that many college HE lecturers contend with is the lack of self-belief as the sector is often referred to as the ‘Cinderella sector’ in the educational press (BBC News, 2006; Cook, 2010; Hyland and Merrill, 2003). This is reinforced by the experiences of many college HE lecturers being made to feel inferior to their HE
institute colleagues (HEFCE, 2003). On this basis college HE lecturers may feel it all the more important to ensure that their programme is firmly grounded in research-enhanced experiences for fear of criticism from partner institutions. It is with the motivation of both carrot and stick that the psychology programme outlined here was devised, where research methods underpin all levels.

Case outlined

This is the case of a sub-degree in psychology and its Level 6 top-up both delivered at the same institution and in partnership with a university in the South West. There are several factors that have led to the smooth adoption of this integrated student research experience. Firstly, the same programme manager both wrote and now oversees all three years' provision across the two courses, offering an overview and a deep consideration of the building of research skills throughout the full degree. In addition to this the students benefit from a highly experienced team of trained teachers (Gibbs and Coffey, 2004) who have been working on the programmes for up to 16 years. The team work closely together and are passionate about creating highly experiential, meaningful learning opportunities, which enhance their graduates' transferable skills.

The focus on research methods is essential as it is often seen as a necessary evil by social science students who, if not planning to continue in academia, may see no point in engaging in a range of new skills if it is not going to be of obvious use in their future. The second barrier is the implicit links that students may draw from maths to methods, arithmetic anxiety (Baloglu and Zelhart, 2003). For these reasons it is important to ensure that student see the modules as vital in the understanding of the discipline as a whole, and that any numbers are purely representative of behaviour. It is also important that research, as an activity, should not suddenly appear in their final year of study, but is something that they have been working towards throughout the entire course. Research activities become normalised, not purely through the research-focused modules, but throughout the entire course.

Theoretical underpinning

The approach taken to developing a research-engaged curriculum was similar to the model of ‘Student as Producer’ proposed by the University of Lincoln. Student as producer research-engaged teaching was defined as:

A fundamental principle of curriculum design whereby students learn primarily by engagement in real research projects, or projects which replicate the process of research in their discipline. Engagement is created through active collaboration amongst and between students and academics. (Neary, Saunders, Hagyard and Derricott, 2014: 9)

Such an approach was possible as one person was the programme manager across both qualifications and that the BA had been developed as a natural progression route from the associate degree. With this overview the manager could work with the teaching team to integrate research aspects to each module, ensuring a range of experiences, but with an explicit focus on research activity on at least one module per year.
Within the curriculum it was important that the students learned, not only from the lecturer-led input of lectures and workshops, but also from their peers. This was achieved firstly through socio-cognitive conflict, based on task-related divergent thought, which has been shown to increase learning through a deeper cognitive engagement with the material (Darnon, Doll and Butera, 2007). The second interactive link was the feedback from previous students about the processes the newer cohort were to undergo, a technique that has proved positive in raising self-efficacy and learning in research methods modules (Murphy, 2015).

The final element to be introduced was the concept of experiential learning. Kolb and Kolb (2005) have shown that through concrete experiences students can reflect more meaningfully through personal elaboration, which leads to abstract hypothesising and ultimately the implications on how to act on what has been learnt.

Year one research experiences

All students sit a compulsory research methods module during the first year where they are instructed on the philosophical and scientific principles of psychological research, in line with the British Psychological Society (BPS) requirements (BPS, 2010). The module introduces the students to four different data collection methods and their associated analysis techniques, all delivered experientially to allow for genuinely reflective critical engagement with each technique (Kolb and Kolb, 2005). These experiences set the students up for their final task of the year, which is a small group research design based on hypothetical scenarios set by the lecturer, assessed by individual research proposals. The groups are lecturer-formed to ensure that there is a mix of abilities and experiences within the group in order to maximise socio-cognitive conflict (Butera and Darnon, 2010).

In addition to their formal classes and assignments there is an opportunity for the first year students to get a taste of the second year by introducing the second year students, and their research projects, throughout the year. This involvement enhances their confidence in their gradually acquired research methods skills and knowledge, and makes them stakeholders in the second year students’ research projects.

Year two research experiences

The research proposal devised in groups at the end of the previous year prepares the returning second year students for their two Level 5 research-based modules. To extend their knowledge and skills from the Level 4 research methods module they undertake an advanced data analysis module utilising more challenging quantitative and qualitative forms of analysis. The data used for analysis in these portfolios is data that the group produced in the cognitive psychology module sat in the first year. This adds personal context to the data and a deeper understanding of what processes underpinned the collection so more meaning can be gleaned from its interpretation (Rogers, Kuiper, and Kirker, 1977).

Alongside this is the group project module, where students are assigned to groups to design and implement a research project based on BPS digest studies. In order to ensure that they come to a design within a suitable timeframe their first assessment is to present their group designs by week six. In order to maximise this opportunity the groups present their ideas, as a work in progress, to the first year students who are asked to comment, ask questions or make suggestions. The session is generally very productive with a range of issues emerging, which the second year research groups must subsequently evaluate for use in their study.
This is excellent preparation for any dissemination where they may need to show reflection, or to defend their approach. The interactive session allows the first year students to realise just how far they have come with respect to their understanding of research methodology and to get a taster of what is to come in the years ahead.

The second year students reflect on the contributions of their student colleagues and redesign as appropriate. In order to pilot their experimental procedures or questionnaire designs they employ the services of the first year students who are encouraged to help identify any potential pitfalls. This repeated interaction between the year groups allows the first year students to feel invested in the projects, and the second year students to involve a group they can trust to be their critical friends. The second assessment for the group project module is for each student to write up an independent five-thousand word lab report, where they may each take their own view of the data, focusing on different variables or theoretical explanations. This allows for individual assessment in a form that reflects the writing of a journal article. The final part of the assessment process is the Level 5 conference day where all second year groups present their work to the first year students. Again both parties benefit as the second year are confident to present to a familiar crowd. Equally the first year students are interested to see the results of the projects that they have witnessed develop over the preceding nine months. The day is a celebration of hard work and achievement. The day finishes with the relieved second year students handing over the metaphorical baton to the first years by having an informal question and answer session on what pitfalls they experienced throughout the process, and what they would tell themselves if they could go back to the beginning of the process.

Year three research experiences

The third year top-up degree does not have quite the fluidity in approach as the previous two years as students from many sub-degrees progress on to this BA, but for those who did take the psychological route throughout, they can see this transition as a natural development in their research skills.

All degree students undertake the dissertation module. Project topics are often based on an idea devised by the student. We encourage students to make links to potential employment opportunities and their projects are often related to their employment context or a voluntary position that they hold. Occasionally there are projects driven by a lecturer's interest but where the students are fully involved in the design of the study. Each year there are also commissioned projects from local charities and social enterprises that need research questions addressed but lack the time or skills to do this themselves.

Whichever approach is being taken it is supported in several ways. Each student has weekly access to a supervisor who will be in charge of research direction, act as a sounding board and offer general motivation. In addition to this there is a compulsory weekly lab class where each stage of the research process is introduced at the appropriate moment. Groups are split by approach, so focus on qualitative, experimental, and questionnaire methods can be targeted. The first assignment, combining the Level 4 and approaches, is a timely research proposal where the students specify their design and how it is grounded in evidence. On passing the ethics board scrutiny the BA students develop their methods calling on the Level 5 students for piloting in a less formal way than was undertaken at the previous level.
The students all complete an individual report in the standard dissertation format, but those who were undertaking the commissioned research for outside agencies act as editors for an additional institutional report. These reports focus on the specific needs of the agency, are briefer and written in a more engaging style, with the audience at the fore when considering forms of communication.

A three-day student conference completes the year, where the second years are invited to learn from the third year students with respect to design evaluation and presentation skills. Again the opportunity is afforded to them to have informal discussions with the third years as to the challenges of the process and to take advice from them about their experiences.

**Reflections**

Year on year the teaching team have witnessed an improvement in the quality of the applied research being produced by students. This extends to their critical analysis of peer-reviewed papers in their substantive modules. Interestingly, students who were offered the opportunity to undertake the commissioned research projects were those most likely to progress on to Masters courses. The reason for this is unclear, as these opportunities were not offered to the most academic students, but to those who were known to have interests in the topics available and had shown themselves to be reliable and able to listen and interpret the brief most accurately. The processes are not complete or static, but develop each year utilising opportunities as they arrive and capturing inspiration from team members as it occurs.

**References**


Young, P. (2002) 'Scholarship is the word that dare not speak its name': Lecturers' experiences of teaching on a higher education programme in a further education college. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 26(3): 273-286.
Fostering an institutional scholarly culture: a case study from Newcastle College

JONATHAN EATON AND LAURA GOWER, NEWCASTLE COLLEGE

Abstract

The college higher education (HE) sector is exceptionally diverse. Institutional approaches to scholarship should be clearly contextualised according to the nature of academic provision offered by individual colleges and the needs of the communities which they serve. This case study will provide an overview of the institutional approach to scholarship developed by Newcastle College.

The approach to scholarship at Newcastle College can be conceptualised through three interconnecting lenses. Scholarship is viewed as a means of civic engagement which produces outcomes of benefit to the wider community, following Boyer’s concept of the scholarship of engagement. Specialist projects support future curricula development, particularly in the field of cyber security. The concept of Student as Producer, developed at the University of Lincoln, has been trialled as a means of engaging our student body in research engaged teaching and learning.

This institutional model for scholarship has demonstrated considerable impact in increasing the proportion of staff engaged in scholarly activity and supporting our ongoing application for taught degree awarding powers.

Introduction

Newcastle College is one of the largest providers of college HE in the UK. Currently almost 3,000 students are enrolled on programmes at Levels 4, 5, 6 and 7. The HE curriculum portfolio is firmly vocational in nature with specialisms in a range of areas including digital skills, creative industries, engineering and business. HE programmes are designed to meet the needs of regional industry and provide firm employability outcomes for graduates. Newcastle College inhabits a complex local HE ecosystem, and shares the city with two large universities.

Newcastle College was one of the first two colleges to secure foundation degree awarding powers in 2011, alongside New College Durham. As part of a wider group structure, entitled Newcastle College Group (NCG), the college has undergone an intensive scrutiny process to obtain taught degree awarding powers in recent years. NCG has HE provision at three colleges, including sites at Kidderminster and Skelmersdale. The majority of foundation degrees offered at Newcastle College are currently validated by NCG. The authors are involved in the management of research and scholarly activity across NCG HE provision, although the focus of this paper is concentrated on Newcastle College.
A model for scholarly activity

The challenges in inculcating a culture of scholarly activity within college HE are well known (Simmons and Lea, 2013). In 2013, Newcastle College adopted a new research and scholarly activity strategy which sought to provide institutional direction for research across HE provision. This strategy built on discussions around the nature of scholarship in the college which had commenced in 2011 and persisted through a variety of forms during the intervening period. By its nature, the research and scholarly activity model adopted is a reflection of the specific context in which the institution operates. It should therefore not be viewed as a solution which can be indiscriminately applied across other institutions, without significant consideration of localised socio-economic drivers.

The strategy acknowledged the value of Boyer’s model of scholarship in validating diverse forms of scholarly activity (Boyer, 1990). Feedback from professional development events demonstrates that Boyer’s model is particularly useful in encouraging college HE staff to situate their practice within an existing theoretical framework. Indeed, the process of developing a model for scholarly activity was shaped in recognition that such practice was not necessarily new, but rather had been ongoing across the institution for a significant period of time, albeit in ways which were often not defined within existing notions of research. For this reason, a key aspect of embedding the institutional model involved considerable focus on the use of language to define and articulate scholarly activity across a broad range of discipline areas. The notion of research is particularly problematic within a vocational context, and diverse distinctions within an overarching framework of scholarship were therefore to be welcomed (Rogerson, 2014).

The model for scholarly activity adopted by Newcastle College can be interpreted and applied in a number of different ways. The following sections explore the adoption of the model at institutional, discipline and student level.

The civic college

With a few notable exceptions, HE providers have historically served a geographic hinterland from which students have frequently been drawn and graduates often returned to serve in employment. In recent decades, the hinterland of the university sector may be observed to have grown considerably, to embrace a national – and often international – perspective. Yet, on the whole, colleges continue to maintain their focus on local and regional needs. This is particularly the case in the era of further education (FE) area reviews structured around local enterprise partnership regions.

It would undoubtedly be mistaken to claim that universities have lost their regional focus. Indeed, in recent years a new conceptual model has emerged which values the role of the university within its civic context. This model of the civic university, which has been adopted by a number of northern institutions, recognises the contribution which HE providers make to the social, cultural and economic capital of the cities in which they reside (Goddard and Vallance, 2013). The model argues for a reorientation of teaching, research and outreach within the university to serve the wider civic community.

The potency of the civic university as a defining concept can be similarly applied to the college HE sector, through the notion of the civic college (Eaton, 2015). This reflects the historical origins of colleges as institutions which directly served the local population and contributed to the development and sustainability of a skilled industrial workforce, in some
ways recapturing the mission of redbrick universities during the Victorian era. At a deep level, the concept of the civic college recognises that staff and students are drawn in the main from local communities, many of which are facing acute challenges during an era of austerity. Moreover, the role of college HE providers in widening participation in HE and delivering curricula responsive to employer needs reinforces the civic responsibility of such institutions.

The idea of the civic college is grounded in a theoretical framework connected to Boyer's later thinking on the purpose of scholarship in modern society. While Boyer's model of four types of scholarship has proven influential across the college HE sector, his views on wider engagement have frequently been somewhat overlooked. In a later article, Boyer framed his model within the overarching concept of the scholarship of engagement (Boyer, 1996). He argued forcefully that the purpose of scholarship should be oriented towards addressing the problems and challenges faced by communities outside of academia, rather than being disconnected from ordinary daily life.

The concept of the civic college informs the strategic approach to scholarly activity adopted by Newcastle College. This is evidenced by a number of projects undertaken to support community bodies in addressing problems for which they themselves have little research capability. Student projects, both within and without the curriculum, constitute a considerable resource for research and inquiry. During the 2014/15 academic year, undergraduates and postgraduates undertook a series of externally commissioned research projects to enrich and support the activities of organisations working with the local community. Partner organisations included a local cultural heritage hub, children's book centre and a city farm. In each case, the commissioned project was designed to deliver real outcomes for the partner organisations, rather than function as an academic exercise to fulfil an assessment brief. During the 2015/16 academic year, Newcastle College has contributed to a collaborative city-wide project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund to develop an iBook city trail recording cultural life in Newcastle during the First World War. Research internships on the project have been offered to students from both Newcastle College and Northumbria University, encouraging the student body from across the city to work together for the benefit of the wider community.

The college as an entity represents a substantial asset for the city in terms of knowledge exchange. Since 2013, Newcastle College has worked in partnership with the Lit & Phil Library (the largest independent library outside of London) to facilitate an annual public lecture series. These events are designed to provide free opportunities for members of the general public to engage with cutting edge thinking and innovative ideas in the centre of Newcastle. Speakers have included Professor Robert Winston, Professor Sugata Mitra and Lord Matt Ridley.

Niche research in specialist areas

The Active Cyber Security Learning in a Vocational Higher Education project illustrates how a scholarly culture can be fostered though specialist projects within particular disciplines aligned with regional and national priorities. The Digital Skills Academy offers a Foundation Degree in Cyber Security and has significant expertise in this field. The UK National Cyber Security Strategy, published in 2011, advocated the Government's desire to position the UK as a secure location for pursuing business opportunities in cyberspace. In doing so, it recognised the need to build resilience against cyber attacks and ensure relevant education and training opportunities were delivered to strengthen the capacity of the sector (Cabinet
Office, 2011; Cabinet Office, 2014). The project, funded by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and the Higher Education Academy, sought to develop a model for foundation degree students to act as agents of knowledge exchange at the interface between academia and industry through working with sector practitioners and experts. The project aimed to revolutionise teaching and learning on the FdSc programme through adopting high impact pedagogic practices (Kuh, 2008). To a certain extent, the project sought to rediscover the somewhat revolutionary origins of the foundation degree, positioned directly at the interface between the lecture theatre and the workplace (Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), 2010). The project enhanced scholarly activity across the Digital Skills Academy specifically through engaging with the wider cyber security community, staff secondments and student internships.

The project engaged with the wider cyber security community in a number of different ways. The college worked with a series of local employers to provide live briefs and exercise scenarios for students. This gave students the opportunity to work with the latest cyber security technology and helped bring student knowledge and skills in line with industry requirements. A series of events also took place including a breakfast event for industry practitioners, the launch of a specialist teaching facility named the Turning Lab, and the UK Workshop on Cyber Security Training and Education. These events involved staff, students, and representatives from industry and looked at issues facing the wider community and how they might be resolved. Focusing on key current debates these events created a space for the wider community to highlight, explore, debate, and resolve issues facing the cyber security industry.

Through the project, teaching staff within the Digital Skills Academy were released to undertake secondments within an industry setting. These enabled staff to go out into industry and complete projects that enhanced their knowledge and skills. This scholarly activity was later transferred into their teaching and students were able to benefit from an enhanced curricula taught by those at the forefront of industry. The secondments had an added benefit of improving staff confidence in engaging in scholarly activity. As a result, academic staff presented aspects of their scholarly activity at a national conference.

In addition to engaging in live exercise scenarios and attending and participating in events, students were given the opportunity to further engage in scholarly activity through an internship programme. Five student internships were offered through the project and helped to further engage the student body in research engaged teaching and learning. The project highlighted the need for an increased awareness of cyber security across all levels of educational delivery. The interns, with the support of teaching staff, developed and delivered cyber security training sessions to enhance understanding to internal and external audiences.

The project has enabled the Digital Skills Academy to enhance scholarship in several different areas. Through the project it can be seen how scholarship has benefited the wider community, enhanced the curriculum and engaged the student body in research engaged teaching and learning. Students on the FdSc Cyber Security programme benefited from the project through experiencing innovative pedagogies and sustained engagement with employers and industry practitioners, which allowed them to develop the appropriate professional skillsets currently noted as frequently lacking in science, technology, engineering and maths graduates (Medhat, 2014).
Student as Producer

The student experience is central to the provision of HE. It is widely acknowledged that the student profile of many college HE providers is markedly distinct from that of universities. In particular, college HE students are more likely to be over the age of 25, to study part-time or come from backgrounds with no tradition of HE participation than their peers within the university sector (Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), 2006). From a pedagogic perspective, this potentially means that the college HE student body possesses a particular reservoir of knowledge which could enrich the classroom experience. The role of students as researchers in their own right has been explored in a number of recent studies (Healey and Jenkins, 2009; Healey, Jenkins and Lea, 2014).

In exploring possible approaches to the synthesis of teaching and research applicable to a vocational context, Newcastle College found particular resonance with the concept of ‘Student as Producer’ (Neary and Winn, 2009). Pioneered at the University of Lincoln, but owing its gestation to a series of previous projects at other institutions, Student as Producer seeks to re-energise the relationship between teaching and research through recasting the role of students as producers, rather than consumers, of knowledge. The intellectual origins of Student as Producer can be traced back to the pioneering work of the critical theorist Walter Benjamin. At its heart, Student as Producer encourages students to actively engage in the project of HE and, in doing so, reimagine both the purpose and the future of the institution. As such, it possesses deep connections to meaningful student engagement. Within the learning environment, Student as Producer demands that students engage in research or activities which emulate research throughout their studies. It values the outputs of student research, whether in the form of creative works, publications or presentations. Student as Producer challenges traditional hierarchies within higher education, through advocating that the nature of learning should be dynamic, uncertain and fluid, rather than consisting solely of the passive reception of knowledge by the student body. Student as Producer therefore has radical implications for the use of technology and the design of learning spaces.

For the college HE sector, the value of Student as Producer lies in its recognition of the existing knowledge and expertise possessed by the student body. It aligns with the identity of the college HE student as both learner and practitioner. Student as Producer therefore has the potential to reinvigorate teaching and learning. Taking a radical approach to pedagogic innovation inevitably demands a measured approach. The adoption of Student as Producer at Newcastle College has been facilitated over a number of years, to ensure that a supportive framework is in place. The college hosts an annual Student as Producer Conference and publishes a student-led academic journal. Student as Producer workshops are delivered to staff as part of the continuing professional development offer. A project marketing strategy ensures that the concept and benefits of Student as Producer are communicated clearly and frequently both inside and outside of the institution. Perhaps most radically, academic teams are challenged to identify aspects of Student as Producer within curriculum design and delivery during validation and revalidation events. While the adoption of Student as Producer by programme teams is not mandatory, it is encouraged and visibly valued. This use of the validation process as a means of encouraging and measuring the spread of Student as Producer across the curriculum portfolio emulates the approach taken by the University of Lincoln. It also emphasises the value of possessing degree awarding powers in terms of utilising institutional quality assurance processes to promote pedagogic innovation.
Conclusion

This paper has explored the concept of scholarly activity at Newcastle College through a series of lenses. The overview presented above is by no means exhaustive and could, for example, be supplemented by a multiplicity of disciplinary perspectives which supplement, or indeed challenge, the strategic perspective. The development of the institutional model for scholarly activity has not been linear in nature. Rather, it has been enriched and invigorated by reacting in a timely manner to emerging opportunities both regionally and nationally. The model has also been strengthened by an understanding of best practice from other HE providers. Institutions from across the college HE sector are encouraged to explore their own approaches to scholarly activity through the lenses outlined above, provided that their practice is specific to their own individual context.

References


3.8
Mending the gap in professional education.
HELEN CASEY, NEW COLLEGE DURHAM

Introduction
This is a summary of the presentation delivered at the Association of Colleges’ (AoC) conference (June 2015) about how, in a professional learning context, service users and students can learn together. As partners in learning, developing innovative projects, students and service users can make a genuine contribution to research and knowledge. They can also be involved in a form of scholarship which enhances their personal and professional development and breaks away from the traditional classroom-based teacher/student divide, which promotes their independent learning and skills.

By creating a learning environment where people share their experiences and knowledge, traditional barriers that exist between people on the receiving end of professional support and those providing it can be removed. This is an account of an innovative project which took place in a children’s centre in South Shields, North East England. It involved nine parents, eight social work students and one community health nursing student from New College Durham who have broken new ground as pioneers of the first ‘gap mending programme’ in the UK. The outcomes of this first programme have created a legacy for other parents and changed the way that professionals can learn from those they are seeking to support.

The success of this pilot has lead to the establishment of further gap mending programmes and widened the professional context within which this approach can apply.

Background
In 2003 a new degree for social work was established and a key feature of the new curriculum was the requirement for service user and carer involvement in all aspects and stages of teaching, course management and delivery. The concept of involving people who are traditionally on the receiving end of social work support/services was not new. Many previous Diploma in Social Work (DIPSW) programmes were endeavouring to do this in parallel with Community Care Act legislation/management practice which placed a new focus on people at the centre of services (Department of Health, 1991).

I recall from my own student DIPSW days that this usually involved someone coming to talk about their experiences of having used mental health or disability services which did not meet their needs, let alone interests, and having a social worker who did not do enough to support them. I never saw them again so never understood what difference coming to share their experiences with students made, although I would have liked to have told them how much it helped me to determine to always go the extra mile to support people.

The requirement to involve service users and those with informal caring responsibilities – as opposed to those in a formal, paid caring role – to this new level was unique to professional education. Particularly as ring-fenced funding was provided by the Government to support and sustain this innovation. The past 12 years have seen the development of a wide range of ways in which people with experiences of receiving services have contributed to social work
education and training. Interpretation and application varies widely and still involves service users and carers coming in to give a one-off talk about their experiences, which is valuable if it has a positive impact on students’ professional development. For me, as a lecturer at New College Durham, where I studied as a social worker, the challenge within the BA (Hons) Social Work degree programme has been to widen the scope of involvement and promote dialogue as well as participation between service users, carers and students.

**National and international links**

My practice in this context has been significantly developed since I became aware of PowerUs – an international network of teachers, academics, service users and students – who introduced ‘gap mending’ to describe methods of inclusion that result in more equal practice (Heule, Askheim and Beresford, 2011). The PowerUs Partnership was established in 2011 by those who developed this method of teaching at Lund University, Sweden, in 2005, and lecturers who ran a similar course at Lillehammer University College, Norway, with members of Shaping our Lives – a lead service-user organisation in the UK.

In 2013 I was invited to Lund University by Cecilia Heule who pioneered the gap mending approach there, to consider the cross-cultural context of service user involvement in social work education. The uniqueness of the commitment to service user and carer involvement in social work education in the UK was central to the discussion among Swedish, Norwegian and Danish lecturers who are working to achieve similar goals within their own governments. The culmination of two days’ work led to the production of a charter of international principles launched at the Social Work Action Network 2014 Conference.

On my return from Sweden I was supporting social work student placements within a children’s centre where student social workers were excluded from joining parent support groups by parents. One parent later explained: “When you hear the words ‘social worker’ it fills you with so much fear that you want to run a mile.” Twelve parents were attending a Solihull parenting course over a three month period. This was a compulsory requirement as part of their individual plans working towards reconciliation with their children.

In discussion with the children’s centre manager, and the student who felt most affected by the exclusion, a voluntary meeting was offered to explore the barrier that clearly existed between parents and social workers. Nine parents came to the first meeting which established the beginning of ‘mending the gap between parents and professionals’. As the first gap mending programme to be piloted in the UK, interest was attracted from managers and commissioners in South Tyneside as a potential model which could benefit similar groups in the community. And a gap mending approach has been incorporated within teaching at London Southbank University by PowerUs member John Macdonough. The pilot programme has also benefitted from the full support of Dr Hazel Douglas, who introduced and developed the Solihull Approach, as some parents identified their interest to become the first parents to train as trainers of future Solihull parenting programmes. This was one of many unanticipated outcomes, which have been a key feature of the gap mending approach.

**The parents**

The group of parents who attended the first of four meetings leading to the development of the first gap mending programme consisted of seven mothers and two fathers. All of them had different experiences and different stories to tell, but they were united by the common
experience of having lost, or been separated from, their children by social workers. More common ground was shared in the first meeting. Nine of the parents had been together during the 12-week Solihull parenting programme and therefore knew each other and felt comfortable with sharing views and personal experiences. It was fantastic to see how motivated these parents were to have their voice heard on a subject that provoked deep and difficult emotions. It was testament to the strong relationship that had been built between parents and the children’s centre manager, who had delivered the Solihull parenting training programme, that the discussion lasted twice as long as anticipated and opened the dialogue for further meetings.

Common ground identified in the first meeting included agreement by parents that the best experiences of social work intervention led to “children being placed in a safe environment”. They then went on to share their worst experiences:

- Poor/negative communication – one parent described herself and her child being reduced to tears by the way they were spoken to.
- Not being prepared – different social workers going over the same information, making each visit time-consuming.
- Bringing up the past – even where the outcome was positive, there were many strong views shared about the use of past history against people, as one father observed: “Why send us on courses to change our behaviour if they are going to keep going on about our past...makes you think ‘why bother, they are never going to see us any differently’”.
- Home visits – acknowledgement this may be appropriate, however, a social worker turning up on a doorstep unannounced can feel threatening and intrusive; examples were shared of health workers and social workers’ visits.
- Appointments – often these are made without taking into account the person’s availability or circumstances.

Parents agreed that a better approach would include:

- Professionals saying things differently, as one mother recalled: “I’ll never forget the way the social worker spoke to me, as if I wasn’t even a human being, let alone a mother to my children. She made me feel this (fingers demonstrating extremely small) big”.
- Believing people can change (echoing earlier comment above).
- Advocacy support, as explained by a mother new to the area: “I knew nobody and just wanted some support from someone who understood what I was going through, who could support me with getting my points across. I have managed to do this, but it is not easy when you are upset and stressed”.
- Parents agreed that generally they feared speaking up for themselves at meetings and had felt “invisible”.
- Information explained better – everyone agreed that they were not sufficiently informed about relevant matters, processes, or their rights, often due to complicated terminology/letters or professionals “just not bothering to tell you anything”.
- There was some agreement that the information focus was on the child, therefore it didn’t really matter if parents did not understand, again reinforcing their feeling of being invisible.
I recall how humbled I felt at that meeting, listening to people’s experiences of the profession I represented which, apart from the one positive point about the importance of children being placed in a safe environment, had demonstrably let people down. We agreed that we had identified some important gaps that needed to be mended. Over three further meetings we worked together to plan the content of the programme, which was key to empowering parents as pioneers in this exciting project; for the first time in their experience they were not joining in something where others had pre-determined the content. In this context, social work students would be recruited as co-participants.

The students

Eight social work students and one community health student from New College Durham took part, resulting in a balance in numbers between parents and students. Emphasis was placed on committing to the programme, which would either have been during their study time, or with the support of their placement supervisors as the programme was run during placements rather than in college.

The programme

A central philosophy to the gap mending approach is for people to meet as people first, therefore the course began with an introductory activity to enable participants to come together prior to teaching sessions. Parents chose to meet with students for the first time at the children’s centre as it was an environment they were familiar with and felt comfortable in. For the same reason all the sessions were held there.

The introductory session was run by an independent facilitator to enable teaching staff to participate at the same level as parents and students. Although ice-breakers were introduced, discussion developed naturally over tea, coffee and cake which became a theme of the gap mending sessions. The facilitator introduced a self assessment sheet for each participant to note down what they expected to gain from the programme for themselves, the group and in their role. In each column individuals were asked to note three things that they would like to understand, know and be able to do by the end of the programme. This was a useful aid to gathering information for evaluation purposes.

The programme content was introduced to students by parents and the main themes of the gap mending sessions agreed:

Week one – introduction/activity
Week two – establishing ground rules/confidentiality/communication skills
Week three – professional standards, Health and Care Professions Council, The College of Social Work, written communication
Week four – presentation skills and reflection
Week five – advocacy and empowerment
Week six – professional values, medical model/social model
Week seven – emotional well being/resilience, relaxation
Week eight – presentations, evaluation/defining project outcomes and new opportunities
Week nine – celebration of achievement/certificate event

The themes of these sessions were largely informed by the gaps identified by parents at the first meeting. However, what brought them to life were the discussions which
involved sharing both experiences and learning together. A full account of the gap mending programme content, discussion and resources, which may be useful to other education programmes, will be made available at a later stage. However, to provide a flavour examples include:

**a. Written communication**

In one exercise students were asked to write a letter to parents to arrange an initial meeting. A brief outline was provided about the parent they were writing to and the letters were signed with different names so that the students could not be identified. Parents read the letters and provided feedback based upon several factors:

- How they would feel receiving the letter
- Examples of good and bad practice within the letter
- How the letter could be improved upon

Interestingly, what most students realised was how detached they were from written communication; they had observed that generally within social work departments the administrative staff sent a letter without social workers signing or even reading them. They agreed that this was something they needed to follow up and discuss at their placements. They agreed to feedback at the following session about suggestions they had made for improving written communication, such as:

- Writing the letters themselves
- Ensuring that the correct term of reference is used in the introduction (i.e. not using first name)
- Explaining who they are, their role and the purpose of a meeting
- Providing options of where to meet, date and time
- Providing contact details and signing the letter

**b. Supervised contact**

This is where a parent has time-limited contact with their child/children arranged by a social worker. It often involves someone the child or parent has never met before taking the child to the social services venue where they will spend time with another parent. The meeting will be observed and recorded by the social worker who does not explain the purpose of taking notes or what they are writing about. Both parents and social work students explained their lack of understanding of why this is the standard process and how uncomfortable this experience is for all concerned. At this stage in the gap mending programme we were attracting interest from the local children and families team and invited a social worker to come and join the discussion about how this could change and be a much better experience for all involved.

At the end of the programme the evaluation process was based upon the key messages parents and students learned from each other.

Some key messages from parents to students:

- Think out of the box, rather than tick boxes/categories – have an open mind.
- Don’t be a text book social worker – use theory/legislation/guidelines, but use your own initiative/judgement.
Don't be judgemental/ be personable and professional.

Do question/challenge, even if you think your manager will say ‘no’, at least you have tried.

Don't have a patronising attitude, e.g. a social worker telling parents to do things, not giving options, give people choices.

If a parent tells you they are struggling e.g. with addiction, give help/support – admitting should be a positive thing, not negative.

Don't just focus on the child; focus on parents and families as a whole.

Give parents achievable goals.

If a parent gets angry, upset – think about why, there will usually be a good reason.

Some key messages from students to parents:

- Don't be afraid to co-operate with services and be willing to develop productive relationships.
- Always ask if you do not understand anything within the process to ensure you understand what is involved as part of your assessments.
- We are on a learning journey and value your shared experiences and acknowledge the importance of these in your lives; we have appreciated the time parents have taken to be involved in our learning.
- Parents have allowed us to explore our feelings about their experiences in a non-judgemental and safe environment and we want to let you know that this way of learning and exploration of feelings and values continues outside of our sessions.

Outcomes

Final thoughts of parents and students:

Parents

“As parents we are able to take what we have learned with other parents within our future roles as trainers within the Solihull parenting programme and with the children and families team.”

Students

“As students we are able to act as ambassadors for the gap mending programme with our peers and in other academic organisations and disciplines to show the transferability of using the gap mending approach within education.”

Other outcomes include:

- Initiating a creative writing group.
- Participation in the first PowerUs film shown at a European social work conference.
- Establishing Parentkind, a parent-led service working with social services to facilitate consultation and feedback with other parents and provide peer advocacy support, also exploring links with nurse training and education.
One key outcome for a small group of parents and students has been their increased confidence, which has enabled them to respond to the wide interest about this project. They have been interviewed by BBC radio and an article was published about them in the Daily Mail (2014) (possibly the first positive news report about social workers and therefore a great example of how gaps can be mended). The outcomes from this first pilot programme have inspired further programmes:

- The Higher Education Academy funded an event to explore how gaps could be mended with young people, which has led to the development of the second gap mending programme at New College Durham.
- Sunderland University social work department ran their first gap mending programme in partnership with Sunderland carers centre.
- New College Durham will soon be launching the next gap mending programme in partnership with Investing in People and Culture and the Scottish Refugee Council in order to mend the gaps between asylum seekers, refugees and students in professional education.

Conclusion

This summarises the presentation I delivered along with my final year students, Gaynor Murray and Neil Quinn, at AoC's HE Research and Scholarship Conference (June 2015). Both Gaynor and Neil have gained social work posts within children and families teams and feel that their learning with – and from – parents has positively impacted upon their practice. Further exploration of the impact and transferability of this approach within other contexts will be made within future programmes.

The benefit of seeing students as partners in learning widens the possibilities for students to engage in scholarly research. The benefit of participatory research enhances the potential for improving practice. I look forward to sharing further information and resources through AoC, whose focus on scholarly and research activity has encouraged me to develop within my own institution.

References


Sector agency case study - Teaching with moving image resources: a scholarly approach in further education

ALEX MORRIS, LEARNING ON SCREEN - BRITISH UNIVERSITIES FILM & VIDEO COUNCIL

Introduction

Over 68 years, Learning on Screen - the British Universities and Colleges Film and Video Council, formerly the British Universities Film & Video Council, has led the way in providing audiovisual access to education institutions. During this time the organisation’s determination has not wavered but the audiovisual landscape has changed dramatically. In 2016, there is no shortage of material and a perception of limitless access for everyone. The question of access has evolved and is not about scarcity, but about high-quality, reliable moving image content, pedagogically framed and remotely accessible to teaching staff and students across the UK.

Historically, Learning on Screen has worked with a large number of higher education (HE) institutions to provide access to pedagogically framed audiovisual resources that support scholarly practice, and in recent years this work has been extended to further education (FE). With the recent announcement of the Association of College’s Scholarship Project, which “aims to support the development and embedding of a distinct college HE scholarly ethos across the sector”, Learning on Screen’s work is now more focused than ever on bringing this scholarly approach to FE, embedding audiovisual teaching in a way that supports the strategic aims of colleges. The use of audiovisual material is already well embedded in HE teaching and learning, for example, Learning on Screen represents 83% of UK HE institutions; however the FE sector is yet to adopt audiovisual methods of teaching to the same extent (BUFVC, date unknown).

This essay seeks to demonstrate how teaching with moving image benefits HE and FE education by improving teaching quality and enhancing learning. It will highlight how an application of audiovisual resources, like that more traditionally practiced in HE, can support FE, improving student outcomes, increasing student engagement, helping with retention rates and supporting colleges in achieving their strategic goals in these areas. It will also highlight the necessity for these resources to be online and remotely accessible in order to meet the needs of students in the 21st century.

The case for teaching with moving image resources will be achieved by reference to a number of case studies from the University of Manchester, University of Lincoln and Ravensbourne College. All three institutions use Learning on Screen’s Box of Broadcasts (BoB) resource, an online on-demand television and radio recording service that allows teaching staff and students at subscribing institutions to record broadcasts from over 60 television and radio channels and access an archive of over two million recorded programmes to support teaching and learning. In addition, there will be specific reference to two FE organisations, Croydon College and City of Glasgow College, which use BoB and have implemented audiovisual teaching across their institutions. It is necessary to highlight that Learning on Screen works with both universities and FE colleges and therefore each specific case study is either from an HE or FE organisation, rather than specifically referring to college HE. Throughout the essay there will also be reference to academic research that supports the arguments made.
Pedagogically framed material

The use of moving image in teaching and learning supports scholarly practice but video resources need to be supported by good quality metadata to ensure that material has a trustworthy and reliable provenance. The BoB resource allows users to search a programme’s description and metadata – sourced directly from the broadcaster – so users can trust that what they are accessing is suitable for academic study.

To complement the metadata, BoB supplies users with subtitles and transcripts, so the content and dialogue of a programme can be analysed. Again this data comes direct from the broadcaster and is included with each individual television resource. Dr. Adam Evans, Senior Lecturer in Sociology of Sport at the University of Lincoln, highlights the benefits of having content backed up by good quality data:

> From a qualitative research perspective, transcripts are very good, because we can look at literally what was said from a more detached perspective. It’s good for students to reflect on what was said throughout the programme, rather than just viewing it in one hit...and forgetting the main arguments that came out of a programme (BUFVC, 2014d: 4).

In order for moving image content to be used in course work, citations need to be provided, and this has often been challenging for students who are locating material from unreliable online sources. BoB includes its own audiovisual citations, ensuring that students use and cite programmes correctly in their work, as Dr. Sandy Willmott, Senior Lecturer in Sports Science at the University of Lincoln, highlights:

> Citations are always a problem for students when they’re finding resources and using it to support their work. Audiovisual material has been one of the most difficult; students typically become used to the citation styles for books and journal articles... The fact that a citation gets provided for them automatically is a real bonus. (BUFVC, 2014d: 4).

Meet student expectations

In a recent article for Learning on Screen journal, Viewfinder Online, Linda Ligios and Karen Colbron note that “the development of virtual learning technology and the accessibility of audiovisual media are rapidly changing higher education (HE) practice” (Ligios and Colbron, 2014). This, they argue, is in response to a student body that increasingly “lives and communicates in a digital environment”.

As Ligios and Colbron note, the availability of educational audiovisual resources is in response to a student population that is increasingly communicating in the digital environment, however, this is part of a larger societal trend. The Office for National Statistics reports in its 2015 statistical bulletin on internet use that 78% of adults use the internet “every day or almost everyday”, and that 96% of young adults (aged 16-24) accessed the internet ‘on the go’ via mobile devices (Office for National Statistics, 2015). When these numbers are examined alongside findings by IT multi-national Cisco, who reported in May 2015 that video accounted
for 64% of internet traffic in 2014 – a figure that is set to rise to 80% by 2019 – we can conclude that the 21st century population is increasingly operating in the digital space, and that this space is largely dominated by video, either through news websites, online streaming applications, social media platforms or YouTube (Cisco, 2014). In student populations digital communication is even more firmly embedded. In the 2013/2014 academic year, 82.6% of UK HE first-degree students were young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2014) – the age group that Cisco report is using the internet every day and remotely. This is also the age group that the vast majority of FE students fall into.

The incorporation of audiovisual material in teaching matches the expectations of the student body that is consuming the internet far more than previous generations, and helps deliver information in a familiar and relatable medium. Dr. Freddie Gaffney, Subject Leader - Digital Film Production at HE institution Ravensbourne College, a BoB subscriber, recognises how audiovisual teaching matches student expectations, stating that over the 25 years he has been teaching, students have increasingly come to expect more audiovisual material to feature in learning (BUFVC, 2014b). This is also highlighted by Paul Stainthorp, Electronic Resources Librarian at the University of Lincoln, “it’s very important to us that services like BoB are available on iPads and on mobile phones, because that’s where our students are learning”(BUFVC, 2014d: 5).

City of Glasgow College is a FE subscriber. The college has noted how audiovisual material has helped meet the expectations of this digitally-minded student body, as Nicola Buddo, Digital Librarian, observes:

> Everything is digital. It’s online. Students are on their iPhones, iPads or on a PC constantly. You go home, you study and you go elsewhere and study. Everything needs to be instantly accessible and students expect that now (BUFVC, 2014a: 3).

Meeting the needs of different students

i. Learning styles

Ian Fleming’s model of learning styles suggests that there are three primary learning styles: visual, auditory and kinesthetic, and that most students possess a blend of these styles, usually with one operating in dominance to the others (Business Balls, date unknown). Writing in Viewfinder Online Catherine Chambers, Senior Producer at the Open University, states that “70% of learners are visual learners” who learn best through “…visual aids such as images, diagrams, charts, films, and infographics” (Chambers, 2015).

Iain Bromley, Subject Leader: BA Fashion Promotion at Ravensbourne College, observes that the predominant learning styles of students at the university are visual and kinesthetic: “Text based isn’t as good for them as being able to visually see it, and have somebody speak to them” (BUFVC, 2014b: 5). Similarly, at both Croydon College and City of Glasgow College there is a diverse student body with some students being more receptive to audiovisual resources than to reading text (BUFVC, 2014a). The use of audiovisual material in teaching meets the needs of different students, creating a ‘way in’ for students who do not necessarily respond well to hearing a traditional lecture being read aloud.
ii. English as a second language
As well as different cognitive learning styles, students also have different needs when it comes to learning in a particular language. The BoB resource, for example, includes a rolling English language transcript of all dialogue spoken in programmes. Students who may not speak English as their first language can read what is being said, helping them to understand and develop their English speaking and reading skills at the same time. At Croydon College and City of Glasgow College there is a diverse student body and both colleges note how BoB has both helped students improve their English skills as well as gain a better understanding of audiovisual material (BUFVC, 2014a).

iii. Hearing impairment
The transcript feature on BoB is useful for any students who have a hearing impairment, allowing them to read what is being said in real time; a benefit recognised by both Croydon College and City of Glasgow College (BUFVC, 2014a). In addition, as every student at each subscribing institution has remote access to all programmes, students who suffer from a hearing impairment are able to study resources in their own time and at their own pace.

Student engagement
Moving image has the potential of transforming information that might have traditionally been delivered by chalk and talk teaching into something engaging and relatable. As Catherine Chambers notes: “video is a valuable tool for teaching and learning for many reasons; making the inaccessible accessible, transforming complex, difficult or even dull subject matter into engaging thought provoking content” (Chambers, 2015).

i. Students engage with audiovisual inside and outside the classroom
In the FE sector Croydon College and City of Glasgow College have both noticed the positive impact audiovisual teaching has had on student engagement. At Croydon College, usage of the BoB resource has risen significantly since the college first subscribed in 2009 and it has now become one of the college’s most accessed resources, as noted by Tom Butler, Head of Libraries and Learning Resources: “the sheer usage has gone up through the roof. It’s now one of our most popular resources” (BUFVC, 2014a: 4).

Croydon College uses audiovisual material in its courses to add an extra dimension to lectures and to reinforce learning. Lecturers have found that using a normal media player to play television and radio programmes in class – where it is necessary to stop the programme, scroll to the next section, and re-start – interrupts the fluidity of lessons and means students become distracted and lose concentration. The BoB resource has allowed lecturers to make clips from the programmes in advance and play these seamlessly within the lecture to highlight specific issues and spark debate. Stuart Fletcher, Lecturer in BTEC Business, notes:

I notice here at Croydon College...that our students generally engage more through audiovisual learning. Students don't want to be bogged down by watching a whole 60-minute programme of *Panorama*, so the ability to say ‘I want you to watch this programme. I want you to cut out what you think are the most important or interesting parts’...gives the student the ability to look at the content, to pick out what they want and then present it back...[to] the class themselves...It offers both the teacher and the student the ability to look at the programme in a slightly different context (BUFVC, 2014a: 4).
At City of Glasgow College students use audiovisual material to explore their own ideas, explain theories and answer assignments. They use it to record programmes they think will be useful for their courses, put clips into their presentations, reference clips in essays, make playlists and share them with their classmates. Nicola Buddo observes, “the students love BoB. I think they're really engaged with it in a way that I've not really seen them engaged with any other resource” (BUFVC, 2014a: 4).

ii. Is 90% attendance possible?
At HE level the University of Manchester has seen the positive effect of using audiovisual material in lectures. “The days of being able to stand at the front of a lecture theatre behind a lectern and read something that you prepared years ago are long gone. Using material from BoB…it is possible to quickly engage a roomful of students with up-to-date and relevant content”, notes Anna Goatman, Senior Lecturer in Marketing (BUFVC, 2014c: 5).

Goatman is a keen proponent of audiovisual teaching, utilising television and radio content on her courses to great effect:

A video clip can demonstrate a point in minutes, much better than a long and wordy explanation...The students were doing an assignment on not-for-profit marketing and I showed them the intro to a documentary on the health care sector – it gave them an instant picture of what life was really like...and the pressures staff were under (Goatman, 2014).

Goatman's use of audiovisual material encompasses everything from documentaries to popular culture television – one clip she uses frequently to demonstrate the efficacy of child “pester power” when marketing products is from an episode of The Simpsons. Goatman also likes to put the emphasis on her students to find course relevant content: “choosing the right clip and using it creatively to demonstrate or illustrate the points they want to make – these are the skills that students need to develop, because they'll use them in the real world of marketing” (Goatman 2014).

As a result of her engaging mode of teaching, student attendance at her lectures exceeds 90% and her personal studies into student engagement in her lectures have yielded qualitative findings – student interaction has risen and students physically appear to be more engaged (Goatman and Medway, date unknown).

Support student outcomes
i. Flipped learning
One of the main benefits of incorporating audiovisual teaching styles is the positive impact on student outcomes. Education institutions want to provide the best courses for students to yield the best outcomes and including moving image and sound materials, especially in a flipped classroom format, can support this.

Flipped learning is defined as a pedagogical model in which the traditional typical lecture/homework format is reversed (Sankey and Hunt, 2013: 786). One way this can work is by encouraging students to watch audiovisual resources, listen to recordings of lectures and read around a subject at home before coming to classes to discuss their thoughts and ideas.
in a seminar discussion. Abbey Boyer, Director of Learning and Teaching at Kolbe Catholic College in Australia, describes flipped learning in this way; students are provided with “a video [to watch at home] that explains the concepts, structure and skills, so that when they get to class...they can get into a real ‘workshop of learning’” (Sankey and Hunt, 2013: 787). The use of audiovisual material in flipped learning is also emphasised by American education association Educause in its definition:

Short video lectures are viewed by students at home before the class session, while in-class time is devoted to exercises, projects, or discussions. The video lecture is often seen as the key ingredient in the flipped approach, such lectures being either created by the instructor and posted online or selected from an online repository. While a pre-recorded lecture could certainly be a podcast or other audio format, the ease with which video can be accessed and viewed today has made it so ubiquitous that the flipped model has come to be identified with it (Sankey and Hunt, 2013: 787).

Sankey and Hunt note that flipped classrooms have become increasingly popular in HE and that this has been amplified because of the “widespread adoption of online learning environments” making it easier for students to access online content, either at home or on the move (Sankey and Hunt, 2013: 786).

ii. Flipped learning: does it work?
One study that has highlighted the efficacy of flipped learning in supporting student outcomes was carried out at the University of British Columbia in 2011. Louis Deslauriers studied two groups of physics students, with approximately 425 students in each group, over a period of 12 weeks. For the first 11 weeks of the course, both Group 1 and Group 2 received the same lectures, delivered in a traditional lecture format. During the final week of study, Group 2's lectures were delivered using a flipped classroom format. Over the 12 weeks both groups were tested weekly and received average scores that were collated at the end of the study. Over the full duration of the study, Group 1 scored an average of 41% on their tests and Group 2 scored an average of 72% (Flipped Classroom Workshop, date unknown).

Another study, conducted by Steven Goh, tested the efficacy of flipped learning in teaching Materials Technology. Goh’s aim was to set students up for the world of work by removing traditional learning patterns, putting the emphasis on them to source information for themselves. Goh wanted to “introduce an authentic learning activity based on a true life case study”, a process he achieved by taking students on site visits and by incorporating television programmes and YouTube clips into the course (Sankey and Hunt, 2013: 790). Goh noted that over the duration of his courses, the traditional distinctions between on-campus and off-campus (external) learning began to blur, achieving the desired outcome and removing the dependency on traditional study guides and lecture materials (Sankey and Hunt, 2013: 790).

iii. Flipped learning in HE and FE
The two studies described demonstrate the possibilities of flipping a classroom and there are many others with findings published online or in journals (Sankey and Hunt, 2013). Flipped learning can yield successful results and with the development of resources like BoB, off-campus and long distance learning objectives can be achieved. Lecturers can create viewing lists to complement existing reading lists and students can
source and study audiovisual resources in their own time, before attending seminars to discuss their own thoughts and opinions. Moreover, as the FE and college HE sector begins to adopt more long distance methods of learning, online audiovisual resources that are remotely accessible will show themselves to be increasingly important.

**Student retention**

The final section of this essay will concentrate on student retention, particularly focussing on how the use of audiovisual material can improve retention in the FE sector. Retaining students is now more vital than ever for colleges as the sector faces financial difficulties that have not been experienced before. Every student that drops out represents not just a loss of income but also a lost opportunity for that student. Retaining students is, then, both a way of ensuring funding and a measure of the quality of a college's teaching.

Traditionally the FE sector has lagged behind HE when it comes to retention rates, a point noted by Elizabeth W. Achinewhu-Nworgu (Achinewhu-Nworgu, 2007: 3). This is substantiated by figures from the Higher Education Statistics Agency, which reports a dropout figure of 5.7% of “UK domicile young full-time first degree entrants not continuing in HE after their first year” for the 2012/2013 academic year (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2015b). Conversely, the dropout rate for the FE sector in the same academic year was 10.8% (Local Government Association, 2015: 3).

i. Retention and the need for digital resources

In a 2011 article published by Jisc, Meeting Students’ Needs To Improve Retention, Sarah Knight notes that high student engagement leads to positive retention figures, particularly highlighting the role that digital media plays in achieving this: 

I see, more than ever, effective engagement, contact and communication are vital to students completing their courses and digital technologies play an ever-increasing role in support of this. Digital technologies can have a positive impact on student retention by helping institutions enhance curricula, ensure quality...match educational experiences with everyday life, assess learning more effectively and deliver learning experiences that meet with or exceed student expectations (Knight, 2011).

Her claims are substantiated by reference to a study conducted at Lewisham College, where, over a period of two years, the development of a special learner portal, featuring educational technological resources and access to online tools, resulted in an increased retention rate on the college’s higher diploma IT course. Over the full two years of the study the retention rate increased from 62% to 92% (Knight, 2011).
Conclusion

The Association of Colleges’ Scholarship Project is focused on instilling a scholarly ethos into HE in FE teaching and learning, and this essay has highlighted how moving image can instill this ethos, providing strategic and pedagogical benefits to FE colleges in general.

As has been stated, HE teaching has continued to incorporate more and more moving image in response to the 21st century’s mass use of the internet video as a mode of communication and information dissemination. The FE sector, however, has yet to adopt these to quite the same extent, with Learning on Screen membership amongst colleges being lower than HE membership. This may be starting to change, though; a 100% rise in FE membership over the last 12 months suggests recognition of the value of moving image in college teaching.

One reason for this may be the increasing prevalence of long distance learning. To meet the pressures of these demands there is a need for good quality teaching material that is reliable and remotely accessible through virtual learning platforms. And, as the FE landscape faces a new set of challenges over the coming years, moving image will prove its worth in engaging students. Ultimately, when students are engaged with learning retention figures rise and student outcomes improve, and in the 21st century audiovisual material is central to achieving this.

References


Flipped Classroom Workshop. (2015) 10 Published Results Supporting the Benefits of Flipped Learning.


4 | Extended Abstracts

4.1

North East College Regional Scholarship Network

RICHARD HODGSON, NEW COLLEGE DURHAM, ON BEHALF OF THE NORTH EAST COLLEGE REGIONAL SCHOLARSHIP NETWORK

The North East of England has a number of college higher education (HE) providers who have historically worked together to share good practice and deliver practitioner-based workshop activities. With a number of key drivers developing the profile of research and scholarship within the college HE sector, including studies by the Mixed Economy Group (MEG) and the Quality Assurance Agency, a group of three large North East MEG college providers made the decision to establish a shared college scholarship approach.

The North East College Regional Scholarship Network (NECRSN) was formed in March 2014 with membership from Newcastle College, New College Durham and Sunderland College. Supporting the network during its formation was JISC RSC Northern; a key member of their consultancy team has continued to play a vital role within the network but, following JISC RSC Northern restructuring, now works as part of the network on a voluntary basis.

The aim of NECRSN is to collaborate in the development and enhancement of college HE research and scholarly activity. The strength of the network approach to college HE research and scholarship lies in the capacity for a discipline, rather than an institutional, focus. Recent studies have noted that practitioners who work in college HE often face barriers in existing subject communities (Simmons and Lea, 2013). The management of the NECRSN is by a steering group comprising of a representative from each college and a volunteer expert who was previously a consultant with JISC RSC Northern. This group meets every six weeks to monitor and develop joint research and scholarship activity.

To meet the aim of the network, NECRSN has focused on three areas of activity. The first of these is the development of shared research scholarly activity. NECRSN provides the opportunity for staff in the three colleges to develop within their subject groups by hosting events and online resources which facilitate professional development, collaborative projects and the sharing of good practice across the region. The second area of activity is to disseminate college research and scholarly activity through the proposed publication of a shared journal and holding joint regional college HE practitioner conference activities. The intention of which is to invite college HE practicing colleges across the North East region to attend and to share good practice and enable the network to grow. The third broader area of activity is to explore the scope for piloting a peer review network for college HE outputs within the network thus establishing a benchmark for the quality of scholarship. The thinking behind this is that academics in the university sector have their research evaluated through the Research Excellence Framework, which is not generally accessible by HE practitioners in the college sector.

The feeling within the three current member colleges is that the network has met a real need to enable HE practitioners to develop and share good cross-college practice and work
together to enhance teaching and learning for their students. There is a real feeling of excitement within the NECRSN that we are discovering new territory in college HE research and scholarship in exploring new models and practice. There is no barrier or boundary discovered within the network, just a new terrain to explore and develop.

The first year of running the NECRSN has seen the development of two core collaborative projects between subject practitioners from the three colleges. The two cross-college subject communities are e-learning and information technology and sports and exercise. A short abstract for each project has been prepared below.

Higher education provided by further education colleges is characterised by more success in recruiting students from low participation neighbourhoods and high student satisfaction levels as measured by the National Student Survey. The challenges which this provision faces are lower student continuation rates and employment success than is the case across higher education as a whole.

Engaging students more firmly within their chosen course and providing clear and motivating information about career prospects are seen as key factors in tackling these challenges.

This project attempts to deploy and measure the impact of social media to better engage and inform students about their courses and the careers to which they lead. Three colleges (Sunderland College, Newcastle College and New College Durham) are contributing to this project which is largely operating through the use of dedicated Facebook and LinkedIn groups linking current and ex-students from a specific course with relevant employers. Student attitudes towards their course and their career are assessed and monitored throughout the progress of a course. A narrative describing the project, together with results and some analysis, is being prepared.

*Articles on this scholarship project have been published in FE News.*

Cohesion in sports teams has been shown to improve performance. It is thought that this comes about through feelings of joint enterprise and collective responsibility. The current study aims to investigate if this phenomenon transferred into classes of undergraduate sports students because they are likely to be sports participants themselves. If a cohesive group performed better academically then course leaders would benefit from planning specific group activities into induction sessions and into their ongoing schemes of work. Group cohesion was measured using the six item Perceived Cohesion Scale for Small Groups at the end of semester one and semester two. This was correlated with measures of attendance and retention for each of the participating groups at three local colleges. Full results are not yet available; however the semester one results show a low correlation between attendance and group cohesion.
The NECRSN continues to grow. In September 2015, college HE practitioners from Middlesbrough College joined the network and further joint college scholarship projects will be established. The growth and development of higher apprenticeships is of particular interest to NECRSN members.

References


4.2
Towards a curriculum for teaching research skills and methodology at undergraduate level and developing student-led research

ALEX DAY, PETER SYMONDS COLLEGE

Much is made of college higher education (HE) not having as strong an emphasis on research and scholarly activity as university counterparts. It may be that part of the solution is through the development of student-led research through curriculum design and embedding the teaching of research skills. Russell Group universities place research-led learning at the centre of the student experience as it actively engages students:

Encouraging them to pursue new knowledge and to develop the independence of thought, critical thinking and entrepreneurial skills and ability to handle uncertainty and new problems... (Russell Group, 2013).

In a recent article for the Higher Education Policy Institute, I made the argument that the world is continually changing and that we cannot anticipate all the knowledge future workers will need. The future might be more about knowing how to retrieve information and then apply it, rather than what people were actually taught as undergraduates.

There is general acceptance that the teaching of research methodology has moved from Doctorate to Masters and is becoming much more firmly embedded in undergraduate studies. My proposition is that this is because of the nature of the world we live in today.

There is considerable information on how to do research, but far less on what to teach, when and how to teach it at undergraduate level. In a workshop at the Association of Colleges’ Research and Scholarship in College Higher Education Conference I shared what we currently teach, when we teach it and how our thoughts on delivery are evolving. A number of colleagues at the workshop were interested in developing a group to share good practice in teaching research skills and methodology and I hope to establish such a group in the near future.

The degree programmes we have designed include a substantial 40 credit module in years one and two which is either work-based learning or an investigative project. In year three we have a 40 or 60 credit dissertation module, so we are particularly interested in developing a progressive scheme of work through each year to develop student-led research.
The grid below outlines what we currently teach and when:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Term one</th>
<th>Term two</th>
<th>Term three</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year one</td>
<td>Developing and Enhancing Academic Skills Module</td>
<td>Work-based Learning/Investigative Project Module</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
<td>• The status of knowledge – claims versus facts</td>
<td>• The three pillars of research, the “ologies”: ontology, epistemology, axiology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Engaging with knowledge published by others: referencing, plagiarism, validity, reliability, triangulation &amp; making judgements</td>
<td>• The research process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Using electronic resources effectively &amp; researching topics for academic writing</td>
<td>• Research methodologies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Critical thinking</td>
<td>• Research methods: sampling, organising and interpreting data</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Emphasise that students make a contribution to knowledge; they do not just digest and repeat it, they make it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| Year two   | Work-based Learning/Investigative Project Module |                                                |                                                |
| <strong>Content</strong>|                                                |                                                |                                                |
|            | • Recap the “ologies” but link to rest of research process using the Research Onion (University of Derby) |                                                |                                                |
|            | • How to do a literature review                 |                                                |                                                |
|            | • Developing qualitative and quantitative tools/methods of gathering data |                                                |                                                |
|            | • Making your own original contribution – challenging existing evidence |                                                |                                                |
|            | • Ethical considerations                        |                                                |                                                |
|            | • Developing reflexivity                        |                                                |                                                |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year three</th>
<th><strong>Dissertation module continues across the whole year</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Content    | • Lecture sessions on: the format of a dissertation; how to write the abstract & introduction; using statistics; research approaches; ethics & literature review, and drawing conclusions  
• Recap of previous year’s sessions facilitated by more flipped learning and workshops, e.g. applying the research onion to a research proposal, developing your tools, rather than taught input on methods  
• Focus is on enabling students to construct a coherent research design  
• Consideration of positionality & bias |

Things which have worked well for us in terms of developing student understanding and enhancing learning are:

**Year one**

• Getting across to students that people see the same thing differently – links to consideration of positionality and bias in year three. A really good illustration of this was the picture of a dress which caused significant social media debate in 2015; some people saw the dress as white and gold, others saw it as black and blue  
• Term one – students write an essay about the reliability and validity of the resources they have found for a particular essay title  
• Term three – Hot Seat exercise (see below) in week two and at mid-point which makes students aware of the importance of the research question and enhances collaboration and collegiate feeling  
• One-to-one tutorials

**Year two**

• Research Onion – the University of Derby have a useful interactive version of the Research Onion at [https://onion.derby.ac.uk/](https://onion.derby.ac.uk/)  
• Analogies  
  • Buying a car and the research process  
  • The literature review “party”  
  • The court room  
• Hot Seat exercise – each student sits at the front of the class and discusses their research and the group helps the individual refine both their topic and research question

**Year three**

• Lots of additional guidance on Moodle  
• Checklists/pro forma for various elements of the dissertation  
• Starter phrases for each chapter  
• What a brilliant piece of research would look like (Whisker, 2005: 203)  
• Emphasising the need to identify recurring themes in the literature review which relate to their research question  
• Presentation of research ideas in groups (variation on the hot seat idea)
We continue to reflect on what we are teaching - and when - with regard to research and would welcome the opportunity to work with others to share good practice and ideas with the intention to build a bank of resources for teaching research.

References


Cultivating creativity: a study of UK policy and Singaporean practice in tertiary arts education, with special reference to creative skill development relevant for the digital industries

DR ANDREW GOWER, PRINCIPAL, MORLEY COLLEGE

Abstract

The Singapore Media Fusion Plan published in 2009 by the Media Development Authority of Singapore set out a plan for growth of the media sector within the city state. The plan acknowledges a merging or convergence of digital content within the digital industries (including music, publishing and broadcast media) for the creation of innovative multi-platform content for a global consumer market. It is the so-called content professional who creates the “compelling educational, entertainment and commercial and public service content that benefits consumers around the world” (Skillset, 2009: 13).

The purpose of this research is firstly to seek to define creative skill development from a UK perspective, as specifically relevant for the digital industries. Secondly, it seeks to reflect on creative skill development within the context of three Singaporean case study learning experiences at Singapore Polytechnic, Nanyang Polytechnic and Nanyang Technological University. The research was conducted in Singapore and the UK during 2014-2015, supported by the National Arts Council of Singapore and East Kent College. The overarching aim is to support students in their acquisition of the knowledge, abilities and personal capacities to operate at the leading-edge of the globalised digital industries.

Introduction: building capabilities to achieve excellence

In January 2012 the National Arts Council (NAC) of Singapore published the report of the Arts and Culture Strategic Review (NAC, 2012). The report celebrates NAC’s confidence in Singaporeans having “the cultural foundation and economic means to springboard to our artistic and cultural success” (NAC, 2012: 5).

Within the report the NAC recognises that “originality, authenticity and uniqueness in content” are key to securing artistic and cultural success, building on Singapore’s “existing infrastructure to take its existing stable of talent, offerings and institutions to the next level” (NAC, 2012: 18). It is the report’s priority on developing people and the growing importance of distinctive digital content that are the main drivers for this study of Singaporean educational practice. In order to achieve artistic and cultural excellence as expressed through “originality, authenticity and uniqueness in content” within “distinctive and innovative works”, NAC’s vision prioritises a need to “raise the capacities and capabilities of our cultural and broader creative workforce, and maintain a steady stream of qualified professionals” (NAC, 2012: 18). This study seeks to make a contribution to practical considerations of approaches by which to build capabilities to achieve excellence in the production of digital content.

It is notable that within the cultural ecosystem of Singapore there are already “developmental opportunities” (NAC, 2012: 76) for aspiring professionals. Singapore’s ArtScience Museum at Marina Bay Sands is, for example, providing a platform for practitioners in the fields of music and media to showcase their work.
Context: supporting professional aspirations

As proposed by Flew (2007: 21), a distinct property of the new or interactive media associated with digital technologies, convergence and networking is the “digitisation of all forms of text, speech, image and sound, into informational content that is changeable at all stages of creation, storage, delivery and use” (Flew, 2007: 22). The digital convergence of creative content distributed through, for example, websites, mobile applications and digital channels blurs the boundaries between the constituent sectors of the creative industries, with interactive media playing an “important role in every creative sector, helping to deliver content through the digital medium” (UK Trade & Investment (UKTI), 2010: 26).

The developing context of the convergence of digital content and parallel enhancements of technology – such as the increasing speed of the mobile data network – continues to prompt reappraisal of educational curriculum design and delivery, seeking to shape future learning experiences that are “stimulating, relevant and authentic” (Jackson and Sinclair, 2006: 131) for potential graduate employment within the digital industries.

Commercial imperatives of artistic quality and high production values reassert the contribution that the study of music and/or media in tertiary education make in supporting the acquisition of specialised capabilities required of the aspiring digital content professional.

Employability: towards ‘stimulating, relevant and authentic’ learning

Yorke defines employability as a “set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that makes graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations” (Yorke, 2006: 8). Harvey extends the concept of employability from a set of achievements, or a measure of success at a given point in time, to a perspective of employability as a developing process within which “pedagogical processes and reflection on and articulation of learning are essential elements” (Harvey, 2003: 3). Harvey suggests that students are active partners in this process and that there is a need to increase their awareness of the “wider purpose of each activity in developing their skills, and the value in doing so” (Pegg et al, 2012: 30).

While evaluation of a student’s creative response to a task provides a summative demonstration of their creative skill development at that moment in time, enhancement of pedagogy requires a more detailed consideration of the creative process (Sawyer, 2012: 88). Reflection on creativity as a structured learning process will open opportunity to develop a pedagogy for employability that informs approaches to learning, teaching and assessment.

By amplifying the process of change from divergent to convergent thinking Sawyer makes the “tacit explicit”, which within an educational setting fosters a “culture within which the wider picture” of graduate skills relevant for employment are made clear (Pegg et al, 2012: 30). If, for example, the opening problem (stage one) was formulated as a project brief (expressed in terms that reflect industry expectations), students would potentially experience an authentic work-related learning opportunity entirely relevant for the digital industries. As described by Pegg et al (2012: 33), “one approach to using assessment to directly develop student employability is through realistic tasks.”
Investigating creative skill development

Creative skill development is explored through three case studies drawn from the:

- Diploma in Music and Audio Technology, School of Digital Media and Infocomm Technology at Singapore Polytechnic
- Diploma in Interaction Design, School of Interactive and Digital Media at Nanyang Polytechnic
- Bachelor in Fine Art in Interactive Media, School of Art, Design and Media at Nanyang Technological University

Exploring policy and practice

For further details of the featured case studies and their implications for professional practice please see the full report, available here: https://independent.academia.edu/GowerAndrew

Selected bibliography


4.4
Oxbridge Open Delivery Model: allowing scholarship to thrive in college higher education

SUSIE KENTELL, BLACKPOOL AND THE FYLDE COLLEGE

Background

The original presentation delivered at the Association of Colleges’ Scholarship Conference (June 2015) went by the title of ‘Oxbridge Lite’ Delivery Model: *Allowing scholarship to thrive in college higher education*. Following the presentation, and in consultation with Blackpool and the Fylde, the title of the delivery model is now referred to as ‘Oxbridge Open’.

The model has been developed within the project management team at Blackpool and the Fylde College which predominantly delivers to part-time students working within project management environments and has links with organisations such as BAE Systems, Rolls Royce and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The meeting of both academic and vocational perspectives of the discipline requires a model which provides flexibility to respond to the rapidly changing and challenging environments in both areas. Alongside this is the need to ensure scholarship for both students and lecturers becomes firmly integrated within the course framework with an underpinning planning structure which allows for sustainable delivery across multiple sites to established project-based organisations.

The origins of the model are inspired by approaches utilised at Oxford and Cambridge universities which focus heavily on the use of seminars and the importance of critical thinking at the heart of the Higher Education (HE) learning process (Oxford Learning Institute, 2015; Palfreyman, 2008). While these are both key contributors to Oxbridge Open, the model itself has been developed and specifically tailored to support college HE environments with a clear focus on academic, vocational and professional practice.

Wider contextual factors present in the discussion of college HE contributed to the development of the model and have shaped some of the key characteristics. Such constraints evident within college HE environments include the difficulty to foster a distinct HE environment, expectations on lecturers to combine HE teaching within FE teaching with often little time for preparation and adjustment between (Simmons and Lea, 2013: 1-3). Alongside this, and crucial to the discussion of Oxbridge Open, is that:

> The teaching staff are very likely to be working FE-style contracts and conditions (requiring in some cases 850 class contact hours per year, making it difficult to commit meaningfully to wider scholarship activities).” (Simmons and Lea, 2013: 2).
In light of the contextual factors above the aims of the model are to:

- Maximise the benefits of HE within college environments (small class sizes, more tutor time).
- To create a research-driven learning experience that has become synonymous with HE institutions.
- Encourage and utilise vocational links to key strategic contacts (e.g. BAE Systems, Rolls Royce).

The Oxbridge Open Model

The model utilises a variety of activities/tasks to develop students' understanding of the subject area, as may be expected; however, it clearly defines the ownership of these tasks as either being student-led or lecturer-led activities which aims to promote student responsibility and ownership of their learning. From a lecturer’s point of view it has been recorded in practice that the model demands the use of innovative teaching practice and provides a structured, integrated and practical approach to developing student and staff research. Through the use of activities chosen both for applicability to the module and tailored to group needs, lecturers can manage the achievement of overall module outcomes alongside lesson-specific outcomes. These high impact and memorable activities support the achievement 'rise and fall' throughout the module which, when linked to key conceptual areas, act as bookmarks to cement the concept firmly in the mind of the student.

Examples of activities used within the trial include: debates, seminars, role play, guest lectures, group research, student reflection, peer reviewed essays, student presentations, cross-module conferences, and academic poster conferences. Activities are chosen with respect to their appropriateness to the project management discipline.

Block planning

The Oxbridge Open Model is dependent on the underpinning planning structures which are applied to each module, which falls under the title of block planning.

Block planning provides a structured and consistent framework which supports effective teaching practice, knowledge sharing and alignment across modules and requires the integration of scholarly activity as part of module planning. The structured approach has been specifically tailored within the environment to allow for greater flexibility for HE practice while conforming to college-based systems and conditions.

The planning takes two perspectives, firstly the overall module view (Figure 1) which considers the high level learning requirements and generalised topic areas and scheduling. Secondly the ‘four week block’ (Figure 2), which is a specific breakdown of tasks, activities and learning outcomes. The group’s progress is reviewed at the end of a block and this allows for specific changes as required to fit the group’s needs and ensure that learning is based on current and relevant research, which is always being developed alongside the module from both an academic and vocational perspective.
A crucial element within any student’s journey is the structured progression through the learning levels and within Oxbridge Open this is managed in two ways. Firstly the management of the student’s skillsets via the appropriation of suitable activities to differing learning levels and secondly the amount and manner of autonomous and self-directed learning which is directed by the lecturer. This transition mirrors the developmental traits which have been outlined by Hodge (Hodge et al, 2008) and the requirements of the levels outlined within the Regulated Qualification Framework (Ofqual, 2015). This shift to an increased level of autonomous and self-directed learning allows the selected lecturer-led activities to highlight key areas within specific modules and then provide structured student-led activities to foster a research-focused learning experience. With self-directed student time clearly defined, it frees the tutor to engage in module specific research, investigation and updating that under an FE perspective may be considered a task for outside of “lesson time”.

Figures 3, 4 and 5 demonstrate the development of the delivery style and level of lecturer/student-led activities at Levels 4, 5 and 6 and the links to Hodge et al’s developmental levels (Hodge et al, 2008: 8-9).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental Level</th>
<th>Student Trait</th>
<th>Activities (Oxbridge Open)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Reliance on external references (Foundation) | 1. Knowledge as certain  
2. Reliance on authorities as source of knowledge  
3. Externally defined value system and identity  
4. Act in relationship to acquire approval | • Interactive lectures  
• Guest lectures  
• Guided research  
• Guided projects (Group)  
• Tutorials  
• Group presentations |

*Figure 3 - Integrated Scholarship Level 4*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental Level</th>
<th>Student Trait</th>
<th>Activities (Oxbridge Open)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| At the crossroads         | 1. Evolving awareness of multiple perspectives and uncertainty  
2. Evolving awareness of own values and identity and of limitations of dependent relationships | • Directed research  
• Directed projects (Individual)  
• Debates  
• Seminars  
• Cross module conferences |

*Figure 4 - Integrated Scholarship Level 5*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental Level</th>
<th>Student Trait</th>
<th>Activities (Oxbridge Open)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Self-authorship (Capstone) | 1. Awareness of knowledge as contextual  
2. Development of internal belief system and sense of self  
3. Capacity to engage in authentic, interdependent relationships | • Autonomous research  
• Autonomous projects (Individual)  
• Dissertation supervision  
• Academic poster conferences |

*Figure 5 - Integrated Scholarship Level 6*
Conclusion

Through the use of this model it is evident that students experience a change of emphasis from content to an emphasis on research process and problems which support the model's aim to develop students' critical thinking abilities. From a student perspective this supports their transition from being an audience to being participants in research through the progression via research-led, research-orientated, research-based and research-tutored (Healey and Jenkins, 2009: 5-8). From a lecturer's perspective it increases the possibilities for lecturers to engage in a variety of scholarship, including integration, teaching, discovery and application (Boyer, 1990: 15-25). Importantly the additional research and scholarship which takes place at Level 6 – on the part of both the lecturers and students – informs modules at the lower levels of the course and allows development of the project management course as a whole, both in relation to content and the students’ (current and future) relationship with the discipline from both an academic and vocational perspective.

References


4.5
From Heifer so Lonely to Flightless Bats in New Zealand: a perspective on collaborative research approaches at a land-based college

DR JAMES LITTLEMORE AND DR WANDA MCCORMICK, MOULTON COLLEGE

Background

For colleges of further education (FE) with a substantial higher education (HE) portfolio, there remains an exigent requirement to foster scholarly output. This aims to improve both the quality of the learning experience and to meet the expectations of validating partners to promote the Quality Assurance Agency’s (QAA) culture of ‘scholarship and research’. Yet how is this done in a vocational setting where the traditional focus has always been on teaching and learning?

The research timeline

For the past 16 years, an evolving and dynamic applied research model at Moulton College in the East Midlands has: encouraged innovation; stimulated partnership working and funding acquisition with industry; promoted collaborative skills development for participating staff and students, and enriched the undergraduate teaching and learning experience to help foster the much-lauded HE ethos. An evolving timeline outlines the stages in developing an approach to managing research in a land-based FE context and how this has ultimately fostered research output amongst undergraduate students (Figure 1).

Figure 1 - Timeline of research development at Moulton College from 1999 to the present day
Guide to acronyms in Figure 1 above: Undergraduate Research Bursaries at Northampton (URB@N); Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (UFAW); Horticultural Development Company (HDC); Integrated Quality Enhancement Review (QAA) (IQER).

Key determinants remain to play to curriculum strengths and to link to experienced staff using an appropriate research strategy, invoking a defined research culture by strengthening links with just one university. Embedding a research culture within FE will increase quality, enhancing the professional identity of staff; and remission of time and consideration of membership of the Higher Education Academy may help galvanise activity and assist in bidding for funds with partners. By virtue of the niche provision offered by land-based colleges, support should be streamlined for discipline-based or pedagogic projects with an applied outcome that can generate publicity and involve undergraduates.

Collaborative research examples from Moulton College

Case study 1: Why did the harvest mouse cross the road?
This ecological PhD studentship was developed with staff from the University of Northampton and set out to investigate the habits of this diminutive, secretive, wild mammal – the harvest mouse. With funding from the Thomas Harrison Trust and the People's Trust for Endangered Species, this project has captured the interest of the public with national coverage on BBC Earth, The Guardian and a recent feature in BBC Wildlife Magazine.

Case study 2: Heifer so Lonely
This PhD studentship was based on the college farm and set out to investigate social bonds in dairy cattle and how dynamic group systems impacted upon welfare and productivity. Developed with Cambridge Veterinary School, the impact of this research was of both academic and generalist interest on a national stage, with the student attending Parliament as part of the Set for Britain initiative for early career researchers.

Case study 3: Flightless bats in New Zealand
A research link was made with the New Zealand Department of Conservation and, so far, two students have undertaken their undergraduate dissertations abroad. Travel expenses have been awarded from the University of Northampton Vice-Chancellors’ Innovation Fund, and alongside media interviews some scholarly output has been generated.
Conclusion

Diverse outputs from postgraduate and undergraduate research in animal welfare, wildlife conservation and agriculture subjects can clearly initiate an argument of parity of perceptions and experiences of research with mainstream universities. Yet while there is evidently a climate for cautious optimism, there also needs to be a reality check as the value and impact of scholarly activity may not always be visible to management working in the traditional FE domain.

References:


Project management for creatives: when the project is your life

JOHN FITZSIMONS, EXETER COLLEGE

Introduction

To thrive in an economy defined by innovative application of knowledge, we must do more than absorb and feed back information. Learners and workers must draw on their entire spectrum of learning experiences to apply what they have learned in new and creative ways (Seltzer and Bentley, 1999: viii).

The end. Let's start with the end and work back. No, no, let's start in the middle and work out. Or let's just hop around this topic and wait for inspiration to strike. Welcome to the world of the creative. From a business point of view, it's chaos.

The term creative is quite broad. There are all kinds of creative people who do not chose to follow a creative discipline yet are creative; scientists, engineers, marketing executives, etc. My focus here, however, is on those who train in a creative discipline – music, dance, drama, art, design and media. This is a narrow definition but it is the educational focus of these creative disciplines that interests me and how these interact and engage with commercial and industrial models of practice.

As a case study I would like to introduce you to The Mighty Plod. A glam rock band from 1970, they looked the part, they travelled the length and breadth of the UK in a beaten up old Post Office van and they learned to play their music well. Their ambition? To become professional musicians; in this they failed.

Underpinning this failure was a lack of understanding of how to achieve their goal. This is what I would like to examine here; what could they have done to ensure a better outcome.

To begin with, it might have been useful for them to study the business they were trying to enter. The music business, like all businesses, is formulated to make money. It does this mainly by exploitation of copyright, something that The Mighty Plod never really understood. Here is an example of the discourse common in world they were attempting to engage with:

*Artist hereby grants to Company six (6) separate and consecutive options to extend the term of this Agreement under the same terms and conditions for additional periods (each an “Option Period”) commencing upon the expiration of the Initial Period or the immediately preceding Option Period, if any, and expiring nine (9) months after Artist’s delivery to Company of the requisite LP for the respective Option Period (Extract from Banjul music recording contract, 1974).*
The first time the band came across this was when they signed their first (and last) recording contract. No one in the band read the contract. It was enough to have been signed up. The result was that they had signed away all rights to the songs they had taken three years to craft, as well all future songs they had yet to write. In addition to a lack of understanding of copyright ownership, no one in the band seemed to bother with detailed campaign planning. An awareness of the tools of project management was a completely alien idea.

Somewhere along the line, a short introduction to music business contracts, a project plan that included legal and ethical issues and the engagement of a manager might have helped. Advice and information on how to fill in funding applications would also have been helpful, as well as help seeking out sources of money, other than working nights washing up in a bistro. In their ignorance of the business world The Mighty Plod were not alone. Just a few years earlier The Beatles were involved in a struggle to survive after the near collapse of their record label, Apple.

Education has not been entirely deaf to this need. BTEC courses and, latterly, those offered by the University of the Arts at Level 2 and 3, include some of this information in the course specification. While the students may pass the module, the importance of the information contained within it is often not appreciated, nor is much of the course content specific enough. Tools for managing effective teams, project management techniques, copyright legalities and funding opportunities are hardly mentioned.

One laudable attempt to deal with this lack was the diploma which was introduced in 2008. Designed by industry, it focused on the very things that creative students need: problem solving, teamwork, research and reflective thinking (labelled PLTS: personal learning and thinking skills). As it was contextualised by collaborative and real-life commercial projects, students would invariably come across...Gantt charts or, if they were really lucky, Scrum project management tools, thingamajig and critical path analysis.

Just like The Mighty Plod, this qualification largely failed to realise its ambition (to revolutionise education). The roots of this failure can be traced to the methods used by the Qualifications Curriculum Authority (2008) to implement the diploma. The core educational aspect, PLTS, was confined to a non-assessed “add on” while the written content was promoted to centre stage. The model was over-complex and demanded new ways of working across schools and colleges as well as engagement with businesses, including, of course, for musicians, the music business. It was, and it remains, a brave attempt to change the focus of education, mired as it is in written responses to examinations – the A Level method of learning.

In industry the need for everyone to work with, and understand, project management, effective communication, teamwork and motivation are recognised as key. There are vast amounts of money devoted to training courses that attempt to develop skills, not just in creative industries but in every industry. It is an odd situation in which there seems to be a chasm between what we focus on in education and what life afterwards demands. So we are left with a few questions:

- Are we wasting our creative talent?
- Is there an opportunity to design HE project management courses for creatives?
- Is education the right place for this?
- Should we be linking creatives with business teams? How?
- Do we have to wear suits?

And, finally, whatever happened to The Mighty Plod?
We can at least answer this last question. The lead singer became a poet and writer, the drummer obtained a Masters in music and a degree in computing science, and the guitarist is writing this article.

Project management is important. For creatives to achieve their ambitions as musicians, artists, designers and performers they will need to understand that there are two aspects to their lives. One is learning their skill, practicing and developing it; the other is selling it in what has become, and perhaps always will be, a ruthless, unforgiving and often unregulated marketplace. As educators we could perhaps follow the advice of Star Trek’s Jean-Luc Picard, captain of the USS Enterprise: “Engage”.

Selected bibliography


Towards a regional higher skills policy

BEN VERINDER, CHALKSTREAM COMMUNICATIONS ON BEHALF OF LONDON CAPITAL COLLEGES

Introduction

London colleges used a comprehensive research project as the springboard for the development of a higher skills policy for the capital – and in doing so established stronger links with their local enterprise partnership (LEP).

Research to underpin the development of a higher skills policy for London was commissioned by the London Capital Colleges group in April 2014 for completion by Chalkstream Communications in December 2014.

The project involved:

- A new study of London’s higher skills needs – including a synthesis of secondary sources and primary research.
- A modestly framed and succinctly drafted set of higher skills policy proposals for London.
- Outreach opportunities to influencers through the research and consultation.

Methodology

The project involved:

- A contextual review of existing research relating to higher skills demand and supply in London.
- Interview series with a range of capital employers investing in higher skills provision.
- Interview series with decision-makers and public servants in a higher skills role.
- A review of the national higher skills policy to provide the broad context for policy discussions.
- The development of a draft higher skills policy paper for London and engagement with the LEP and others to take policy forward.

Results

Contextual review

Our analysis of data from over 60 different sources identified a set of common factors most relevant to understanding and planning higher skills – defined as typically Level 4 and 5 qualifications – in any region.
These included:

- Significant variations in regional and sub-regional demand as dictated by industrial specialisms and in employer propensity to invest in higher skills as a result of business type and size.
- A clear distinction between the business objectives driving investment in higher skills from those driving investment in Level 3 or undergraduate.
- Graduate over-qualification as a growing rationale for diversification of funding into higher skills.
- A decline in the research capacity of most sector skills councils, leading to a growing number of fissures in the higher skills intelligence landscape.
- Higher skills needs among employers being specific to sub-sectors – one size does not fit all.
- Huge issues with the reliability and range of data relating to current higher skills provision and progression from Level 3 to higher skills courses – providing major planning challenges for colleges and LEPs.

**Employer interviews**

Our interviews with employers reinforce the specificity of higher skills needs; requirements are sub-sector specific at best.

In common with the literature, employer respondents valued employability skills higher than specific technical skills or qualifications per se. While their view of work-based learning is changing – largely as a result of higher levels of awareness of apprenticeships – they also expressed, again in common with the literature, low levels of knowledge of higher apprenticeship routes.

Employers, according to this phase of research, are typically looking for positive, proactive, involved relationships with their higher skills providers. A common criticism of colleges in this regard was that they could be too passive, content to provide higher skills students for recruitment pools rather than utilise opportunities to work in partnership with employer groups in curriculum development, for instance.

**Opinion formers**

This group of respondents recognised recent shifts in the profile of Level 3 students progressing to higher education (HE) and higher skills as ‘mixed economy’ students, sitting both BTEC and A Level courses, grow as a proportion of the cohort.

They reported a considerable and perhaps worrying level of confusion among their institutions or stakeholders about new, emerging higher skills qualifications. This has been exacerbated in the capital by the (mis)use of ‘ordinary degree’ as equivalent to higher skills by planners.
These opinion formers identified a hierarchy of challenges for higher skills providers in any region:

- The difficulties of recruiting, retaining and updating the skills of a higher skills teaching workforce in the face of demographic changes in the further education (FE) workforce and rising wages in the private sector for various technical occupations.
- The demographic changes of 2016 to 2019 which will see a significant decline in the 18 to 21 population.
- The well-documented and continuing difficulties in engaging small business in apprenticeship recruitment.
- Low levels of awareness of the 24+ loan offer and its details among sub-sections of the UK public, linked to the absence of national or regional communication campaigns for the scheme.

Policy paper review

While membership bodies, universities, independent researchers and think tanks hold different views on a range of higher skills issues, there are a number of common threads which run between most or all of the current policy proposals in this area.

- A need to simplify higher apprenticeships and part-time HE funding.
- A strong case for a national or regional accreditation body independent of any single higher education institution.
- A simplification and rationalisation of the foundation degree awarding powers process.
- Further incentives for sustainable HE and FE partnerships.
- Specialisation of institutions in higher skills provision in one form or another.
- A dramatic improvement in schools careers advice.

Policy paper

The findings resulted in a detailed set of policy proposals for London, which have been used to engage the LEP and other relevant stakeholders in higher skills planning.

Recommendations included:

- The development of a higher skills data dashboard for London and the mapping of higher skills level awards and funding in the capital.
- Exploration of the viability of a regional accreditation body.
- The establishment of a regional research capacity – with a focus on understanding regional sub-sector higher skills needs.
- A higher apprenticeship policy for London.
- A regional part-time and 24+ Adult Learning Loans communication campaign.
- Modular validation provided by HE institutes.
- A college focus on flexibility of delivery.
Collaborative partnership between staff and students is emphasised by the Higher Education Academy as being a sophisticated and effective way of developing student engagement and enhancing learning and teaching. Within the University Centre at North Lindsey College, programme teams have identified and developed a range of differing opportunities for such collaboration, with a view to informing current and prospective curriculum delivery, while simultaneously enhancing the overall student experience. In light of this, the primary aim of our Association of Colleges’ (AoC) Research Conference presentation (June 2015) was to outline a number of the projects taking place within the University Centre, as well as highlighting the ways in which subsequent opportunities for informal learning and student empowerment have arisen through the means of informal formative assessment (Yorke, 2003). Increasingly, opportunities for staff student collaboration are emerging from class-based discussions which go beyond the formal boundaries of curriculum. While the term ‘formative’ is used to classify any resulting activities, these opportunities are designed to involve students in ‘real’ environments outside of the core curriculum.

Staff members do not have any predetermined topics to be researched during the year, but instead these areas for research are born out of naturally occurring discussions taking place as part of the learning and teaching experience and which have stimulated a level of curiosity among a number of students. An example exists with bioscience, where students and staff discussed the effects of higher level study on perceptions of stress as part of a physiology unit. Following a suggestion from the tutor that research could be conducted to investigate this further, a small handful of students were keen to become involved. One particular student became involved at all stages of the research process, including the presentation of findings at the AoC conference. Continued research in this area has resulted in a paper being submitted for publication with the Journal of Further and Higher Education.

Yorke (2003) makes links to the work of Torrance and Pryor (1998; 2001), emphasising the significance of divergence within the student experience, where assessments are encouraged to “test students’ ability to succeed in more open-ended tasks”. The organic nature of these activities ensures that they have no predetermined plan and that the students can be involved in the relevant processes associated with research design, application and review.

The principles which sit behind these activities align with Boud’s forceful argument that “we need to introduce high quality formative assessment practices because it is engagement with these practices which provides a secure foundation for lifelong learning and contributes directly to a learning society” (Boud, 2000: 152). The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education’s level descriptors challenge students to “exercise initiative and personal responsibility” and, traditionally, students may well be conditioned to expect feedback on their progress from their tutors at various points along the learning journey having submitted summative assessments.

There is a growing consensus among University Centre staff at the college that repeated involvement by individual students in research activities, which sit outside of the formal curriculum, can alter the nature of dialogue between staff and students. Feedback is
naturally replaced with more of a professional discussion between all members of the research project, therefore encouraging a more peer-based approach towards collaboration. Further studies will aim to determine the extent to which a students’ participation in these professional based discussions can dispel the notion that summative feedback overshadows any formative feedback received by the students (Boud, 2000: 154).

Through continued discussion among the corresponding staff, the various levels of dissemination associated with these projects has been increasingly recognised, with some projects aiming to inform internal practice and develop new initiatives. In addition, others have resulted in conference presentations while some have been put forward for publication within international peer-reviewed journals.

Through the eyes of the teaching teams, the common benefit associated with these activities, and regardless of the type of scholarship, is that these students are no longer “silent scholars”, simply producing scholarship for the purposes of summative assessment, receiving tutor feedback and quickly storing their treasures in the loft or under the bed, to be dusted off as part of periodic reminiscing sessions.

Indeed, while the original ideas and concepts may have taken the form of a summative assessment, these informal activities are designed to extend and reposition knowledge and skills in a more applied manner. Whether the scholarship output is the creation of workshops for the community, contributions to an internal and subject-focused magazine or a peer-reviewed paper, the authors and contributors have revealed themselves on a public stage.

The organic and informal approach towards scholarship has developed naturally as a result of informal discussions with members of teaching staff who are keen to progress areas of scholarship, whether it is to consider pedagogical aspects following a new initiative or to support personal and subject-focused research interests. Irrespective of focus, the discussion has centred on the extent to which students can be actively involved throughout the research journey.

While it is appreciated that opportunities for staff and student collaboration are only ever likely to appeal to a proportion of our students, it is our desire to continue to grow and develop our culture of informal learning opportunities. This will, in turn, allow for an increasing number of graduates from the University Centre to be well placed to make a telling and valuable contribution to society upon the completion of their studies. Similarly, through the sharing and dissemination of good practice within the centre, a wider range of staff will be encouraged to identify those unique opportunities for truly organic learning for students within their respective programmes of study.

References


5 Posters

The following pages contain examples of posters from Warwickshire College Group.

5.1 ‘Higher Teaching, Higher Practice’: Developing the Excellent HE Lecturer
DR TANYA CAREY AND DR RICHARD PEARCE

5.2 Developing a Higher Education Infrastructure to Support Teaching & Learning
DR ANN COTERILL AND TOM EVERSHEED

5.3 Game Changing: teaching to achieve high performance learning in the context of college based higher education
STEVEN RAVEN

5.4 Lesson Observations Designed for college based higher education
DR TANYA CAREY, DR RICHARD PEARCE, THEA PHILCOX, HELEN KINGHORN
1. Introduction
Most college staff teaching at higher education (HE) level possess a teaching qualification relevant to the post-compulsory sector, but many have no HE specific teacher training. Warwickshire College recognised that staff teaching at HE level often require development opportunities to ensure that HE teaching is of a high quality and appropriate to the level. A specific CPD programme including a series of HE training sessions were developed (see Figure 1). The training is closely linked to the Higher Education Academy (HEA) Professional Standards Framework allowing lecturers to use evidence from training in subsequent application for HEA fellowship.

2. Relevance
This poster presentation will be of interest to college lecturers and teacher training staff who may be looking to develop HE specific teacher training within their institutions and wish to learn of other college experiences in training staff to teach at HE level.

3. Higher Teaching, Higher Practice (HTHP)
This specific training focuses on some of the similarities and differences between teaching at FE and HE level, and discusses how to provide effective teaching at the various HE levels. The training includes how to increase the variety of teaching and assessment methods used by staff and key indicators for achieving excellence in HE teaching. The sessions particularly emphasise innovative modes of HE delivery and assessment and are designed to facilitate sharing of best practice.

4. HTP content
- Similarities and differences between FE and HE
- The FHEQ and teaching to the appropriate level
- The variety of teaching methods available to the HE lecturer
- Creation of suitable assessment to meet the learning outcomes for higher cognitive ability
- Exploring teaching methods to attain deep learning
- Classroom activities that encourage high level transferable skills
- Producing detailed, meaningful yet timely feedback to students
- The structure and management of HE (internal and external)
- Responsibilities for various HE specific tasks within the College
- The Professional Standards Framework (PSF) and HEA fellowship
- Support networks and other HE bodies

5. Staff Feedback
- “Very useful session; really liked the use of exemplar module guides, assignment briefs and feedback sheets”
- “Very informative session for me; really helped to rethink key features of HE teaching and learning”
- “Really good to have time to consider the variety of teaching methods I use and learn about innovative ways to develop higher order skills”

6. Impact on teaching
The positive impact of specific HE CPD programme is confirmed by lesson observations, course and module surveys, NSS, external examiner reports, and internal quality auditing.
- Staff feel better supported as they move into teaching at higher levels
- Staff grow in confidence within the HE classroom
- A greater variety of teaching methods are used, benefitting the diverse student body
- Public information and modular documentation is more consistent
- Better quality feedback is given to students in a more timely manner
- Improved ability of staff to redevelop or create new courses as they better understand the level of learning outcomes and assessment
- Greater understanding of the HEA PSF leads to higher % of staff achieving fellowship
Developing a Higher Education Infrastructure to Support Teaching & Learning
Dr Ann Cotterill and Tom Evershed

1. Introduction
As college based higher education (HE) has expanded, the infrastructure in place to support the higher level provision has not always been similarly developed. Increasingly, each college delivering HE is expected to demonstrate “deliberative and executive structures in the strategic oversight of its processes and outcomes in the management and quality enhancement of its higher education provision.” In 2013/14, a number of recommendations from QAA Higher Education Reviews specifically related to this aspect of HE management.

2. HE Committee Structure
Warwickshire College Group has put in place a deliberative committee structure that maintains oversight of its HE. This structure comprises HE Academic Board and two constituent committees: HE Quality and Academic Standards Committee (HEQAS) and HE Teaching and Learning Committee (HETLC) as depicted in Figure 1. HEQAS and HETLC report termly to HE Academic Board and key Board outcomes are reported termly to the governors.

3. Monitoring Responsibilities
Figure 2 provides an illustration of the information that is considered by each committee. At Warwickshire College Group, a range of information is filtered through the HE Management Team who collate, summarise and provide a first stage evaluation. If the information indicates a deficiency or identifies areas for improvement, actions may be taken or recommendations made to HE Academic Board. For example, HE Teaching and Learning Committee may recommend to HE Academic Board that a policy is required that sets out the college’s definition of scholarly activity and minimum expectations of staff. Similarly, following a review of a summary of EE reports, HE Quality and Academic Standards Committee may agree to review the college policy on internal verification.

4. Developing the Infrastructure
It may not be appropriate for all colleges to set up three dedicated HE committees. The following 6-step guide may be helpful:
1. list the information that is routinely gathered and should be evaluated (EE reports, student surveys, lesson observations, etc.);
2. identify where this information is currently being considered and ask whether this is fit for practice;
3. consider whether all the information being gathered and evaluated is overseen by one body or group;
4. if necessary, agree one or more committees to consider specific information and a process for oversight (i.e. all summarised by an HE Manager and reported to SLT);
5. document the outcomes. If committees are set up to ensure there are appropriate terms of reference and membership;
6. review all committees annually and change, improve and/or adapt as necessary for the institution.

5. Enhancement
The right infrastructure should facilitate colleges to evidence “deliberate steps taken at provider level to improve the quality of learning opportunities.”

References
2. Higher Education Review. A handbook for QAA subscribers and providers with access to funding from HEFCE undergoing review in 2014-15, QAA, June 2014

Figure 2

Figure 1
Game Changing: teaching to achieve high performance learning in the context of college based Higher Education.

An investigation of how student (consumer) attitudes impact on their learning journey; and how the marketing position of the higher education product requires re-evaluating.

Introduction

Due to the uncapping of university places, in 2015, the quality of teaching and learning in College based H.E. has never been so important from a marketing perspective. Researchers (Williams 2013) lament the commercialisation of higher education and asks how to address the challenges. The study has utilised the authors’ action research interests, and experience of teaching within both university and college departments. As teachers committed to the concept of life changing education the question asked was: How can teaching and learning be structured to facilitate the students of College based Higher Education to more effectively compete in the graduate jobs market? Having conducted a range of pilot surveys and interviews the study has evolved to consider drawing conclusions that point to the re-evaluation of how Higher Education is marketed.

Methodology & Initial Findings

Via a process of student consultation, qualitative observation and practitioner discursive reflection a model of the high performance learner was developed (see opposite); four key research areas have been identified as instrumental to supporting this model in terms of organisational behaviour: structuring learning time, content delivery to achieve visible learning, resourcing to learn, student transition to independence. The schematic was developed to stimulate debate and observation.

Discussion

Marketisation of higher education is impacting on delivery, funding impacts on the resourcing of learning, the nature of employability is presently unclear and students perceptions of the learning journey are equally unclear and disparate. Key student behaviours are driven by economic factors. Initial student surveys demonstrate that economic behaviours including for example “20 or more hours per week term paid work” appear to significantly differentiate between College based HE and DfL students, when groups were matched against parental income levels and state school education. The contention for further research is that differences in student value systems impact their learning journey. These are predicable in College based HE cohorts. Hence economic behaviour impacts should shape the design of educational products to deliver consumer satisfaction.

Further Research: Call to Action

The authors are currently calling for contributors, research partners, survey and interview participants to engage in the ongoing research programme.

To register your interest contact:
Steve Raven Email: steve.raven@srbs.biz Tel: 07775 761934

Hypothesis A: Student outcomes are influenced by the behavioural economics the student brings to the learning journey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude to:</th>
<th>HPL Added Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>debt</td>
<td>HPL Traits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>readiness of learning</td>
<td>critical thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wage or earning expectation</td>
<td>leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>academic integrity</td>
<td>students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>authors</td>
<td>to assessment &amp; examinations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beliefs regarding:</td>
<td>self realisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>their own ‘power to create’</td>
<td>learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the ‘value’ of education</td>
<td>employment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Impact

Hypothesis B: Students attain high performance learner capabilities within a partnership brought about by the college’s organisational behaviour and the student’s learner behaviour.

Hypothesis C: Student outcomes are influenced by the College’s organisational behaviour

Illustration 1: Schematic Model of the Partnership between the Student & the Educational Organisation determining the Learning Journey towards Employability.

Authors:
Steve Raven MA FSET FRSA
A Fellow of the RSA, Head of HE Business & Management at Warwickshire College, previously taught at Glyndwr University and founder of a start-up training business developing into a global concern. Having been involved in College based HE since 1985 in a variety of roles is well placed to engage in action research focused on teaching and learning strategies to improve student’s capacity to compete in the graduate jobs market.

Paul Masiah MA FHEA
A Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, Paul is currently a lecturer in Business & Management at Warwickshire College specialising in International Business and Marketing. Particularly a Senior Lecturer at Coventry University, continues to be active in research and has a wide range of published research and presentation papers to his name, most notably with the area of pedagogy and business studies.
Lesson Observations Designed for College-Based Higher Education
Dr Tanya Carey, Dr Richard Pearce, Thea Philcox, Helen Kinghorn

Introduction
High quality teaching and learning has always been a strong feature in colleges. In many colleges, the traditional further education (FE) methods of lesson observations have been used to measure and improve teaching for both further and higher education (HE). Particularly with the introduction of the Higher Education Academy (HEA) Professional Standards Framework (PSF), colleges have looked to develop methods of lesson observation that are fit for purpose for HE.
Warwickshire College Group has developed a robust process for observing HE teaching that includes specific criteria to allow judgements to be made of the standard of teaching.

The lesson observations
The criteria used in assessing teaching are closely linked with the PSF allowing lecturers to use evidence from teaching observations in subsequent application for HEA fellowship. The observations are focussed on highlighting areas of good practice, areas for further development and a discussion of scholarly activity and its impact on the students’ learning experience.

The emphasis during lesson observations is on enhancement of the shared understanding of what makes teaching excellence at HE level. The indicators of effective teaching at HE level are given in Figure 1, and the judgements given against each indicator and how they are used to improve the overall quality of teaching is summarised in Figure 2.

What contributes to effective learning and teaching?
The QAA quality code refers to:
- Inclusive learning through promoting equality, diversity and equal opportunity
- Learning facilitated by enthusiastic and capable staff through teaching and other types of support for learning, whether formal or informal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality of Learning (Planning and Pedagogy)</th>
<th>Quality of Learning (Pacing and Delivery)</th>
<th>Development of Learner Independence</th>
<th>Judgements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Well-planned activities (A1)             | ILT is used effectively to facilitate achievement of the learning outcomes (K4) | Learning activities correlate with the individual learning needs of the students (K3) | Each of the competencies in Figure 1 (plus the subject material and development of student employability skills) are judged in terms of their effectiveness and their impact on the learners (see Figure 2).
A detailed report is written by the observer and this is discussed verbally with the lecturer. Resulting actions then either require the lecturer to share good practice with others or focus on improvement or enhancement of important aspects.

Assessment for Learning
- Lecturer makes effective use of formative assessment methods to check learning (K5)
- Formative assessment is used to inform changes to the module (K5)
- Learning checked throughout lesson
- Range of methods to check learning (peer and self-assessment)
- Expert questioning used to confirm deeper learning
- Learners are confident answering questions and give in-depth responses

Promotion of Equality and Diversity
- Materials and teaching methods foster good relations and are sensitive to and promote equality of opportunity
- Lecturer embeds diversity in the lesson content
- Lecturer tackles discrimination and/or stereotyping
- Lecturer meaningfully integrates outside world into the learning process
- Lecturer promotes equality of opportunity by meeting individual learner needs

Learner Voice
- Learners confirm this is a typical lesson
- Learners are able to give an evaluation of their own learning and progress
- For graded courses, learners are aware of their targets
- Learners confirm VLE is available and its content is useful

FIGURE 1: Specific indicator competencies for HE Teaching observations (codes in brackets relate to specific areas of PSF)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary of Impact on Learners</th>
<th>Targeted Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highly effective</td>
<td>Focus on improvement and/or enhancement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective</td>
<td>Share good practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not yet entirely effective</td>
<td>Not seen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not seen</td>
<td>Not seen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIGURE 2: Learner impact profile and resulting actions
Second College HE Research and Scholarship Conference

Tuesday 28 June, Birmingham (subsidised by the AoC/HEFCE Scholarship Project)

The Association of Colleges’ (AoC) Scholarship Project aims to support the development and embedding of a distinct college higher education scholarly ethos across the sector. This year’s event will build on the 2015 conference and concentrate on the progress made in the project. Delegates will be able to discuss how to support researchers outside those already participating in the project.

Find out about the project at www.aoc.co.uk/scholarshipproject.

Sessions will include

› Early findings of successful institutional scholarship policies and practices
› Workshops led by project funded local development managers
› Presentations of co-learning initiatives with students
› How to involve employers in scholarship
› International perspectives
› Developing the college HE scholarship community

“If colleges want to be successful in higher education they need to ensure their teaching staff are up-to-date in their subject and technical areas. To achieve this they need to undertake research and scholarship that is appropriate to the provision of technical and professional education.”

Martin Doel CBE, Chief Executive, Association of Colleges

Tremendous energy and enthusiasm for this initiative was evident throughout the day. This is a fabulous opportunity for scholarly development for FE and HE staff.

John Fitzsimons, Programme Leader / Lecturer, Exeter College

A thought provoking and engaging conference with a real HE feel, head buzzing with new approaches to implement!

Lesley Jobson, Lecturer / Programme Leader, Northumberland College

AoC welcomes colleagues interested in shaping the content of the conference or with an interest in presenting. For an informal discussion please contact projects@aoc.co.uk or John Lea john_lea@aoc.co.uk Director of the Scholarship Project.