

LINK 28

Pedagogic Research and Development

Missing LINK ...

LINK has truly been one of the great success stories of the Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Network. The value, relevance and importance of LINK for our colleagues across the UK and beyond has been a recurrent theme in evaluations of our activities over the years. As a publication which reflects contemporary themes and issues in higher education, and showcases the thoughts on learning and teaching practice of those working in the HLST subjects grouping, each issue is a resource to keep for future reference.

Like England cricket test opener Alastair Cook, who just missed out on reaching a remarkable 300 runs in the third test against India at Edgbaston this summer, we fall just short of what could have been a landmark 30 issues of LINK. Cook scored a career-best 294 runs before being caught out in the deep. We have published 28 issues of LINK and one special issue before being bowled out by the Higher Education Academy!

Our first special issue of LINK "showcased and celebrated" the pedagogic research and development projects which we funded in our first six years up to 2006, and also included a summary of the seven projects in HLST subjects which were supported through HEFCE's Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning (FDTL). In this issue of LINK we do the same for the projects we have funded since 2006, paying particular attention to the impact they have had.

Undoubtedly, our pedagogic research and development projects have been another area of great success for the HLST Network. Through an increasingly competitive bidding process, relatively small grants were awarded to individuals and groups, across the UK and across the subjects in the HLST grouping, to pursue developmental initiatives which addressed the issues of importance in our community, added to our knowledge and understanding, and provided evidence of effective practice in learning and teaching. The process enhanced the learning experiences and opportunities of our students, and we could all share in this through LINK.

We remain hopeful that LINK can find a new sponsor, like our highly regarded peer reviewed journal (JoHLSTE) which is moving to Elsevier. The current reality is, however, that with the end of HLST comes the demise of LINK. We know that it will be sadly missed and we shall miss producing it. Our thanks to all who have undertaken the innovative and creative work which has filled 29 issues of LINK.

Our link to the future is Lyn Bibbings, recently appointed as Discipline Lead for HLST subjects in the HE Academy and formerly our Liaison Officer for Tourism. John Buswell, formerly our Assistant Director, will lead developments related to the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. We wish them both every success in their new roles.

Clive Robertson
Formerly Director, Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Network

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Introduction

Under Rounds 7 to 11 of the Higher Education Academy HLST Network's pedagogic research and development grants, a total of 40 projects were approved and funded between 2006/07 and 2010/11. This edition of LINK showcases these projects, which cover themes such as academic writing, the first year experience, employability, blended learning, assessment and feedback, problem-based learning, coaching, student progression, presentation skills, podcasting, ethics, student perceptions of research, personalised learning experiences, entrepreneurship, foundation degree transition, personal development planning, academic leadership, student engagement, reflective thinking, cultural awareness and the international student experience.

We have included as many of the projects as possible, and are pleased with the response to our request for evaluative updates. Most of the articles have been written by those who were involved in projects, but 11 of them have been prepared by David Botterill, who interviewed project leaders and completed an evaluative report which is summarised here; the full version can be seen on our website.

Thoughts on Impact Following Discussions with Project Leaders, by David Botterill

Specific Impacts

In all the reported cases, project staff reported that they did things differently as a result of the projects. Evidence from the case studies pointed to three types of specific impact, tightly aligned to project outcomes:

Some projects had direct impact on students' experiences during the project. Examples include Nic Mathews (R8) who, with her colleagues, ran induction programmes for Year 2 and Year 3 students at the start of the academic year; Iain Wallace and Karen Thompson (R8), who changed the delivery of a module to incorporate podcast broadcast news media for Year 1 tourism students; and Charles Buckley and colleagues (R9), who made modifications to blended learning for Year 1 sports students at Liverpool Hope.

Other projects placed greater emphasis on building resource banks for both student learning and staff development. For example, Kevin Morgan (R10) and colleagues, who filmed their ethno-drama scenarios for sports coaching in broadcast standard media and made them available on the web for wider dissemination; and Karen Bill's (R10)

work on documenting the trials and tribulations of graduates setting up their own businesses in tourism and sport provided valuable teaching tools for subsequent use. In other projects, resource banks were created to help tutors to increase their subject knowledge. For example, Alex Kenyon (R9) on ethics; Sarah Cullen (R8) on dissertation supervision; Nina Becket and Maureen Brookes (R10) on personalisation or 'student engagement'; and Catherine MacConnell (R10), who worked with FE partners to investigate the experiences of "top up" students. These projects impacted directly on teaching practice but also brought about changes to student support interventions and through revalidation and review processes. Their impact is therefore designed to be more long term.

Further projects focused the development of tools to enhance teaching and learning but had yet to fully evaluate their influence on student learning. Colin Beard (R11) in Sheffield Hallam worked with colleagues at LJMU to promote conversations on PDP using a card game intervention to increase students' ability to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses on emotional intelligence and plans for personal actions.

Broader Impact

In most cases, evidence on the wider impact of the project beyond the lead researcher and their close group was more difficult to establish. However, the outcomes of many projects had been disseminated in staff development activities within faculties or at the institutional level. Some project outcomes had been published as research papers in JoHLSTE, the HLST journal, and others were in the process of publication. One project continues to impact the project holder as a part of work for a post graduate qualification.

Longevity of Impact

Projects in technology soon became overtaken by further developments and were thus somewhat short lived, while others continue to address important issues in the sector and would benefit from wider adoption, and still others have proved to be vanguard studies for current directions in the HE sector.

General Impacts

The achievement of a successful project bid:

- provided the stimulus to turn nascent projects into a more concrete set of activities,
- was very often built on previous projects, providing longevity and coherence rather than one-off interventions
- provided focus and motivation for teams of staff, often involving academic developers with front-line academic staff

- enabled many projects to gain additional (financial or in-kind) resources
- benefited the project applicant/s who gained internal recognition for championing learning and teaching activity

For more details, see each project's full final report, available on the HLST website.

References and links for the articles are available at: www.heacademy.ac.uk/hlst/publications

Evaluating the Effectiveness of a Penalty, Feedback and Support System in Addressing the Grammar, Spelling and Academic Writing of Sport Students

Linda Allin and Gordon MacFadyen, Northumbria University

The key focus of our project was to examine staff and student views of a penalty and feedback system implemented in the then Division of Sport Sciences. This was to encourage students to pay more attention to grammar, spelling and referencing in their written work. The project stemmed from recognition that writing is a key skill for graduates and our knowledge that sport employers were dissatisfied with the abilities of sport graduates in written communication areas such as report writing (Allin et al., 2003). The project was funded through round seven of the pedagogic research grants, and included focus groups with students and a staff workshop. The findings highlighted not only the strengths and weaknesses of our assessment system, but also those of wider pedagogic areas. These included the notion of perceptual gaps between tutors and students in relation to feedback (Weaver, 2006), and the support of students. Following the project, it was the broader pedagogic areas that caught my interest and led me to develop my knowledge in relation to the academic literature on feedback and assessment, and from there to the notion of formative assessment, assessment for learning and involving students more in learning. The project not only inspired me to change my practice in relation to the clarity of my feedback and support for students, but was also the beginning of my development towards becoming a University Teaching Fellow at Northumbria University, becoming an associate for the Northumbria CETL for assessment for learning, and more recently gaining an MA (Distinction) in Academic Practice.

This project has had an impact on students. I now include short written pieces of work as formative tasks in modules, enabling students to gain feedback and improve their writing. I also involve students in dialogues about assessment and discuss their support needs, and I run sessions on academic writing within two academic development weeks in the year, during which students can come and gain support through interactive tasks. The evidence suggests that students have improved their summative assessments and feel that they are gaining the support they need in key areas. Other colleagues have also become involved in teaching and learning enhancement, and

we now have two University Teaching Fellows in the Department with whom staff can discuss ways to enhance their practice. Useful practice in relation to formative assessments and writing tasks has also been shared across sport programmes. It is fair to say that the impetus to change, and the ensuing subsequent changes, might not have occurred in quite the same way without the initial project funding.

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Enhancing the Employability of our Students

Kelly Ashford and Rob Shave, Brunel University

Around 10,000 young people graduate from sport and exercise science degree courses each year, creating ever increasing competition for graduate level jobs. It is vital that they are equipped with relevant discipline-specific and generic knowledge and skills in order to make the most of possible employment opportunities. With this in mind, our project aimed to investigate the current level of employability skills in an undergraduate cohort and how these might be enhanced via curriculum interventions.

Based on the results of this project, and in line with government initiatives, an employability agenda was embedded within the undergraduate curriculum. In Year 1, students engage in activities designed to promote self-learning skills and a wider understanding of employability skills and opportunities. Some of this is also facilitated through optional extracurricular courses. These activities prepare them for the short work placement that they undertake in Year 2, which allows them to implement skills and use subject specific knowledge in a real-world context. This also has benefits for organisations in the local community, some of which currently struggle to deliver activities and health

interventions as they have limited personnel, by providing a sustained flow of potential employees and volunteers. In Year 3, focus is turned towards the final steps required in order to pursue an individual's chosen employment or continuation of study. While this may seem a relatively rudimentary intervention, moving employability features from an implicit to an explicit context and providing specific employment opportunities has been successful in enhancing student employability.

As a result of the changes, a number of students have gained employment in their host work placement organisation, and the subject area has observed a small rise in graduate level employment, although it is acknowledged that other initiatives could also have contributed to the latter. In addition, staff have acquired a sound understanding of student perceptions of employability skills and the student experience in this context, enabling them to make informed decisions about curriculum change. Indeed, an outcome of this is the introduction of a sandwich year option that we hope will prove fruitful in the coming years.

Sport Studies Students' Approaches to Study and Their First Year Experience with Blended Learning

Charles Buckley, Bangor University, Edd Pitt, Bill Norton and Tessa Owens, Liverpool Hope University

Understanding students' approaches to study is important for educators if they are to create an effective learning environment. This project was designed to examine the relationships between students' approaches to study, their conceptions of learning and their first year experiences in a sports studies course at university, as well as the students' judgements about the value of networked technologies in the first year of a sport studies degree.

Project Description

This study used an integrative approach (TILT, 2001), combining questionnaires and interviews to assess students' experiences in a blended learning environment. The first stage of the project involved 236 first year undergraduate

sport studies students who were asked, at the beginning of their course, to complete a survey comprising a set of 23 items concerning their reflections on networked learning (Goodyear et al., 2003) and the Approaches and Study Skills Inventory for Students (ASSIST) (Entwistle et al., 2000). The ASSIST comprises three sections: eight items designed to assess students' conceptions of learning; 52 items allowing the researcher to characterise students' self reported approaches to study in terms of deep, strategic and surface/apathetic; and eight items exploring students' preferences for different types of course and teaching. Demographic data on students' experience, age and gender was also collected.

The second stage of the project focused on post-intervention analyses using the same instruments, with an additional set of 17 items exploring students' experiences on the course (Goodyear et al., 2003). At the end of the course, the Judgements about Networked Learning Scale developed by Goodyear et al. (2003) was used to capture students' overall judgements about the value of their experiences using technology to support their learning. This consisted of 20 items and was drawn from the sets of items on reflections on networked learning and experiences of the course.

There were a series of focus group interviews at the end of the 2006/2007 academic year to assess students' perceptions of learning, networked learning and the value of the incorporation of technology in their curriculum. 19 students (6 male and 13 female) divided into 5 focus groups took part. Data were captured on a digital voice recorder and transcribed verbatim and interviews lasted between 30 and 40 minutes. The

data were analysed using inductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Emergent latent themes were linked with the data themselves within a constructionist epistemological framework. The thematic analysis of the focus group interviews generated 222 initial codes. Codes were then provisionally organised to generate eleven emergent categories, subsequently reorganised into nine, and each of these contributed to final themes. We acknowledge that with this approach, meanings and experiences are socially produced and reproduced, rather than inherent within individuals (Burr, 1995).

The socio-cultural contexts and structural conditions in which sport studies students operate at Liverpool Hope University was acknowledged and contributed to data analysis. This research forms an integral part of the students' first year course and they are required to reflect on their approach to study, the value of blended learning, and the use of technology to support their learning, then submit a report on this in a portfolio at the end of the course. The learner portfolio acts as a motivational tool throughout the year to improve engagement with studies. It encourages students to reflect on their first year of study to help them become aware of their learning style and how best to approach the following two years. As dialogue is central to learning and teaching (Laurillard, 2002), regular communications (both online and face-to-face) between student and student, student and tutor, and tutors involved in designing the course, were used to inform the pedagogical underpinnings of the developing course.

Project Evaluation

Accessing Online Material

Students are now able to access online material from a variety of sources and geographical locations. Rae (2004) reported that student access to computers had risen to over 90% by late 2003. Research into student perceptions of the incorporation of technology into learning and teaching indicates that, "students appear to be overwhelmingly positive about access to online resources to supplement traditional teaching" (Sharpe et al., 2006, p. 22). Students in this study were generally positive both at the start and at the end of the course in the way they felt about the blended learning approach used. There was evidence of moderation of this overall view in the responses to some of the statements: on the importance and worth of using technology, for example, with some modest falls in ratings for these, although the proportion of students responding positively remained high. The only reversal of opinion was that at the end of the course, a minority of students felt excited about using the technology compared to a majority at the start of the course. Of relevance to the real life experience offered by the course, was the very high proportion of students agreeing at the start that using the technology would be helpful in their future careers. Although this figure fell slightly at the end of the course, a large proportion still felt this was the case. Kirkwood (2006)

pointed out that over many years there have been persistent and sometimes considerable differences in access to technology in terms of gender, age, geographical location and subject area. We acknowledge that there are likely to be issues of access, although these did not emerge as important for the small sample of students interviewed as part of this project.

Liverpool Hope University, at the time of the study, used Learnwise as their virtual learning environment (VLE) and the first year sports students had engaged with the discussion forums set up each week following lectures and seminars. Most of the students appreciated being able to access course materials and the forum from sites other than university and were positive about the immediacy of online feedback on essays from tutors. Whilst contributions to the forum were consistent amongst students throughout the year, relatively few students commented on using the wider range of facilities available in the VLE. Despite this, there were few negative comments relating to Learnwise, which seems to provide a sense of security to many as they feel that the lecture notes and seminar notes will be available should they miss sessions. In addition, a number of students were impressed by the range of data sources such as electronic journals available through links to selected information gateways. However, in the responses of many students, even from those who felt confident with using the VLE and software programmes, there was a clear indication that they had invested what they perceived as considerable effort to come to terms with its use in university as opposed to their ways of studying with it in school. The first year in sport studies has a number of seminars devoted specifically to using various aspects of information technology; some of these are linked with assessments, both formative and summative. However, this finding suggests that students might benefit further from tutors offering top-up sessions, particularly relating to the use of the VLE and the purpose of online discussion forums.

Haven and Botterill (2003), in a review of the use of VLEs in the HLST Network, said that there was a need to consider support systems, in particular training and technical support for staff and students. Pavey and Garland (2004), in work with 146 first year sport studies students engaged with a VLE, recommended that the key to success lies in the method that e-activities are introduced with and consistent support from the tutor. Kirkwood (2006), in a study with Open University students, also found that problems of low participation in online tutorials and low-uptake of recommended online resources can result from students lacking the necessary skills expected or assumed by their teachers. Although most students were very positive about the forum as a site for collaborative learning, some seemed to struggle with the way that discussion threads operated and worried about expressing themselves in such a public environment. Jones et al. (2001), working with students in five different universities, also found that students generally felt inhibited about making unprompted interventions, which they considered to be an intrusion on the tutor. Heinze and

Proctor (2004), in a study with part-time undergraduate information technology students, found that while some were comfortable with the technology affording detailed and reflective posts, others felt daunted by the lengthy posts of their peers. For some, the impact was so severe it was cited in their reasons for withdrawing from the course.

Developing “Virtual” Independence Through Blended Learning

Through data analysis we noted the ways in which students demonstrated a reflective approach to their first year experience. This was perhaps facilitated in part by the tasks they completed during some of the seminars, which introduced them to learning styles and their personal development portfolios that included reflective essays. Many comments in the interviews demonstrated that, over the academic year, students had become self-aware and developed insights into how individual differences are manifest within approaches to learning in higher education settings. On the whole, they considered they had moved towards becoming independent learners.

The data demonstrated a clear understanding on the part of most students that there is a clear divide between the expectations placed upon them by university and their previous experiences in the sixth-form at school. At the start of the course, a very high proportion of students agreed that they would need to be more self-directed in their studying. Although this fell significantly by the end of the course, around two thirds still felt this was the case. In addition, there was an increase in the number of students agreeing that they had been expected to work differently on the course from other courses. One third of students felt that they needed more help on the course than on other courses because of the technology and this proportion did not vary from the beginning to the end of the course. Two thirds of the students agreed, both at the start and the end, that the staff had given detailed instructions during the course.

Computer mediated conferencing provides the opportunity for students to make detailed reflective contributions, although in many studies discussions appear to be the least used and valued by students (e.g., Dickinson, 2005; Molesworth, 2004). However, for many of the group in this study the discussion forums were seen as a place where drawing on the experiences of others could help them develop and learn new skills. They also demonstrated a broad view of the ways in which knowledge might be interpreted and saw it as having more than just an academic dimension. In this way, the forum was viewed as a site where students could share a range of personal experiences which were perceived to benefit others in reflecting on themselves as learners coming to terms with a new and challenging academic environment. This finding may have been influenced by the open-ended discussion topics set by tutors on the course following seminars, which also encouraged students to focus on their own experiences and apply these to a range of theoretical principles.

While there was a lot of positive feedback from students about the use of the VLE over the year, they also valued both lectures and seminars. This was manifest particularly in the ways that they felt that tutors were able to respond to them and understand them as individuals better in face-to-face scenarios than in computer-mediated environments. Being able to share their ideas with others in seminars and the discussion fora was important to many of the group, even those who expressed a preference for working on their own. This went beyond a realisation that it aided their academic development; in addition, they valued the ways in which it allowed them to draw on some of the life experiences of others, both in face-to-face scenarios and through online fora.

The survey results indicated that some two thirds of the students, when asked to respond to questions contrasting the blended approach with traditional courses, agreed that, or were unsure whether, they would miss the more face-to-face parts of such courses; and half agreed that, or were unsure whether, using technology would be second best to traditional methods. These proportions did not change from the start to the end of the course. In addition, nearly all students were very positive about a one-week fieldwork experience for establishing friendships and giving them more confidence in working in team situations, as well as communicating in seminars and lectures. For many of the students, being actively involved in doing and/or having a visual stimulus was very important to give meaning to the learning situation. In particular, students were positive about the use of videos during lectures.

Project Conclusion

Based on the work with students during the project we have made a number of recommendations for curriculum planners:

1. Blended learning programmes need to be designed using sound pedagogical principles with appropriate methods, mediums and modes to develop student learning. There should be a varied mix of face-to-face sessions, field-based activities, laboratory work, and online resources and activities. All have been valued by our students and have served different purposes.
2. Sharpe et al (2006) argued that successful blended learning involves helping students develop their conceptions of the learning process. It should be understood that students adopt various approaches to their studies, which are dependent on a number of factors. In attempting to uncover their conceptions of learning, students can begin to understand themselves as learners and develop meta-cognitive abilities. Through such reflections, we recommend working with individuals to help them to recognise that who they are will impact on what they want to do and how they are able to achieve their goals.

3. There is a need to carefully design the multiple learning environments involved in a blended learning programme to suit the needs of learners. The interview data implies that sport studies students have certain expectations and experiences that they bring with them, which tutors should be aware of when designing course materials. This has become even more apparent in recent times with the ubiquitous existence of social networking, smartphones and tablet PCs.
4. Students need to be empowered and encouraged to take on responsibilities such as leading discussion groups, as well as being encouraged to make contributions to course content. Pritchard et al. (2006) presented a case study, which urged skills training in order to enhance good team-working skills amongst students. We believe that a similar case could be made for training students how to communicate in online forums and the provision of additional guidance as to our expectations of these collaborative events.
5. The construction of knowledge should be viewed as a communal activity involving students, their peers and tutors, and this should be openly expressed to students. We recognise the importance of communal constructivism whereby learners become active parts of a learning community, supporting their learning with shared expertise

and shared knowledge creation, thereby allowing them to claim a role in their own education.

Additional Outputs from the Project

Under the title *Using a Virtual Learning Environment: What Works in a First Year Sport Studies Module?* we created provided a good practice guide covering the following topics:

- general tips on forum use
- using the VLE as a base for learning
- lecture material available
- links to full text journal articles
- using external websites to engage students in the world of sport
- contact with tutors
- supporting students who don't engage
- use of computer generated animations
- using quizzes

David Botterill

Using Flexible Learning and Online Resources to Enhance Student Support and First Year Student Experience

Sue Curland,
Leeds Metropolitan
University

This project started in January 2007, with the aim of developing and implementing flexible learning in the delivery of basic financial studies and numeracy for first year students at Leeds Metropolitan University. We started with hospitality and retailing students, with the intention of extending the work to other students in the university.

The work was completed for the academic year 2008 and has now been developed for use with overseas and European students whose first language is not English. The emphasis has been on mathematics, giving students the basic skills to underpin their future degree work.

The finished project provided electronic resources such as workbooks, support material and diagnostic tests for the students, to be used at their own speed and level of need. These resources are now available on the university repository as an open educational resource and can be accessed both internally by faculties and externally by other educational establishments. The diagnostic test was made available to events and tourism students, and the repository registered 32,000 hits in a year, with students accessing and completing some of the questions many times, each hit generating a different set of numbers to work on.

All the work packs continue to be used in 2011, especially the mathematics ones – our own *Skills for Learning* website has included material from the equations workbook. We are planning to increase the use of these workbooks for assessment in the October 2011 semester, as they contain a mixture of questions (with answers available later), and also an explanation of the techniques used in order to complete and solve the problems.

The initial exploratory research carried out with students on the retailing courses has been built on and evaluated since 2007. Two papers were presented at conferences, in Finland and Cyprus. In 2011, a poster presentation was given at a Computer

Aided Learning Conference in Manchester and further developments have seen the diagnostic testing transferred to an integrative device linked to the University's VLE. It can also be downloaded onto hand-held devices such as mobile phones and net books.

With the recent emphasis in my Faculty on the pre-degree Language and Methods of Mathematics for English Language students, we are developing the use of e-learning and evaluating student uptake. This work would not have been possible without the HLST project that supplied the resources for this work.

Generational Distance in Teaching and Learning

Caroline Ritchie, Elspeth Dale, Mike Flynn and Sarah Lawson, University of Wales Institute, Cardiff

At UWIC we teach Wines and Spirit Education Trust (WSET) courses to both part-time and full-time students as part of our commitment to improving employability, the courses being embedded into the undergraduate programme as an optional module. As part of our review of student achievement we noted that the Year 1 undergraduates taking the WSET intermediate course habitually achieved lower grades than the older part-time students, many of whom had not studied for several years. This is counterintuitive and goes against much prior research. The lecturing team suggested that one reason could be that as the age gap between the undergraduates and the lecturers increased, the teaching methods and linguistic significance of the technical language was placing barriers in the way of the younger cohorts' learning. We therefore set up the project to observe how we taught the two separate cohorts in one academic year, 2006/2007. Each lecture was video recorded with two cameras, one observing the students and the other the member of staff.

The nature of the course, including wine tasting, encourages discussion. It appeared to the lecturers that there was much more interaction and conversation among the full-time than the part-time students, and that probably they should have been learning more. However, observation of the videos showed that the part-time students talked less because they took more notes, and that although some full-time students were talking to the lecturers, many others were talking to each other, therefore excluding themselves from the teaching and learning process. In both cohorts the conversations which took place between lecturers and students were about course subjects, but in the part-time cohort all engaged in the process while only a minority did in the full-time group. The lecturing team felt that one reason for this was that the full-time students habitually spread themselves around the class and away from the front, while the part-time students always sat towards the front so that they could participate. As a result of this, in the academic year of 2007/2008 we changed the room set up from conventional school room to a horseshoe shape, so that the lecturer could walk through the horseshoe and talk directly to the students. This worked very well for the part-time group

but was disastrous for the full-time group because they could now observe each other as well as talk to neighbours, and concentration was even further reduced. The best practice method of teaching therefore was to have two different styles of room set up: horseshoe for the part-time students and schoolroom for the full-time students.

The videos also showed that we reacted differently to questions and comments from the two cohorts. Talking about the taste of wine is always subjective. However, the part-time students, who were generally closer in age to the lecturing team, tended to use query words which had the same significance to both lecturer and student so a conversation would develop easily. In the full-time group, the words used by the students to suggest a taste or smell were often outside the lecturers' habitual lexicon and we frequently dismissed the words as irrelevant or foolish. This had two effects: diminishing the students' tentative confidence and reducing the likelihood that they would try to engage in a discussion with the lecturer. Once this behaviour on the part of the lecturing staff became apparent we made, and continue to make, great efforts not to dismiss a term that seems unlikely to us, but to explore why that term might be used. As was originally supposed, it often is because a particular word or its usage does not have the same meaning to both lecturer and student. The everyday objects that one generation (the lecturers) grew up with and is familiar with, might not exist one or two generations down the line (the full-time students). We have come to accept that the petrol notes on a Riesling wine may also resemble the smell of new trainers; or pear aromas, Tippex. Now we just have to convince new student generations that most consumers are not yet ready to have food objects described in such terms and the drinks industry that the world has changed linguistically and they need to review the language of wine if they are to develop future customer bases.

It was confirmed in July 2011 that this research is to form the basis for a professional doctorate for Mike Flynn, who will take forward these themes and investigate how to improve our teaching to this younger age group. Mike, Dr Sarah Lawson and Elspeth Dale were the other members of the project team.

How Tutors can Learn from Formative Feedback

Richard Tong, *University of Wales Institute, Cardiff*

This project used computer-aided assessment (CAA), and more importantly computer-aided feedback, to improve student performance. In summary, students were provided with formative feedback following CAA in a first year physiology module.

The formative feedback was provided during a face-to-face session 7 days after the assessment, or immediately after the CAA via computer aided feedback. Student performance improved following both types of feedback but students preferred the instantaneous computer aided feedback over the tutor-led feedback 7 days later.

The major learning points from this study were that:

- students want instant feedback and have often moved onto the next bite-sized learning or assessment task by the time they receive later feedback – they are not interested in feedback on something they did last week
- they find it difficult to link feedback from different modules in and feed it into a different module assessment

- although students often report that they want more contact with tutors, the reality in terms of attendance at lectures and the follow-up formative feedback tutorials does not support this; the modern-day student is keen to get instant responses to performance electronically, which is similar to the ways in which they tend to communicate (e.g., instant text messages, twitter, MSM, Skype)

The School has begun to move from traditional paper or optical-read multiple choice questions, towards computer-aided multiple choice tests. This allows students to receive more detailed and instantaneous feedback. While the students fully appreciate this, the staff also accept that additional time spent in preparing computer aided feedback is offset by the reduction in marking load. Students instantly access their feedback, in contrast to delayed written feedback accompanying a grade when the majority of the students are only interested in looking at the grade.

Facilitating the Use of Off-Air Video Material in Tourism Seminars

John Beech, *with Marcella Daye*, *Coventry University*

The aim of this project was to allow lecturers to choose to use off-air recordings for seminar use in a systematic and informed way, with readily available support material in the form of worksheets. Video recordings are held in libraries, making this support material also available for students' individual use.

An initial survey of available off-air recordings relevant to tourism seminars showed that a wealth of material in terms of suitable recordings was available. However, we were aware, from personal experience and through networking with colleagues both at Coventry University and other UK HE establishments, that exploitation of this material was piecemeal and specifically that:

- the use of a particular programme by a particular lecturer tended to be rather hit-and-miss
- it was a not uncommon experience that a programme which the lecturer had chosen as particularly useful was greeted with limited engagement by students
- in the case of our university, there was a consensus among lecturers that off-air video resources available in the library were being under-used despite their potential value

I had worked with video material in the teaching of English as a Foreign Language from 1975 to 1992, and was familiar with the use of worksheets to provide an active learning experience for students. Although the pedagogic context was significantly different from the HE Tourism sector, that earlier experience suggested that there was a strong potential for using appropriately designed video worksheets with tourism students.

The development of a bank of materials thus seemed a useful way forward to ensure that a great resource did not go under-used and that the student learning experience could be enhanced in the broadest possible range of HE institutions.

Conducting the project necessarily involved a much closer consideration of the video material available. This included a closer scrutiny of both familiar and unfamiliar material. A number of lessons were learned from this process:

Producing effective worksheets required viewing each programme on a number of occasions plus additional work:

- initial viewing for consideration with respect to suitability, including initial judgement on appropriateness with respect to level
- viewing on a stop/start basis with note taking
- typing up of draft worksheet from notes
- reworking of worksheet with consideration of layout to accommodate student notes
- further viewing with final draft of worksheet
- where possible (subject to timetabling), piloting of worksheet with current students
- final draft of worksheet completed

This process was considerably longer in terms of time commitment, than had been envisaged.

Previous experience with video materials had suggested that some programmes would be suitable as the basis for

worksheets at a number of levels but this turned out not to be the case, in general. A clear lesson learned was that the majority of programmes have a natural level of appropriateness. This is a function of:

- content and its relevance to tourism theory
- language “heaviness” (especially relevant if worksheets are to be suitable for use by non-native speaking students)
- style of presentation within the programme

During the course of the project, we became more aware of the issue of employability within the HE agenda and thus included material relevant to employability in tourism and the travel industry.

We felt that the motivation of the project – to save other lecturers’ time by providing ready to use support materials – was more than vindicated, and that a directly useful contribution had been made to the programme they teach on.

We also felt that we had developed significant skills in judging the suitability of external materials which can be applied to a wider range of materials. For example, we felt that we were better able to judge the suitability of external printed materials (realia as opposed to academic writing) for use in seminars.

Effects of an Imagery Intervention on Students’ Verbal Presentation Performance

Nichola Callow and Ross Roberts, Bangor University

This project examined the effects on an imagery intervention on student verbal presentation performance. Six weeks before a verbal presentation for the project proposal module (20 credits), Year 2 undergraduates were assigned to one of two imagery perspective groups: one imagined performing the task as if looking out through their own eyes, known as internal visual imagery, and one imagined performing the task as if they were watching themselves from an external view, known as external visual imagery. They were asked to imagine performing their presentation using their particular imagery strategy three times a week over the coming six weeks. Students’ level of narcissism – a

personality construct – was also assessed. Narcissism was measured because we hypothesised that this might have an impact on how effective the different imagery perspectives were. Results revealed that students who were high in narcissism performed better when using external visual imagery, as opposed to internal visual imagery. For low narcissistic students, the opposite pattern was revealed.

This project has had a significant impact on our current research. In particular, the findings from the study, and subsequent discussion of the processes underlying the effects, helped our conceptual thinking with regards to imagery and narcissism, and why certain imagery perspectives might be more or less beneficial for high and low narcissists. In addition, the process of study design informed our thinking for future studies. As a result, we published a two-study paper exploring imagery perspectives and narcissism in relation to motor performance in the *Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology*, the flagship journal for sport psychology. Additionally, a manuscript detailing the results of the present study is in preparation for submission to an educational psychology journal.

At a general level, the research has impacted on students as it has helped to inform module content at both undergraduate (Year 2 and 3) and M levels. For

example, students completing the British Psychological Society accredited MSc in Sport and Exercise Psychology attend an imagery workshop, as part of the course, where this research is discussed. The project has also benefited students in a number of more specific ways: undergraduate and M-level students have been provided with training in the research process and have completed research projects that have been based on this project. In addition, a PhD student is gaining

writing experience as she is taking the lead, with support from us, in writing the manuscript detailing the present study.

As a result of this work and some of the research that has since emanated from it, Ross, along with other colleagues in the School, has recently secured a University PhD studentship starting in October 2011 to investigate narcissism in relation to performance. One intended aspect of this PhD is to examine how particular psychological strategies, such as imagery, might aid the performance of low and high narcissistic individuals to enable them to excel under pressure, and will likely use research design bases that are heavily informed by this work. Collaborative research has also recently been initiated with a world leader in the field.

It is clear that the funding we received was instrumental in the process for all these initiatives, and so we thank the HLST Network for their support.

Dissertation Supervision: Enhancing the Experience of Tourism and Hospitality Students

Sarah Cullen, Selena Dowling and Terry Webb,
University of West London

Picture this fictional scenario. It's the time of the academic year when dissertation supervisors are allocated and students and staff are having their initial meetings. After a long day of such meetings, Emma is chatting with her office colleague about her conversations with her dissertation students:

When they come in to see me they look all weighed down. I think of them as holding this metaphorical heavy bundle wrapped up like a baby with dissertation stamped on its forehead. Then all of a sudden they throw it into my lap and expect me to catch it.

"What shall I call it? How can I make it 'grow up'? I don't know how to do this? Tell me, go on, give me some answers, you're my supervisor and you've worked with lots of students on research projects!"

Well, they might not ask me those questions directly but I can hear them being asked subtly by the body language, the blank expressions and the lack of confidence that some students have about the process. I have to spend so much time getting the "baby" back into their arms before they leave . . . but I know they'll be back and I'll have to catch it again.

Later that evening in the bar, some of Emmas' students happen to meet up with their friends and the conversation turns to events of the day. They exchange notes on their first meeting with their supervisors:

He was pretty useless. Kept asking what my topic was? Why doesn't he just give me one? He's the expert lecturer after all. (Spoken with an ironic smirk!)

The second student replies: "Oh, I've got a topic but I don't know how to start and what data collection to do. Emma, my supervisor, just sent me away to read some past students' projects on similar topics – what good is that?"

Fictional though they may be, it is likely that both staff and students would recognise these as typical reactions at the early stage of dissertation supervision. Our study

at the University of West London (UWL) takes this fictional representation of student/supervisor relations as a starting point and subjects it to a robust empirical survey of undergraduate and postgraduate master's students of hospitality, tourism and events, and their dissertation supervisors. The results of this study show some marked differences in expectations of roles in supervision and the assessment of factors that affect dissertation quality. The impact of the study's results on teaching and learning enhancement provides evaluative indicators of the value of the pedagogic research.

Project Description

Many undergraduate and master's taught courses include a dissertation, which forms a significant part of a student's course of study. This is a considerable challenge for students in terms of determining the research focus, the independent nature of the work and the nature of the one-to-one supervisory relationship. At UWL, within the School of Hospitality and Tourism, a large

number of undergraduate (150 to 180) and master's (20 to 30) students complete a dissertation as part of their taught courses during the October to June academic year. In addition, about 100 students complete a dissertation from February to February. In common is the provision of a research methods course, the requirement to undertake primary data collection, and the allocation of individual supervisors.

Students come from a diverse range of learning backgrounds: there is a high proportion of international/EU students and, on the undergraduate course, a high proportion of direct entry students to the final year. These students face a steep learning curve in terms of academic writing skills and independent study. Direct entry students are given support in academic writing, but nevertheless the non-completion rate for the dissertation is quite high for undergraduates. Anecdotally, reasons for this include financial pressures, difficulties adapting to different academic requirements, and strategic decisions to accept a different award that does not require a dissertation. What is unclear is to what extent the type and quality of supervision may be a factor in these decisions. The allocation of supervisors is largely from within the School, although some are from elsewhere in the Faculty and occasionally from other Faculties, depending on topic. Approximately 30 colleagues are involved in supervision of these students at any one time. The number of supervisors, and the number of students they are expected to supervise, has grown significantly in recent years and is projected to grow still further.

This research was concerned with student and staff expectations of the supervisory process, aiming to evaluate whether supervision is, or needs to be, adapted to suit different groups of students and whether the supervisory process changes over the time period of the supervision. It sought to test models of supervisory practice within the context of tourism and hospitality education. This project built on other research into the supervisory process and aimed to fill the knowledge gap regarding the experiences of students on tourism and hospitality taught courses at undergraduate and master's level. It was concerned with enhancing and maximising the benefit of supervision by researching the impact on students with a view to informing university practice.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of this project was to explore how the needs and expectations of hospitality and tourism students are met by the current supervisory practice, and evaluate and disseminate how supervisory practice can be developed.

The objectives were to:

- establish student and staff expectations of the supervisory process
- identify and evaluate student and staff experiences of the supervisory experience
- identify and evaluate the supervisor's role in the learning process and whether this changes over time
- identify any differences in expectations, experiences and learning between different student groups such as those based on gender, level of study and nationality
- identify ways in which supervisory practice could be developed to meet those needs and expectations

In order to provide a complete and up-to-date analysis, both primary and secondary sources of data were used. Data collection was carried out by means of two questionnaires. One was given to supervisors and one to students in the final stages of completing their dissertations. Six interviews were also carried out with staff. In addition to questions relating specifically to the objectives of this research, questions were also asked about related areas such as research methods courses and preparation, and

issues to do with supervisory resourcing, training and support.

The questionnaires were designed based on the themes derived from the literature. Demographic data was collected to identify differences between groups of students. Students were asked to rank a series of statements about their expectations of the supervisory experience, and this was compared with what they considered actually happened and also with similar statements ranked by supervisors. These statements were on a continuum designed to test the degree of independence and the various models from director to mentor. Supervisors and students were also asked to indicate, on a Likert scale, their agreement with a series of statements and to highlight the main barriers to success. Some open questions were posed at the end.

The questionnaires were given to all undergraduate and postgraduate students submitting a dissertation during the months of May and June 2008, and sent to all the supervisors. The questionnaires were both complex and fairly time consuming to complete and so a response of 96 (51.4%) students and 17 (56.6%) staff was representative.

Summary data was produced for all questions including means for all the statements. For comparative analysis, the mean and standard deviation for each question was calculated, and a paired t-test for the difference between the means was calculated at a 5% level of significance. For cross tabulations, a chi-squared test at 5% significance was applied. Most of the respondents were undergraduates, full-time, female, in paid employment, had no special needs and had a male supervisor. There was a wide range of nationalities and ethnic groups. The mean age of both undergraduate and postgraduate students was 28.9 and this is indicative of the high proportion of mature students in both groups. The mean number of contacts with a supervisor was the same for both groups. A large proportion of students were in paid employment,

although this figure was higher for postgraduate students, as was the number of hours worked. The undergraduate students were studying for five different degrees and students from all courses were represented, although in differing proportions.

Project Conclusion

So did the study confirm the scenario painted at the outset of this article? Did the students and the supervisors work out their differences in expectations, and what were the factors that influenced the quality of the dissertation experience? From the results of the study it is apparent that supervisors and students continued to have differing expectations of the supervisory role and process, but with additional nuances of emphasis. Students would like supervisors to be more directive and tell them what to do. Supervisors talked about the challenges of encouraging independence and their responses clearly indicated that they prefer a more mentoring or process role and, although they were clearly concerned about the standard of the dissertations submitted by students, they considered this to be the responsibility of the student. In practice, it seems that supervisors do facilitate the independent learning of the students and, when a good relationship was established, this developed and increased over time. Students agreed that in practice they were more autonomous, and that their confidence and independence increased during the relationship. It was encouraging that, in spite of their expectations not being met in these aspects, the students considered the supervisory relationship to have been a good one. Students agreed that advice was constructive and helpful; that they felt able to approach their supervisors who were available and responsive. However, supervisors sometimes felt that they had to be more directive than they would like to due to the needs and expectations of the students.

It would be a mistake to assume all students want their supervisors be directive or, indeed, that all supervisors prefer to be more facilitative. The supervisors clearly recognise different needs and may adapt their style if appropriate while, at the same time, trying to encourage independence. There is some evidence, albeit not very strong, that different groups of students may have differing needs. To some extent the findings from the student questionnaire did bear out staff views. For example, African students reported that they got more help with writing skills and Asian students reported being more apprehensive. Supervisors saw writing skills to be an issue for African and Asian students, and talked about cultural learning differences in these groups that may perhaps explain the apprehension. Mature students were more independent in their questionnaire responses and supervisors clearly recognised this. However, overall, differences among groups were not very conclusive and so it may well be that the supervisors' stated approach of treating students fairly but on an individual basis according to need and ability is the most appropriate approach. What seemed to be missing in the supervisors'

discourse was a strategy for addressing de-motivated and/or non-attending supervisees.

The top five responses for undergraduate students affecting the quality of their dissertation were: poor data analysis skills; no previous research experience; insufficient training in research methods; poor time management skills; and poor availability of LRC resources

The top six responses for postgraduate students affecting the quality of the dissertation were: too many hours of paid employment; poor time management skills; no previous research experience; language difficulties; data analysis skills needed improving; and personal issues

The top seven responses supervisors affecting the quality of the dissertation were:

- student does not focus research topic sufficiently
- student has poor academic writing skills
- student has poor data analysis skills
- student has a lack of conceptual ability
- student does not make enough effort
- student has no previous research experience
- student has language difficulties

Project Evaluation

The project results have informed interventions aimed at consolidating the dissertation support system at UWL and development activities at partner institutions in the UK and overseas. For supervisors, the study has provided valuable insights into how students view the supervisory process. The results from the questionnaires have been used to inform discussions among the supervisory team at annual moderation meetings, facilitate reflexive professional practice with experienced supervisors and enhance new supervisor training. For the students, additional emphasis has been given to the supervisory relationships in research methods modules, on-line learning resources and in the student dissertation guide.

The self-reported ranked responses to factors impacting on dissertation quality have resulted in targeted training in data analysis techniques for both staff and students. The students' perceptions that they have no previous experience of research has been challenged by demonstrating how the skills learnt during coursework projects and assignments undertaken at earlier stages of the degree are valuable research skills that can be built on in the dissertation process. Knowledge and understanding of supervisory relationships and differing expectations has been used in supervisory training, research seminars, sharing good practice sessions and producing on-line resources on supervision for staff.

Attempts to replicate the study and thus to make a quantitative assessment of improvements have been confounded by significant changes to the assessment regulations that have introduced tougher sanctions on non-submission. While these are likely to have increased submission rates, there is no evidence that they have resulted in greater engagement in supervision by those students who eschew the supervisory process.

Additional outputs from the project

In addition to the report of the project, a separate *Resource Guide to Dissertation Supervision on Taught Undergraduate and Postgraduate Programmes* is available. The Resource Guide provides an annotated bibliography of over 30 textbook, research article and internet resources on the subject. Copies of the questionnaires used in the study can be found in Appendices 1 and 2 of the Final Project Report.

David Botterill

Cultural Awareness in the Hospitality Curriculum

Tom Baum, *University of Strathclyde*, and Frances Devine, *University of Ulster*

This project was built on a range of research-related work undertaken by teams in Ulster and Scotland. They looked at migrant workers in the context of Scottish and Northern Irish Hospitality, and addressed the theme from the point of view of all stakeholders in these locations: employers, front-line managers, workers, educators and tourism authorities. This project used a wide-ranging information base to compile a hospitality education resource bank and bibliography of support learning materials, designed to prepare young people for a multicultural workplace.

The project objective was to develop a cultural awareness module and support learning resources for hospitality studies and the specific aims were to:

- interrogate existing research (by the project team and others) in order to ascertain appropriate module and learning resource content
- survey the hospitality education community in Scotland, Northern Ireland and elsewhere to determine suitable pedagogic approaches for teaching and learning in this area
- develop a learning resource bank and bibliography of material with application value to teachers and trainers in this area

Since the project was completed in May 2008, the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management at the University of Ulster has reflected on the outcomes of the project and undertaken a thorough analysis of the content of modules. The intention was to embed cultural diversity in the curriculum in order to develop students' ability to work in global business environments and lead to improved graduate employability.

During a revalidation exercise a new innovative module of study, entitled Cultural Awareness, was added to the curriculum as an optional module in Year 3 for the 2009/2010 academic year. This module has been a great success with 42% of final year students choosing Cultural Awareness from a selection of three optional modules.

Impact on Students

Key results from an evaluation with students who had completed the Cultural Awareness module showed that the majority agreed strongly that "cultural awareness should be introduced to students as part of the curriculum". The students agreed that "the module taught me a lot about how to deal with people from different nationalities".

The students also gained an awareness of the significance of communication to enhance intercultural communication. The majority of students agreed that "we were able to compare our own culture with another and make effective use of different communication styles".

In addition, the students realised the value of the module in preparing them for the multicultural working environment of the future and felt that "the module will help us to articulate our understanding of different cultures to future employers (at interview stage) and that we will be in a better position to demonstrate our communication abilities with international colleagues in future workplace environments".

Impact on Colleagues

The entire department agreed strongly that "cultural diversity is important and must be introduced to students before they work in the hospitality and tourism industry", and in addition, most of the staff felt that "cultural diversity should be addressed and discussed in all fields or areas of business on a regular basis".

These results led to a number of initiatives being incorporated within the department. For example, training sessions were organised on such areas as Internationalisation in the Classroom; and Assessment and Feedback for the Diverse Nature of the Student. These training sessions allowed academics to gain more insight into the importance of integration and communication abilities in the classroom, and online teaching environments, in a multicultural context.

From these training sessions colleagues developed and designed appropriate pedagogic materials and e-learning technologies, such as podcasting and blogging, to aid education practices for cultural diversity to all students, both classroom-based and online. These new approaches to teaching and learning helped both the tutor and student by providing extra support, enhancing learning through greater student engagement and interaction. The processes also offer an increasing mobility of learning and the use of multiple assessment criteria help students to appreciate internationalisation and diversity. Some initiatives used by colleagues on methods of teaching and assessment include study abroad trips, international placement opportunities, work experience and international guest speakers from hospitality

and tourism backgrounds. Case studies are being used as a method to evaluate the impact of intercultural competences on successful cross-cultural management scenarios and issues.

Cultural diversity education for students can also be relevant to programmes of study other than hospitality and tourism. In business subjects, for example, as many businesses today face cultural barriers and misunderstandings within their teams which can lead to difficulties in achieving goals and business objectives. To create the managers of the future in today's world, higher education must prepare its graduates to work across cultures with awareness.

David Botterill

Developing a Resource Bank for Problem-Based Learning in Sports-Related Courses

Michael Duncan, Newman College of Higher Education

Problem-based learning (PBL) has long been used within the context of medical education as a means to foster motivation, promote problem solving abilities, and encourage student interaction and independent learning.

A PBL approach has several advantages when compared with other teaching methods. Its ability to build on previous knowledge, and the immediate application of knowledge to construct solutions to specific problems and the team-based learning environment, all facilitates student learning and independent thinking.

In the context of sport science, although the fundamental premise behind PBL applies to a range of domains within the field, it appeared to us that there had been limited investigation of the impact of PBL on students' learning experience in this area.

This was considered to be an interesting area of research that could have an impact on both student and academic staff experience of higher education. Yet research within the sports domain had tended to focus on practical application

and outcomes, rather than on the process of constructing and running modules or programmes that employ PBL.

The three aims of this research were to:

- develop a PBL problem bank specific to sports-related courses
- trial a number of these problems in undergraduate sports modules across Years 1 to 3
- evaluate the efficacy of these problems in enhancing the student experience

At the conclusion of the project, the introduction of problem scenarios appeared to have added to the student experience across all years of undergraduate study. The experience of PBL seemed to be positive, with all students reporting that PBL offered something different from traditional lecture-led teaching, that it enabled the development of transferable skills such as information retrieval, as well as developing the ability to form an argument and to present effectively that can be used in other areas of their study.

All groups also highlighted the move to a student-centred form of learning as an important aspect of PBL, but they had somewhat differing views on this. A strong theme was also the preference of this method of teaching over traditional lecture-led teaching. However, compared to their Year 1 or Year 3 peers, the Year 2 students focused much more attention on the assessment of the module: gaining a good grade or passing the module. Although there seemed to be an acknowledgement that PBL required them to engage more with the subject content, there also seemed to be some resistance to this.

From these findings, first year undergraduate students seem fully capable of engaging with PBL and may be more receptive to this form of learning than their peers in Year 2. With the former group, bad habits may not yet be developed and early experience of greater student autonomy in developing their own learning might be beneficial in developing a deeper approach to learning overall. Likewise, the Year 3 students

seemed to value this experience more than Year 2. This may be due, at least in part, to the timing of PBL modules with the Year 3 students: the PBL delivery took place in spring/summer for Year 3 students when some final year modules had already been completed and the students' dissertations were underway.

As the focus group interviews for these students also took place in the final weeks of their university courses, it may be that the final year students had been more reflective about their

PBL experiences than students in Year 1 and 2 who were still in the middle of their courses. This certainly seems the case when students were asked about the workings of the problems used in their modules, with only the Year 3 students providing any evidence that these had been considered. Despite this, the introduction of PBL scenarios appears to have had some positive impact on the student experience across all years of undergraduate study.

Finding a Better Way to Teach Coaching: Can Action Research Help?

Robyn Jones, *University of Wales Institute, Cardiff*

As academic coaching courses have become increasingly commonplace, the issue of how best to deliver a skill set that is both practical and theoretical in nature has gained importance. In order to give students of coaching a sense of how theory can inform their practice and, hence, of the integrated nature of their work, I proposed to evaluate and subsequently improve an existing coaching unit run from an action research perspective.

The purpose of the study lay in providing an evidenced-based example of innovative pedagogical practice. The aim was to evaluate and analyse an action research approach to teaching coaching. The objectives were to:

- evaluate an academic sports coaching unit from both teaching and learning perspectives, and amend as appropriate
- to provide student-centred learning opportunities that were flexible, inclusive of an explicit nexus between theory and practice

- to allow students an opportunity to better engage in the process of their own learning through the provision of an innovative pedagogy and to provide guidelines for staff interested in using action research as a teaching method

My pedagogical practice has continued to evolve following the project. The module is now a well-established part of the MSc (Sports Coaching) at UWIC, and has been evaluated very positively by students and the external examiner. Results from the funded project pointed towards the value of considered follow-up through the use of peer-focus group work. Consequently, subsequent running of the unit has ensured both adequate time and sensitive facilitation by staff in attempts to maximise this component.

Students now have a far better appreciation of how theory and practice can, and perhaps should, be connected. Being able to identify a theory, thus enabling them to put a label on certain coaching practices, has acted as a catalyst to students' knowledge development, particularly in terms of their personal construction of practice. The structure of the unit, in enforcing the use of theory in practice, has also better developed students' reflective capabilities in terms of their understanding of the complexities inherent within the pedagogical context and how it can and cannot be influenced.

Colleagues who have seen or heard about this module have often expressed great interest in knowing more about it: exactly how it is structured, facilitated and assessed. Those who teach on it have commented on their need to be fully engaged in the process, to see how students' learning is developing through the unit and their particular role in that development. In consequence, as a team, we have resolved to meet more regularly, albeit informally, to ensure continuity of teaching and learning.

Welcome Back: Understanding and Actively Supporting Student Progression for Returning Students

Nic Matthews, Denise Hill, Jo Hardman,
University of Gloucestershire

Student progression through a degree programme from lower to higher learning challenges an assumption lying within the UK higher education experience. Like many assumptions in the university system, the idea of progression is seldom explicitly explained to the student body. Great effort has been put into providing entry level students, with intensive induction programmes to university life, but in many HEIs returning students are expected to find their way back into studying with little or no specific induction to the expectations of studying in Years 2 and 3. Starting from the presumption that progression was largely not understood by students, we mounted a project and put forward the question: "Do students need a three year academic support system and, if so, on what basis should it be provided?"

Project Description

The overall aim of this project was to contribute to the understanding within the HLST subject community of different student support systems, with particular attention paid to the successful progression of students through Years 2 and 3. The project focused on acquiring a critical understanding of how students approach their studies as they progress through their undergraduate programmes and how, if at all, a student's academic development is informed by the broader learning environment, including the institution's approach to academic counselling. Student engagement with different support mechanisms was examined, with particular attention given to how such provision was seen to support the students' educational goals and aspirations.

The project objectives were to:

- identify aspects within current systems of academic counselling and study support which are regarded by students as good practice (inclusive of "returner" inductions)
- use an enhanced understanding of the student experience of support systems and then to work with students and staff to develop guidelines for an Academic Charter (i.e., what might be considered a reasonable set of expectations regarding support for academic development)
- make recommendations at a departmental level that may capitalise on the effective use of academic and support staff time/expertise

The literature in the area of student support acknowledges a range of issues which we considered when constructing the

empirical work including: learning environments (HEA, 2007); retention and the identification of students at risk; student engagement, academic success and self-efficacy (Lafferty, 2007); student inductions; and, models of student support and academic counselling.

Themes from the literature review informed the student survey circulated at the Returners' Induction Day in September 2007, and the discussion points in the focus groups.

Method

A mixed method approach was adopted to review returning students' experience of student support mechanisms. The research was conducted on the following basis:

Semester One: Returning Students' Experiences of Academic Support

In September, returning Years 2 and 3 students (n = 219) were surveyed to review their academic development, use of student support systems and their educational aspirations. Five focus groups (n = 19) and one interview were carried out in October/November 2007, to further review issues of academic development, student support mechanisms and educational aspirations.

Semester Two: Meeting and Managing Student Expectations of Academic Support

Eight staff were involved in a seminar on the theme of developing an Academic Charter in March 2008 and six students individually interviewed on the theme of developing an Academic Charter in April 2008.

The survey data was obtained from students attending the Returners' Day. Each student completed a questionnaire about their studies: resources, media and spaces used to support their learning, approaches to their work, and sources of academic support they accessed. Analysis of the survey data obtained from the students has provided detail on:

- the value and benefits of the induction events
- levels of engagement with existing support mechanisms
- student aspirations as they progress through their studies

Results

We sought to further understand how returning students perceived and engaged with academic support systems. The institutional model of student support was critically explored with Year 2 and 3 students from six undergraduate programmes. By having a more critical understanding of the experiences of these students, it is possible to start to articulate what can be done by departmental teams to actively support the academic development of students through the transitional phases of their studies.

While each HEI will adopt its own approach to student support, these are invariably variations on a theme. Some general observations are therefore possible despite the institutional focus of the empirical work. The Returners' Day was well received, both in terms of the practical advice that was offered on the day and also in terms of the message that it conveyed to the students in attendance. The feedback obtained from attendees reinforces the idea that support for progression and encouraging academic success can be linked to both the tangible provision offered and the educational climate and learning environment that is created, at a course or departmental level.

A key finding has been a subtle, yet significant, shift in the way in which students engage with their studies in Years 2 and 3. As a result, we have been able to identify those support roles that students believe are crucial to their academic development and success. The staff in these roles are characterised as being able to offer immediate help with academic questions (invariably assessment driven queries) and demonstrate detailed knowledge of university regulations. Senior Tutors in particular are seen to build up a repertoire of responses based on case law and provide students with a direct point of contact. Course leaders and module tutors are also seen as vital in offering specific academic advice. This has implications for how HEIs allocate hours to particular roles, particularly at the level of individual modules, and consequently how personal tutors are used.

Discussions on student progression are closely aligned with debates on what facilitates and encourages success. It is evident from the focus group that many students have specific career aspirations and their decision to come to university was motivated by the idea that a degree would enhance their employability. As a result, it is equally evident that students are comfortable with the idea that they are responsible for their own learning and that academic success requires significant personal commitment, outside the formal systems in place. Departmental and course-level cultures must consider how they instil and sustain the notion of the student as an independent learner. Academic support needs to find the right balance between hand-holding and facilitating autonomy. Students see good practice as being responsive to specific issues rather than anything to do with the structure in place.

It was expected that an enhanced understanding of the students' experience of existing support systems would lead them to make suggestions as to how provision might be modified. However, the evidence suggests that the students were satisfied with the academic support systems but articulated concerns with the way in which systems were put into operation. Many students expressed an appreciation for the level of support they received from the majority of the academic and support staff they encountered.

However, a recurring issue was that of inconsistencies in the level and scope of the student support offered by staff. Students explained that inconsistencies in the way support was offered, and disparities in how staff with specific remits to support student learning exercised their responsibilities, had a profound influence on their learning experience, both negatively and positively. Examples of good practice were frequently off-set by examples of poor practice. Students expressed sympathy for staff who were busy dealing with a number of competing demands on their time but they were also clear that student support was one of those demands.

Students expressed concerns over:

- the timeliness of email responses (some tutors not replying at all)
- the extent to which tutors were willing to discuss assessment requirements outside class time
- the extent to which tutors responded to the requirements of students with special educational needs
- different approaches to the student appointment system (some tutors readily available, others on a very restricted basis, and others operating an open door policy)

It is important to emphasise that concerns were not widespread but that such inconsistencies did have consequences for the students' learning experience. For example, students hesitated to seek help from unresponsive tutors a second time. This influenced their engagement with specific modules and also consideration of future module choices. Equally, those students who spoke positively about their interaction with staff in support roles articulated that they felt comfortable asking for help and would return to that individual time and again, even if that tutor was not in a direct position to help with the query.

The findings of the survey and the focus groups indicate that students felt that key individuals were course leaders and module tutors, and that staff in these roles were important sources of support, addressing course level or module specific queries respectively. Academic achievement is the focus for many students, especially as they enter their final year. Actively supporting progression and encouraging success would therefore appear to mean acknowledging the impact module level support systems have on the learning experience. Responsive module tutors that replied promptly to emails, gave clear assessment advice and were enthusiastic about their subject or academic discipline, were

seen as key factors in students' engagement in their studies. Some students referred to their tutors as inspirational and this had a positive influence on them, regardless of the student's perception of their ability in that subject. Institutions will have their own model of allocating hours to the role of the module tutor and administrative tasks will be part of the allocation, but the importance of dialogue with students should not be underestimated.

The University of Gloucestershire re-launched the Senior Tutor role in 2007, as a specialist position to provide academic and pastoral care to students. Its specialist remit means that the students canvassed through the different phases of data collection had not necessarily come across Senior Tutors. However, the expertise and service provided was welcomed by those who had cause to seek the guidance of the team. Academic support for students experiencing personal problems, often complex problems, requires a significant investment of staff time. The specialist knowledge accumulated by staff in these roles allows them to deal swiftly and effectively with student concerns. In some cases this helps support retention as well as progression. This role, therefore, has enhanced student support and is to be welcomed as a feature of a three-year support structure.

Project Conclusion

The findings suggest that Year 2 and 3 students favour systems which prioritise academic achievement and provide immediate responses to difficulties. Data analysis indicates that students perceive the key personnel to be course leaders, module tutors and Senior Tutors. They were less concerned about retaining personal tutors in Years 1 and 2. Students invariably sought advice from those staff perceived to have the authority to directly respond to issues, academic or pastoral. Personal tutors were seen as a possible point of contact but they did not necessarily have subject knowledge, a detailed understanding of the institution's regulations, and an appreciation of the breadth of student services available. The prioritising of the identified academic positions and roles reflects the returning students' focus on academic performance. The survey and focus group data suggest that aspirations and attitudes towards performance will subtly change as the student progresses through their programme.

Year 1 students reflect on the first year experience and articulate awareness of weaknesses in their study skills (e.g., time management); this suggests support should be available which provides encouragement for those seeking to improve their academic skills. Year 2 is characterised by students prioritising academic performance, namely achieving their desired degree classification. As a result, the support systems must facilitate access to those staff with the capacity to support the students in the pursuit of their changing goals and focus: invariably subject or discipline specialists – module tutors – rather than academic tutors with a more general remit – personal tutors.

Returning students welcome induction activities that make them feel valued and part of a learning community. The workshops appear to have encouraged many to think about their levels of attainment, and consider future academic and professional pathways. If such momentum is to be sustained the student support mechanisms must recognise and reflect the students' shifting focus towards academic success. This has implications for how departments allocate staff time, define specialist roles and distribute resources in support of the student learning experience.

Project Evaluation

In September 2007, staff within the faculty ran a Returners' Day, delivering a programme of workshops and re-orientation activities for Level 4 and 5 students. It was led by the faculty's team of Senior Tutors: academic staff with a specific remit for

monitoring and enhancing the delivery of academic counselling to all students. The day's events included a welcome back meeting with the Co-ordinating Senior Tutor; meetings with course leaders which outlined headline changes to programmes and regulations; study skills workshops; access to careers information; and workshops on future study options, such as applying for the PGCE, postgraduate taught programmes and research degrees.

The event proved to be very successful with over 200 students in attendance. While students had previously had access to course meetings early on in the academic year, it was important to capture the students' views on the merits of organising a programme of activities on the scale set out during this Returners' Day. To gauge student opinion an evaluation was carried out and students were invited to jot down comments on "post-it" notes. The advantage of this was that feedback was anonymous, instant and to the point. Students were encouraged to leave comments and suggestions about the day itself, and were also asked to reflect on what they had got out of the specific workshops. Exemplar comments included:

Nice to split into 2nd and 3rd years to get more specific information.

Fewer lectures, more individual meetings needed.

We got a lot out of the dissertation meeting (design issues, referencing).

Other comments focused on the logistics of running such an event, identifying the need for shorter sessions, more refreshments – these were provided but attendance was greater than anticipated – and a later start time – probably not a surprising request! There was also potential for unexpected outcomes as a result of the day. One student noted:

opportunities to recruit participants/ subjects for dissertation projects, i.e. those who are doing similar testing methods

Students attending specific workshops were asked to reflect on the following questions: a) Why did you come today? b) What have you learned? What will you take away with you? As an example, students attending a postgraduate study workshop commented:

Don't know what to do next year. [This has] given me a lot to think about.

I came to the Masters meeting today to get an idea of what continuing education would involve. I have learned that a Masters comes in a variety of options meaning I could look into doing further education when working and living somewhere else.

I came to this session to get a clearer outlook on the pathway to take in relation to a Masters degree, I feel more positive about this now and feel this session has made it more realistic and achievable.

Returning students appreciate the opportunity to be "re-oriented" into university life. Students acknowledge the value in knowing up front what is expected of them: this seems to have a motivating effect and gets them thinking about the forthcoming year and what may come next, at the end of their undergraduate studies. More importantly, there is a sense that students perceive such events as the evidence that the faculty is visibly supporting, and interested in, their progression. There are pastoral as well as academic benefits to be gained from induction activities.

David Botterill

Developing Good Practice in Video-Podcasting for Tourism Teaching and Learning

Iain Wallace and Karen Thompson, University of Strathclyde

It's Week 8 and your Friday afternoon "Introduction to . . ." module for entry level students looms large in your mind. You wonder how many students will turn up this week now that they have discovered the university VLE platform holds your lecture notes and, to make matters worse, it's another Bank Holiday on the following Monday. And for those that do make it, will there be any reaction to your questions this week? How can you find a way to draw out what they have understood so far on the module? You wonder whether they have got to know one another sufficiently well to cope with some peer assessment of their last assessment exercise or whether that would just be too risky. You'd like to get them thinking about some recent news coverage on television but just can't seem to enter the world of podcasting with any confidence and the last thing you want is to be embarrassed by technological hitches in front of the students. Oh well, it's back to those old lecture notes then . . . but not it seems for Iain Wallace and Karen Thompson, who took the opportunities provided by initiatives already ongoing within the University of Strathclyde to mount this project.

Project Description

Over the last decade, the use of audio and video material in an educational context has been well established. However, the emergence of mobile digital media players such as mobile phones and iPods is presenting new opportunities for accessing digital material. Educators are inevitably exploring these possibilities but there is danger in assuming that the most straightforward or obvious applications of these technologies (e.g., recording lectures so that students can listen to them in their own time) will lead to learning benefits. Previous experience of other technology adoptions in this context suggest that simply harnessing mass distribution potential (e.g., making lecture notes available online) without paying attention to the way that technologies interact with other elements of a course can lead to unintended negative consequences (e.g., students failing to attend lectures because they know that the lecture notes will be made available).

In this pilot, course tutors wished to avoid these sorts of consequences and instead redesign the course to provide a number of inter-related learning opportunities for students, supported by different technologies. Podcasts were created to introduce students to core concepts and ideas, interactive lectures were supported by an electronic voting system, and students were given opportunities to self-test online using multiple choice questions (MCQs). Together, these technologies and the course design they supported had a significant measurable positive impact on student learning.

The initial pilot during academic session 2006/07 was supported by the Re-engineering Assessment Practices Project (REAP), led by the University of Strathclyde and funded under the Scottish Funding Council's e-Learning transformation programme. The REAP project (www.reap.ac.uk) draws on current educational research to redesign large enrolment first year classes across a range of disciplines using a wide variety of technologies. All the redesigns are underpinned by formative assessment

principles that emphasise student responsibility. The goal of REAP is to develop in students the ability to monitor, manage and direct their own learning.

Funding from the HLST Network supported evaluation of the impact of these video podcast materials on student engagement and learning. This evaluation work focused on the use of video podcasts within the Introduction to Tourism first year class at the University. The podcasts were developed in conjunction with Spoken Word Services at Glasgow Caledonian University (www.spokenword.ac.uk). Focus groups took place, and questionnaires were developed and administered to gather a range of qualitative and quantitative data.

About the Intervention

The number of lecture hours was reduced by half, to one hour per week, and the class split in two, each lecture being delivered twice to this smaller cohort. Lectures were re-designed as interactive sessions, supported by a "personal response" or electronic voting system (EVS). These weekly face-to-face opportunities offered students the chance to discuss topics with the tutor and with each other, instead of passively receiving transmitted material.

Prior to these interactive lectures, students were asked to watch video-podcasts created with the assistance of Spoken Word Services and delivered via the University VLE. These podcasts used archive material licensed from the BBC and commentaries created by the course tutor to illustrate key topics and included links to additional resources, replacing the content previously delivered in lectures. In all, six podcasts were made available to students via the VLE, with the option of watching each podcast onscreen or downloading the materials to a portable device (e.g., an iPod or mobile phone).

Three online MCQs replaced the paper-based tests previously delivered in class. These tests were supplemented by formative online MCQs supplied by the publisher of the course textbook, which allowed students to test their knowledge regularly at home. Online tests were delivered via the VLE and included feedback comments giving students immediate information about their performance. Students were also required to produce a group presentation at the end of the second semester. Group activities were supported by online spaces including message-boards within the VLE.

Project Evaluation

Outcomes from the REAP pilot project were used as the starting point for evaluation. The teaching team at Strathclyde, in collaboration with colleagues from the REAP project and Spoken Word Services, devised a set of topic areas which would examine various aspects of student podcast use, such as usability, technical issues and learning value. General usage

and awareness of mobile technologies were also examined, along with broader issues related to module evaluation.

The team agreed a set of questions based on these topic areas to be addressed by all focus groups, with the understanding that these would not have to be covered in the same order in each group, and that students could lead conversations in additional directions. Four focus groups were carried out with small groups of students in November 2007, while the tourism course was running. Students were assured that their comments would be anonymously fed back to the course leaders and would have an impact on future course design.

An initial brief report from these focus groups and subsequent discussions led to the production of a questionnaire, which was administered to students in tutorial groups in December 2007. These tutorial groups were compulsory and so responses were much higher than would traditionally be obtained in lectures. The questionnaire covered all aspects of the course so that comparative analysis could be carried out with results from last semester's students. Questions relating to use of video podcasts and related technologies were more in depth and were designed specifically to address identified areas of research interest, such as the interaction between students' use of technologies in their personal life and for education.

Further qualitative evidence was collated from interviews with the course leader, two student focus groups and open-ended responses from a student questionnaire. Quantitative data was also collated from this questionnaire. Class grade averages and progression rates were compared across cohorts for sessions 2005/6 and 2006/7. Additional evaluation activities undertaken during the second phase of the intervention, in session 2007/8, included a student questionnaire and three more focus groups.

Results

Although attendance at lectures improved during session 2006/7, it remained at a lower than desirable level. Lectures scheduled on Mondays achieved an average of 50% attendance but those on Fridays achieved only 30%. In order to resolve this difficulty, the department moved to re-schedule lectures to Tuesdays and Thursdays. In academic session 2007/08, attendance at lectures reached a high of 76.7% in week 5, falling to just under 40% in week 10, the last week of the semester.

Before the intervention, in academic session 2004/5, 40 students were deemed "not qualified" and the average class coursework mark, including these "not qualified" students, was 47.8%. After the first phase of the intervention in 2006/7, the number of students deemed "not qualified" was reduced by 25% to 30 and the average class coursework mark rose dramatically to 60%.

Data from the VLE during session 2007/08 indicated that 71.8% of students watched the first video podcast and many students accessed the podcast on multiple occasions. During the year, numbers accessing the podcasts fell: 56% accessed the second podcast, with numbers falling to 14.4% for the last podcast released. Overall, 67% of students responding to an end of year questionnaire reported that they had watched the podcasts and 70% agreed or strongly agreed that the podcasts had contributed to their learning.

Although students were offered the option to download the podcasts to portable media devices, the overwhelming majority (80%) reported that they had watched the video materials via the VLE. Students agreed or strongly agreed that the podcasts were easy to access on campus (65%) and off campus (72%). 72% of students also agreed or strongly agreed that the purpose of the podcasts was clear and 68% agreed or strongly agreed that the podcasts built on the lecture material.

When asked what they liked about the podcasts, students commented that the podcasts were an accessible way of approaching the course material:

I think it is an interesting way to add to the lectures especially as the chapters we have in the tourism books we are using are quite long.

I think they're informative. It tells you a lot and it is easier than reading all the pages of the textbook.

Students agreed that the podcasts fitted in well with other elements of the course, including interactive lectures as well as the information in the class textbook and in the suggested further reading. 79% of respondents to the class questionnaire agreed or strongly agreed that they found it useful to have the same information presented in different formats and students in focus groups sessions commented that the podcasts offered an enhanced experience in lectures:

I really like our lecturer, she tends to give a lot of examples and relate them to the podcasts. In lectures she will say "as you saw in the podcast" and relate it to what she is saying, so on top of the podcasts building on to the reading the tutor also helps and builds on to the podcasts, they are really helpful.

The main weakness in the new course design, reported by students responding to the questionnaire and in focus groups, was the format of the interactive lectures supported by electronic voting. Although 57% of students agreed or strongly agreed that using clickers increased their concentration in lectures (23% disagreed or strongly disagreed) and 66% of students agreed that, overall, use of electronic voting was enjoyable (11% disagreed or strongly disagreed), some students reported that the questions asked in the interactive lessons were too easy or straightforward.

Project Conclusion

This extended pilot over 2 years of a first year tourism course demonstrates that the adoption of podcast technologies to facilitate a more innovative course design structure can have measurable and positive benefits for student attainment. However, it is important to note that the podcasts created to support the class did not replicate materials presented in lectures but were an integrated part of well designed learning opportunities for this first year group. Using the podcasts to prepare students in advance of interactive lectures helped them to grasp core concepts in an accessible and digestible way. Interactive lectures and opportunities for self-testing using online MCQs built on students' learning and supported them to reflect on their understanding. These changes in pedagogic practice had the effect of shifting the responsibility for learning onto the student. Students came to understand that unless they had viewed the podcast materials in advance they would not be able to interact in the lecture setting and their uninformed participation in the electronic voting sessions would impact upon the lectures' assessment of their peers through the immediate feedback facility of the software. The direction of pressure to learn in the lecture setting was therefore subtly shifted away from the lecturer to the student's own performance within a peer group.

Creating the podcasts and revising lecture content to include interactive questions was time consuming for academic staff members. Although there was no decrease in the number of hours taught, because the class was divided into two to facilitate effective interactivity, the fact that the lecture was duplicated meant that teachers had less material to prepare overall and gains in time saved are anticipated in future years.

However, it is also anticipated that it will be necessary to review the content of the podcasts to avoid examples appearing dated in future years. The department's relationship with the Spoken Word project is recognised as a key strength as it offers access to high quality content. Access to the BBC archive was a particularly valuable source of broadcast news footage. Without this content, it is likely that the podcast materials would be less attractive to students and without the support of the staff from the Spoken Word project the podcast content could not have been produced.

Evaluators were surprised that few students (around 8%) downloaded the podcasts from the VLE to view on portable media. One possible explanation for this is that fewer students have access to portable media devices than staff assume. Another possibility is that it is just as convenient for students to watch video materials on a university or home computer and portability of content is less important. One student noted that the podcasts were "less convenient than the textbook", which he generally took to the laundrette to read while doing his washing.

Recommendations

1. Video podcasts can be a useful addition to teaching, offering a convenient and accessible route into core materials.
2. Podcasts are most useful when they are incorporated holistically into a well-designed course, rather than offered as an add-on. It is important to consider students' motivation to learn and to participate in learning opportunities before adding podcasting to course provision.
3. Access to high-quality content is a significant bonus, but content that is well-aligned with other learning activities is likely to be highly motivating (e.g., the teacher could create

a simple podcast giving class feedback on an assignment or more information about a topic from a previous lecture).

4. Students might not always choose to download podcast material onto portable media but find it straightforward to watch or listen to audio-visual material online.
5. While there is almost universal ownership of mobile technologies such as laptops, phones and music players among this student cohort, there is little understanding or awareness of how rich educational content might be used in this context, which warrants further investigation.

David Botterill

Getting the Message Across: One way + Another

Maureen Brookes,
*Oxford Brookes
University*

The HLST Network funded this project in 2007, and the aim of the research was to evaluate students' perceptions of the impact of formative feedback podcasts on their learning experience. The research was undertaken within the context of a compulsory undergraduate module that was team-taught and run over different time periods. I developed the podcasts weekly in order to provide an overview of the theoretical concepts covered, how they fitted together with the rest of the module and to provide formative feedback on students' progress with their assessed coursework. Students could access the podcasts from a dedicated wiki or have them downloaded through iTunes.

While not all students took advantage of the podcasts during the project, the feedback from students and their evaluation of the podcasts was overwhelmingly positive. In particular, students felt the podcasts helped them to complete their coursework, provided a good summary of the week's activities and helped them to better understand the theoretical constructs covered within the module. The project also yielded interesting findings about students' attitude, their ability and the

accessibility of the podcasts. An unexpected finding from the study was how valuable other members of the teaching team found the podcasts, particularly those teaching on the module for the first time. For me, as the module leader, podcasts therefore proved to be both an efficient and effective learning and teaching support.

Given the results of the study, I have continued to podcast to students to provide additional learning support and have witnessed a rise in the number of students using these on a regular basis. As part of my Oxford Brookes Teaching Fellowship, Year 3 and Year 4 students have recorded podcasts to support Year 1 students preparing to undertake a work placement year, and have begun experimenting with videocasts as mini-lectures to help these students complete their academic work whilst on placement. As a result of presenting papers on this work at research conferences including CHME and Eurochrie, and publishing a paper in JoHLSTE, a number of academic colleagues across the wider HLST community have informed me that they too have begun to use podcasting as an efficient and effective way to support student learning.

Image-Based Teaching Methods in Tourism Education

Dorin Festeu,
Buckinghamshire New University

This project responded to the interest shown by users from universities other than those initially targeted by the Image Enriched Learning in Tourism Education Project (funded by HEFCE-HEA under FDTL 5).

Feedback collected from the participants of the dissemination events revealed that lecturers have very little experience of how to use images in lectures, seminars and assessment. Most of them expressed the view that there was very little material available on the innovative use of images in tourism education, so the Image Based Teaching Methods in Tourism Education (IBTM) Project sought to develop learning objects that could guide users.

The aim of the project was to develop image-based teaching methods that would lead to improvements in teaching materials and through this student interest, engagement and learning. The objectives were to develop a series of case studies on the use of images which could be used for new staff development and CPD; and to develop, based on these case studies, learning objects that would be made available to the wider teaching community through the dedicated web-page.

The innovative teaching methods developed within the framework of the IBTM project have significantly enhanced the way in which images are being used in lectures and seminars on Bucks New University tourism courses. Images are now being used to produce conceptual frameworks, stimulate ethical analysis of various aspects of tourism, illustrate complex concepts, assess understanding and knowledge and stimulate critical thinking.

The newly developed methodologies have had a significant positive impact on students' understanding of complex concepts, and student engagement in lectures and seminars. Students are now regarding images not as mere colourful addition to the text but as essential ideas, and message conveyors that require an active process of analysis and thinking.

As a result of the dissemination process, colleagues from our university and from other UK universities are using images with more confidence and with greater efficiency. Unsolicited feedback from colleagues has revealed that, as a result of implementing the new innovative methods, their lectures have become more attractive to students and students have become more active in seminars and workshops, which is a pre-condition for enhanced learning.

Reusable Learning Objects: Evaluating the Outcomes of Multi-Media and Single Medium RLOs

Ian Gilhespy and David Harris,
University College Plymouth Marjon

For Ramsden (2008), one of the key challenges facing higher education in the next 15 years derives from the need for flexibility. By flexibility, he is referring to the response to changing social circumstances and pressures faced by the increasingly diverse student body, and their preferred modes of study. There are many ways of reacting to this need for flexibility, one of which is to embrace some of the opportunities offered by digital technologies including, for example, the maintenance of managed learning environments. These environments require content of course, some of which may come in the form of learning objects. Our interests in this

project were to evaluate some of the different ways in which content can be delivered and the ways in which the technology actually affects the delivery of the content.

The use of a variety of media to support the processes of education is well established. However, over the last 15 years educators have been taking an increasing interest in the scope of digital materials to offer or enhance educational outcomes. The rapid innovation and turnover of forms of technology has energised a number of educators to try and embrace what appears to be a host of new opportunities to support existing methods of teaching and learning, or to reconfigure the teaching and learning process in such a way that traditional forms of delivery are supplanted.

In certain respects, current debates around the uses of websites, virtual learning environments and mobile technologies echo the debates about the effectiveness of distance learning materials. This relates to the emergence of the Open University in the UK in particular, but there are also new elements to the debates that arise specifically from the technology and the software. Our project consisted of an attempt to evaluate the educational outcomes of delivering the same content using different means; the first being a suite of extended learning objects including slides and audio,

the second a series of single-medium learning objects (audio files or podcasts), and the third a traditional academic article of 6,000 words. The project was embedded into an intermediate level module and the outcomes were tested using a multiple-choice test alongside a number of focus group discussions.

This pilot study demonstrated that the adoption of digital technologies is one that achieves very positive feedback from student groups generally. Student learning was as effective with the provision of electronic materials as with the provision of traditional learning materials. Students become frequent users of podcasts and there is some provisional evidence here that, over a long period, the learning from such single medium podcasts is greater than from the multi-media learning objects (LOs). This is partially due to the flexibility of consumption that podcasts offer to learners and the portability of the digital players that are habitually used by students. Nevertheless, the feedback in the discussion groups suggests that the initial availability of multi-media LOs may be the preferred option of most students.

Amongst those students who identify their iPods and MP3 players as their music players, there was some resistance to the notion of using podcasts for learning purposes on mobile digital technologies, with educational content intruding into the private soundscapes of MP3 users.

The availability of electronic materials appears to suit those students who prefer to work on their own. There is some evidence that the availability of the podcasts allows for the development of new learning strategies by the students in the sample. LOs may be used for rehearsal. Journeys to university become a time for study rather than just periods of travel and, supplementary to this, there is evidence that some students enjoy the opportunity to prepare for their study in advance of the formal teaching times. For example, they like to use the LOs and podcasts in advance of lectures and seminars as it allows them to gain greater benefit from the taught sessions. This finding relates strongly to the sister study of this project, which found

that dyslexic students like to prepare in this way, not least as a means to relieve the anxiety of not knowing what was coming up in the formal teaching sessions. Effective study is, thus, enhanced by the availability of electronic materials in advance.

The majority of students in the sample viewed LOs as supplementary: an added bonus to the established methods of teaching and learning. There was little recognition that electronic materials could potentially supplant traditional forms of delivery.

Analysis of the multiple-choice test results suggested that the podcasts were the most effective medium although the sample sizes were small and, more importantly, the content was inevitably affected by the type of media being employed.

Our practice of producing LOs has been affected by this project funding. We have felt encouraged to produce more LOs and to embed them into the design of our modules. We have moved over to the Xerte platform for the development and storage of our teaching materials, given the popularity of the LOs amongst students with visual access issues.

Inevitably, the project raises further issues that are worthy of exploration. The discussion raises deeper issues about the role of conventions in the different media, and the design implications, which include being able to effectively match content with media, rather than working out how to cover the same material with different media. Clearly, some educational content may be better suited to forms of delivery in different media than others and this, in turn, may require some academic enquiry into the limitations and benefits of using the conventions of realist media for the achievement of educational outcomes. This might include, for example, a study of the benefits and drawbacks of "positioning" the educational user, the readability of realist educational texts, the uses of authoritative "voices" and the opportunities of using non-realist forms for educational purposes.

We have continued to make our learning objects available both on private websites and the JORUM open repository.

Decoding Critical Thinking for Chinese and Indian International Students Studying in Tourism or Hospitality Subjects

Rong Huang, University of Plymouth

This project ran between January and December 2008. Dr Rong Huang was the lead for the project and this reflection is based on her experience.

Following undertaking this project I have become more reflective on my own teaching and research practice. I am an academic staff member who was born and educated in China. This project made me more fluent and capable when discussing critical

thinking with my students from a Western background, and very pragmatic and patient when helping students from an Asian background. As for my research, this project provided an opportunity for

me to develop my own critical thinking skill to a higher level. The project also helped me when carrying out another research project around the same time: *Easing the Transition: Peer Mentor Support to International Direct Entry Students*, part of the Prime Minister's Initiative Pilot Projects Award Scheme.

The HLST funded project laid a solid foundation for other research projects in which I am involved with or lead for, such as a project entitled *Easing Transition for International students from FE to HE*, funded by the Centre of Excellence in Teaching and Learning (HELP) and *Becoming a University Lecturer in the UK: Negotiating Knowledge, Experience and Learning*, funded by the Pedagogical Research Institute and Observatory.

The impact of the original HLST funded project on students was three-fold:

1. Students had a series of workshops and seminars related to the development of critical thinking skills. The students felt more supported and became more confident in using critical thinking skills in their assignments and also in classroom discussions.

2. For postgraduate students from an Eastern socio-cultural background, an introduction to critical thinking was provided during their induction programme. Formative assessment was introduced to help them develop these skills.
3. For students from Western backgrounds, as I had a better understanding of critical thinking and its role in the formation of Western knowledge, I became more able to facilitate their knowledge accumulation and skill development.

The impacts on colleagues were two-fold:

1. For colleagues in my own department, materials generated from this project were made available to them if they wished to see them; these materials included our research project bid document, critical thinking leaflets for academic staff (and students), and also relevant research papers.
2. For the wider academic audience, I attended an international conference and presented our research findings.

Exploring Ethics – Consent, Anonymity and Confidentiality: Practical Resource Bank for Tutors, Undergraduate and Master's Researchers

Alexandra Kenyon,
Leeds Metropolitan
University

The volume of research undertaken in UK universities where hospitality, sport, leisure and tourism are taught has expanded significantly over the past 25 years. Practising research in an ethical manner has become an important part of the professionalism of staff and students. Systems of ethical scrutiny have been designed to enforce rigorous standards of research practice in universities and it is normally a requirement that research undertaken by UK university staff and research degree students passes before a research ethics committee. Research undertaken for a dissertation as a part of bachelor or master's programmes may not be subject to university-wide scrutiny and therefore there is heightened responsibility on HLST teaching staff to

imbue students with a strong sense of what research ethics entails, and to encourage a self-critical community of responsible researchers.

Project Description

In this project, I set out to provide the wider staff and student community across the four HLST subjects with a practical set of tools in the form of a resource bank that would assist in building ethical research practices in social science based research projects.

The objectives of the study were to:

- undertake a survey of literature regarding regulation and frameworks of ethical issues
- investigate ethical issues specific to consent, anonymity and confidentiality
- evaluate appropriate consent, anonymity and confidentiality issues specific to hospitality, tourism and events students
- provide summaries and annotated bibliographies of some of the main authors of ethical issues
- provide PowerPoint slides showing practical examples found in the literature review

These objectives were met through the production of two resource guides and two supplementary PowerPoint presentations that can be modified, expanded and adapted by staff teaching about research ethics in the social sciences to students in the HLST subjects. These can be found on the HLST website.

Resource Guide 1 provides a detailed discussion of the need for research ethics, starting with the Nuremberg Code, and provides case studies of four illustrative, and at the time controversial, examples of research practice. This leads to a statement of six key principles of ethical research adopted from the advice of the UK Economic and Social Research Council (2005, p. 1):

1. Research should be designed, reviewed and undertaken to ensure integrity and quality.
2. Research staff and subjects must be informed fully about the purpose, methods and intended possible uses of the research, what their participation in the research entails and what risks, if any, are involved. Some variation is allowed in very specific and exceptional research contexts for which detailed guidance is provided in the policy guidelines.
3. The confidentiality of information supplied by research subjects and the anonymity of respondents must be respected.
4. Research participants must participate in a voluntary way, free from any coercion.
5. Harm to research participants must be avoided.

6. The independence of research must be clear, and any conflicts of interest or partiality must be explicit.

It ends with a useful set of references and a short annotated bibliography of key sources.

Resource Guide 2 concentrates on the processes of securing informed consent and dealing with anonymity and confidentiality. These preoccupations derived from the practices of medical research and have also become central to the practices of social scientists. The guide highlights that adherence to specific ethical policies and codes is of paramount importance, but researching people and their behaviour in natural settings brings a whole host of context specific dilemmas. It provides case study material and accompanying PowerPoint slides to demonstrate how the rights of the participant and the safety of the researcher can be secured by careful planning.

Project Evaluation

The resource guides provide a flexible tool that can be built on and adapted in the future as new evidence and policies are introduced. The guides contain a complete set of teaching materials that have been tried and tested in teaching situations at Leeds Metropolitan University. The case study material is designed to promote discussion among the students and sample handouts provide practical tips to aid student learning.

David Botterill

Understanding Postgraduate Students' Views on Research – From Theory into Practice

Moira Lafferty, *University of Chester*

This project built on knowledge and results from the undergraduate HLST Network funded research conducted in 2005. The study explored how level 7 students' views of research changed over time when following MSc programmes within the Sports Sciences. Three key transitional phases were targeted: the beginning of the course, engagement with the theoretical taught elements of research methods, and experiential learning and practical application of research skills in the thesis/dissertation.

Concept-mapping methodology was used to gather both qualitative and quantitative data. This non-standard approach allowed the research team to determine both individual differences, and explore common themes in students' understanding of research and skill development.

Results highlighted several important factors to consider when reflecting on students' knowledge and understanding of research, and knowledge development and change, at postgraduate level. As students entered level 7 study their views of research were

similar in many ways to the views they held as they were completing their final year dissertation (Lafferty, 2007), suggesting that at this juncture knowledge of research is strongly shaped by their procedural knowledge.

After the research methods taught module had been completed, changes in the complexity and structure of the concept maps indicated that students, at least for a while after the taught module, were able to identify and engage with a more global understanding of research and the inter-relationships between many

of the differing concepts. It appears that during the taught phase students began to identify and inter-link areas of research methodology, leading to the formation of a more detailed and complex schematic representation of research, suggesting that the QAA's aim for the understanding of research methods for postgraduate students was being reached. However, results from those students who were in the process of doing a Master's research project suggest that knowledge is malleable and that when students engage in their own research project, their global view of research narrows and becomes driven by the need for specific procedural knowledge.

Results of the study led to the posing of three critical questions:

How does the end focus, which is on applied procedural knowledge, shape students' future personal view and definition of research?

Do research methods courses actually provide transferable skills, develop a wide knowledge base and hence understanding of research in its global sense?

Do institutions actually really engage in teaching research methods in their true form, or research methods for dissertations?

These questions have formed the basis of much debate and discussion amongst colleagues, both in Sports Science and in other Departments within the University. Based on the results of the study we continue to develop our research methods course and have, to a degree, diversified: placing emphasis on differing research methods throughout other modules, trying to integrate into discussions at all points, both research methods knowledge and alternative approaches, in practical and theoretical situations. One of the drivers for doing this was to reduce the negative notion of research methods being a dry subject and "one that we have to do" and also to retain students broad view of research methods, alternative approaches and differing philosophical stances.

Online Peer and Self-Assessment in the Teaching of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport, Tourism and Events

Peter Lugosi,
*Bournemouth
University*

This project aimed to assist in the testing, evaluation and finalisation of a new version of CASPAR (Computer Assisted Self and Peer Assessment Ratings): an internet-based tool developed to manage the administration and assessment of group work more effectively. The study evaluated the experiences of students using CASPAR in group work and assessment, alongside those of staff using CASPAR in their teaching and in the management of group work. The project provided user feedback to support testing, validation and finalisation of CASPAR V2 and, more broadly, it provided guidance on the effective use of CASPAR in group work and self and peer assessment (SPA).

The project had a number of impacts: firstly, it helped to finalise CASPAR V2, which has since been made available for use by

colleagues around the world. CASPAR is hosted by the Centre for Excellence in Media Practice at Bournemouth University, generating income which can be reinvested in maintaining and developing the system. Secondly, evaluating student and staff experiences helped to identify good practice in developing SPA and the application of CASPAR in its management. Even in cases where staff ceased deploying CASPAR, their experiences of using it helped to develop alternative SPA methods and processes. Finally, the findings of the study led to several publications considering the use of CASPAR specifically and SPA more generally, which can help others make best use of this system or develop alternative methods of SPA (Lugosi, 2009, 2010).

Embedding Research-Based Teaching in the First Year of a Sport Science Course

Nick Sculthorpe, *University of Bedfordshire*

Our project looked at the potential benefits of enabling students to engage in a piece of research as part of their first year programme. Traditionally, the connection between research and teaching is made much later in a student's undergraduate career and while this makes sense in that it is difficult to undertake research until a little knowledge of the area of interest has been acquired, we felt strongly that students would benefit from undertaking a larger scale project early in their time at university. There were a few caveats, the most important being that students had to develop a research question for themselves that was meaningful and within the scope of the skill sets we could reasonably teach them. Thus it was different from the lab write-ups they might have previously encountered, as it was a far longer piece of work and was self-determined. Overall the project was a success, and students' engagement and performance improved because of the work.

In terms of how my practice has changed since the project, my teaching has not changed a great deal. However, that is more a reflection that, as an active researcher, I have always believed that the research process could be used to improve students' attitude and engagement with complex and abstract concepts. Perhaps more telling is that since the project, my institution has undergone a subject review and, as a result, the unit in which the project took place no longer exists and I no longer teach first year students. Nonetheless, the new replacement unit also has several weeks of lab time towards the end of the first year dedicated to students investigating a problem of their own. Therefore, because of the HLST funded project, the staff who took over teaching that year group also considered research-based teaching as an important part of students' first year experience. The fact that the project has endured as part of the first year curriculum beyond the time limits of the original proposal shows how it has affected the practice within our department.

Personalising Student Learning Experiences

Maureen Brookes and Nina Becket, *Oxford Brookes University*

Within education, personalisation is defined as "working in partnership with the learner – to tailor their learning experience in pathways, according to their needs and personal objectives – in a way which delivers success" (DfES, 2006, p. 7). The concept has been widely accepted in schools and further education, but in universities "student engagement" is becoming the preferred descriptor. Regardless of the label, in education the aim of personalisation is to promote personal development through self-realisation, self-enhancement and self-development in the learner. While empirical studies on personalisation are limited, research does suggest that there are both benefits and challenges to personalisation within higher education (HE) in the UK. This study therefore sought to assess the understanding of personalisation, its benefits and challenges, from both academic staff and student perspectives.

The increase, in 2012, in the fee component charged directly to students who are resident in England, and the consequences of fee rises in England for the governments of Scotland and Wales, is likely to heighten the importance of student engagement in HE. The topic of our project has, therefore, become more urgent since we began our work for the HLST Network.

Project Description

A qualitative approach was adopted for the study which comprised two HEIs that offered hospitality, leisure, sport and tourism degrees at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. Separate focus groups were held with academics and students across the range of subjects in both institutions. The focus groups were held to determine current understanding of personalisation within HE, what the potential benefits are and what current challenges or constraints are faced in personalisation initiatives. In total, six focus groups were held, with 21 academics and 24 students. It should be noted that student participants were predominantly studying at undergraduate level.

Understanding of Personalisation

There was a limited degree of familiarity with the term personalisation among both staff and student informants. Academic informants were willing to offer their interpretations of personalisation as a construct, whereas students required more encouragement to offer their opinions.

Academics recognised that personalisation was an important part of their role. However, some felt that it was “something that happens rather than . . . a conscious thing”. At the broadest level, it was suggested that personalisation is a buzzword that captures engagement and student centredness, and therefore “something that we all encounter every day with students”. There was much agreement among informants that personalisation involved tailoring the students’ learning experience to meet their needs and giving students choice in shaping their degree. Hence, the importance of students taking responsibility for, or ownership of, their learning was also recognised.

Staff referred to and interpreted the idea of ultimate or genuine personalisation as empowering students “to design course content as well as delivery”. However, academics generally considered this degree of personalisation to be inappropriate as they viewed themselves as having a key role to play in personalisation. They considered that it was the academics’ job to provide the scaffolding to student learning as they have an understanding of what students need to know. Many respondents felt that content was something academics should keep control of “because we are the experts [but] what we could personalise more is the result of the learning”.

Students also recognised the central role academics played in personalising their learning experiences. Informants commented that personalisation had “to do with one-on-one interaction”, in which someone can “help me make the choices that I need to make that will help me with my future”. Other students felt that personalisation required staff and students to “work together more closely” so that they had an experience that was “not standardised, but tailored to your needs”. In addition, students also reported that they wanted to be known by name. Like academic informants, students also felt that personalised learning should have its limits otherwise it might be spoon feeding.

These interpretations highlight the relevance of relationships between academics and students in personalising student learning experiences. As informants commented, you had to have a rapport with students, get to know them as individuals and understand any baggage attached to students, to help them to make sound choices. Students had a similar perspective. As one student informant suggested, “it makes it nice if you talk a little bit about your personal life and if you know that you can laugh with the person and that is good”. Another added that tutors then “kind of start figuring out what that person is about, what their character is like, because I’m not just another name on a paper”. In contrast, one informant suggested that “if people do not know us, it makes students feel angry, because it is not like school where we have to go. We pay for the privilege”.

Perceived Benefits

Academics and students perceived potential benefits in personalising student learning experiences. Academics identified benefits for students, themselves and their institutions or programmes. However, students reported benefits that related only to themselves.

Academics reported that students were likely to be more motivated through personalisation efforts, and “if they are more motivated, they should be more engaged, and the outcome should be that they get a better degree – possibly”. Furthermore, academics considered that students were more likely to achieve their full potential as a learner and thus be more likely to achieve their career aspirations. As a result, student satisfaction levels are also likely to be enhanced, particularly when “it makes them feel that somebody cares about them, knows who they are, and what they are doing”.

Academics suggested that they were also more likely to be satisfied if they felt they contributed to individual student development. For the same reasons, they felt it to be “embarrassing if someone comes up to you and you don’t know who they are”. From a programme or institutional perspective, academics considered that personalisation initiatives helped them selling the course to prospective students. Additionally, relationships developed with students through personalisation efforts continued; graduates and alumni were more likely to contribute to programmes either through guest lectures, field trips or placement opportunities.

Student informants felt that personalisation helped to bring out the best in people so that it “enhanced your abilities and improves your employability and career progression”. They reported that this was a result of staff who helped identify students’ weaknesses and could better advise them. Students also suggested that the interaction with staff made them feel more comfortable and therefore more motivated to do their best.

Perceived Challenges

As well as the potential benefits, informants identified a number of challenges to personalisation by academics and students. The challenges reported by academics relate to students, academics, resources and systems.

Academics suggested that student attitudes were often a challenge. Informants reported that some students are not interested in personalised learning but rather want academics to “just give me the grade”, an attitude which was exacerbated when students view themselves as customers. Others felt that students needed to engage to achieve the benefits of personalisation and often it was perceived “to be cool to be seen not engaging”.

Academics further reported that some students enter HE without the ability to make informed decisions or handle choice. As a result, for some, “the more personalised it is, the more difficult they find it, because it creates more challenges”. One informant explained further that, “students at the bottom may actively rebel against personalisation”.

Informants suggested it was necessary to break down 'societal barriers', and that students needed to "learn how to work within the HE system as adults" so that they understand "what the product and the experience is" before it can be personalised.

In contrast, other informants considered that students might be lulled into a comfort zone through personalisation initiatives and they might prefer to stick to modules or what they already know in an effort to achieve higher grades. As a result, "actually challenging students to help them to achieve more would then become more difficult".

Academics felt that the sheer size and diversity of student cohorts challenged personalisation efforts. As one informant commented, "when you are teaching big cohorts, they [students] quite easily pass through the net". An inherent danger was perceived to be not working with the most able students, although other informants suggested that "sometimes the students who are capable students, who are motivated, are not well served by the current system". In other words, a disproportionate amount of time was spent with students who required or demanded more support.

Regardless of which type of student benefits the most, one informant commented that "without streaming and polarising people" it was virtually impossible to personalise learning for individual students in the current HE environment.

Staff attitudes were also considered a potential challenge to personalisation. Academic informants reported that some staff "just don't get it . . . why they have to engage with students". In some instances, it is a case of student attitudes and lack of motivation rubbing off on academics, so that lack of motivation or willingness to engage becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. In other cases, it is institutional reward and recognition systems that prioritise research over teaching. Although student satisfaction scores are important, informants suggested that "those who spend too much time with students get penalised". Nonetheless, informants also reported that "much progress in relation to personalisation was a result of the initiatives of individual members of staff", rather than centralised initiatives developed at departmental or institutional level.

Centralised institutional systems and procedures were viewed as an impediment to personalisation as they hampered relationships developed between individual staff and students. As one informant identified, "there are central mechanisms that stop us interacting with them [students] . . . we sometimes find that central services work against us". These systems were reported to impact throughout the student life cycle, from initial student enquiry and application through to alumni engagement. Others felt that personalisation initiatives were often high risk stuff and that current centralised systems often penalise risk taking. One informant suggested that these systems were leading to de-skilled teaching that impacted negatively on personalisation, and therefore there was a need to "re-professionalise" the role of academics within HE.

There were also reported to be resource implications associated with personalisation. Informants suggested that personalisation efforts make for more work and that those options come at a cost. Academics felt that increasingly there were time pressures and they rarely get "the opportunity to talk students and they get an opportunity to talk to me". Physical resources were also seen to be a possible challenge, in particular for space to go and sit privately with a student when required or "physical considerations that restrict access to academic members of staff".

Students suggested that access to academic members of staff was a major challenge to personalisation, particularly in relation to dissertation supervision. As one suggested, "our tutors have got so many commitments outside of university, so it makes it hard to get appointments". Similarly, when it came to part time staff, students felt it hard to build up any sort of relationship.

Students also reported a perception of favouritism when staff and student relationships are built unevenly across departments or programmes. However, they also recognised that this might be partially due to the behaviour of students themselves as "some students aren't as committed . . . so they won't take it seriously". As such, they perhaps are not engaged or willing to build relationships and some students felt that even in the latter stages of their programmes, "some people still aren't pulling their weight". Students suggested there was further resentment when these students who "do not attend formal teaching sessions . . . then take up academic time trying to catch up and/or seek advice".

Project Evaluation

Within our own department, a number of changes have been made as a result of the findings from this project including:

- a Facebook page for students to access before they arrive at university
- new induction procedures to increase the informal interaction between academic staff and students were introduced in September 2010
- extended induction to increase interaction between students and their academic advisors
- creation of a new personal and professional development module that uses academic advisors for support
- a curriculum review process which has enabled the authors to provide staff development activities that re-emphasised the importance of relationship development

Project Conclusion

Personalisation is a topic of concern to staff and students in HE. Staff and students can see both benefits and challenges in achieving personalisation. Benefits relate to the possible motivation and subsequent achievement of students, and beyond this there are also potential benefits to academic staff and the

institution. However, academic staff do have concerns about the extent to which personalisation is desirable or appropriate given the resource constraints in today's HE system. There are examples of good practice that create the opportunity for personalisation of the student experience. For example, induction programmes which facilitate engagement between staff and students, and modules which require personal planning and reflection by students.

Additional Outputs from the Project: Good Practice Guidelines

Despite the numerous challenges to personalisation identified through the study, academic informants were clear that the benefits outweighed these. Both academics and students identified a number of personalisation initiatives that they considered were working within their subject areas:

Academics:

- induction activities, residential and field trips undertaken outside the HEI where informal rapport can be developed and a different type of interaction between academics and students takes place
- personal tutoring systems, run in conjunction with personal development plans or programmes
- plenary sessions across year groups which facilitate two-way communication
- staff open door policies, although the implications of this on staff time were also recognised
- student choice in personal tutors and dissertation tutors
- independent study modules and dissertations

- personal response systems in large classes
- swipe cards to monitor attendance, and having students take some ownership of that and be accountable
- the adoption of personalisation in academic performance feedback, using audio feedback for example, to increase student satisfaction around this issue

Students:

- Facebook pages for "freshers" that can be accessed prior to actually arriving at university to start to get to know other students
- being able to draw on their own experiences within formal learning activities
- having relationships with academics as personal tutors who know your name and your strengths and weaknesses and are committed and available
- work placements and relationships with visiting tutors
- volunteering opportunities, although not all of these were considered to be worthwhile
- equality of opportunity with equal access to tutors and to other learning resources such as e-books
- access to VLE and on-line resources only to students who attend lectures
- field trips and other extra-curricular activities
- plenary year group sessions, when conducted appropriately
- practical sessions in the first year (sports students)

David Botterill

Entrepreneurial Skills and Sport Enterprises and the Impact of Social Interaction amongst Sport Graduates Learning Experience in Enterprise Education

Karen Bill, *University of Wolverhampton*

"You're fired!" The sound-bite strap line of the popular BBC series, *The Apprentice*, presented by Lord Alan Sugar has captured, for television, what many universities are trying to promote in their enterprise education initiatives. In the BBC programme, a group of aspiring entrepreneurs are put through a series of tests of their ability. After each round, a candidate is fired until just one candidate is selected to be apprenticed to Lord Sugar in one of his enterprises. The content of this

popular programme is dominated by the social interaction between the participants as they tackle the week's challenge, before the drama of a boardroom evaluation of their individual performances by Lord Sugar and his fellow expert judges, and the final "you're fired" moment.

In this project, we put our own more studied and sporting twist on enterprise education. The research was facilitated

around the first ever three-day National Council for Graduate Entrepreneurship (NCGE) Flying Start Sport Business Enterprise Intensive Programme held in June 2009. Flying Start is a national programme dedicated to getting student and graduate businesses off the ground. Building on the Flying Start initiative, I was interested to evaluate its effectiveness and assess the importance of social interaction in maintaining students' affections for entrepreneurial activity. Not confined to the rigours of television scheduling, I also followed the fortunes of budding entrepreneurs over an 8 month period using video-diary techniques.

Project Description

The project had the following aims:

- evaluation of the programme to explore the perceived effectiveness of an intensive three-day business enterprise event in terms of developing students' entrepreneurial competencies
- exploration of the nature of social interaction and the extent to which it influences students' affection for the learning activity
- use of case studies/video diaries to understand more about the nature of sport businesses
- an understanding of the important factors related to the development of sport enterprises as perceived by the students, through the qualitative analysis of the case-study material

Graduates attending the three-day programme, representing over 18 different UK universities, were given the opportunity to be involved in the research project, subject to appropriate informed consent. Twenty students completed the initial questionnaires, a 53-item instrument, both pre- and post-event, regarding their perceived level of entrepreneurial competences (adapted from Man et al., 2008) and measuring ten competency areas (see Iredale, 2002). After the event they were also administered with a four-item questionnaire on Affection on Enterprise Activity (Chin et al., 2004) to measure their interest in learning, and an Adult Classroom Environment Scale (ACES) seven-item instrument (Darkenwald & Valentine, 1986) to gauge affiliation with the tutors.

Quantitative analysis was undertaken using an independent sample t-test and analysis on the entrepreneurial competences to see if there were any significant changes in their development, in terms of the correlation between social interaction variables and the students' affinity with enterprise learning.

Five students took part in further qualitative research, involving the capture of case studies and video footage using video diaries on a monthly basis, to record their experiences in relation to the development of their sport enterprise. The sports businesses consisted of:

- a personal fitness training company
- a travel company specialising in university student outdoor sports holidays
- a patented camera for cyclists
- a sports technology based website

All students were provided with a flip camera. At the end of the 8 months, the students were given a written case study of their business, based on video diary information, and were asked to review it for accuracy and make amendments where they so wished.

Project Conclusion

Although the sample size of the follow-up survey was rather small, it is still possible to note the sharp downward trend in the rating across all ten competency areas in the follow-up survey, as compared with the post-test, which was conducted immediately after Flying Start. In one sense, the possible impact of Flying Start on the participants' competences is not sustainable. A possible explanation is that if there are no measures for supporting the transfer of learning through further practice, the participants' competences cannot be retained in the long term.

On the other hand, it was also noted that the follow-up rating on the Affection of Enterprise Activity was comparable to that in the post-test, even though the follow-up survey was conducted several months after Flying Start. Such findings seem to be supportive of the long-lasting effect of an enterprise activity like Flying Start, which is characterised by its experiential interactive nature.

However, it must be acknowledged that due to the limited sample size the ability for conducting t-tests and correlation analysis on the follow-up sample was curtailed.

In terms of social interaction with Flying Start team members, one can observe that the ratings in the follow-up survey tended to be rather low when compared with the post-test results. Therefore, it seems that more interaction takes place just after the event, but as time moves on there is a drop-off in interaction.

Project Evaluation

The most significant contribution of the project has been to provide learning resources on entrepreneurship that are specifically contextualised to sport. There is an abundant supply of generic learning materials on entrepreneurship, but students need examples that are meaningful and closely related to their study programmes. Of particular value were the case studies and video diary resources. These can be used in a number of ways. Firstly, in line with the growing consensus across Europe that entrepreneurship education must "foster entrepreneurial mindsets" (European Commission, 2008); and the recognition that students need to clearly empathise with, understand and "feel" the life-world of the entrepreneur; these video diaries

provide an opportunity to gain some appreciation of how the graduate sport entrepreneurs deal with uncertainty and pressure, learning by doing, problem solving, etc, as their businesses unfold. Secondly, the video diaries can be analysed in relation to the business start-up process and life-cycle of a product/service in identifying stages, such as ideation, concept development, product/service design, launch and consumption, as the graduates make their journey.

The case studies and video diaries are also to be reviewed as electronic resources and provide useful teaching resources, illustrating important factors relating to the development of these sport enterprises. The video diaries capture natural footage over the year of the sport graduates' perceptions of how their businesses are developing, creating scope to use the video diary resources creatively. For instance, each sport business provides an initial business pitch which can be used to support, develop and facilitate discussion around the new business ideas, as well as preparation, for example, for pitches for either assessment purposes and or business competitions.

Additional Outputs from the Project

This project provides access to the instruments used for gathering data in this project: the 53-item entrepreneurial competences instrument, four-item questionnaire on Affection on Enterprise Activity and the seven-item Adult Classroom Environment Scale (ACES) instrument. The project video diaries have also provided me with raw data for my professional doctorate work. It was expected that the content of the diaries would stress the operational and functional challenges of new business development. While these did feature, additional analysis demonstrated that the preoccupations and experiences of the start-up businesses are more likely to be reported in emotional terms. This raised the question of how best to incorporate the emotional into entrepreneurship education and we are now considering what teaching and learning strategies and tools might be adopted in order to understand and develop emotional intelligence, in order to better prepare the students for life as an "apprentice" entrepreneur.

David Botterill

The Student Induction Experience: Evaluating the Residential Contribution

Bill Davies, *University of Wales Institute, Cardiff*

Formal and informal evaluations had made it consistently apparent that outdoor activity-based residential for Year 1 students on the undergraduate programme in Cardiff School of Sport contributed effectively to the processes induction, introduction to study and transition to university.

However, it was apparent that the positive effects of the residential could be further enhanced if key elements could be identified and systematically analysed in more depth and detail, to improve focus and enable further development of the course. This project aimed to evaluate processes and develop guidelines for the use of a visual ethnography approach as a means of better understanding this student experience, and guiding development of this and similar programmes in the induction process

All student groups undertaking the residential were provided with a rationale for the photo project, a camera and some guidelines regarding the process of the collection of images, as well as a consent form and an opportunity to ask for further information. Following the residential, the photos were collated and content broadly analysed to give an indication of the pattern of activities and elements represented by the images. Students were invited to focus groups to discuss their images and reflect on their residential experience.

As a result of the information collected from and discussed with students, some major changes have been made to the content, organisation and pre-module information. Student joining packs contain general information but also clearly highlight additional detail relating to the residential. The final day's main activity has been significantly amended and a number of organisational "pinch points" have been identified and, it is hoped, ameliorated.

Students received feedback on the photo project by means of a page on the module website under headings "things you liked", "things you didn't like" and "changes we have made for next year". It is anticipated that this closing of the loop will enhance student engagement in providing feedback and more considered course evaluations

Dissemination within the school has resulted in greater awareness of the potential of image-based approaches within a teaching and learning context. For example, following discussion, other practice-based module leaders have reviewed their courses, and are considering the possibility of incorporating aspects of student-led

photography into them, perhaps as part of peer formative assessment. The School of Sport has now also set up two PhD projects using video and photographic methodologies as a means of recording student views and perceptions of their development of professional identities.

The use of student-led photo-based evaluation of learning experiences has considerable potential for engaging students, and providing a reflective depth and richness to their observations

and feedback. However, where there are large numbers involved or where the experience is a linear and intensive one, with little time for review or recapitulation, photo evaluation can lead to patchy student involvement and a certain potential for frustration as lost opportunities are identified. It does seem that the production of an image-based rich evaluative response, even though it may be partial in coverage, outweighs the potential for neutral and negative outcomes.

The Tourism Students' Virtual Conference at Lincoln and Wolverhampton

Heather Hughes, *University of Lincoln*

Final-year tourism students at the University of Lincoln have been participating in a virtual conference live on the Web for some years. Their participation has formed part of the assessment for the Social and Political Perspectives in Tourism module, and stretches both their generic skills and subject understanding just a little further as they come to the end of their undergraduate careers.

The subject matter of the module lends itself perfectly to a conference. Just as the purpose of a conference is to disseminate and discuss new ideas and research, and to reflect on the way in which knowledge is currently constructed in our subject areas, so this module deals with contemporary debates and discussions, sometimes venturing into quite new territory, about issues such as race and access to tourism, impacts of the new security environment on tourism patterns, risk-taking in tourism, and whether holidays ought to be a basic human right. It is therefore a perfect vehicle for modelling a research experience for students.

Though it is not a requirement of the assessment task, students are encouraged to undertake a small amount of primary research for their conference contributions. Judging by the number who have responded positively, this has been one of the attractions of the entire experience. Initially developed with a Teacher Fellow grant in 2004/5, the virtual conference was taken an exciting step further in 2009/10 with this grant from the HLST Network. This welcome resource enabled the teaching team to do two very exciting things. The website was redeveloped to incorporate a new design, new features such as links to Twitter and Facebook, informal discussion areas and enhanced search facilities. Then, we were able to convene the conference across two campuses, as Wolverhampton tourism students on The Changing Face of Tourism Management Year 3 module participated for the first time, with their peers from Lincoln.

This made excellent use of the idea of the virtual conference, allowing a level of interaction and flow of ideas, not possible before, between participants who do not know each other personally. Our teaching and assessment practice has been enormously enriched through the development of the virtual conference. Our external examiners have been enthusiastic too, and want to know when their students can be included!

The impact on students has been equally great. Student feedback has been warm and positive, with some students taking the time to send long considered emails to staff, reflecting on the experience and offering suggestions for the future. The positive attitude can also be seen in the really wonderful topics that students have chosen to research: from the influence of Web 2.0 social networks on destination choice and new directions in accessible tourism, to the travel patterns of second-generation Turkish families in Germany, and the complex relationships involved in 'roots' tourism at Ghanaian slave forts.

I am very grateful to our web designers, Gareth Moore and Steven Hill, who began work on the conference site as their final undergraduate Web design project at Lincoln and are still with us for a couple of months each year, even though pursuing their own busy and demanding careers. This past year, they had extra work to do, as the server on which the site resides had been hacked: such are the hazards of innovative forms of assessment! Sine Heitmann (in 2009/10), and more recently Peter Robinson (Head of Department), formed the vital link at Wolverhampton in extending the conference there. It is our hope that we can expand to more campuses in the UK and who knows, even beyond. Furthermore, we will ensure that in future years students themselves will help to shape the appearance and content of the site, as well as the direction in which the virtual conference develops (www.tsvc.lincoln.ac.uk).

Learning Leaps: Making the Transition from Foundation Degree to BA/BSc Top-Up in HLST Subjects

Catherine McConnell,
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Last year I felt that we were second tier students to the rest of the University . . . it's quite annoying to be classified like that, like you're slightly less important because of the fact that you're on a Foundation Degree. (Top-up student)

This article offers an overview of the key points emerging from our research into the transitional issues experienced by students when progressing from Foundation Degree (FD) to Top-up or direct entry into the final year of a BA course. We have both worked in the HE in FE sector for a number of years and have observed a number of students over a range of disciplines, who struggle with academic progression from FD onwards. This project afforded us the opportunity to formalise our earlier observations and investigate the students' experiences of transition, from both an academic and personal perspective.

The broad aims of the project were to identify ways in which FD students can be encouraged to engage with theory and practice, to clarify the processes these students go through to make "learning leaps", and identify any barriers or challenges to these, from both social and academic perspectives.

In order to complete the project we engaged with student groups from two key HLST areas – Sport Coaching and Development, and Service Management – through separate focus groups and interviews, to capture student voices talking about their experiences of making the academic transition to the top-up year at the University of Brighton. We also made contact with academic course teams through the use of a questionnaire for the Service Management programmes, and through a semi-structured interview with the Course Leader for Sport Coaching and Development Top-up, to elicit their understanding and expectation of the academic leap that is required of students.

Additionally, we embarked on a literature search, bringing together a range of articles on the topic of FD student transitions, as well as others on threshold concepts (Meyer & Land, 2006; Land, Meyer & Smith, 2008), learning leaps (Wisker et al., 2006), theory into practice, and student motivation and engagement.

Project Description

Data collation and analysis techniques varied among the two participant groups due to the individual involvement

each project researcher had with the students and course areas. For example, Rachael Carden, a teacher-practitioner researcher, carried out the data collation with the Service Management students and staff, and carried out extensive analysis using a content analysis approach to reduce the data and find key themes. In contrast Catherine McConnell, a third-party researcher, arranged focus groups and interviews with the Sports Coaching staff and students, which resulted in a more action research approach. The data collated was transcribed and audio analysed by key staff involved in the Sport Coaching and Development Top-up degree, and a peer learning intervention suggested by a student was piloted alongside the project.

Of the 25 students invited by email to participate in the study in October 2009, nine agreed to take part in the first data collection session, and further investigation took place with four self-selecting students from the original group. Seven lecturers from the second year of the FD programme at a partner college were also invited to participate in order to investigate staff perceptions of the difficulties that these students currently face. A further seven final year lecturers at the School of Service Management, University of Brighton, informed the study about their perceptions of the students' "threshold crossing" (Meyer & Land, 2006) in the final year.

During November 2009 and May 2010, third-year lecturers at the School of Service Management were invited to complete a questionnaire based around the concept of threshold crossing at level 6. The underpinning question themes were based on those used on the QAA and SEEC level benchmark statements, to investigate staff perceptions of students' progression and learning leaps.

In May 2010, individual interviews were held with four of the original focus group students to find out if their expectations had matched their actual experiences and investigate their understanding of the threshold concepts that had been identified by their third-year lecturers. In order to make the study more reliable, and therefore more valid, an attempt was made to triangulate the data collection through further distribution of the questionnaire among FD lecturers, and interviews with two students on the third-year programme who had not progressed from FD route but had undertaken the BA (Hons) course from the outset. The format of the questions asked was identical to those used with the progressing FD students.

Between October and December 2009, a parallel project was initiated with the Top-up Sports Coaching and Development students involving a small peer mentoring scheme led by a Top-up graduate. She held one-hour weekly sessions to support the students in their transition to university. The graduate mentor was trained in the areas identified by this research project, in institutional orientation, linking theory to practice, critical thinking, and independent study. Seven timetabled sessions were held for the Top-up students, enabling them to ask questions, offer reassurance in terms of placement ideas and offer signposting to university advice and guidance services.

In December 2009, a follow-up focus group with nine students who had attended these sessions, as well as an in-depth interview with the peer mentor, helped to determine the suitability and effectiveness of the sessions. Interviews were also held with the Top-up Course Leader and the FD Course Leader at the partner college delivering the FdA (Foundation degree in Arts) Sports Coaching and Development.

A further focus group was set up with seven FdA Sport Coaching and Development students studying at a partner college in June 2010, which followed an informal format and was video recorded with the consent of the students.

As a result of the success of the aforementioned peer mentoring scheme, another initiative was established in June 2010. A peer-led mentoring session, held at the University of Brighton, was run by three Top-up students to guide FD students. The session took place on a scheduled day when final year BA Students were presenting at a dissemination event (the "Chelsea Exhibition").

Focus groups and interviews were recorded and transcribed in order for the data to be coded and analysed effectively. Participants signed consent forms prior to being recorded to ensure ethical standards were adhered to. Both study approaches conformed to the Tier 3 University of Brighton Ethics Policy. All students and lecturers were made aware of issues around confidentiality, anonymity and ability to withdraw from the study at any time.

Results for Service Management

The nine Service Management Foundation Degree (FdA) students who completed questionnaires and attended the group interview, in November 2009, indicated that they had many areas of concern about crossing from level 5 to 6 during the academic year 2009/10. Most marked amongst the students was the expectation that the level of academic work would be much more challenging than in their previous year. Furthermore, when comparing themselves to the existing students the FdAs were uncertain as to whether they had the academic skills or subject knowledge for this level of study. Additionally, two key emerging themes – mutual comprehension of meta-language and the use of the dissertation as a measure of threshold crossing – were identified as areas for future research.

The six third-year service management lecturers (L3s) who chose to participate in this study were asked to choose which of the SEEC (2010) benchmark skills they saw as most key to the successful progression from level 5 to level 6. From the cognitive skills listed – analysis, synthesis, evaluation, application, group working, learning resources, self evaluation, information management, autonomy, communications, problem solving, application of skills, autonomy in skills use – analysis and synthesis were identified by 83% as key, and evaluation was identified by 67% as indicative of threshold crossing. The ability to work autonomously was also seen as a key transferable skill by 67% of the third-year lecturers.

There were marked differences in the anticipated skills identified as threshold concepts by the FD lecturers and the experienced results of the third-year lecturers (L3s). FD lecturers saw analysis and synthesis as less key to threshold crossing than L3s (analysis: FD – 70%, L3s – 83%; synthesis: 57% – L2s, L3s – 83%). Furthermore, 57% of FD lecturers predicted that the ability to work autonomously would be key to threshold crossing, compared with 67% of L3s. Of the L3s, 67% stated that this autonomous working was more challenging for FdA students than existing students in their third-year. This could indicate that the FD lecturers did not perceive autonomous working to be as important as L3s to successful achievement at level 6. However, the opposite trend was true for evaluation. All FD lecturers saw evaluation as vital to threshold crossing, compared with 67% of L3s. Therefore, FD lecturers appeared to be over-estimating the importance of the skill of evaluation for third-year success compared with the perceptions of L3s.

Is There a Shared Understanding of What Analysis is?

Any confusion between lecturers and students over what constitutes "good" analysis could have a significant impact on learners' achievement. Two of the FdA students highlighted this difficulty, with one explaining:

Exactly, again I don't quite know about this analysis thing. I've kind of got a broad "analysis" – would you categorise my "analysis" as the same as your "analysis"? Are we thinking the same thing, different things, would there be a cross over or what? There again the tutor that's marking it, would they say that my analysis is good or...?

Within the School of Service Management delivering the third-year Top-up, and partner college delivering the FD, discussions about assessment criteria should include an attempt to

reach a shared understanding about what good analysis actually is. When third-year lecturers were asked if there was a common understanding both between themselves and the students of the exact definitions of analysis, evaluation and synthesis, all lecturers agreed that the definitions would vary quite widely.

In November 2009, all nine FdA students anticipated that they would have to work more independently in their final year than on the FdA course. Five third-year lecturers stated that autonomous working was problematic for FdA learners who were, generally, less able to work independently than existing students.

In May 2010, the FdAs stated that they had indeed found autonomous working problematic. However, they did acknowledge that the ability to work with limited supervision and guidance was a necessary marker for this level of study. There appeared to be a considerable difference in the preparedness for autonomous working between the university students and FdA students. A gradual lessening of tutorial support in the second year of the BA programme had prepared existing students to work independently in their final year. However, FdA students found the changes in both the amount and form of guidance given by tutors at the partner college in Year 2, and at the university in Year 3, problematic.

In summary, the troublesome factors for the FdA students progressing from level 2 to level 3, identified by students and staff, were found to include the following:

- meta-language – the inexplicit use of academic language
- preparedness for writing the dissertation
- ability to analyse and synthesise information
- confidence to work autonomously
- ability to analyse and synthesise information
- confidence to work autonomously
- mismatched expectations of tutorial support available

Results for Sports Coaching and Development

The outcomes of the research conducted with the Sports Coaching and Development Top-up students' focused on the transitional issues that the students were most worried about before arriving on Top-up, and also on the effects of the peer mentoring scheme on their transition. The data was qualitative in nature and not a large enough sample to be generalised, but themes have been drawn from the transcripts in order to highlight the key issues these students felt were important to them personally.

Themes emerging from the focus group with Top-up students at the end of their first term, relating to transition:

- student(s) had felt that achieving the Top-up would be “out of reach”
- prioritising and multi-tasking the workload
- concerns about the amount of academic reading required
- academic conventions, such as referencing (meta-language)
- orientation to university and “fitting in” (identity)

Themes emerging from the focus group with Top-up students at the end of their first term, relating to peer mentoring:

- students would value lecturer endorsement and input into the structure and content of mentoring sessions
- mentor sessions should not be an afterthought – should be embedded within the timetable, preferably between core lectures and seminars
- mentor sessions should not be held in a traditional ‘classroom’ setting – the environment needs to acknowledge everyone as equals with no clear position of authority
- helped the Top-up cohort to interact and bond as a group

Similarly to the findings from the Service Management research, the expectations of tutorial support available also featured amongst the Sports Coaching and Development Top-up students:

A lot of us have noticed . . . You're not being mollycoddled any more; you've got to get on with it.

At [college] they had more time to support you with any help you needed or tutorials and I think here that they don't support you enough, I don't think.

The leap in terms of progression was also a topic raised by students, particularly in terms of the preparation and required prior learning experience necessary to succeed in many third-year modules:

I don't know why they offer that module to us because for me we haven't got any sort of foundation . . . I don't understand half the time what the abbreviations are . . .

The students were also aware that they would not receive any formal feedback on assessed work in the Top-up year before the semester break in February:

Your first assignment of the year is in January and I just think to myself “I'll just do it in a couple of weeks”. A couple of weeks beforehand I'll start it then, because that's the way we did it at college.

I think if it was encouraged to give a bit of work in just to see what your writing style is like . . . just to give you a bit of . . . so you know what to expect and what sort of levels they're looking for.

In summary, the key issues identified with the Sport Coaching and Development Top-up students seem to concur with the findings drawn from the research with the Service Management students, particularly in the following areas:

- experience of one-to-one support available is markedly less than experienced at their partner college when students enter the university environment
- confidence in their ability to achieve the Top-up degree could be a barrier to learning and working autonomously
- the use of metalanguage (academic language and conventions) acts as a barrier
- their status as FD/ Top-up students was generally felt to be low (their perception)
- the delay in summative feedback until the end of semester one is problematic

Project Conclusion

In conclusion, our research identified a number of issues that students face when making the progression from FD at level two, to Top-up at level three, particularly when the transition involves an institutional change. Some of the issues identified above relate to the students perceived barriers, such as confidence in ability, or their status as FD or Top-up students. However, other issues are actual barriers, such as the persistent use of meta-language within the university environment, which is neither transparent nor made explicit to students, resulting in the mismatch of expectations of both staff and students. More could be done to enable lecturers in both partner colleges and the university to discuss learning outcomes, assessment criterion, curriculum design and level descriptors in order to align the FD course with the requirements for achievement at level three.

Project Evaluation

Colleagues in Brighton offered the following evaluations of the project:

The project identified barriers that might inhibit or challenge the students in progressing to final year study examining factors such as the FE to HE cultural change and the management of student expectations. The outcomes of the project were very helpful and facilitated the development of particular support systems for students before and during the “top-up” year. (Hospitality/FD Leader)

As a direct result of this project a number of alterations were made to both programmes. The Business Research module in the FdA was amended to ensure that students were better prepared to undertake the dissertation in level six. Additional study support sessions were arranged in the first few weeks of level six to smooth the bridge between the institutions. As a direct result of the research, students completing the BA top up achieved significantly better degree classifications than previous cohorts. (Team Leader in Service and Business Management, City College of Brighton and Hove)

Several key areas emerged which were viewed as problematic by FdA first year students. Induction processes were deemed to be overly confusing and overwhelming. As a result of this research, induction processes have been simplified and made more “user friendly”. Accessing learner support was seen to be very confusing; consequently procedures for accessing learner support have been clarified and CCBH FdA student handbooks have been developed containing much clearer information about learning support mechanisms, assessments and so on. (Project author and Lecturer, City College Brighton and Hove).

Additional changes to learning and teaching in Sports Coaching and Development have been implemented inspired, in part, by the project findings:

- a peer mentoring scheme (PASS), led by post-graduate students, has been embedded in the Top-Up course, to support the students make a quicker orientation from FD to Top-Up, in terms of learning academic protocol, language, conduct, referencing, mitigating circumstances procedures, etc
- the peer mentoring scheme (PASS) will run on the FD Sports Coaching and Development from Sept 2011, with a view to recruiting peer leaders from the Top-Up to mentor second year FD students
- FD students are able to choose their final year modules much earlier in the course – in February of the academic year prior to their start in October
- course teams from FD and Top-Up are holding joint meetings to cross-moderate assessments, to check work is appropriated graded
- more dialogue takes place between FD and Top-Up staff, to develop curricula that follow more seamlessly from FD to Top-Up

As the PASS scheme grows, the authors intend to collect retention and achievement data, as PASS in other departments at the University of Brighton has seen improvements in these areas.

David Botterill

Integrating Ethno-drama into a Problem-Based Learning Sports Coaching Module: Making the Everyday Context Come Alive Within the Classroom

Kevin Morgan, Robyn Jones, David Gilbourne, *University of Wales Institute Cardiff,* and **David Llewellyn,** *Liverpool John Moores University*

The drama is still very strong in my mind. I can just picture exactly what went on. It's the impact of interaction, of body language. It's much more about that impact that makes it real to me and in my memory.

Most academics would be very happy if the students leaving their lectures could be heard speaking in these emotive and enthusiastic terms about its content. This quote, from a UWIC coaching science master's level student, came during a follow-up evaluation conducted by the project team after the student had experienced a live performance of ethno-drama. Funded under Round 10, this project encompasses a number of the objectives that lay behind the investment by the HLSTN in pedagogic research. It is a project that has clearly impacted on the student experience of learning, demonstrates research-informed teaching, and promotes collaboration between institutions. Additionally, and somewhat unusually, it involved the staff and students from two different subject networks working together: sports coaching and theatre studies.

Project Description

Ethno-drama represents a recent movement in the field of qualitative enquiry, employing arts-based modes to represent research (Saldana, 2005). It uses participatory and interactive theatre to influence participants and audiences by inviting them to negotiate and construct understanding and meaning in ethnographic performances to effect meaningful change (Mieczakowski & Morgan, 2001). This project aimed to use ethno-drama to bring coaching scenarios into the classroom to enhance an already existing and successful problem-based learning module.

The project objectives were to:

- develop dramatised (acted and filmed) scenarios for use in a problem-based learning sports coaching module
- facilitate the learning of sports coaching students by exploring the multi-layered context through live visual scenarios
- gain an insight into student responses to ethno-drama based scenarios

The first phase of the process, which lasted approximately 3 months, involved the writing and validation of the sports coaching scenes. One of the UWIC tutors took the primary responsibility for writing the scripts, which were based on his own ethnographic research: lived and learned experiences in football, as a player and coach. These scripts were then validated and amended in a series of discussion meetings with the UWIC teaching team.

Two versions of each of the scenes were written, with the second version including a series of soliloquies: extended passages of text spoken by one character to the audience, used to reveal inner thoughts. This gave greater insight into the main characters in each scene for the audience to consider.

The second phase was the rehearsal of the scenes by the LJMU student actors, under the supervision of their University Director and collaboration with one of the UWIC teaching team, who met the Director on several occasions to discuss the scenes.

The third phase was the live performance and filming of the ethno-drama based scenarios during the MSc Sports Coaching module at UWIC by the LJMU drama students. This phase took place during a 3 hour session and involved two performances of each scene, with structured post-performance discussions after each one. The second performances included a series of soliloquies by the main characters, which gave more insight into the issues they were facing in their lives.

Consistent with the PBL process identified earlier (Jones & Turner, 2006), students were then asked to identify areas for private research in the following week in order to inform their solutions to the issues raised. In the subsequent session, students shared their research, refocused on the issues and presented their solutions.

The fourth and final phase involved the use of three semi-structured focus group interviews, each with four participants. Each focus group lasted approximately an hour and was structured around the aims and objectives of the study, with students questioned on the effectiveness and relevance of the ethno-drama approach used and its impact on their learning. The focus groups were recorded and transcribed verbatim,

in order to ensure a complete and accurate record. The interview transcripts were subsequently checked by the research team for confirmation of accuracy and to elicit the meaning of what was expressed (Stake, 1995).

Project Evaluation

Ethno-drama is a means of communicating the emotional and contextual complexities of lived experiences (Gilbourne, 2007). It is a form of theatre that can create entertainingly informative, emotionally evocative, aesthetically sound and intellectually rich experiences for an audience. (Saldana, 2005). The focus group data supported the emotional engagement of the students, illustrated by comments such as, "you could see the emotion that was involved with the situation that you can't pick up from reading". Students also felt that the scenes were effective in developing interaction in the post-performance discussions, which is the primary aim of ethno-drama (Mienczakowski & Morgan, 2001). As one student put it, "it was really good at provoking some kind of response from us, really, really good to get everyone talking about it".

"The 'reality based' mounting of human life onstage is a risky enterprise" (Saldana, 2005, p. 32) and the initial impact, therefore, had to be a realistic one that the coaches in the audience could immediately relate to, depicting true-to-life scenarios (Mienczakowski & Morgan, 2001). In this sense, the ethno-drama scenes were successful and in the words of one of the student coaches:

I found it a lot easier watching the visual to gain the body language they were using rather than reading it off a piece of paper, where you had to imagine it yourself. Here you could see what was actually happening.

This is consistent with Saldana's (2005) suggestion that non-verbal cues reveal much about character and "since ethnography analyses participants in action, there are things to show on stage: descriptive replication with subtexual inferences of the way participants react facially, walk, gesture, pose, dress, vocally inflect and interact with others" (p. 27). All of these aspects were important with respect to the impact of the scenes and the engagement of the audience.

One of the main aims of this project was to facilitate a holistic view of coaching, portraying it as a complex social activity involving a myriad of interacting variables (Jones & Turner, 2006). The achievement of this aim, for some at least, was evident in the following student comment:

It illustrated the holistic side of things. So much of coaching is about the interactions between people at a particular time, the behavioural issues that go on, the roles people play and the power struggles. You can't get the sense of that in written words. In my experience, it happens all the time with parents, with players. So from the visual point of view, it's much more realistic.

The scenes were interlinked and they unfolded as the session progressed, revealing more about the characters through a series of soliloquies in the second performance of each scene. The concern of the tutors was that giving the students more information about the characters in the soliloquies might be unrealistic, since coaches often have to be reflexive and make quick decisions, based on initial reactions and assumptions. However, the student coaches in the main disagreed with this and felt that the unfolding scenes "gave us so much more insight into the individual people" and, therefore, "were an assistance, kind of necessary". As one student commented:

I think we probably had an initial view point from the first scene and then when the soliloquies came along we got a little more depth. It forced us not to let the first impression be the last one. You start thinking - is it really that? So you have a first

impression of a person and then you have to rethink, re-evaluate everything.

The students, therefore, valued the soliloquies and, consistent with the aim of ethno-drama to effect meaningful change (Mienczakowski & Morgan, 2001), changed their perspectives as the scenes unfolded. In the words of one student, "after we saw the soliloquies, almost all of our opinions changed". The general feeling amongst the group, therefore, was that the unfolding nature of the scenes was positive: "I really liked them, I thought they gave you a little bit more depth, it gave you far more of an understanding of what's going on in there and it certainly answered a lot of questions". Importantly for the teaching staff, far from considering this to be unrealistic to coaching, students felt that it made it more real:

It was realistic to what coaching is, as you don't get a hundred per cent of the information straight to your face when you deal with it. You have to guess and work it out, you can't jump to a conclusion regarding a character or player or fellow coach, you have to do some research to try and find out more, so we falsely made a couple of assumptions with the coach at the start and with more information it made more sense. It all came together, because if you have coaching problems in any scenario it's unlikely everything's going to be on the table straight away. You're going to have to find out by talking to another player or your fellow coach or someone else to find out that information. You can't make that decision immediately. You start off broadly and then you are making a more informed decision, like you would be in real life.

This was an initial attempt at implementing ethno-drama in a PBL coach education unit and it raised a number of issues for consideration in future projects of this nature. There were some concerns expressed amongst the group about the situational-specific

nature of the football scenes and whether a range of scenarios from different sporting contexts, including team and individual sports, would have been more beneficial for the group as a whole. However, the general feel among the students was that it was more about “picking the stuff out; it could have been anything really”, and that “it’s up to us to recognise it. Even if it wasn’t football, I’d hope I could recognise the same theory, and I’d understand how much impact it would have”. That said, future projects of this nature should consider the sport-specific nature of the scenarios and produce a range of scenes from different sporting contexts. If the audience is made up of coaches from the same sport, make the scenarios sport-specific.

Some of the more interesting and innovative suggestions for future directions to arise from the focus groups were around the issues of student involvement in the script writing and performances, and audience interactions with the actors. In socio-drama (Telesco, 2006), real life situational scenes are developed by the students, based on actual incidents, and set the scene for the audience to interact with the actors, who remain in character. Some of the students in the focus groups felt that being involved in the creation of the characters and scenes would be an effective learning experience. In the words of one student:

The actual learning could take place in the terms of the discussions around how you go about creating that character and why you are going to do it like that. I think that would be a very powerful learning experience for people.

This exercise would be consistent with the informant-led process of ethno-drama as explained by Mieniczakowski and Morgan (2001), in their work with health professionals. The collection and interpretation of data for their critical ethno-drama performances requires the gathering of ethnographic accounts, participant observation and a grounded theory approach. As an innovative future project, a similar process could be adopted in sports coaching using coaches, performers and parents as the informants, to develop the ethnographic scenarios.

In Telesco’s (2006) description of socio-drama, it is the role of the facilitator to “freeze” the scenes from time to time in order to guide discussion between the audience and the actors. During this time the audience members reflect on the scenes, identify the issues and offer solutions for change through interaction with the actors, who remain in role. During this process the facilitator asks specific questions to the actors and the audience. The sorts of questions that the actors are presented with are: how are you feeling right now? and what do you think would make your situation better? In order to answer these questions the actors need to be fully immersed in the characters’ motivation and background, as well as the sub-culture of the context. For the actors this could be a very enlightening experience and is an argument for the student coaches taking on the actor’s roles themselves.

However, when this was suggested to the student coaches in the focus groups there were mixed feelings amongst the group. Some students were understandably anxious about their ability to role play and felt that “if we didn’t get it right then the people observing would not get as much out of it” while others felt that it would be a valuable learning experience for them:

If we were given the script beforehand, and if we were engaged in a lot of theory and discussion about deciding how we were going to go about playing the role in terms of, if someone was actually going to be that coach. If we had the script there and then had to make up our minds about what character he is and in doing that have a discussion and kind of create a stage play for it. Would that not create a very interesting learning experience?

Similarly, there were mixed feelings about students stepping into the scenes and taking on the roles of the central characters and revealing what they would do: “I think the idea is good but you have to have severe amateurs going in front of people who aren’t”. However, this is potentially a very effective learning opportunity, particularly in a group of experienced coaches who are comfortable in sharing their true feelings and stepping into role.

Project Conclusion

The purpose of this project was to explore the use of ethno-drama in coach education and to evaluate its effect on the student learning experience. The results suggest that the approach was successful in producing realistic ethno-drama scenarios, which engaged the students emotionally, and stimulated thought and discussion that informed and changed their perspectives on coaching based issues.

This collaborative venture exemplifies how qualitative researchers, coach educators and theatre artists can effectively serve each other. In the words of Saldana (2005, p. 29):

Scholars in ethnography have much to contribute to those initially educated as artists, and artists well versed in the creative process and products of theatre have much to offer ethnographers”, with both disciplines sharing a “common goal to create a unique, insightful and engaging text about human condition.

The findings of this project suggests that the performance of such engaging texts also has much to offer coach education, by addressing and confronting the issues that coaches encounter in the everyday reality of their job.

Additional Outputs from the Project

During the project, the ethno-dramas were performed live by the student actors in a classroom setting. Theatre production

requires extensive rehearsal time and the team identified that there was a real risk that the energy and resources poured into the performances might be lost. The project incorporated the video recording of both the live performances and the students' discussions, and the project team and HLST Network staff are looking at ways of making this material available. As compelling as the live classroom performances were, the production and direction of video recording was somewhat limited by the constraint of the classroom. Consequently, when the opportunity came to re-record the scenarios, this time using more realistic settings, the project team recognised what a great opportunity it was. Funding was made available under UWIC's Gwlla scheme for embedding technology-enhanced learning across the institution and the scenarios were filmed for a second time, but this time using the playing arenas, physiotherapist suite and boardroom facilities of the UWIC Cyncoed Campus. This resource has meant that the ethno-dramas can be viewed by subsequent cohorts of students as a purpose-made recorded performance. The second recording is also subject to discussion as to how best to make it more widely available.

The project also demonstrates how research-informed teaching can make a significant difference to student learning. The inspiration for the project came from the research activities of several of the project team and its translation into a teaching and learning project was greatly assisted by the HLST Pedagogic Research Fund. A direct research benefit of the project has been the production of an article for publication

in a peer reviewed pedagogy journal, but more imperceptibly the project has had a quite radical impact on other aspects of student learning that, in turn, have enriched the research activity in coaching science. This is evidenced in the increasing number of master's research projects at UWIC that have incorporated qualitative data collection and analysis methods, into the previously quantitative domain of coaching science, since the intervention of the project. The project has generated enthusiasm for, and exploration of, ethnographic and auto-ethnographic writing amongst the UWIC staff and student body, and has resulted in a growing research reputation for UWIC in this area.

David Botterill

The Pedagogic Challenges of Using Film to Enhance Students' Learning in Undergraduate Tourism Programmes

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This project aimed to investigate the pedagogic challenges of using film to enhance student learning in undergraduate tourism programmes at Middlesex University. We had observed, over two years, that students enrolling onto undergraduate tourism programmes mainly perceived the tourism industry through the lenses of the glamour that pervades media advertisements of popular destinations, with minimum, if any, knowledge of the broader impacts of tourism on society.

Film-induced tourism already plays a notable role in promoting or popularising tourist destinations worldwide. However, the role of film in delivering subject-specific pedagogies in tourism, and most importantly in stimulating and enhancing learners' critical abilities to engage with their subject matter, had not been closely examined. This study therefore sought to investigate the pedagogic benefits and challenges of using film to enhance students learning in undergraduate tourism programmes and the findings provide preliminary empirical evidence of this. This should also make it possible to propose best practice that can be disseminated and used by the relevant community of practice.

Online focus group interviews revealed the insights gained into a topic when film is integrated into learning and teaching activities. A summary of the main findings are presented below.

Students were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a range of statements that described the pedagogic benefits of using film in learning and teaching in other subject areas, including two dummy questions. An overwhelming majority of the respondents (37 out of 39) agreed that the use of film in learning and teaching helps students understand difficult topics easily, has the potential to stimulate intellectual debate about the topic, and also helps with relating issues to the real-world context.

It became clear from the responses that the potential to harness the combined power of audio-visualisation or imagery is perceived to be crucial for relating theory with practice, stimulating curiosity among learners, and facilitating the recalling of information long after learning has occurred. The imagery or visualisation of learning through the avenue of film is perceived as providing an opportunity to reflect on how things could be done differently in the future. The findings

highlight particularly that active learning can be encouraged and better supported through the use of audio-visual materials from the popular culture arena.

The use of film in learning and teaching in this study was also closely associated with the potential to provoke critical thinking (challenge previously held views about a topic, places, people) and opportunity to obtain multiple perspectives unconstrained by the tutors' views (biases).

An interesting finding in this study encompasses the notion of emotionality. It was revealed that the emotions provoked in students while watching the films played a significant role in deepening their understanding of the topic under examination. Some participants in the online focus group perceived a relationship between the use of film and learner motivation. They argued that those learners who are less motivated or enthusiastic can be drawn to learn if appropriate films are integrated with their learning and teaching activities.

Similarly, film was perceived to be empowering for tutors, permitting them to deliver effectively those aspects on which

they lacked practical experience, as well as steering clear of boring their students with conventional delivery methods. Popular culture materials like documentaries, feature films and television shows, if used effectively, could play a role in facilitating the active learning experience of students.

Three main pedagogic challenges identified were:

- the difficulties of finding thematically relevant film to support learning and teaching
- the importance of ensuring the films shown are of appropriate length, lasting for a maximum of 30 minutes in a 2 hour session, and 10 minutes in a 1 hour session – this was highlighted by the respondents
- the tutor's ability to stimulate and guide class-wide discussions after the film had been shown

It is anticipated that the insights gained in this study will prove to be invaluable in effectively using film to deliver the relevant subject pedagogies.

Creating Conversations that Engage Students with Personal Development Planning

Colin Beard, *Sheffield Hallam University*

How can students be encouraged to talk about a subject if they are not confident, particularly with regard to the required reflective language? Personal and Professional Development aspires to facilitate transitions in student's self-understanding, and actions to promote personal growth and professional development. "Grand!" as the cartoon character Wallace might say, but without a repertoire of phrases and an environment that promotes emotional risk taking, how might these aspirations become a lived reality for students in hospitality, leisure, sport and tourism?

I collaborated with Andrea Tierney and Paula Baines, from Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU), to develop this project. It supported the final stages of the development of an interactive experiential approach that uses playing cards to initiate a reflective conversational journey for personal development planning (PDP).

The aim and objective was to produce an experiential approach to PDP, reflection and action planning, in the form of a set of cards/statements and briefing sheets that can be widely distributed in higher education (HE).

Project Description

The generic playing card experience has been extensively tested in many international cultural contexts with large numbers of people from around the world (Beard, 2010). The card playing experience has been found to facilitate: a self selection of statements; internal solo and group social conversations (social construction); and, increased self awareness about both personal and professional issues.

This specific card experience was designed for PDP in FE and HE following many expressions of interest from HE lecturers in the UK. It was piloted at Sheffield Hallam University, where learning through conversations (dialogue) and the creation of written material (reflective narratives etc) was the primary output: the card "experience" was secondary and merely applied as a facilitation process.

Taking the form of the card game rummy, players select cards in turn to create a hand that depicts their self-characterisation. This is done by discarding cards that are perceived by the player to be character traits that they would reject. A crucial element of the game is that it is played in a relaxed and non-judgemental atmosphere. Players are encouraged to make a note of cards that they were unable to collect, but would have done if they had been available for selection.

Following a meeting with collaborative colleagues at LJMU it was decided that this emerging development of the PDP experience required the creation of a quality structured pedagogic framework that would:

- give careful consideration to the statements and language used: this resulted in 120 random statements which were then refined to 36 statements with a clear pedagogic structure
- allow the cards to be coded (via icons of varying shape and colour) so as to provide a reflective pedagogic structure for student personal and academic development
- construct the experience so as to focus on a positive psychology in the selection of statement cards

As an initial step, we reviewed a wide range of personal development frameworks including LJMU's copyrighted *World of Work (WoW®)* criteria and Graduate Skills. As a result of our research we chose to base our experiential card game statements under the following categories – emotional intelligence, own strengths and weaknesses, personal values, motivation, drive and energy, and transition and transformation.

Development of Self-Awareness Statements for First Year Students PDP Activities

The card game, designed to generate conversations, is specifically aimed at level four students in the first year transition stage of HE. Time was taken to include research, development and testing in order to draft effective self-awareness statements which could facilitate personal development and reflection.

We used a wide range of texts to inspire our thinking (such as Ron Barnett, Daniel Goleman, WoW®), in order to develop a sound pedagogic framework for student evaluation and conversation generation. We encountered the difficulty of use of language, and how it might be interpreted by students engaging with a card game. Words like ontology, transition, and "I never . . ." are illustrative examples. We aimed to develop the statements in a student-friendly language.

The final card statements are both colour and shape coded: colour denotes the subject for discussion; shape denotes the nature of the statement as either positive or developmental.

These specific card statements were tested first with HE staff, then with students in a field setting at LJMU. The testing included extensive conversations and note taking about the actual experience of playing cards and developing conversations. The final statements are as follows:

PDP Conversations Card Game

Here, D denotes a developmental card (square card) and P a positive card (round card), with colour coding is as follows:

Red Cards: Emotional Intelligence

1. I am able to recognise my own feelings (P).
2. I can control my emotions when working with others (P).
3. I am sensitive to the emotions of others (P).
4. I am good at influencing others (P).
5. I am able to stay calm in a crisis (P).
6. I get angry when I feel others are not listening (D).
7. I prefer to work on my own (D).

Orange Cards: Own Strengths and Weaknesses

1. I can identify my own strengths and weaknesses (P).
2. I respond positively to most feedback (P).
3. I often ask, "can I do that better?" (P).
4. I understand the importance of asking for help (P).
5. I rarely reflect on my mistakes (D).
6. I can easily identify my weaknesses (D).

Yellow Cards: Personal Values

1. I have a strong sense of right and wrong (P).
2. I value honesty (P).
3. I am empowered by my beliefs (P).
4. I always try to respect the beliefs of others (P).
5. I rarely compromise my values (D).
6. I can often be single-minded (D).

Green Cards: Motivation

1. I know what motivates me (P).
2. I engage in new tasks with enthusiasm (P).
3. I have a desire to improve and achieve (P).
4. Learning new things excites me (P).
5. I am not very ambitious (D).
6. I get bored easily (D).

Blue Cards: Drive and Energy

1. I naturally have lots of energy and drive (P).
2. I am not afraid to take risks (P).
3. I strive to achieve my goals (P).
4. I know what drives me to succeed (P).
5. I only engage in things that interest me (D).
6. I find it difficult to stay focussed (D).

Purple: Transition and Transformation

1. I have adjusted well to student life (P).
2. I am developing as an independent learner (P).
3. I am excited about my future (P).
4. I am becoming more confident and empowered (P).
5. I am apprehensive about my future (D).
6. I dislike change (D).

These cards were tested in a field setting with a focus group comprising five participants at UJMU and further discussion with participants took place over lunch. The results of the testing were:

1. The game worked effectively with five players, therefore there is a suggested suitability of between four and six players.
2. Six cards were dealt to each player. The remaining pack of cards was placed in the middle of the table and played as described previously. Game progressed as previously suggested. After discussion with the participants the game was re-played, but this time players were encouraged to share with the other participants their reasons for discarding or picking up new cards. This in itself created conversations, with participants articulating to each other their reasoning for keeping or discarding cards.
3. We decided that the facilitator should set a time limit for this, say 15 minutes, to avoid procrastination. The group should place the remaining deck back in its packet so that only the participants' chosen hands of cards remain in play.
4. For Part B of the game, the group decided that a central board was required to focus participant attention. It was agreed that this board should display the six developmental areas. Participants can see where their strengths lie by relating their own hand to the statements on the board. The facilitator then instructs each student in turn to select from their hand what they consider to be their strongest card to create the "ideal student". The facilitator may also suggest that at least one statement should come from each member of the group and represent one of each colour plus

a development card. Each group is asked to share their choices for an ideal student with the rest of the class.

5. The game was played on a number of occasions until we felt the game prompted the sort of conversations that we had originally envisaged. All participants enjoyed taking part and found the card game to be interesting and fun and would recommend using the game with other students.

We noted that although we had decided to make this a strengths-focused game, when playing on the number of occasions that we did, very few developmental cards were revealed. To increase the odds of a developmental card being chosen, and prompt the conversations needed to help a student develop, we added six more developmental cards (one of each area) to the pack.

Game instructions for staff were developed for the card experience:

Aim of the Game

This card game is designed to help students focus on their strengths and developmental needs by creating learning conversations. The aim of the game is for each student to obtain six statement cards which reveal their realised strengths. The statements are focused on six developmental areas – emotional intelligence; own strengths and weaknesses; personal values; motivation; drive and energy; and, transition and transformation.

An additional element to the game requires each group of students to identify an "ideal student". This part of the game allows the students to project their perceived ideals to others rather than revealing individual traits to a larger group.

How to Play the Game

The cards are dealt out with each student having six cards. The remainder of the cards are left face down in the centre of the table with the top card turned over and placed alongside the pack. The first student to start takes a card from either the upturned card or the deck. The student can then choose to either swap one of their dealt cards or keep their original hand. Play continues until the whole pack is used up or after 15 minutes. Students are encouraged to share their reasons with each other as to why they are disregarding or picking up a new card.

Each player then places their hand face up on the table. The group then needs to create an ideal student from the statements they have all chosen in their hands. At least one statement should come from each member of the group and represent one of each colour plus a development card.

Each group is then asked to share thoughts about their choices for an 'ideal student', and then do so possibly with the rest of the class creating conversations to justify reasoning in an informal plenary style.

Evaluation

We recognise that the cards are essentially interactive in nature, and have the capacity to trigger complex conversational learning, learning through narrative creation, and action outcome orientated behaviours. We recognise that more detailed student support material might be used in developing outcome or behavioural written material.

Project Conclusion

The project has enabled the development of a unique and interactive resource which promotes meaningful learning conversations, and can be used as an aid to personal development and reflective practice to support student development.

David Botterill

Development and Assessment of a Transformational Leadership Inventory in Higher Education

Nichola Callow, James Hardy, Lauren Mawn and Calum Arthur, Bangor University

The purpose of this research project was to develop a measure of transformational leadership relevant to the higher education context in order to assess students' perceptions of their lecturers' transformational leadership. Headline results indicated that the Transformational Leadership in Higher Education Questionnaire (TLHEQ) would constitute an appropriate assessment of transformational leadership behaviours in lecturing. It appeared that transformational leadership predicts student-related outcomes such as satisfaction, academic efficacy, intrinsic motivation and academic performance.

Pivotal to the success of this project was the opportunity to employ a research assistant who undertook the day-to-day running of the research, enabling it to be carried out in an efficient, effective and well considered manner. At the end of the project, the research assistant gave a presentation to staff and students in the school about transformational leadership behaviours in higher education. The results from this study have allowed us to develop an intervention study which will take place on the PGCert programme across the University, thus allowing us to communicate the current findings on transformational leadership to future lecturers.

We would like to carry out more research to assess if training in transformational lecturing behaviours at universities could optimise the effectiveness of lecture delivery, resulting in positive student outcomes such as greater engagement, effort satisfaction, achievement and performance.

Internationalising the Sport Curriculum through Blended Learning: Sharing Ideas and Good Practice

Donna de Haan, University of Worcester

This project aimed to increase academic awareness and proficiency in blended learning in relation to internationalising the sport curriculum. The project was designed to audit current examples of internationalisation of the curricula across the Institute of Sport and Exercise Science (ISES), to

identify best practice, and to encourage further engagement from academics across a range of subject areas and levels of undergraduate study. Awareness and understanding of internationalisation of the curricula was assessed, from both student and academic perspectives, at the start and end of an

academic year. The overall aim of the project was to increase engagement and understanding of internationalisation theory across a sport specific institution, and to share the experience and findings with members of the HLST network.

At the time of writing, an audit of current international related projects across ISES had been carried out. Academic staff and students completed a questionnaire designed to assess their understanding of internationalisation – the data analysis is yet to take place and it is intended to make comparison across the data. Two internal staff development sessions were held that

provided further information regarding internationalisation of the curriculum and provided support regarding developing blended learning projects.

Academic staff within the ISES have expressed interest in participating in the project across the following discipline areas: sport coaching; sport development; sociology and comparative studies in sport; physical education. As an example in PE, there will be an investigation into the different perceptions, beliefs and philosophies of undergraduate PE students in the UK and Australia, through the use of blogging.

Thinking Differently about Engagement

This project documents recent institutional curriculum redevelopment at the University of Bedfordshire that has encouraged its educators to think differently about what is meant by engagement for the purposes of teaching and learning. The framework introduced in the Curriculum Review for 2008 (CRe8) – Stimulating Learning (www.beds.ac.uk/bridgescetl/through/cre8) shifted emphasis away from the traditional focus of structure and content of learning activities and programmes, onto the student experience of learning. With increasing diversity in the undergraduate student demographic and the growing complexity of student expectations of university courses, the CRe8 curriculum framework recognises the need to move away from time-on-task conceptualisations of engagement, shifting focus instead onto learner-centred teaching, encouraging students to be purposefully and meaningfully involved in the unfolding of their own learning.

Though the CRe8 curriculum framework encourages staff to explore and use creative modes of teaching and learning, it has also exposed particular issues surrounding student engagement in HE, many of which came to the fore in this project. This not only challenged educators to think differently about what is meant by engagement in teaching and learning but, perhaps more significantly, to seek out new ways of capturing and evaluating such a student-centred approach to curriculum design and delivery. This study documents one such attempt, investigating the use of online personal reflective blogs as a way of capturing authentic, more nuanced representations of the nature and quality of student and staff engagement in learning. Participating staff and students completed periodic personal reflective blogs, recording their thoughts and feelings in relation to their respective sport related undergraduate units. The results of the project led to the following reflections.

An Alternative Definition of Engagement?

Conventional expressions of student engagement rely on concepts and methods depicting engagement as something educators can easily frame, that endures through time, and whose essential qualities can be captured in a single image or set of behaviours. The findings of this study challenge some of these traditional thoughts, re-addressing student engagement as dynamic, emergent, and embedded in personal learning journeys. Indeed, the places to search for such meaningful content appear not to be in the conventional physical descriptors for individual practice (learning outcomes, assessment criteria), though these remain important, but instead in the flow of student learning itself. The CRe8 curriculum framework encourages University of Bedfordshire teaching staff to move beyond extant and separated institutional policy, and discrete initiatives for student engagement. It has been found to articulate a

Sam Elkington, University of Bedfordshire

guiding framework for holistic curriculum design such that educators might realise the significance of embracing a learner-centred pedagogy.

Shifting Definitions Need New Ways of Capturing Engagement?

With a shifting conceptualisation of engagement comes the need for new ways of capturing and understanding what it means to be engaged for the purposes of learning. This study presents evidence to suggest that making time for structured reflection and feedback is central to this process, as reflection is the activity which links the personal with the learning (Brockbank & McGill, 2003).

The introduction of the CRe8 curriculum framework has shifted emphasis away from the conventional focus of structure and content of learning activities and programmes, onto the student experience of learning and a curriculum which moves beyond traditional transmissive modes of teaching and time-on-task conceptualisations of engagement. Focus is shifted instead onto the personal (the cognitive, motivational, and emotional) processes that foster the kind of independent self-regulatory learning likely to prepare students for life beyond university. Such a shift has not only challenged educators to think differently about

what is meant by engagement in teaching and learning but, perhaps more significantly, to seek out new ways of capturing and evaluating such a student-centred approach to curriculum

design and delivery; a timely advancement in the fast changing context of higher education teaching wherein issues of vocationalism and professional accountability abound.

Motivational Vulnerability in First Year Undergraduates: A Self-Determination Perspective

Andrew P Hill, *York St John University*

Over 100,000 full-time and part-time undergraduates do not complete the first year of their degree programme, and drop-out rates amongst a large number of UK universities are increasing (National Audit Office, 2007). It is possible that this trend is symptomatic of a wider motivational problem among a significant minority of students. As these students often lack the necessary study skills to adjust quickly to university, they can develop a sense of helplessness and incompetence that leads to motivational disengagement, performance difficulties and, eventually, dropout. Research suggests that self-determination theory (Deci et al., 1991) can be used to explain patterns of motivation and adjustment in students.

This project recruited a sample of first year sport-related undergraduate students during the first week of the academic year 2010/2011 and asked them to complete a short questionnaire on four occasions across the academic year. The questionnaires included psychometric instruments that assess motivational regulation, as well as measures of satisfaction with student experience, perceived academic competence, anxiety associated with attendance, and enjoyment and

boredom associated with studying on their degree programme. Following the completion of the academic year, measures of performance (overall first year grade) and objective measures of engagement (first year attendance and use of on-line support system) were calculated. Finally, based on students' responses to the motivational regulation, groups were identified and compared in terms of measures taken across the year.

At the time of writing, it is too early to assess the impact of the project on current practice within the department or externally. However, a report of the findings will be circulated to staff within the subject area, and will contribute to a review of module planning for the academic year 2011/2012 aimed at enhancing the experience of first year students and increasing retention. In addition, the project and its findings will be integrated into the current post-graduate certificate in education offered to new academic members of staff and York St John University (academic year 2011/2012), and included in a British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences (BASES) "Signature Pedagogies" workshop.

Embedding Reflective Processes into Undergraduate Curricula for Sport and Exercise Science Students

Ian Mitchell and Richard Tong, *University of Wales Institute, Cardiff, and Emily Oliver*, *Aberystwyth University*

Project Overview

Undergraduate Sport and Exercise Science (SES) programmes provide the opportunity for students to develop transferable skills that are relevant to future employers. Indeed, students are encouraged to adopt a proactive approach to develop skills that demonstrate increasing capacity for reflective practice, independent learning

and critical thinking. The learning that is evident from this is particularly important when a framework for articulation and reflection is identified. An awareness of reflective processes is therefore seen as underpinning the development of active and autonomous learners, which in turn can enhance the currency of SES students for employability purposes.

This collaborated project examined the reflective practice of SES students within the Cardiff School of Sport (UWIC) and the Department of Sport and Exercise Science (Aberystwyth University). The aim of the project was to determine the level and depth of current reflective practice of SES students and to explore the effects of embedding reflective processes into both programmes. As a result of this project, it was evident

that students experienced a greater understanding of how to engage in reflective processes. Staff members were able to identify opportunities and areas to enhance or modify provision in relation to the respective programmes. The project expands on current teaching strategies that develop critically reflective students and enhance professional development opportunities.

A collaborative partnership was explicitly sought as it enabled comparison of current practice across institutions and also maximised opportunities to embed different ideas into taught curricula. Furthermore, the range of experiences of project team members contributed to developing an in-depth understanding of reflective practice of SES students, and they now have the potential to disseminate examples of good practice when and wherever appropriate.

Students enjoyed the opportunity to reflect in small groups, and felt that this format gave them more triggers to reflect and useful learning points than if they had done this by themselves. Students' perceived understanding of the reflective process was still rather weak. This perhaps reflects that they do not receive any formal theoretical training in reflective practice as part of their course up to this point. As such, students seemed to greatly benefit from the group environment in which reflection was conducted. Further, students reported not engaging in a great deal of reflection while on their own and outside of the reflective session, although reflection was prevalent when preparing for their assessments. It is possible that more structured guidance sheets for out-of-class reflection could be provided to facilitate this in future years.

Key Points from Discussing and Comparing UWIC and Aberystwyth Departmental Analyses:

1. Both groups of students found that modules were beneficial in developing their understanding of reflective practice theory and related processes.
2. Seminar-based, and particularly smaller group numbers, provided opportunity for dialogue that further developed understanding of reflective practice and processes in both student groups.
3. It is evident that students at UWIC have been introduced to reflective practice at an earlier stage, albeit introductory in nature, and as a result portray a more in-depth understanding of reflective theory that proved beneficial in applied settings.

4. Applied experiences seem to be perceived by students as beneficial for the development of reflective practice and processes. However, more opportunities should be provided in order for students to understand the differences between, and benefits of reflection on and in action.
5. Students conveyed the currency of an embedded reflective structure within final year modules, in particular when developing a skill set that has vocational relevance.

As a result of debriefing meetings between the two departments, it was highlighted that identification of good practice from both departments should be disseminated appropriately and ongoing collaboration between both departments both in relation to student and staff development encouraged.

What we learned from the student perspective:

- students respond very well to limited structural reflection over an extended period of time
- students benefit from an in-depth understanding of reflective theory and need action planning to link experiences to learning and professional development
- reflective practice and processes need to be integrated at an early stage of curriculum development to allow students the opportunity to apply and refine skills associated with competence in professional settings
- small group reflections are perceived as more useful than individual reflection – there is a need to emphasise the importance of reflective dialogue
- safe conditions and environment (e.g., regarding anonymity, trust, etc) should be considered and set up before group discussions can occur freely

What we learned from a staff perspective:

- reflective sessions can be enjoyable to teach, but difficult to initially get students engaged
- alternative teaching strategies that provide variety and enhance engagement should be discussed
- skills of non-specialist staff that advise on reflection should be enhanced – best practice should be shared across other disciplines in order for students to become aware of reflective processes in discipline-specific situations
- in relation to assessment, sufficient guidance and examples of best practice when writing reflectively should be provided
- marking criteria need to be more sensitive to reflective portfolios when considering reflective writing and more guidance is needed within this area

Sports Ethics Resources Project (SERP)

Grace Robinson, University of Leeds, and colleagues from Leeds Metropolitan University, UWIC and University of Gloucestershire

This project set out to enhance existing work to meet an identified pedagogic need: to equip tutors to facilitate the effective teaching and learning of ethical thinking and decision-making within sport-related degree programmes, and help students develop the intellectual skills to identify, analyse and respond effectively to ethical issues as they arise in their personal and professional lives.

The work involved the development of easy-to-use resources, based on tried and tested teaching sessions, authored by experienced academics in UK HEIs, some of whom are nationally or internationally renowned in the field of sports ethics.

The resources focused on content, process and to a lesser extent assessment:

- content – sports ethics themes such as cheating, drugs, racism, violence and aggression, coaching children, moral development, ethics in the outdoors, and research ethics
- process – pedagogic approaches linked to the themes
- assessment – examples of aligned forms of formative and summative assessment

The teaching resources produced include lecture, seminar and workshop materials; case studies and scenarios; guidance notes for tutors; student activities; and literature sources. Pedagogies are reflected in suggested methods of delivery and student-centred activities. Assessment examples are aligned to content and process.

This project funding enhanced existing work by consolidating, and making available, current work-in-progress; expanding the resources by maximising the expertise of the recently established Sports Ethics special interest group; and extending this network of practitioners to European partners. It was also hoped that the

project funding would enhance work by providing resources to undertake an evaluation of the use of these resources by several higher education institutions. This has not been possible during the timeframe of this project but the possibility will be pursued during the next stage of development.

Summary of Key Achievements

During the course of this project we collated 25 distinct teaching resources across 11 areas of contemporary ethical debate including the ethics of performance enhancing drugs and new technologies; racism in sport; the ethics of violence and aggression; research ethics and academic integrity; moral character and sport; and, the ethics of teams and teamwork.

To date, 18 academics from the UK and Europe have contributed to the resource by sharing their materials or by taking part in the peer review.

All resources have been published on the Inter-Disciplinary Ethics Applied (IDEA CETL) Resources Database (www.idearesources.leeds.ac.uk/Default.aspx?id=20) and sample materials have been made available free of charge. These have been publicised via an email shot, our website, a posting on the British Philosophy of Sport email feed, and the publication and distribution of a flyer. This work has also resulted in a publication by the project leaders.

Robinson, G. C., & Llewellyn, K. (2011). Developing ethical thinking with undergraduates in sport and exercise science. In P. Kemp & R. Atfield (Eds.), *Enhancing graduate impact in business and management, hospitality, leisure, sport and tourism* (pp. 40-49). Threshold Press Ltd.

Exploring Laboratory and Field-Based Practical Provision within Sport Science-Related Undergraduate Programmes: An Audit of UK-Based Higher Education Institutions

Mark Smith,
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Lincoln

This research project set out to conduct an investigation examining the extent of current laboratory and field-based practical provision across a wide range of higher education institutions (HEI) delivering sport science-related programmes. Between August and September 2010, an online survey was administered to 64 UK-based HEI delivering sport science-related undergraduate degree programmes. With a response rate of 36% (23 HEI), findings revealed that significantly more practical laboratory and field-based engagement occurs for physiology-related modules when compared to psychology and biomechanics, despite assessment weighting being equal across the three disciplines. Such findings were supported by a greater range of laboratory provision to support teaching and learning activity in physiology. Furthermore, it showed that teaching support levels from technician and postgraduate researchers were higher in physiology than in the other two areas.

Across all three Year 1 modules, the most important elements of practical work in year one were laboratory procedures and techniques and investigating experiments, whilst the highest ranked aims were teaching core skills and techniques and linking theory to practice. A total of 78% respondents felt current barriers existed to effective Year 1 practical laboratory and field-based teaching and learning. Among the highest ranked were resources and facilities, time allocation with the curriculum and class size. Interestingly, the average class size for physiology and biomechanics-related modules was 19, whilst for psychology it was 23. The most popular teaching methods and activities during practical work were tutor-led seminars, tutor-led demonstrations, and laboratory and field-based experiments. In assessing Year 1 practical work, all three disciplines favoured laboratory reports as the main assessment tool. Psychology-related modules had a strong emphasis on essay-style assessments to evaluate practical activity.

Based on the evidence gained during this research project, there is a wide range of good practical work currently being delivered in sport science-related programmes across the UK. However, there are indications that the situation could be improved by extending good practice and focusing on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, rather than on class sizes, resources and facilities. Effective pedagogy is at the centre of improving the quality of practical work in sport science-related programmes. When learning activities are well planned and effectively implemented, learning at varying levels of inquiry will challenge students both physically and mentally, in ways that are not possible in seminar or lecture-based environments. The importance of practical work across the entire year one sport science-related curriculum is widely accepted (QAA, 2008; BASES, 2011), and it is acknowledged that good quality practical work promotes the engagement and interest of students as well as developing a range of skills, science-based knowledge and conceptual understanding.

Specific summative observations from the research study are that:

1. Despite programme individualism, it would appear that based on practical curricula (i.e., laboratory/field-based), core teaching, learning and assessment strategies, facility and resource access and availability, formal and unsupervised contact hours and support structures, a degree of currency does exist across institutions delivering such programmes at Year 1.
2. Consideration of more innovative teaching and assessment strategies should be made by programme teams to ensure that creative and engaging practice, and evaluation, meet current employer needs.
3. It would appear that discrepancies exist across disciplines (i.e. physiology, biomechanics and psychology) within Year 1 practical curricula. These primarily relate to assessment, practical content and practical laboratory/field exposure. Providing students greater opportunities to engage in laboratory/field-based activities in the areas allied to psychology would ensure a more balanced and holistic practical exposure in the field of sport sciences.
4. Although we identified that a number of barriers to effective practical delivery exist, it is considered that based on current average class size, and the ratio of practical delivery time to total module contact time, these should not impact on the quality and effectiveness of provision within the practical delivery.

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