



Business,
Management,
Accountancy and
Finance

BMAF magazine

Available to download from www.heacademy.ac.uk/business

Time to get involved

Steve Probert, Assistant Director, BMAF Subject Centre

Welcome to Issue 5 of the BMAF Magazine! Having recently returned from our 3rd Annual Conference, I am reminded that BMAF is no longer “new”. We are approaching our 4th year and our activities are still developing. In 2008-9 we will continue to focus on our priorities of internationalisation; assessment and feedback; staff development; and others, with a proportion of this work facilitated via Specialist Interest Groups (SIGs). These came into existence in 2007-8, and many of you have contributed to and gained from these, with more to come no doubt in 2008-9.

Our relationship with the Association of Business Schools has proved useful to raise our profile, and we hope to develop that further in 2008-9. Although primarily concerned with 14-19 Diplomas to date, our work with relevant Sector Skills Councils will widen in the coming year. BMAF’s relationship with JISC has continued via project work and in developing the Academy/JISC collaboration initiative. We also work with other Subject Centres to provide activities and resources, e.g. by working with the Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Network to develop publications for 2008-9 in the areas of student-centred learning and internationalisation.

Reflecting on nearly 3 years of BMAF operations, what strikes me is their sheer diversity. Firstly, the institutional diversity - and we are proud that we engage with so many institutions - via workshops, Key Contact symposia, etc - organised in every setting including ultra-new universities, Russell Group, civic or campus-based pre-

1992 universities and former polytechnics.

Secondly, our engagements occur regularly in all four countries of the UK.

Finally, there is the enormous diversity of the subjects which are taught under the BMAF umbrella, with some now represented through SIGs. Perhaps the one area that we have not yet developed is HE in FE, and this will become a priority once (and crucially if) funding allows, as there is a vast amount of ‘business’ HE occurring in the FE sector.

If you have been involved in BMAF activities we look forward to seeing you again soon. If you haven’t so far, why not come along to one of our events to see for yourself? The policy on attending Key Contacts symposia has changed to be more inclusive and contacts are encouraged to invite a colleague who may benefit too. Staff of the host school are welcome to attend all or part of the event - all we ask is to be informed in advance so we can plan and cater. For those Key Contacts unable to attend symposia we welcome a colleague or two to attend to represent their school’s concerns. I hope to see many of you at the next round of symposia and at future BMAF events – both old faces and new!



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Student essay competition

What makes a good lecturer?

Katharine Jewitt, Postgraduate student, Open University

This essay draws upon research by Honey and Mumford (1986); Kolb *et al.* (1974); Marton and Saljo (1976); Reynolds (1997); and Schmeck (1988), and focuses on key qualities that make a good lecturer: one who is available to their students in a variety of ways and is always positive, motivational and gives plenty of constructive feedback. A good lecturer knows their students and their learning styles, and will also encourage students to develop relationships with their peers. My views are based on studying at two universities both full-time and part-time; both face-to-face and distance learning. I studied at Staffordshire University and completed a BA Hons in History and Politics full-time and then an MA in Politics part-time. I then switched to distance learning and have studied with the Open University ever since, completing a BSc Open degree, an MBA and will graduate in autumn 2008 with MSc in Human Resource Management and MEd in Lifelong Learning.

The most important qualities that make a good lecturer is one who is positive, builds self-esteem and is motivational. It is somebody who is passionate about their field of study, demonstrates excellent knowledge in a way that students can understand and instils their subject-passion in their students. It is so important to a student that the lecturer believes in the student, whatever their level, and provides constructive feedback rather than criticism. The ability to work with students with disabilities, from diverse educational, cultural and work backgrounds is vital. A good lecturer is one who provides detailed feedback on written work and comments on every paragraph. If paragraphs are left without any feedback, I am left wondering whether that means it was good work or whether it was so bad that the lecturer could find nothing to say!

“... somebody who is passionate about their field of study, demonstrates excellent knowledge in a way that students can understand and instils their subject-passion in their students.”

The most successful courses I have studied on have been where the lecturer uses technology for

learning which involves a blended approach - face to face, classroom, e-learning. The move towards entirely electronic-based study is - in my view - completely misplaced as it simply gives students no choice in how they access materials. Going down the technology road alone simply alienates a large number – for example, those who travel with work and away from technology. We lead busy lives and often want to access study materials when travelling, or during lunch breaks - or even when going on holiday. In most of those circumstances a good old fashioned book or printed guide is going to keep us motivated and interested and for these reasons keeping a balance is important.

It is important that a lecturer appreciates that one style does not fit all and is flexible enough to try different approaches for various learners and to do this by getting to know their students and developing one-to-one relationships and also building relationships between their student peers. Honey and Mumford (1986) categorise learners into four styles: activities, theorists, pragmatists and reflectors. A good lecturer will be one that is novel and participatory enough for activists; intellectually rigorous enough for theorists; practical enough for pragmatists and leisurely enough for reflectors. Knowing the various learning styles is one step forward in considering student needs and meeting their learning characteristics and how people process information most effectively; how students respond to the way it is presented, be it, for example, through the written word, visual representations, verbal discussion or practical demonstration.

“... novel and participatory enough for activists; intellectually rigorous enough for theorists; practical enough for pragmatists and leisurely enough for reflectors.”

It must be recognized of course, not to make something ‘substantive’ out of a metaphor. We don’t actually have learning styles; that is a metaphor that helps make sense of why some people find some learning contexts difficult. There are quite a few people who really dislike the concept of ‘learning styles’, for example, Reynolds (1997) challenges the idea of learning styles.

A good lecturer is one who is available to students to meet a variety of communication needs. Some

students find it easier to communicate face-to-face, others via email or by telephone. Good lecturers are those who are prompt in responding to students and have the ability to use information and communication technology in teaching and supporting and communicating with their students.

Good lecturers recognize that students may take a deep approach or a surface approach to learning tasks (Marton and Saljo, 1976), attempting either to make sense of or to memorize material. The approach that students take makes an enormous difference to what they learn and what they remember. Good lecturers recognize that learners will prefer to learn in different ways and that there may not be one typical learner. The basis of these differences is not always straightforward. Sometimes it seems to be a habit associated with the kinds of task-demands the student is facing, and sometimes it seems to be underpinned by a more fixed cognitive style. Two contrasting styles were identified in Schmeck's (1998) review of the literature 'global' and 'analytical'. These styles are associated with attempting to gain an overview or attempting to work through material in a step-by-step manner. Kolb's (1974) account of learning styles assumes that students can learn to change and balance their style, while Schmeck assumes that style is relatively fixed. Either way, there are clear implications for the way in which lecturers lecture. A good lecturer will respect all approaches and recognize that although a student may take one approach, this may change as a result of their

support and respect.

A good lecturer is one who continuously seeks to improve through personal and professional development. Using their own (and some colleagues) lecturing practice as the subject for evidence-based and reflective practice research. As an example, looking at how to exploit innovations in technology to improve learning for their students by exploring what happens when they do 'x'... review... ok, then let's try 'y'... review... hmmm, let's try 'y1' etc, thus building up a picture with evidence as to what practice actually makes a positive difference to their students.

To conclude, a good lecturer is one who has an appreciation of how students learn and an appreciation of varying study skills and styles. A good lecturer is one that has the ability and willingness to communicate with students in a variety of ways and is open to diverse educational, cultural, students with disabilities and different work backgrounds and is supportive in these differences. A good lecturer is committed to building relationships; a believer in personal development and is passionate about their subject field and passes this on to their students in a style that builds confidence and self-esteem. A good lecturer is accessible to their students and always positive!

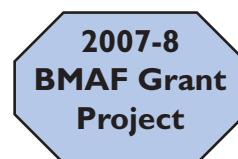
Full references can be accessed on the website:
www.heacademy.ac.uk/business/publications/bmag

Enquiry-based learning

Louise Grisoni, University of the West of England,
louise.grisoni@uwe.ac.uk

This project looks at the introduction of enquiry-based approaches to learning and teaching (EBL) in two final year undergraduate modules within the field of Organisation Studies: Managing Change (an elective attracting some 85 students in 2007/08) and Organisational Analysis (a core module taken by more than 400 students). Most of the students on Managing Change (80%) also take Organisational Analysis. These modules are in a different stage of development with regard to EBL and, although running in the same Department in the same institution, there are both similarities and differences in the opportunities and challenges they face.

The work undertaken on both modules during the course of 2007/08 has continued to build on development in previous years, with a particular focus on:



- How to work with the subject content and assessment processes, creating resources that will develop critical thinking and writing skills and be consistent with values held by staff and students in relation to enquiry-based approaches.
- Exploring the emotional dimensions of student and staff experiences in relation to this approach – in particular the role of anxiety in relation to learning.

- Enquiring into the process of inquiry. Exploring methodological process issues in a creative and collaborative way that can reveal interesting insights about the research process of the project.

Whilst most management education puts the focus on providing answers, EBL places the emphasis on questioning and asking good questions. Our experience suggests that some students struggle to accept that we really mean it when we say “there is no one right answer” (even when as tutors we role-model this approach), fearing that they will be somehow penalised if they fail to agree. Thus whilst Daudelin (2001) notes that, in the complex world of organisations students will face when they graduate, reflection and enquiry are core skills for managers, it is not always easy to convince students of their value. Often there can be a big ‘so what?’ question in students’ minds when they are first introduced to these approaches. For many students their focus is, quite naturally, on assessment and successful completion of the modules, as this is their final year. It is perhaps no surprise then that discovering how to engage with a new approach to learning can be anxiety provoking for students.

Staff also experience considerable anxiety in relation to holding on to the principles of student-led enquiry as an approach to learning, under considerable pressure from students to revert to more familiar approaches and a wider system that is designed to support more didactic approaches. It is in this context that we have been developing and adopting the hybrid enquiry-based learning (HEBL) approaches (CILASS, 2008).

When students embrace these more enquiring approaches, the effects on their levels of self-awareness can be profound and generate real excitement and enthusiasm, as well as anxiety. Students begin to make new connections between

different areas and aspects of their life, and in a ‘safe’ tutorial environment will often share deep personal insights with their peers and tutor, insights that suggest they have developed real confidence in the value of their own experience.

As well as noting the rewards in terms of their own learning when adopting EBL approaches, tutors all had stories relating to the ‘buzz’ they experience when students really engage with the subject and the approach. For example, emulating the tutor’s style and approach when making a presentation; emailing articles and web links that have excited them to the tutor; or describing in seminars how they have applied their learning on other modules or in other areas of their life. However, these responses are by no means predictable, even for the same tutor working with the same group.

As a project team, we have experienced many of the frustrations that students complain of when adopting EBL in relation to the need for: clarity in relation to the project (students wanting to be given ‘the right answer’); time available to work on it (more work in relation to other modules); and the need for a sense of plan and achievement of successful outputs for our work (what response will we get to the risks we have taken?). This has led to some interesting insights into the concept of ‘mirroring’, the reality of collaborative working, creating ‘boundaries’ in relation to what’s in the project and what’s outside it, when we work on the project in work time or personal time, and whether having fun and being creative is an acceptable way to conduct research.

Our work is still evolving as we learn more about what does and does not work in our local context and we continue to be convinced of its value.

Full references can be accessed on the website: www.heacademy.ac.uk/business/publications/bmag

Assessed group work: dealing with ‘free riders’

Bob Perry and Barbara Maiden, University of Wolverhampton Business School, r.perry@wlv.ac.uk and barbara.maiden@wlv.ac.uk

Why this research project?

There is indisputable evidence of the value of team working, whether within the workplace or in an educational setting. However, team working is not

without its difficulties, particularly when it forms part of the assessment of a module.

Anecdotally the biggest problem for tutors is managing complaints about what has been described as ‘free-riding’. Free-riders do not contribute appropriately to the task so causing unnecessary stress and additional effort by fellow group members. In the process these individuals unfairly gain higher grades than they



deserve so frustrating other team members.

Whilst there are no easy solutions, a number of mechanisms might help. The dilemma for the practitioner is deciding how realistic and useful these mechanisms might be, and how in practice they might be effectively implemented. This project builds on an extensive literature review of ideas for overcoming free-riders to develop workable processes and then trial them.

Issues to bear in mind

The literature review alerted the researchers to the potential for 'social loafing' (a tendency of members to individually do less in a group than their potential possibly because their contribution is not valued). Other areas felt to be significant (that module leaders may wish to take account of) included the levels of training students receive in team working and the briefings they get. Additionally, the issue of whether groups should be tutor selected or selected by the students themselves needs careful consideration.

The 'solutions' trialled

The most practical solutions to deterring free riders were identified and trialled.

These were:

- 80/20 responsibility (group members award 20% of the grade)
- Exam follow-on (individual examination needs knowledge of group work)

But can they string a simple sentence together?

Ben Kotzee, Queen Mary, University of London,
b.kotzee@qmul.ac.uk

The quality of undergraduates' writing skills is a common source of complaint in common rooms up and down the country; it even made the headlines when an academic recently published a diary of his students' blunders. There were red faces at Imperial College when Dr Bernard Lamb of the genetics department revealed how one student could gain a first class degree despite having written at one point that "[I]t initsats a undisired non-specific response in mamammals" (Asthana, 2007). It is not only academics that are unimpressed: employer organisations like the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and Association of Graduate Recruiters (AGR) complain loudly about new graduate employees' inability to communicate. In

- Viva warning (use of a viva to assess true contribution of suspected free-riders)
- The two card trick (issue of yellow and red cards)
- Team-led (formative group work helps with individual summative assessment)
- Divided mark (team score is apportioned according to students' views on relative contributions)

All approaches had distinct advantages and disadvantages and all had some positive impact on student behaviour.

Some findings

It became apparent that attempts to eliminate free-riders in teamwork are supported by both students and staff. Analysis of completed questionnaires indicated that students value group work (even when it is assessed) and seem to appreciate any attempt to deal with free-riders.

How might this help me?

Mini case studies containing a full explanation of the approach, reactions of students and module leaders, and supporting paperwork will be made available through the BMAF network. Module leaders are encouraged to review this material and adapt it to suit their local needs. In this way some of the frustrations associated with assessed group work might be reduced.

fact, research from the University of Hertfordshire revealed that the reason most frequently cited by employers for turning down graduates' job applications was that the application contains obvious spelling and grammatical mistakes (Jobscene, 2006).



Dr Roger Johnston of the School of Business and Management and Dr Ben Kotzee of Educational and Staff Development at Queen Mary, University of London have been investigating the problem, focussing on students taking courses in business and management. They found that there is indeed a great deal of concern about UK graduates' writing skills amongst employers (as confirmed in the most prominent graduate labour market surveys) but also in government and organisations such as the Royal Literary Society. However, little information exists on which specific writing skills graduates lack, or on

which writing tasks new graduates commonly perform once in work. Furthermore, little information is available on the differences in writing skills between graduates of business subjects and other graduates. Besides a general feeling that 'graduates cannot string a sentence together' the lack of systematic information in this area renders course design difficult.

Johnston and Kotzee surveyed AGR members on some of these questions and found that graduates of business subjects encounter the same writing tasks once in employment as other graduates, with most employers expecting them to write reports, letters and emails but not, for instance, press releases. Strikingly, 62% of employers held that between 40% and 80% of new graduates' everyday work consists of writing, with 9% reporting content of 80% to 100%. Graduates of both business and other subjects also encounter mostly the same

problems with their writing, with employers reporting that graduates' written work requires frequent editing, especially for grammar and organisation. Punctuation was another area of concern, but employers reported editing for spelling slightly less often. Many employers held that they encountered "text speak" in new graduate employees' written work and that that was unacceptable.

Johnston and Kotzee are preparing their initial results for publication and intend following up the study amongst smaller employers. Queen Mary's School of Business and Management presents a compulsory first year course in academic communication and is reviewing its offering.

Full references can be accessed on the website: www.heacademy.ac.uk/business/publications/bmag

A modest proposal exploring "how students work"

David Taylor, Leeds University Business School, d.t.taylor@lubs.ac.uk

Being 'of a certain age' (i.e. old), and limited in understanding of IT and the internet (i.e. not a clue), it seemed a good idea to find out how students (younger, IT literate) use the huge variety of sources now available (internet, Blogs, Wikis, etc.) when they write essays. As we expect students to learn from each other, it also seemed sensible to explore if, how, and to what extent students exchange work. This idea came out of experience on plagiarism panels – the plagiarism detection software we use highlights matched text in different students' individual work.

First stage

Get some funding – grateful thanks to the BMAF Subject Centre for their support.

Methodology

Ask students; draft a questionnaire; ask students (again) and colleagues; administer the finalised questionnaire; collect the results; ask students (again) what the results mean.

Questionnaire

Fifteen questions, covering 3 broad areas:

1. How do students work – e.g. cut and paste, directly on screen, handwriting notes etc.?

2. Do students exchange notes or final assignments with each other – if so how (e.g. e-mail, as part of a study group)?
3. What do students believe others do?*

2007-8
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Project

*The original question was "What do others do?" but a colleague (thanks John) pointed out that respondents would not know what others did. What I was exploring was perception/belief (obvious really, but not to me).

Headline results (~1100 responses from undergraduate students)

How do you work?

- I prepare notes transferring text using 'cut and paste' - UK/EU 60%, International 80%;
- I cut and paste text into final assignments - UK/EU 27%, International 41%;

International students are significantly more likely to cut and paste text into notes and final assignments than UK/EU students.

Do you exchange information?

- I exchange completed wordprocessed assignments with other students before submitting them (UK/EU 33%, International 41%)
- I let someone I trust have my completed assignment to help them with their assignment (UK/EU 36%, International 44%)

International students are significantly more likely to work together and exchange completed assignments than UK/EU students.

What do others do?

I believe other students exchange completed assignments before handing in their work (UK/EU 84%, International 73%)

Respondents believed other students exchange completed assignments before handing in their own work to a much greater extent than they did (the good driver/bad driver syndrome).

Conclusions

Did I learn anything? Yes!

Further work is required in this area (always the primary conclusion, I would like funding to do more studies). The questionnaire can be used by others to generate comparative results so please contact me.

We (academic staff and institutions) need to provide clear, informed and targeted guidance as to what is allowed (collaboration ✓) and what is not (collusion X). We will then be more likely to detect deliberate cheating, rather than mistakes due to ignorance.

Details of methodology, statistical analysis, results, interpretation, etc will be in the final report presented at a future conference (hopefully in sunny climes) and published on the BMAF website.

Purpose and students' use of reusable learning objects

Lyn Greaves, Thames Valley University
lyn.greaves@tvu.ac.uk and Claire Bradley, London Metropolitan University

Project Aims:

- To introduce Reusable Learning Objects (RLOs) as part of the Learning Development Pathway (LDP) curriculum designed for developing academic competence
- To examine the scheduling, purpose and use made of RLO's at scheduled stages within the LDP
- To test student perceptions of the effectiveness of the RLO's as part of the support given for their independent learning
- To compare progression out turns with those of previous cohorts

The RLOs were designed by the Reusable Learning Objects CETL at London Metropolitan University, and the extant curriculum context in TVU is one specifically designed to support progression. A core foundation module - 'Critical approaches to research and study in HE' - was used as the test bed for the redesign. The original module was designed to provide a supported LDP for students to develop and refine the academic skills and approaches required for critical enquiry and academic writing. This is achieved through profiling and structured learning exercises, in which they develop confidence and skills as an independent learner. Having measured the student learning gain in the previous year, and taking account of student feedback, a need was identified for interactive

support outside of the contact session each week.



Results and Evaluation of Impact

The evaluation used a mixed methods approach to provide both quantitative and qualitative data. This consists of analysing usage statistics from the Blackboard VLE and an on-line feedback form provided with each RLO. At the end of the module a student evaluation session was held, attended by 17 students, who completed a questionnaire and took part in a focus group. In addition, the tutor replicated a prior tool for performance analysis to see if there was an overall performance improvement in the cohort in comparison with the performance of the previous cohort.

The project team is really excited by the impact that the blended learning approach has had on further improving the gains in student learning and progression since the LDP was introduced into the module. The second cohort of students appear to have a deeper, more coherent and sustained learning experience as a result of the introduction of the RLOs. Whilst we cannot claim this for certain, we do know from the extensive student evaluation of the project that both the VLE and the RLOs have been useful and helpful to the students. The VLE helped them to keep on track with their work as it acted as a central store of information and resources, and enabled them to collaborate and share ideas and resources with others (an unexpected outcome). Student comments about the RLOs indicate that they did use and value them. The intention was that the online learning environment

and interactive RLOs would provide additional support for students, providing them with access when it was most useful and convenient. The evaluation has shown that this was in fact the case, and we are confident that our learning design has helped the students to succeed.

The Blended Learning Design

The referencing suite of RLOs provides a basic visual introduction to referencing and shows how to reference correctly. Each RLO starts with an example, and provides some key reasons why referencing is important. The student is then interactively taken through the stages of accessing the relevant information through to looking at how to include the final citation in the reference list. They all conclude with a 'test your knowledge' set of activities.

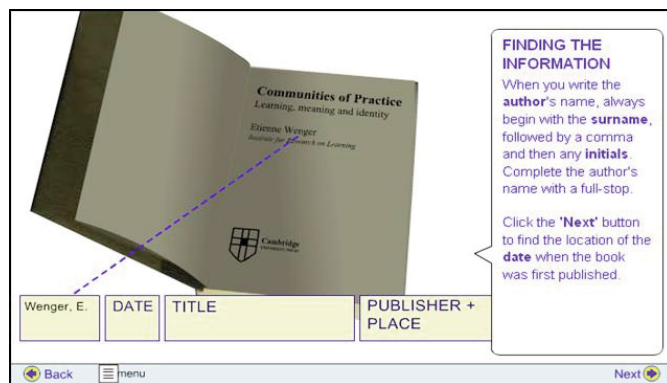


Figure 1. Screen from the referencing suite

Student Learning and Progression

Student learning and progression was compared with the previous cohort using baseline data and a positive outcome for the use of RLOs was shown.

The final report will be published on the BMAF website.

Global Leadership and Global Fitness Framework Conference

“Education is the leading of human souls to what it best, and making what is best out of them.” John Ruskin

“Leaders have to shape up if they are to be successful in the new global village” was the message behind a two-day conference held recently at the Ashcroft International Business School (AIBS), Anglia Ruskin University in Chelmsford. The conference, which took place on the 3rd and 4th April, explored leaders’ fitness for purpose in the rapidly changing world. Devised for international researchers and business leaders from a wide range of fields, the event offered an opportunity to consider what global leadership involved, and what was required for this to work effectively. A major thrust of the conference was the exploration of a holistic framework which highlighted the importance of considering the physical, mental and spiritual fitness of individuals, organisations and society. Were leaders, organisations and society fit for purpose? Could individuals, organisations and nations continue to act in their own self interests and assume, for instance, that natural resources would continue to be exploitable? What were business leaders’ role in achieving the UN’s Millennium Development Goals? Was a new global way of thinking required?

Judging by the feedback received (a typical example being that shown below) the conference was a great success.

“Thank you all for a wonderful conference. It was very special and took courage from [the organisers] to create this. It was good to arrive and see the Ruskin quote [shown at the start of this article] about our unfolding souls and then to hear all the great inputs that represent years of research and hard work and commitment; then to... sit and talk with people wrestling with the daily struggles of things like the automotive industry, outsourcing to India and China, all these opportunities for transformation; to face some of the terrible injustices and suffering that are happening globally and yet never to lose sight of the fact that things are indeed changing right now and will change. The conference embodied some of that change, the possibility of academic brains and hearts being put at the service of a new way of doing business in this world; and people jumping in and talking out and linking up.”

Conference organisers John Rayment and Dr Jonathan Smith, both senior researchers at AIBS, have been carrying out a long-term study of how urgent global issues - such as the breakdown of family and society, pandemics, demographic change,

religious fundamentalism and global warming - may be addressed, particularly in relation to the responsibilities of organisations including businesses and governments.

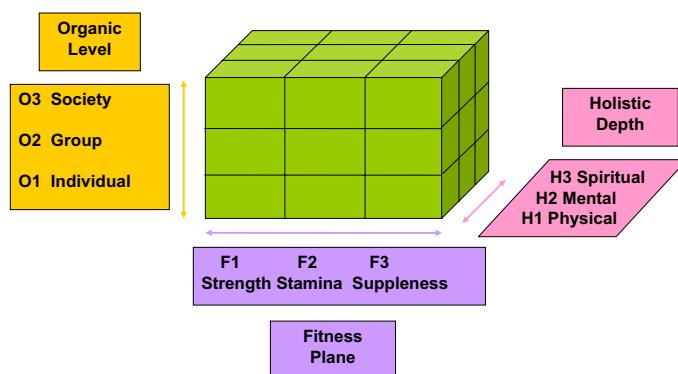
"Leaders should adopt a new global way of thinking as the current leadership model is appreciably outdated", explained John Rayment. "Individuals, organisations and nations can no longer act in their own self interests and assume that natural resources are still exploitable, or that business and population growth is desirable. Leaders have not yet recognised that changing circumstances have made this approach untenable."

Over 50 international researchers attended the conference, and delegates had the opportunity to become involved in the Global Fitness and Leadership research network set up by the AIBS. AIBS are also currently developing an MSc in Global Leadership and are keen to see similar programmes developed elsewhere.



The team also launched the Global Fitness Framework - their model for assessing the fitness of individuals, groups and societies.

Global Fitness Framework



Speaking about the model, Dr Smith said that:

"fit organisations will co-operate and collaborate with others and with the communities of which they are a part. In our view, 'fitness' must be measured holistically, taking into consideration the physical, mental and spiritual dimensions of performance and the purpose sought."

One of the key speakers at the event was Martin Rutte, President of Livelihood, a management consulting business in New Mexico. Martin is co-author of the New York Times business bestseller 'Chicken Soup for the Soul at Work'. He is also Chair of the board of Canada's first Centre for Spirituality and the Workplace at the Sobey School of Business, Saint Mary's University, Halifax.

A huge thank you to all who contributed to such an amazing conference.

For more information contact either John Rayment john.rayment@anglia.ac.uk or Jonathan Smith jonathan.smith@anglia.ac.uk

Making the most of PDFs

Simon Ball, JISC TechDis Service

Introduction

The TechDis Accessibility Essentials Guide on making the most of PDFs has been designed to provide step-by-step information to enable anyone creating or using Portable Document Format (PDF) documents to do so in a more accessible manner. These hints and tips will benefit those who create PDF documents using scanned materials or word processed documents, or receive a PDF version of publicity materials from a graphic designer.

Accessibility Essentials 4 is available online and in hard copy at no charge (a fee may be charged for bulk orders), and is supplemented by web-based guidance including hints and tips for screen reader users, best practice case studies and a comparison of some free PDF software.

The use of the techniques described here will aid people with a wide range of disabilities, needs and preferences to get more from written content by highlighting the potential benefits of PDF format and enabling documents to be created with these in

mind. These techniques will have benefits (and possibly barriers) for different groups of learners and it is important to consider the needs of the specific learners and adapt the materials as necessary.

A few highlights from the document are included here as a flavour of the full document.

Building Accessibility into Existing PDFs

This section looks at techniques for ensuring that existing PDF documents are as accessible as possible. N.B. These functions are available in Adobe® Acrobat Professional but may not be available in all software.

- The Accessibility Check - This section is highlighted in more detail below
- Adding Tags and Structure to PDFs
- PDFs and Bookmarks
- PDFs and Images
- PDFs and Tables

Running the Accessibility Check

- Navigate to Advanced > Accessibility > Full check. The dialogue box seen in Figure 1 will appear.
- Make sure the 'Create Accessibility Report' and 'Include repair hints in the Accessibility Report' boxes are checked.
- Select the appropriate range to be checked and click 'Start Checking'.
- This will produce a dialogue box giving a brief overview of any problems found. Clicking 'OK' in this box will produce a full report giving links to any problem areas of the document and instructions for amending these areas.

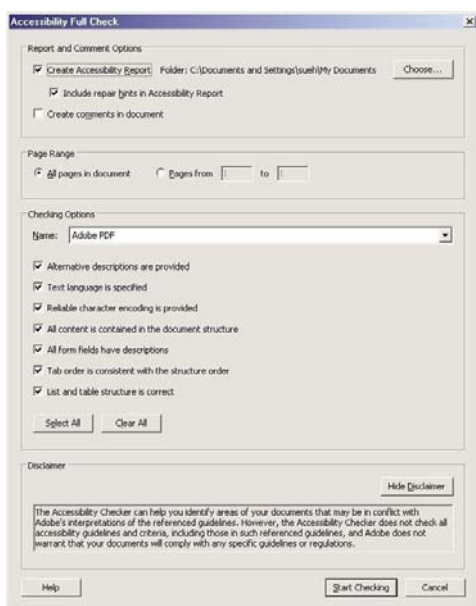


Figure 1. Accessibility Check Dialogue Box

Typically the Accessibility Check will find at least two problems; that the text lacks a language specification and that there is no reading order. Instructions on how to address these are given in Accessibility Essentials 4.

Adding Tags and Structure to PDFs

If the source document has been properly created using styles and headings these will be carried over when the document is converted to PDF format. However if you do not have access to the source document or it was not well structured, it is possible to clear the existing structure and add the appropriate tags. This can be a lengthy process if you are working with a long document.

Clearing the existing document structure

This may be necessary if the source document was not structured appropriately and an entirely new structure is needed. N.B. It is important to note that any existing tags will be erased, leaving a completely unstructured page.

- Navigate to Advanced > Accessibility > TouchUp Reading Order. The dialogue box seen in Figure 2 will be displayed.

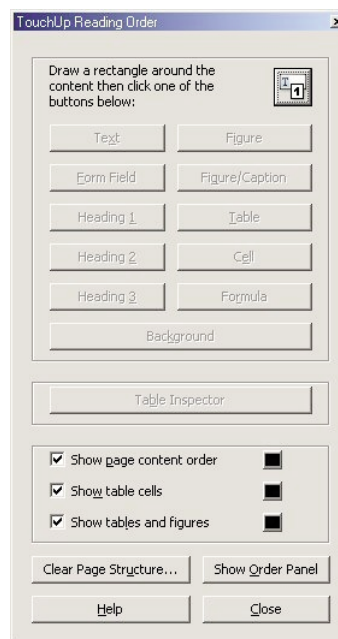


Figure 2. Touch Up Reading Order Dialogue Box

- Select 'Clear Page Structure'.
- A dialogue box will prompt you to check whether you want to clear all structure from the document. Click 'Yes'.

Adding structure

Once the existing reading order has been cleared a new structure can be added. To define the new structure:

- Navigate to Advanced > Accessibility > TouchUp Reading Order.
- Using the mouse, select the area to be tagged.
- Click on the appropriate button. For example to make the selected text into a main heading, click the 'Heading 1' button. This will tag the selection as a particular type of content.
- Reading order is determined by the order in which the content is tagged, i.e. the first tagged item will be the first item in the reading order. Each item is labelled with a number corresponding to the reading order of the document (see Figure 3).

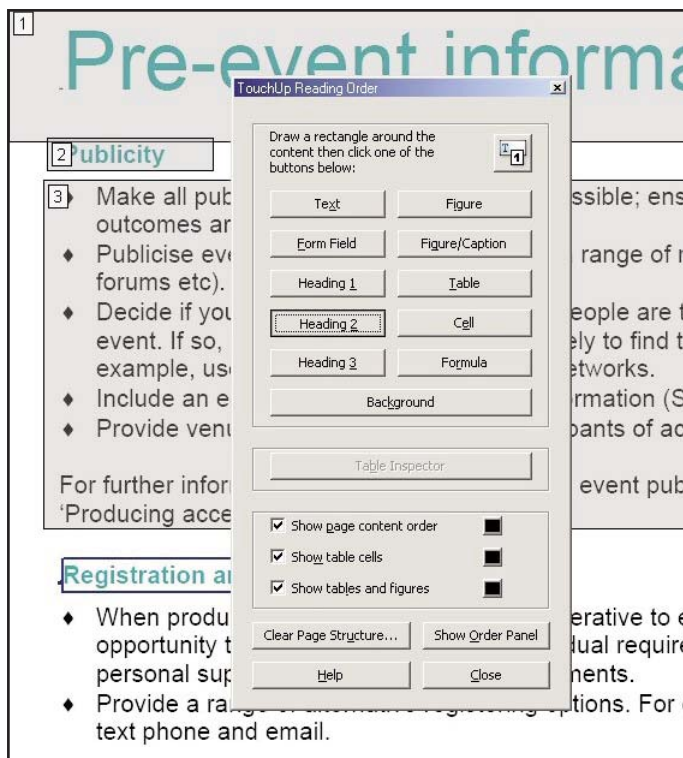


Figure 3. Highlighting text and allocating Heading level to set Reading Order

- Mistakes in the reading order can be rectified by dragging and dropping the numbers to the appropriate place.

User Personalisation of Adobe® Reader

This section covers techniques that the reader can use to amend the look and feel of a PDF document so that it is best suited to them. Please note that many of these functions are only available in Adobe® Reader; users will not necessarily be able

to access the same functions when reading a PDF in a web browser or other PDF reader software.

- Personalised Font and Background Colours - This section covers how users can change the background and font colours to suit their personal requirements.
- Enlarging the Text Size - This section covers the use of the zoom function to enlarge the text size of a document.
- Document Navigation - This section covers using the Bookmark and Pages views to quickly navigate through a document. It also covers the Find and Search functions which allow users to search the current and other documents for particular information.
- Alternative Views - Adobe® Reader allows users to reflow text, enabling columns to be arranged into continuous text and magnified text to fit into the window without the need for horizontal scrolling, scroll through a document automatically and have specified sections, pages or a whole document read aloud. This section shows users how to make use of these alternative views.

Accessibility Essentials 4

This is the fourth publication in the Accessibility Essentials Series, with other titles covering:

- Making Electronic Documents More Readable
- Writing Accessible Electronic Documents with Microsoft® Word
- Creating Accessible Presentations

For more information or to obtain this or the other documents in the Accessibility Essentials Series see www.techdis.ac.uk/accessibilityessentials or contact us on helpdesk@techdis.ac.uk.

TechDis

TechDis supports the education sector in achieving greater accessibility and inclusion by stimulating innovation and providing expert advice and guidance on disability and technology.

TechDis is a JISC-funded advisory service. For more information go to www.techdis.ac.uk

HE if FE - would you like technology with that sir?

Mike Wood and Richard Hodgson, Department of Professional Development, City of Sunderland College and Bob Bell, HE Consultant, Regional Support Centre (Northern)

The Regional Support Centres (RSCs) - nine in England, two in Scotland, one in Wales and one in Northern Ireland - exist to help hard pressed curriculum and support staff in FE and other colleges to get the best out of e-learning. RSCs were originally created to ensure that the 400+ colleges had a local point of contact, initially for technical support, but curriculum support quickly developed once JANET connections were up and running and over the last seven years that support has morphed into help with the systems and people aspects of e-learning.

A typical RSC has about ten staff whose role primarily involves brokering training for client staff, promoting JISC services, providing advice on e-learning systems and technology and operating social networks and forums. The latter are very important in promoting self-help across communities. The RSC is able to monitor, facilitate and disseminate projects such as the one described below being conducted at City of Sunderland College. This project is developing partly with funds provided by JISC within a collaborative Tyne and Wear Colleges project named COMPORT (<http://comport.gateshead.ac.uk/comport/>).

A foundation degree in service management at City of Sunderland College – implementing technology to assist work-based learners

34 second year Foundation Degree Service Management learners are producing an e-portfolio as part of the assessment for their Personal Development Planning Unit. This is an assessed part of the course with the e-portfolio element being worth 50% of the unit total. These learners are ideal as they produced a similar portfolio in hard copy format last year and in general they have picked up their knowledge of information technology through work related training and self discovery.

In the main, they did not study any form of ICT at secondary school, as most of them have been out of formal education for some years following

secondary school.

As part of the research each learner has been loaned a PDA (Personal Digital Assistant) to help collect evidence for their electronic portfolio. The PDA can be used to take digital photographs, digital video shots, digital sound files, and be used as a mobile storage and communication device. This is to help the learners gather and store personal development evidence in and out of their work environments which can then be uploaded onto their web based e-portfolios.



Richard Hodgson, college tutor, with Joanne Macleman and Michelle McCormack

Both the PDA and e-portfolios are completely new technology for the learners so it is proving an interesting challenge. However, we are pleased to report that they are starting to enjoy and see the advantages of using both mobile technologies and web technologies to support their learning. Many have now mastered the day-to-day management of their e-portfolios, regularly adding learning logs and personal reflections for this academic year. One of the main benefits learners have found is being able to add hyperlinks to their portfolios, so those viewing learners' portfolios can see work and academic-based websites relevant to each learner's personal and work based development. This adds a nice dimension to the written reflection learners give each month on their progress.

Many learners have now taken digital photographs of their development activities inside and outside the workplace. Examples include learners holding team meetings in their work environment, giving formal presentations, pictures of new layouts and

facilities developed by the learner as part of their personal development this year. They add a very effective visual feel to the portfolio and learners are starting to enjoy the challenge of making their portfolios in a way that traditional paper portfolios cannot offer. It is also nice to experience learners thinking about what other types of electronic evidence could be added to their portfolios. A few learners are thinking about adding podcasts to their portfolios so reflections on development activities can be given by the spoken rather than written word. It is also hoped that some learners will try taking short video files of development activities and adding these to their portfolios ready for the final assessment at the end of May this academic year.

It is true that many of these learners had concerns about using the technology at the start of the year but they are fully getting into the swing of using it now. The benefits of an e-portfolio are perhaps nicely summed up by one of our learners in some written blog-style feedback on the project in February.

"At first it was confusing how to put together my personal development portfolio. There were times when it was really frustrating, but now I really find it easy. I can dip in and out of the portfolio at work, at home and at college and communicate freely with my tutor using my portfolio. Colleagues at work are impressed with my use of technology and I really feel I have achieved something."

It is nice to see learning technology really enhancing the learning experience and seeing our mature higher education learners pushing back the barriers to achieve both academically and personally.

City of Sunderland College hope to adopt the e-portfolio system for further higher education learners next academic year. A review is taking place looking at the supply of different types of mobile technology to our learners to build individual and creative personal development portfolios to enhance their future learning performance and the quality of the College's provision.

Intute integration developments

Angela Joyce, Project Research Assistant, Intute
angela.joyce@bristol.ac.uk

The evolution of the Web has changed the way that people access information. Web 2.0 technologies have allowed information providers to integrate their services in people's existing online spaces, and users expect to be able to synthesise, edit and customise content for their own, specific purposes. Intute, the JISC funded service that aims to offer the best of the Web for higher and further education, has responded to these changes by developing a variety of free integration services which offer flexible ways of delivering its content to users.

These are available for anyone involved in higher education, whether lecturers, researcher, librarians or students. Basically they enable users to take content from the Intute website and embed it in their own website or VLE.

Various methods of integrating content are offered, which can be broken down into five main areas:

- Linking to Intute or the Virtual Training Suite tutorials, including the Business section of Intute

- Search options, eg. Federated search, integrating the Intute search box for all Intute or just the Business section
- Using Intute newsfeeds, eg. latest Business resources added
- Using MyIntute to customise Intute and non-Intute resources
- Users contributing content to Intute

Many lecturers have expressed interest in using Intute in their VLEs. At present you can integrate our simple weblinks, newsfeeds or import MyIntute catalogue records. We are working on ways of putting a search box in Moodle and Blackboard.

More information on these methods is given on the Integration page of the Intute Website at:
www.intute.ac.uk/integration/

We offer 5 Quick Guides to Integration (in PDF) on the website at:
www.intute.ac.uk/integrationguides/

There are examples of how various institutions have integrated Intute content on del.icio.us at:
<http://del.icio.us/angejoyce>

BMAF Annual Conference 2008

The Learning and Teaching Agenda in the UK: National Perspectives but Common Concerns

Richard Atfield, Editor, BMAF magazine

The Third Annual BMAF Conference was held in Edinburgh at the George Hotel on 29th and 30th April. Over 150 delegates from 60 HEIs attended the BMAF Conference, and a total of 61 papers and 12 workshops were presented. The hotel is in the heart of the city and many also took the opportunity to explore the historical sites as well as the wide range of shopping!



The conference was formally opened in the King's Hall of the George Hotel with a keynote address from Dr Bill Harvey, Deputy Director of the Scottish Funding Council, created when the Scottish HE and FE Funding Councils merged in 2005.

Delegates dispersed to participate in the various streams of papers, which included: employability and employer engagement; new technology; assessment and feedback; curriculum integration and innovation; student retention; cultural diversity and internationalisation. Many of these papers were stimulated by the BMAF small grants, allocated each year to support teaching, research and development activities by individuals or teams across the UK.

The workshops provided a variety of learning experiences, from short presentations and group discussions, through pod-casting and playing with toys, to the very active learning experience of teaching presentation skills through drama.

Networking opportunities continued around a range of posters and displays, in the activities of many of the BMAF Special Interest Groups, and less formally in the bars and restaurants of the George Hotel and central Edinburgh long into the evening.

Barbara Allan from the University of Hull Business School said:

My feedback on the BMAF conference focuses on one particularly stimulating and engaging

The conference dinner was hosted by Napier University, in the spectacular setting of the 'Scottish Baronial' Turmeau Grand Hall of their Craighouse Campus, which was originally built in the late 19th Century. Rising 45 feet to the top of the vaulted ceiling, the Hall with its dark oak panelled walls, twin canopied fire places, Venetian windows and Minstrels Gallery provided a very memorable venue for this occasion.



From the evaluation forms (congratulations to Mary Meldrum for winning the prize draw!) it is clear that this conference has built on the success of last year's event at Aston. There were understandable concerns expressed about the packed timetable and the difficult decisions to be made between parallel sessions, but in turn these illustrated how valuable the various contributions were perceived to be to the BMAF community.

We are also grateful to some of the participants who have taken the trouble to offer a little more detail in the reflections that follow here so that readers can have a more personal insight into the 'taste and feel' of a BMAF Conference.

If you were unable to make the conference this year, detailed paper abstracts can be downloaded from the BMAF website at:

www.heacademy.ac.uk/business/events/conference

We are investigating potential venues for the 2009 Conference and are currently aiming to hold it in the Cardiff area. We look forward to you joining us at the 2009 Annual Conference.

session. This session was on the theme of 'supporting inquiry based approaches to learning and teaching of diverse groups through the use of journaling'. A team from the University of the West of England (UWE) led an interactive and

experiential session in which we reflected on the process of using learning journals (journaling) as a means of facilitating learning. I first realised that this was going to be a 'different' type of workshop when asked to sit on the floor - there was some evidence of creaking joints in the room - and this stimulated a shift in perspective as we were all become experiential learners. The second surprise was that the session was facilitated by students from UWE. They did a magnificent job and demonstrated their knowledge of the processes of reflection and also the challenges involved in writing a journal. In addition, they demonstrated excellent facilitation skills and ensured that we all had a deep learning experience. They were super ambassadors for UWE.

As with all quality learning experiences, we were left with lots of questions and there was a reluctance to leave the workshop. I was left reflecting on the importance of including students in our professional conferences as we are all partners in this learning business.

Diane Richardson from the University of Bedfordshire, said:

Great venue and food! Excellent networking opportunities! Useful sharing of experiences and best practice!



The University of Bedfordshire is in the process of designing a new MSc in Project Management, so it was useful to meet the recently established Project Management SIG, to learn of their work and aspirations. I look forward to a fruitful engagement with the team. This was my first attendance at a BMAF conference, and it proved to be interesting and beneficial. I look forward to the next event!

Ollie Jones & Jayne Mothersdale from Leeds Metropolitan University said:

One of the themes at this year's conference was about common concerns, and it was comforting to see that many institutions face the same issues with students and their organisations, and that while the approaches to these problems were different in style and application, a lot of us appear to be moving in the same direction. The differences often showed themselves as specks of illuminated innovation in ALT practice which, whilst were perhaps not overwhelming in themselves, though useful for a prospector, as a whole accumulated to a substantial body of knowledge and wisdom already being transferred within our institution.

The serendipitous meetings and open sharing of content, ideas and concerns in events such as this, remain a privilege and source of inspiration to those responsible for 'making a difference'.

John Beaumont-Kerridge from the University of Bedfordshire said:

There were certainly a wide range topics available. All of the seminars I attended were busy, and I noticed many others were also whilst "in transit" between rooms. There was a useful range of the new, the traditional and case studies of contemporary work in the UK. No comments were heard from participants in terms of too much, too little, subject content etc. One or two very interesting activities, e.g. presentation skills workshop. This was repeated which was a VERY good idea. It enabled some word of mouth comments to suggest others to attend.



In conclusion, all the BMAF staff should be congratulated for their hard work and skill for a most successful conference.

BMAF Workshop Programme 2008

The Subject Centre Workshop programme is under continuous development and further details will be available via the monthly E-News bulletins and the BMAF Website.

Date	Topic	Location
2 June 2008	Employability Competencies <i>Employability SIG Workshop</i>	Aston University
5 June 2008	Entrepreneurial Learning in the Curriculum - <i>Entrepreneurial Learning SIG Workshop</i>	Newcastle University
6 June 2008	Simulation Games and Role-Play Workshop	University of Plymouth
11 June 2008	Key Contact Symposium	University of the West of Scotland, Hamilton
12 - 13 June 2008	Assessment, Employability and the Cost/Benefits of International Students <i>Internationalisation SIG Conference</i>	York St John University
16 June 2008	Enhancing Assessment and Feedback: An Evidence-Based Approach <i>ASKe, BMAF, HLST Workshop</i>	Birmingham City University
23 June 2008	Key Contact Symposium	University of Glamorgan, Cardiff
4 July 2008	Knowledge and Craft <i>Project Management Network for Excellence in Learning & Teaching Workshop</i>	Aston University
7 July 2008	Key Contact Symposium	Sheffield Hallam University
10 July 2008	Key Contact Symposium	Association of Business Schools, London

There is no charge for any BMAF-led workshops, further details on costs of the Internationalisation SIG conference can be found on our website. If you would like to reserve a place at any of the above, please email bmaf@brookes.ac.uk and include the venue/date of the workshop you are interested in attending in the subject line.

We are keen to hear from those of you who may wish to host and/or contribute to the programme. All enquires to bmaf@brookes.ac.uk or 01865 485670.

Richard Atfield
Sam French

Editor
Publications Officer

Extra copies of this magazine can be requested from BMAFMagazine@brookes.ac.uk and the online version can be accessed at www.heacademy.ac.uk/business/bmag

This magazine is published by the **Business, Management, Accountancy and Finance Subject Centre**, which is part of the Subject Network of the Higher Education Academy.

We welcome contributions for the next issue which we intend to publish in October 2008. Guidelines for submissions and copy deadline will be available on the website.

Business School, Oxford Brookes University
Wheatley,
Oxon OX33 1HX

Tel: 01865 485670
Fax: 01865 485829