

Sheffield Hallam University

Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning

Centre for Promoting Learner Autonomy (CPLA)

CPLA Activities 2008-2010



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For more information on CPLA and its activities visit the CPLA website at www.shu.ac.uk/cet/

Alternatively you can e-mail us at cpla@shu.ac.uk or phone 0114 225 4735.

What is CPLA?

The Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning

Sheffield Hallam University has three Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL). Together, they build upon excellent practices in promoting learner autonomy, enhancing employability skills and attitudes and developing inter-professional e-learning. The CETLs are funded through a competitive bidding process by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)

The Centre for Promoting Learner Autonomy

The Centre for Promoting Learner Autonomy (CPLA) is one of three Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning at Sheffield Hallam University. The overall purpose of the CPLA is to promote and innovate learning and teaching practices that empower students through innovating ways of enabling them to construct their own knowledge in partnerships with tutors and other students, as well as to acquire responsibility for their own learning.

We encourage and support staff at Sheffield Hallam University to think of different ways of actively involving students in their own learning processes (the buzzword that is generally used to describe this is 'learner autonomy').

This booklet will give you a brief overview of CPLA activities, some resources on learner autonomy and a variety of teaching and learning practices that can foster a sense of autonomy in learners.

Our Website - www.shu.ac.uk/cetl

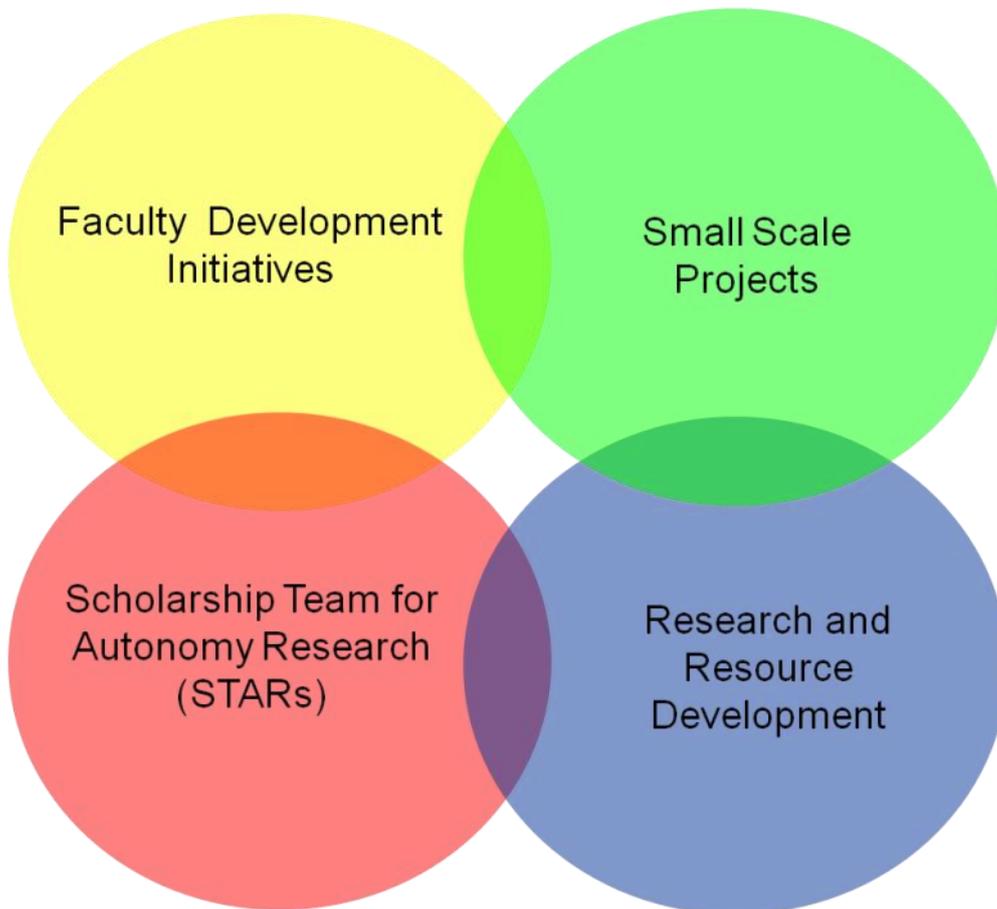
This website is packed full of really useful resources to support those interested in developing autonomous learners. These are people who can take responsibility for their own learning, have the necessary skills and attitudes, and can access and evaluate resources to learn effectively and make use of that learning. The resources include case studies; guides to good practice; literature references; conference presentations; video and

poster resources; and a number of PowerPoint presentations. Together, they cover a range of practices such as Enquiry Based Learning; feedback on assessment; mentoring and peer assisted learning; developing resources; inter-disciplinary learning; Project and Problem Based Learning; and negotiated learning. There are also resources around developing effective learning environments; educational development; managing change; and supporting communities of practice. The website also provides information on how to contact any of the CETL core team or those who have led the projects that have produced the case studies. We are sure you will find the information useful and invite you to make contact with anyone listed in the site.

CPLA Strategy

With CPLA support, each Faculty is pursuing a large scale, strategic initiative, over two and a half years. These initiatives are designed to support the development of Learner Autonomy across the University, and will impact upon a significant number of staff and a substantial number of students.

Each year, staff are invited to apply for a one-year, funded innovation project, aimed at developing practices that encourage the development of learner autonomy in their students. The projects are supported by CPLA and outcomes are produced through poster exhibitions, case studies and conference presentations.



This team is helping the University to develop a fuller understanding of Learner Autonomy by undertaking a two-year scholarship programme. Outcomes will include guidelines on practice, recommendations to the University and external publications.

The CPLA is working to produce a range of resources to support practices in developing learner autonomy. These resources arise as a result of research and evaluation activity as well as the outcomes of supported projects and initiatives. Collectively, we are developing a range of resources, which are offered through our website.

Conceptualising Learner Autonomy In Higher Education

Conceptualising Learner Autonomy involves two factors:

1. An autonomous learner has developed the capacity to take at least some control over their learning.
2. The learning environment provides opportunities for the learner to take control of their learning.

Developing capacity requires a set of personal qualities that include:

- Confidence
- Motivation
- Taking and accepting responsibility
- Taking initiative

It also requires the following skills:

- Academic
- Intellectual
- Personal
- Interpersonal



Within the context of Higher Education, effective autonomous learning requires the learner to have an appropriate conceptual stance towards their learning, which leads to an appropriate orientation to learning. In addition, learning is a social activity, and socialising their learning requires learners to recognise the benefits of working with others and to be able to share and negotiate with other learners. The employability agenda within HE requires learners to develop appropriate professional skills and the diverse nature of the student body requires learners to recognise difference; develop tolerance, empathy and understanding of other values and cultures; and to be able to explain, discuss and negotiate in an acceptable manner.

The Sheffield Hallam definition of learner autonomy starts with the premise that an autonomous learner takes responsibility for his/her own learning. In doing this:

- They can identify their learning goals (what they need to learn), their learning processes (how they will learn it) and how they will evaluate and use their learning
- They have well-founded conceptions of learning
- They have a range of learning approaches and skills
- They can organize their learning
- They have good information processing skills
- They are well motivated to learn

1 Developing a conceptual stance towards Higher Learning

Students come to University from diverse social, cultural and educational backgrounds, which influence their expectations of Higher Education. One factor that can inhibit their learning and success is the mismatch between their expectations and those of the programme. It is important that students develop an appropriate conceptual stance towards their learning. This involves understanding what is meant by 'higher learning', as well as accepting responsibility for their own learning, developing high level intellectual skills, including reflection and metacognition, and understanding and developing their own approaches to learning.

Although it is necessary for students to reflect continuously on their learning and conceptions, a key time to engage with students on these is on arrival into university, so as to encourage effective orientations and deep approaches to learning, and to develop a culture of reflection and engagement which will support them through their university studies.

2 Motivation and engagement

Engaged learners are active in their learning, in both formal and informal environments. They have a natural sense of curiosity about their subject and its wider context. They demonstrate a balance of vocational, academic, personal and social motivations to learn, and can distinguish between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations to learn. Motivation can be encouraged by socialising the learning; developing effective working relationships; offering choice in learning goals and processes; providing positive feedback; introducing realistic challenges and offering the opportunities to develop self-confidence.

3 Information skills

The Standing Conference of University Librarians (SCONUL) describes the seven pillars of information literacy as the ability to:

- recognize a need for information
- distinguish ways in which the information 'gap' may be addressed
- construct strategies for locating information
- locate and access information
- compare and evaluate information obtained from different sources

organize, apply and communicate information to others in ways appropriate
synthesize and build upon existing information, contributing to the creation of new knowledge

4 Managing learning

In order for students to be able to operate autonomously, it is important for them to develop an approach to managing their learning; managing themselves; and managing relationships in ways that maximise their ability to succeed in their academic lives. This can be encapsulated intuitively in the notions of personal effectiveness; reflections on the nature and degree of personal autonomy; and informed agency in the context of a complex academic environment. For many students, this can be seen as an evolving capability in relation to the different demands and challenges presented by their learning experiences and learning goals.

Specifically, this will involve students developing effective study, planning, problem solving and time and project management skills; demonstrating focus and resilience; being able to balance social, work and learning needs; and having the metacognition to balance the demands of assessment, self-assessment and evaluation of their learning.



Conceptualising Learner Autonomy in Higher Education

An autonomous learner takes responsibility for his/her own learning

Willing to learn

Having confidence

Taking and accepting responsibility

Taking initiative

Interpersonal skills

- Negotiation
- Handling conflict
- Sharing
- Communication skills
- Presentation skills
- Explaining and questioning
- Listening

Intellectual skills

- hypothesis
- evaluation
- synthesis
- analysis
- application
- knowledge

Academic skills

Research
Students determine and pursue THEIR OWN lines of enquiry

Information
Build on what they already know
Identify what information they need
Find, evaluate and use the information
May communicate their learning to others

Professional skills

- Team working and leadership
- Managing projects and meetings
- Decision making
- Practical application of theory

Personal skills

- Taking and accepting responsibility
- Ethics, empathy and tolerance
- Encourages exploration, curiosity
- Creative problem-solving
- Balancing creativity with resilience
- Planning
- Time-management and organisation

The **SWIM** model of Learner Autonomy showing the understanding, skills and attitudes that students need to develop

STANCE TOWARDS LEARNING

- Orientation to learning
- Appropriate conceptions of learning
- Deep approach to learning
- A range of appropriate learning strategies
- Active learning

WILLINGNESS TO LEARN

- Balance of vocational, academic, personal and social motivations to learn
- Intrinsic motivation
- Extrinsic motivation
- Goals
- Short, Medium, Long
- Confidence

INFORMATION SKILLS

- Recognise information need
- Addressed information 'gap'
- Construct strategies for locating information
- Locate and access information
- Compare and evaluate information
- Organise, apply and communicate information
- Synthesise and build upon existing information

MANAGEMENT

- Study Skills
- Planning and problem solving
- Evaluation & Metacognition
- Self-assessment
- Focus & 'stickability'
- Time and project management
- Balancing social, work and learning needs
- Assessment

The learning environment provides opportunities for the learner to take some control of their learning

CPLA Small Scale Project Schemes

The Centre for Promoting Learning Autonomy (CPLA) has had considerable success supporting a series of small scale education development initiatives that highlight practical ways in which academic staff can improve students' learning. The small scale project scheme is part of CPLA's strategy that aims to encourage practice that develops learner autonomy in students across the University. The scheme has invited staff to bid for one year initiatives that extend current practice as well as support and reward staff involved in more innovative work. The projects are designed and implemented by academic staff with a view to develop learning and teaching practice that enhances students' autonomy. The small scale project scheme funded and supported a total of 24 projects during the academic year 2008/09.

Current Projects

There are currently 21 projects supported: 14 of which are subject specific and 7 interdisciplinary initiatives. CPLA provides support and advice to project teams and work collaboratively with them to evaluate the impact/effects of their projects. CPLA supports all subject specific projects but works in partnership with the Inter-professional e-Learning CETL (based at Sheffield Hallam University) to support interdisciplinary projects.

Subject specific projects: these are independent projects usually in a single module or discipline that introduce learning and teaching practices that embed learner autonomy (e.g. enquiry base learning, peer tutoring, etc.)

Interdisciplinary projects: these are collaborative projects that encourage different subject groups/faculties to work together on multi-disciplinary projects built around learner autonomy. Typically this may include collaboration between department such as nursing and IT, engineering and fashion etc.

Brief descriptions of all projects supported by CPLA over the years are included in the booklet.

Project Outputs

Two elements that culminate important developments within the scheme are:

- interim seminar and poster exhibition - January 2010, and
- closing symposium - July 2010

Each event consist of staff producing summaries their work (in the format of posters) and includes a number of interactive presentations on key themes around learning autonomy and the student experience.

The events are open to all staff at Sheffield Hallam University and encourage project teams to share good practice and experiences, and gain feedback from a wider audience which feeds into project development. In the previous year the events attracted approximately 100 members of staff and similar numbers are expected this year.

A selection of posters produced at last year's closing symposium (July 2009) are included in the booklet.

Case Studies

Each project produces a case study which is peer-reviewed and published on the CPLA website. The aim is to develop a resource base from which good practice is disseminated.

It is anticipated that over 25 case studies will be available on the CPLA website in the coming months. Do visit the website for more information on learning and teaching practices that develop learner autonomy at Sheffield Hallam University.

Small Scale Projects 2009/10 Summaries

Students as researchers: a student led collaborative project to evaluate and develop study skills resources to support autonomous learning for Real Estate Undergraduate students.

Sarah Ward; Information Specialist
Learning and Academic Services

This is a student led research and collaborative writing project during which second year students will produce a subject specific, study skills learning resource for first year students on the real estate programme. This will require them to review and evaluate resources used during their first year of study; work collaboratively to write a resource targeted at first year students; and reflect on their involvement in the project and inform its future development.

Enhancing Literacy Skills and Encouraging Evidence based Autonomy for Bioscience Students

Jane Gurman
Faculty Of Health & Wellbeing

The project team will create a support system for developing first year student skills in scientific writing. It will focus on digital fluency and writing skills such as logical structure, evidence and analysis. The team will map resources and previous learning experiences, develop skills-based workshops, workbooks, diagnostic exercises and reflection processes. It is planned that the project will build a platform for developing the expert practitioner at second and final year.

Enquiry based learning [EBL] for Science of Imaging Technology

Sarah Naylor
Faculty Of Health & Wellbeing

This project aims to promote learner autonomy by applying enquiry based learning approaches to the Science of Imaging Technology for first year students. The students will build on knowledge in a first semester module and develop a learning strategy to apply this knowledge to practical situations. The planned outcome will be an EBL based strategy that has been fully developed and evaluated that can be rolled out into other modules within the programme.

The Sheffield Enterprise Events Company (SEEC)

Simon Clark and Charmaine Myers
Venture Matrix

It is proposed that a group of VM students organise and set up all-day interactive enterprise events for pupils from Sheffield Secondary Schools. We will involve Sheffield College student entrepreneurs with VM students to jointly organise the delivery of enterprise events. Typically, 3 invitations will be offered per secondary school across the city, per event, leading to a total of ~100 secondary students per event.

In essence, the project offers both internal and external opportunities. Internally, via the student led organisation of events to develop learner autonomy, mentoring (retention) and enterprise (employability). Externally, via the organisation and delivery of high profile enterprise events, to widen participation and ultimately boost recruitment.

Developing Academic Skills of First Year Radiotherapy & Oncology Level 4 Students

Jo Doughty and Cathy Malone
Faculty Of Health & Wellbeing

The aim of this project is to improve student engagement with academic requirements of a professional course. The objective is to use a range of resources (questionnaire, survey, tutorials, workshops) to facilitate student evaluation and reflection on their own academic skillset and to create a tool to enable students to track their own development. A key feature is linking their on-line self evaluations with the course requirements and linking these clearly with kind of feedback they receive on formative written work early in their course. These tools aim to establish a coherent shared language for talking about student writing and support further autonomous learning.

Transition into and through Higher Education for pre-registration nursing students

John Freeman
Faculty Of Health & Wellbeing

This is a student-led project to develop a range of mixed media resources to enhance learner autonomy among pre-registration nursing students. The resources are student-led in development and can include service user and practitioner perspectives to support transition into Higher Education and graduation into the workforce. It is our experience that there are key transitional points for our students across their programme, which are focused around progressing through the academic levels and making transitions into the workplace. We propose that students will be invited to develop a range of materials that can be used to signpost and support transitions for the students at critical moments in their student lives. In addition to the materials created, the participants will also be able to demonstrate key transferable and employability skills, to promote peer support, and learner autonomy. Materials developed will contribute to supporting attrition and retention amongst the nursing student body.

The Graduate Consulting and Research Unit

Lakshmi Damodaran
Sheffield Business School

The Graduate Consulting and Research Unit (GCRU) is a pilot programme focusing upon recruiting competitive Undergraduate, Postgraduate and Doctoral students from across the Faculty (and University) in order for them to be employed as Junior Consultants to offer contract consultancy and research services for internal and external clients. The aim is to build on the theoretical skills alongside the courses students undertake by providing them with practical experience and relevant training and thus increasing their employability and creating opportunities for knowledge creation in the form of project-based case studies for wider application. All students will work under the guidance of academic staff. The GCRU, because of its aims, lies at the heart of SBS and facilitates the fulfilment of some of its primary goals. Its focus will be to unify the research and knowledge transfer agendas with student experience, student employability and business engagement, and, through contributing to the delivery of customer lifetime value, help create a larger business network or community. The GCRU is currently in the pilot phase and aims to officially launch late May of this year (2009). It is currently undertaking projects that require market research and has recruited students from various subject disciplines, for example, an undergraduate Marketing student, a postgraduate Risk Management student and a Doctoral student (non SBS). It is expected that multi-disciplinary projects will be facilitated in future.

Small Scale Projects 2009/10 Summaries

A Buddy Scheme - Supporting Transition and Progression for students with Aspergers Syndrome

Claire Graham
Student & Learning Services

The project aims to improve the student experience for students with Aspergers Syndrome (AS) by developing a 'Buddy Scheme' to support transition into SHU and progression throughout stages of the student life cycle. Within the project will be an evaluation of the benefits of a 'Buddy Scheme' on learner autonomy, and will also draw up a successful recruitment and training plan to co-ordinate and manage potential student 'buddies'. The 'Buddy Scheme' will then be launched through the Disabled Student Support Portfolio, after which the project will share good practice on both a local and national level and will publicise the findings through national journals and conferences.

Work Based Projects in the Humanities: autonomous learners and satisfied students?

Alison McHale
Faculty Of Development & Society

This project seeks to establish quantifiable evidence of 'worth' for the development of Work Based Learning across the Humanities in terms of student awareness of becoming an autonomous learner; enhancement of degree/university experience and relevance to graduate employability. The project's key objectives are to engage students in a transparent research exercise in assessing their perceptions of self as autonomous learners before, during and after the year long module; examine the suitability of tutor delivery and support for this module; gather feedback from partner/stakeholder agencies on their perception of our students' learning/skills; and to create a researched resource in support of the wider agendas of recruitment, retention and transition to employment.

Faculty of Development & Society's Arundel Learning Hub and the Foundation Degree in Early Years within the CASECC Programme Area

Mary Haynes
Faculty Of Development & Society

This project will engage directly with FdA Early Years part time students on their first module. There is expected to be 3 cohorts of approximately 60 students in total. The materials from this project will also be used to support existing students on this course, approximately 174. As part of the CASECC programme which is largely part time focused, we anticipate further wide use of the materials produced. We would also be able to extend to collaborative partners who currently deliver FdA Early Years to approximately 70 students. It is expected that most of these students would top up to BA (Hons) Early Years at SHU. Overall the project aims to enhance the part time student learning experience through improved student preparation for the transition of learning in higher education.

"If You Build It" They Won't Necessarily Come! Reinigorating Student Representative Engagement In Partnership With Students

Mark O'Hara
Faculty Of Development & Society

The last Faculty Forum of 2008 attracted only one student representative to attend, indicating that existing structures were both costly and ineffective. Preliminary efforts to change our approach

have yielded promising results: almost 40 student representatives attended in March 2009. However this proposal will build on this limited success by providing scholarly understanding of what makes partnership with student representatives engaging and how to effect change in practice. Student engagement is an institution-and sector-wide issue (Little *et al*, 2009). This project would be only the first step in a broader longer-term cultural change in the Faculty towards achieving greater student engagement.

Developing A Student-Centred Placement Preparation Framework

Rachel Bower
Sheffield Business School

The project will develop a more student-centred placement preparation framework for students of international business, tourism or marketing with French. The project will enhance the student experience and improve employability skills through students taking greater responsibility for their own learning in their placement period in terms of preparation, engagement and outcomes. Students will take responsibility for their learning through active, independent, and interdependent involvement in the following ways: Firstly, in preparation for placement, through peer mentoring, working collaboratively to provide solutions for situations they will face, and determining the content of the pre-placement module. Secondly, during placement, students will act as core researchers into current transferable business practice in their placement company and produce company dossiers to inform their mentoring of peers during and following their placement.

Supporting Student Learning by Embedding Writing and Speaking Skills

Sue Forder
Faculty Of Arts, Computing, Engineering & Sciences

The project aims are to enhance students' learning through writing and speaking opportunities, to support their transition into Higher Education, to develop learner autonomy and to improve retention. Tutors will work collaboratively with SLS to introduce informal and formal writing and speaking activities with supportive feedback to support students' learning while developing these skills and learner autonomy. This highly structured program aims to; increase student engagement in their subject of study; increase student understanding of subject content; increase understanding of academic expectations of their courses; develop student writing (fluency and accuracy); develop student self awareness as learners; improve retention.

Masters Induction For All - Development Of A Distance Learning, Stand-Alone, Electronic Learning Object For All

Christine Ferris
Faculty Of Health & Wellbeing

Changing distance learning highlighted a need for students to engage with the requirements of Level 7 study through the VLE. Individual programmes have developed their own resources. Over the last 12 months we have pooled resources and now require these to be redeveloped and evaluated. Many Level 7 students access individual modules along with modules that are part of an award. The move towards blended and DL requires increased learner autonomy. Induction is the first impression students get and helps to orientate the student to the demands of the autonomous learning demanded at this level of study. The aim of this project is to produce and evaluate a distance learning, stand-alone, electronic learning object for all (international and UK based) students accessing any Level 7 modules.

Interdisciplinary Projects 2009/10 Summaries

A Peer Assisted Learning Project for Nursing and IT Students

Bridget Winwood, H&W and Anne Nortcliffe, ACES

The key focus of this symbiotic project is to improve the employability and professional skills of our students in HWB and ACES. Nursing students will develop skills in digital fluency, particularly their computing technology skills, ability to search literature, and overall IT competence and confidence, whilst the computing students, will have the opportunity to develop their employability skills, through engagement in a venture opportunity.

Cross-subject and Cross-Faculty Working To Promote Problem Solving Skills in Secondary ITT Students

Terry Hudson D&S and Rowan Todd ACES

The learning experience will involve cross-subject groups of six students working collaboratively to produce activities and materials for an open day at SHU for local school children. The student groups will teach an area relevant to each subject group (within the general topic of Protecting the Environment) to the school pupils. Planning for this will take place over subsequent months as the groups are given curriculum time to meet, plan and design their teaching activities.

A Sustainable Marriage

Lesley Campbell and Abdul Hoque; ACES

The project aims to use the skills and knowledge of the 2 student cohorts to re-examine the notion of 'throwaway fashion' and promote a new concept in clothing using dissolvable fabric, as a metaphor and as a vehicle. By bringing together the skills of post graduate Engineering students working with Polymers and other biodegradable/bio compostable innovative materials and first and second year undergraduate Fashion students skills of design, pattern cutting and garment manufacture the aim is to produce the 'Ultimate Wedding Gown' as a vehicle to draw attention to the concept of throwaway fashion.

Interdisciplinary and Cross Year Course Mentoring and Integration

Chris Short, ACES

The project aims to provide an enhanced student experience for students of 'engineering design technology' and 'electronics and control' through the integration of carefully identified final year projects with taught courses in the first and second years. The rationale for this integration is the fact that the vast majority of engineering products now involve interdisciplinary expertise. The structure of the integrated projects aims to provide benefits for all the students involved. The final year project students will benefit from skills and expertise outside their own subject area provided by 1st and 2nd year students in complementary subject areas. The 1st and 2nd years will benefit from having a 'real world' problem to work with and also through working with final year students. Further benefits will include enhancement of project and people management skills for the final year students through working with others. The lower year students will gain an understanding of other disciplines from interaction with peers.

Management Strategy Game Framework

Martin Beer, ACES and Ian Snelling, HWB.

The objective of this project is to develop a framework for providing a customised learning object to provide groups of students with an insight of the complexity in decision making in health and social care systems. It is often extremely difficult for practitioners to fully understand the full impact of the decisions made in the policy and management environments.

The intention is to specify an agent-based environment that allows students to explore the effects of the decisions of a range of actors in the health and social care system, through the establishment of a 'virtual health and social economy' which will run through a simulation game.

Assessing and Enhancing Learning Autonomy through Cross-Cultural Learning between Languages and Business Students

Christine O'Leary and Kiefer Lee, SBS

The project aims to provide opportunities for Masters Marketing and final-year Languages students to work *interdependently* and *independently* to enhance their autonomy as business professionals. Via an assessed assignment, the Marketing students are asked to develop an international marketing strategy for a new product/service offer in a European market. They are required to conduct an in-depth cross-cultural analysis as part of their research, and to work with the Languages students who will act as the country-language-culture experts.

In partnership, the Marketing and Languages students develop a research strategy and conduct primary research (e.g. focus group, interview etc.). There will be extensive use of role play, for instance, Languages students act as country-language-culture experts, and as 'average' Spanish/German/French/Italian consumers taking part in a focus group study. Students will also keep and submit a reflective learning log within which the development of learner autonomy is evaluated.

Collaborative Architectural Technology / Virtual Reality Project to Support the Design of New Buildings for Shirebrook Academy

Penny Collier, ACES and Geoff Birkett, D&S

Virtual Reality (VR) technologies offer the opportunity to experience environments before they physically exist. Development of such environments requires specialist skills in 3D modelling software and visualisation technologies such as those taught and supported on the Interactive Media with Animation course. These visualisation technologies are supported in the Adsetts Centre Visualisation Suite, which houses a stereoscopic 3D projection system, stereoscopic 3D workstations, and makes use of VR4Max virtual reality software (<http://www.vr4max.com>). This hardware and software allows people to experience real-time, interactive, realistic virtual environments. Designing a new building requires specialist knowledge and support. The specification for the Shirebrook Academy design will be set by the Comprehensive Design Project team and completed by the Architectural Technology students. By bringing these two cohorts of students together we can produce a piece of work that neither cohort could achieve on their own.

Small Scale Projects 2008/9 Summaries

Managing 'what technology where' through higher level constructive alignment

Simon Polovina

Faculty Of Arts, Computing, Engineering & Sciences

This project aims to not only teach students to evaluate technologies critically but also to equip them to decide which technologies suit industry problems. Each problem is novel, and demands a novel combination of technologies that simply cannot be taught beforehand. The objective then is to give students the ability to self-manage autonomous learning to cope with challenging situations outside of the 'safe' environment of a university. The anticipated outcome of this project is an educational resource embodying an approach that could be applied across many other disciplines.

Key issues in Contemporary Criminology

Ann Robinson

Faculty Of Development & Society

This project aims to use an enquiry-based approach to enhance the partnership between students and staff in the discipline of criminology. This will be accomplished via two different methods. Firstly an investigation will be created that provides an opportunity for students to articulate key issues and a future direction for the discipline. Secondly an enquiry based model will be used to plan for student learning within the module so as to build engagement and motivation. The end result of this project will be the mapping of concepts of student learning about the discipline which can then be evaluated.

Promoting Enquiry Based Learning Using The Philosophical Enquiry Approach

Fufy Demise

Faculty Of Development & Society

The project aims to develop students' skills and confidence to participate effectively in seminar discussions. The philosophical enquiry approach uses stimuli such as music, film, stories and pictures to encourage discussions based on philosophical questions that arise from the stimuli, where curiosity, creativity, critical approach and caring are central (Lipmann 1980). Students will put autonomous learning into practice by generating questions, influencing and shaping discussions through their responses, and by observing and giving feedback on their group's progress in using thinking and discussion skills. Following training on the principles and tools of philosophical enquiry, participating tutors will facilitate philosophical enquiry seminars using the tools of philosophical enquiry. A range of evaluation methods will be used to evaluate the impact of using philosophical enquiry on students' learning.

Supporting Students' Autonomous Learning Of Concepts Of Databases

Matthew Love

Faculty Of Arts, Computing, Engineering & Sciences

This project aims to explore the learning styles students adopt when studying the design and implementation of database systems and through that exploration develop a number of learning objects that use a variety of methods to help students understand and independently apply these domain skills. The project will also address student autonomy by developing facilities that encourage students to self-observe their own approaches to problem solving. Through this observation students will develop their awareness of learning strategies that work for them.

Student-Led Resource Creation Within The FDS Learning Hubs

Julie Evans

Faculty Of Development & Society

This project (to be delivered in collaboration with the RiT initiative and Student Union) aims to develop enquiry-based learning skills in students while taking an increasingly student-centred approach to LTA. By using the Learning Hubs as a 'vehicle' through which to promote, develop, and embed strong and innovative learning and teaching practices the project will provide students with the opportunity to reflect on, research and experience different styles of learning. In addition to the creation of 're-usable' learning resources - providing visual evidence of links with student-led research and learning - the project is seen as an opportunity to develop an extra-curricular activity which could be replicated each year and rolled-out across the Faculty.

Enabling Students To Engage With Autonomous Learning: The Assessment of Student Character Strengths

Ann Macaskill

Faculty Of Development & Society

This project aims to use measures and techniques from Positive Psychology to develop student confidence to facilitate their development as autonomous learners. This will be accomplished through increasing student self-esteem by assessing character strengths of first year psychology students and providing them with feedback and information about how these strengths can contribute to developing their learning skills. The end result of this will be a package allowing an individual to assess student strengths and replicate the positive effect of increased student confidence on learner autonomy.

Developing Management Simulation Software To Promote Learner Autonomy - Sim Sports Facility

Chris Moriarty

Faculty Of Health & Wellbeing

This project aims to enhance students' development as autonomous learners through engagement in metacognitive process. The metacognitive process in this instance is a computer simulation which engages students in an iterative process of setting objectives, performance indicators and targets; managing the simulated facility to these objectives (by inputting a range of management decisions into the simulation software); receiving immediate, software-generated feedback on performance; evaluating performance and re-evaluating objectives, performance indicators and targets. At the same time professional skills (including decision-making, teamwork, communication and performance management) will be developed.

Turning Student Groups Into Teams

Lynn Cinderey

Faculty Of Arts, Computing, Engineering & Sciences

Autonomous learners are expected to assume greater responsibility for, and take charge of, their own learning. This project will examine how a selected group of final year students equip themselves with the knowledge and skills to run team meetings with first year Information Systems students. This project will look at how students use declarative knowledge in practice and ask what is it like to lead student teams?

Small Scale Projects 2008/9 Summaries

Audio Feedback To Assist Disabled Students To Feed Forward Their Learning To Become More Autonomous Learners

Anne Nortcliffe

Faculty Of Arts, Computing, Engineering & Sciences

The project aims to research and develop a methodology of audio recording to promote more autonomous learning amongst disabled students and enhance their learning experience. Higher Education aims to help students become autonomous learners however, learner autonomy is contentious in some quarters where there are concerns that it may engender inequality for disabled students. The strategic and selective audio recording of lectures and other learning events can be beneficial for disabled students and with the addition of audio 'notes', including audio feedback, may offer more control to students with disabilities.

Using The 'Apprenticeship Model' Of Research Supervision In Occupational Therapy Students

Melanie Bryer

Faculty Of Health & Wellbeing

The aim of this project is to investigate how undergraduate research can be embedded more effectively within the Occupational therapy curriculum and utilised by academic staff. In particular it will investigate how an apprenticeship model might enhance the research experience of Occupational Therapy (OT) students and improve their choice of research topic. In addition to this there will be further investigation into how dissemination of research findings can be enhanced more effectively through partnerships with OT graduates and by academic staff. The main goal of this project is to enhance personal development and motivation of staff and SHU/OT graduates through engaging in more meaningful research activity

Evaluating 'Live' Assessment For Nutrition Students

Jenny Paxman

Sheffield Business School

This project aims to evaluate 'live' assessment for Nutrition students and furthermore to explore how collaborative work across academic and technical teams can enhance the student experience of assessment and promote learner autonomy. The annual Nutrition Fair is a real or 'live' assessment for final year Nutrition students who are studying the module Applied Nutrition 2. The staged assessment package involves students in the planning, preparation and delivery of a stall for the fair on a topic relevant to nutrition and health. This project will establish how 'live' assessment is perceived by students, staff, visitors and employers and to find out more about how such activities can be supported both internally, within the University, and externally.

Developing Learner Autonomy In International And UK Students At SHU

Gudrun Myers

Sheffield Business School

The aim of this project is to allow international and UK students to act as peers in their areas of expertise and to support each other in the development of autonomous behaviour across a spectrum of activities, leading ultimately to a stronger sense of self-efficacy and higher levels of academic success.

Click, Clarify, Copy, Create - Media Literacy Skills For Discovering, Evaluating And Reusing Sound And Visual Resources

Linda Purdy

Learning & IT Services

The aim of this project is to produce an online interactive resource which would allow students to develop key skills in 'media literacy'. We live in an increasingly media rich society and students are entering the University with an expectation of accessing and reusing media resources in their work. They are used to having film, TV, radio and images at their finger tips particularly via the internet. Students tend to be naive and inexperienced in how to discover quality resources and the factors to consider when critically evaluating and reusing them; these are key skills in developing 'media literate' students.

Developing Student Autonomy Through The Production Of A Public History Resource

Emma Robertson

Faculty Of Development & Society

This project will develop, implement and support an innovative piece of assessment in which level six undergraduate students autonomously produce a public history resource. The assessment will take place as part of a new history module entitled, 'Northern Soul: Constructing Regional Identities in the North of England, 1850-1980,' and will involve staff from the History group and LTI. Students and tutor will work in partnership to discuss the nature of this resource, which could be, for example, a mini-exhibition, short film, website or booklet. The students will then have the opportunity to explore and receive training in different technologies, as appropriate to their group projects, which will help them in developing their digital fluency.

Putting Students in their Lecturers' Shoes

Robert Wilson

Faculty Of Health & Wellbeing

This project aims to investigate, plan, develop and implement supplementary instruction into the learning, teaching and assessment in a module on a level 4, 5, or 6 computing, sports management and nursing degree course with a view to promote student learning autonomy. A key element of this will be giving students the opportunity to drive and deliver a module which will also offer the students an opportunity to develop different key skills, autonomous learning and active learning styles.

Enquiry-Based Learning For Biology

Ben Abell

Faculty Of Health & Wellbeing

Traditional teaching in Biosciences follows a lecture-based approach, without a strong focus on learner autonomy. In contrast, Biosciences lecturers possess strong research backgrounds that are based on understanding and building new knowledge through enquiry-based approaches. To maximise the transfer of these skills and develop learner autonomy it seems natural to move towards enquiry-based approaches for module delivery. Expected outcomes are that students will learn biology in a deeper and more coherent manner, promoting quality learning and the acquisition of key transferable skills.

Small Scale Projects 2008/9 Summaries

Promoting Learner Autonomy Through Mentoring

Nicola Martin

Faculty Of Development & Society

This project aims to evaluate and develop existing SHU mentoring techniques by working with six students who have Asperger Syndrome. Although the Disabled Student Allowance is able to fund mentoring, and research evidence suggests that students do find this useful, there has so far been no systematic interrogation of whether this promotes learner autonomy. The overall goal of this project is to produce good practice guidelines which will have application beyond SHU.

Developing Learning Autonomy in Work-Based, Learner-Centred CPD Provisions

Kiefer Lee

Sheffield Business School

This project aims to develop learner autonomy in the work-based, Postgraduate/Post-experience CPD provision within the Marketing subject area. The process for achieving this will include taking the existing provisions and making them more work-based and ensuring they are centred upon enquiry/problem based approaches targeted at the resolution of real business problems within the learner's organisational context.

Project Based Learning: Making Media

Hilary Cunliffe-Charlesworth & Keith Radley

Faculty Of Arts, Computing, Engineering & Sciences

The project aims to demonstrate the effectiveness and impact of learner autonomy and how it can improve student engagement and comprehension, and encourage other staff to use this style of learning.

This project involves students from Making Media in developing promotional tools for students from Level 5 Computer Network Engineering. Both cohorts gain autonomy from cross disciplinary working using their subject skills, as clients giving and receiving direction in small group activities. The relationship to the real world and employment is a key aspect.

Enhancing Student Feedback With Voice Files

June Clark

Sheffield Business School

The aim of this project develop the use of Web 2.0 technologies to actively engage learners using podcasts to provide a meaningful record of feedback to students. Students engaged in group work assessment would be provided with and then expected to engage with audio tutor feedback. Students would also produce their own podcasts to provide peer feedback and as a means of recording their "brainstorming ideas" assessment and thereby enhance the student learning experience.

Developing Enquiring Teachers Through Peer Group Learning

Mark Boylan

Faculty Of Development & Society

Developing teachers as educational enquirers has been put at the heart of newly revalidated secondary education programmes. This project will enhance the evolving inter subject collaboration that has developed through the creation of cross subject modules. The first

strand of the project will be to design cross subject activities to be used by collaborative learning groups, working both with tutor support and independently. The second strand is to develop a number of innovative cross subject learning experiences to support the development of enquiry skills. These will involve highly interactive sessions for large cohorts of students working in smaller peer learning groups and collaborative team teaching by tutors.

The Venture Matrix

Charmaine Myers

Faculty Of Arts, Computing, Engineering & Sciences

The Venture Matrix aims to achieve a sustainable University wide programme that will provide our students with a mechanism to simulate or replicate the world of work. Students will develop knowledge and experience the holistic nature of working in their chosen professions, engaging in authentic learning opportunities, multi-disciplinary teams or consortia, across subject boundaries and faculties with high levels of interaction demanding critical knowledge and skills. They will not only learn from their tutors but also from their peers; developing true learner autonomy. The project will help establish and resource a small number of key ventures that will offer ongoing learning opportunities for students from all levels of study.

Enabling Students To Engage With Autonomous Learning: The Application of Student Character Strengths

Ann Macaskill

Faculty Of Development & Society

This project aims to increase student self-esteem by assessing their character strengths and providing them with feedback on their strengths. This will be achieved by delivering workshops aimed increasing self-confidence by enhancing the use of students' character strengths. When the project comes to an end there will be a number of effective workshop protocols which other individuals could use to plan their own confidence building workshops.

Introduction To Academic Skills

Cathy Morse

Faculty Of Development & Society

This project aims to build confidence in students and expose them to the academic skills which will be built upon throughout their course. The project consists of a voluntary set of online 'exercises' together with suggested 'model' approaches to be offered to students from the point at which they become Unconditional Firm in the Admissions process. The goal of the project is to enhance awareness of the nature of higher education and to foster the potential for autonomous learning.

Developing Learner Autonomy in International and UK Students at SHU

Gudrun Myers (SBS)



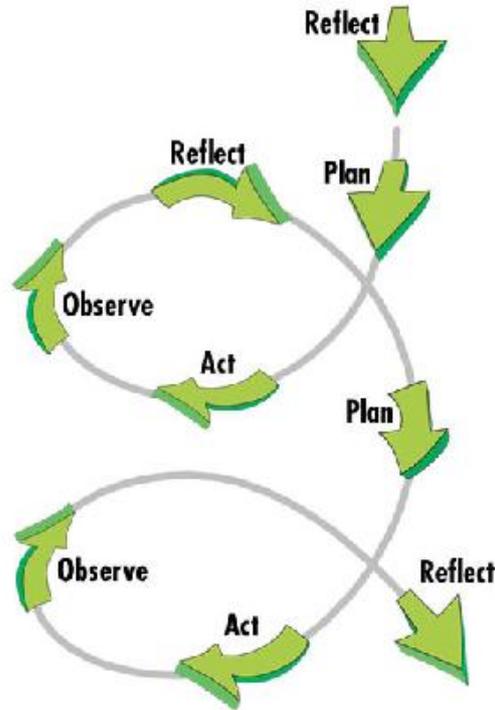
Background:

Experience of staff working with international students reveals that a proportion of these students do not engage effectively with the learning opportunities on their courses, showing weaker language skills, lower levels of participation in seminar activities and lack of meaningful contact with UK students. The same is true of UK students going abroad to study or work. Successful academic and social integration enhance academic success but engagement by and with learners from other cultures does not happen automatically.

Rationale:

Building on previous experience and published research in the areas of peer-supported and TANDEM learning, the project aimed to identify effective peer-support mechanisms to enable international and UK students to develop their levels of autonomy by working together. The individual goals included:

1. identifying student and tutor views
2. designing peer-support interactions
3. evaluating the interactions
4. embedding of interactions in existing modules
5. assessing the viability of a university-wide TANDEM module



Method:

REFLECTION

The project was undertaken in stages and started with a review of what UK and Chinese students felt they could learn from each other.

PLANNING AND ACTING

Based on the outcomes of this survey and existing literature, the team then planned and organised a series of interactive student events, which took place between 26 November 2008 and 1 April 2009.

OBSERVATION, FEEDBACK AND REFLECTION

Staff observed each event, asked students for feedback, and after their own reflections fed changes into the following events.

Evaluation:

The final evaluation took place on 23 and 24 April and included the use of student focus groups and three student questionnaires, as well as a review by the project team of the overall project. Goals 1—4 have been achieved. Some of the TANDEM activities that have been developed will be embedded in assessed student portfolios (UK students) or aligned to other assessed work for which the TANDEM activities provide a practice environment (Chinese Graduate Diploma students); goal 5 is still in progress

Future developments based on evaluation:

- peer network with UK/Chinese contact but also Chinese to Chinese links (Graduate Diploma to Masters cohorts) and UK to UK student contact between years 1, 2 and 3;
- UK/Chinese club; name to be decided by students
- club supported by the Chinese language assistant and students from the Faculty of Development and Society, who will use this activity as the basis of their work-based learning project

STUDENT VOICES

"Through the communication and the games with local students we can understand a lot about British culture." (Chinese student)

"Speaking to people who were from China was very useful." (UK students)

"I helped my partner on the communication level, by practising English with them and by introducing several aspects of the western culture. For me being able to put what I learned in the class in real life situations was the most important." (UK student)

"Some of us met and went ice-skating, this was helpful. We also met and helped each other with our work." (UK student)



"My partner helped me most. The follow-up event let me know more about British culture". (Chinese student)

"I helped her with a presentation. She was very grateful. She corrects my Chinese when I pronounce it wrong." (UK student)

"While listening to the person I keep eye contact to build up confidence." (Chinese student)

"The whole event is very relaxed and a happy environment." (Chinese student)

"The process of the events has helped me to understand UK Higher Education better." (Chinese student)

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Sheffield
Hallam University

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'Now I feel like I am at University...'

Using a community of enquiry approach to promote engagement in seminars

Fufy Demissie, Cathy Burnett, Mary Haynes & Sheila Sharpe (D&S)



Abstract

This poster describes a project which supported students in taking responsibility for the learning process through encouraging them to pose and interrogate their own questions during seminar discussions. The work spanned a variety of undergraduate courses related to Early Childhood and Education, including professional courses for trainee teachers and early years professionals. Using a community of enquiry approach, tutors worked alongside students to support them in pursuing enquiry and critical thinking. The project evaluation has suggested that participants are becoming increasingly confident in generating their own questions, influencing and shaping discussions and reflecting upon the development of their own thinking. Moreover, tutors have begun to question and adapt their teaching styles in order to more effectively promote student-led dialogue. This work will be used to prompt consideration of the value of oral work in developing academic literacy.

Introduction

Feedback from students and tutors had highlighted a lack of engagement by some students in the academic dimensions of these courses and drawn attention to the significance of social and cultural contexts to the nature and quality of seminar discussions. In order to address possible barriers to participation, the team decided to use the Philosophy for Children (P4C) methodology to support the development of academic literacy initially through promoting engagement, confidence and critical thinking through oral work.

Tutor comment

'I was quite anxious... because I would be taking more a back seat... I found that I had to give a lot more thought into what I was doing than usual.'



Method

- Stimulus
- Individual questions
- Question chosen
- Discussion
- Final thoughts

Aims of the project

- Investigate whether P4C can be used in a higher education context
- Explore tutors' perspectives on the effectiveness of P4C in improving engagement and participation
- Explore students' perspectives on the impact of P4C on their learning experience

Tutor comment

'The most positive aspect was the confidence students showed in challenging particular ideas, while doing this in a way that was sensitive to the possibility of different point of view. Also positive was the very natural way in which the discussion focussed on picking key concepts, ... I was very impressed by the depth of students' thinking and the way in which they were able to draw on their own professional experience in an authoritative manner.'

Student comment

'The students taught the students rather than the lecturer teaching the students kind of thing... the learning I got out of it was more valued, the fact that we done it ourselves, that we had done it ourselves rather than being a piece of paper and that was it, kind of thing. I valued it a lot more. I think the learning was a lot more.'

Findings

Tutors perspectives

- Engagement and involvement
- Anxiety and uncertainty

Student perspectives

- Empowerment and participation
- Critical thinking
- Learning environment

Evaluation

Students: post-seminar paper evaluations, 2 Student focus group interviews, 1 in-depth interview
Tutors: paper based evaluation, 4 individual interviews

Strengths:

- Can be used in HE context
- Reflective tool
- flexible, easy to use structure
- Supports learner autonomy and critical thinking
- Creates an enabling learning environment

Limitations

- Novelty factor
- Self-selected participants
- Small scale research
- focus on early childhood education courses

Student comment

'I think it worked really well because it seemed to give everybody else the onus rather than the tutor talking... you were questioning yourself, questioning your development and your ideas about things ...'



Next stage (2009/10)

- Use P4C methodology in at least 5 seminars in a 1st year personal and professional learning module
- Pre-intervention survey of perspectives on learning, attitudes to participation in discussion, expectations of learning in university
- Reflective accounts after each session
- Post-intervention evaluation of perspectives of learning, attitudes to participation in discussions, expectations of learning in university

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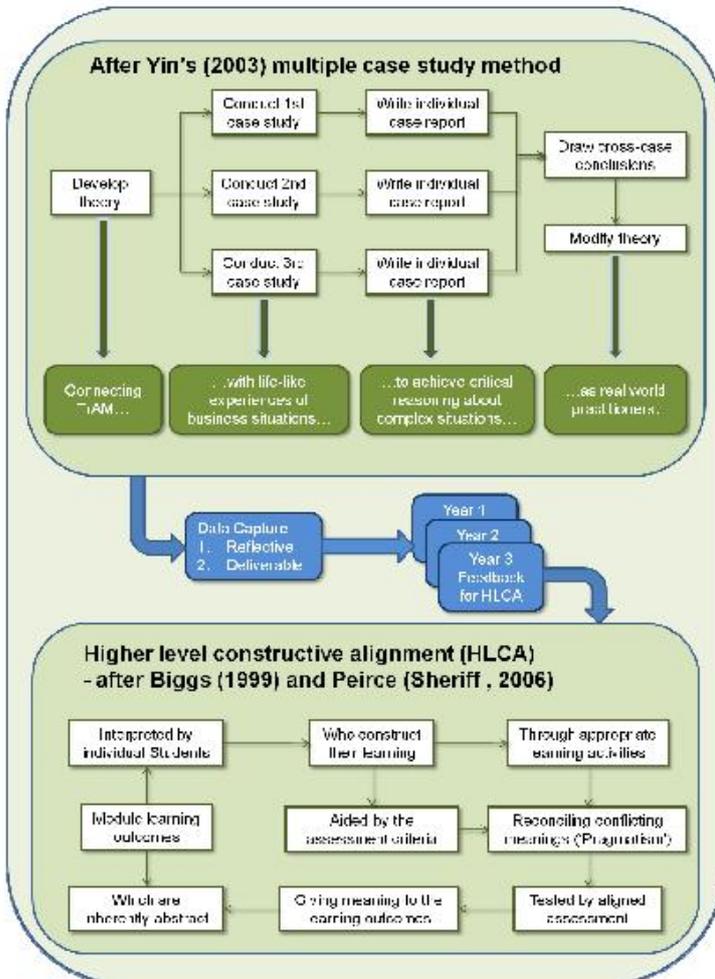
Practising Life-Like Case Studies through HLCA

Simon Polovina, Ivan Lauanders, & Simon Andrews (Dept. of Computing, ACES)



We appropriated Yin and HLCA...

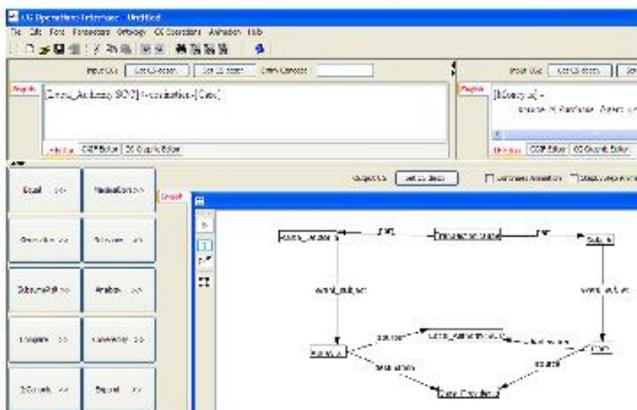
...with a theoretical framework called 'Transaction Agent Modelling' (TrAM)...



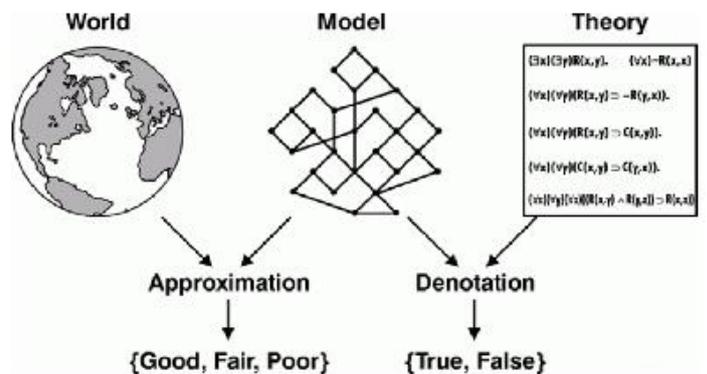
Results showed that through the case studies and TrAM the student design groups were actively engaged in applying reasoning and this theoretical framework to different settings. Industrial TrAM practitioners would draw on a similar stock of knowledge derived from previous examples of cases congruent with a reflective practitioner (Schon 1983). Students' reflections:

- = "Models may be wrong as they don't accurately reflect reality as it really is"
- = "It is impossible to model the real world. Assumptions can be made but, real model parameters will also change sometimes in an unpredictable way"
- = "The purpose of the model is to maximise the usefulness"
- = "A model can be useful to help us see and make changes to the design"
- = "Models are better used as a guide for understanding an enterprise"

...and a software tool that explores the issues...



...to highlight how "All Models are Wrong, but Some are Useful" (Box, 1979; Sowa, 2000)



Developing student autonomy through the production of a public history resource

Emma Robertson (D&S)



Background:

- New history lecturer aiming to improve IT/ media skills of self and students
- New level six module provided scope for new kinds of assessment
- Decision to adopt the 'Inspirational Learning' methodology which uses film to inspire students (by Keith Radley)
- Similar UCLAN project in which students created community history resource

Rationale/ Aims:

- To enhance learner autonomy through offering students ownership over their own projects
- To encourage creativity as a way to inspire learning
- To enhance students' self-confidence through a challenging, but supported, assessment task
- To enhance digital fluency skills by requiring a multi-media element to be part of each project
- To improve relationships between staff and students, particularly through learning environments which emphasised collaboration rather than hierarchies
- To improve connections between history staff and LTI staff



Northern Soul:
Constructions of Regional Identity in the North of England, 1850-1980

Level 6 History Option Module
20 Credits
Semester 2 2008-9

Number of students: 29
Module Team: Emma Robertson (leader),
Keith Radley, Richard Mather, John Tanner



Approach/ Method:

- Lectures/ seminars weeks 1-6 provide background and overview of topic, and ideas for projects
- Group visit to National Coal Mining Museum in week 7 encourages students to consider approaches to public history
- Students produce public history resources in small teams of 3-5 students on the topic of 'Sheffield: a typical northern city?'
- Project must include primary source materials and a multi-media element, and be suitable for a general audience
- Suggested formats included film, wiki, booklet, but students decide for themselves which format is most appropriate
- Support provided for projects in workshop sessions from weeks 8-12
- Workshops provide variety of learning environments (Local Studies Library and Adsetts Extension)
- LTI staff provide additional guidance on film-making and technological support (e.g on use of editing suites)
- End of module showcase for students to view all projects

Assessment:

- Task 1: Individual essay (40%)
- Task 2: Group project (30%)
- Task 3: Individual project report evaluating their project with reference to module themes (30%)

Evaluation:

- Mid-semester and end of module questionnaires
- Focus groups (6 students)
- Tutor's teaching/ learning diary
- Video interviews on 'Inspirational Learning' methodology with Keith Radley

Summary

Successes:

- High quality projects produced
- Good relationships between students and tutors on a collaborative rather than hierarchical model
- High degree of peer collaboration
- Digital fluency skills of students – and module tutor – enhanced
- Students (and staff) working with people outside the university
- Increased self-confidence of students
- Improved networks between history tutor and LTI staff

Challenges/ difficulties:

- Overambitious projects
- Weighting of group project did not reflect time/effort of students
- Clash of projects with final year dissertations
- Uploading final projects through Blackboard proved difficult for students – and staff
- Accessing equipment (for tutor)
- Managing and marking projects submitted in a variety of different media
- Liaising with external agents

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Motivation, control and confidence in 'live' assessment; a learning journey

Jenny Paxman (SBS)



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Many thanks to Emma Cadman, student assistant to the project.

Background

Throughout their final year Nutrition students studying the module Applied Nutrition 2 prepare to host a stall at the annual Nutrition Fair. This real or 'live' assessment uses a five-staged learning journey model (see Figure 1) and involves students in planning and preparing for then hosting a stall on a self-chosen topic relevant to health and nutrition. There were approximately 440 visitors to the 2009 Nutrition Fair including the general public, University staff, employers from various external agencies, a local school and University students from both local universities.

There is a dearth of published literature assessing the importance of 'live' assessment in the context of learner autonomy. It has been identified that experienced based learning (EBL) is associated with increased learner self-concept (Andresen et al, 1995). Where learners accept responsibility for their own learning this breeds a positive attitude towards learning and the ability to adequately reflect on learning experiences in order to bring them under conscious control (Little, 1995). Dickinson (1995) states that where individuals are actively and independently involved in their own learning they are more motivated to learn and demonstrate greater learning effectiveness.

Rationale

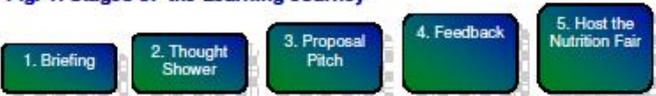
This project aimed to evaluate 'live' assessment for Nutrition students by exploring the student experiences during a learning journey designed to promote learner autonomy. Levels of motivation, control and confidence were measured throughout.

Method

In total, 65 students took part in the Nutrition Fair itself and were required to complete a number of questionnaires including one on demographics and learning styles, and a visual analogue based questionnaire at critical stages of the learning journey outlined in Figure 1. These 'before and after' questionnaires examined the students' levels of motivation, confidence and control at the specific time points throughout the 'live' assessment. Data from questionnaires was coded and analysed using SPSS.

As well as completing questionnaires, 6 students also attended a focus group where they were asked open ended questions to established how the Nutrition Fair, as a form of assessment, is perceived by students and could be improved in the future. Themes from this focus group are reported in outcomes.

Fig. 1: Stages of the Learning Journey

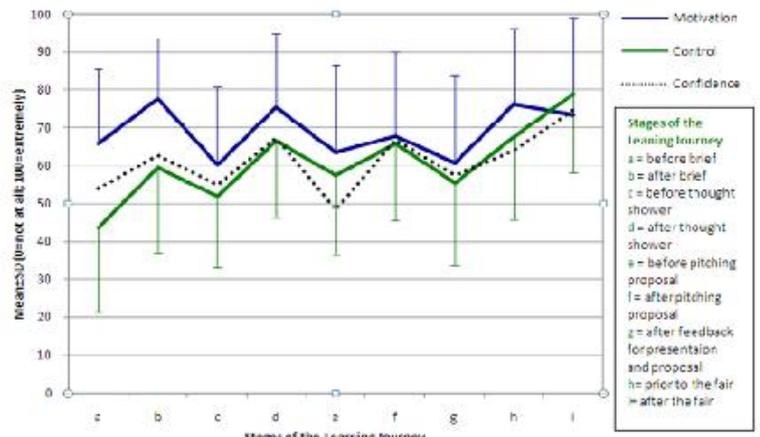


Outcomes

Figure 2 shows mean levels of motivation, control and confidence at the various stages of the learning journey outlined in Figure 1. The graph shows that throughout the journey motivation remained relatively high, though learners generally demonstrated greater levels of motivation following the completion of each stage. Unsurprisingly, there were highly significant increases in mean reported levels of both control and confidence from stage 'a' (before brief) to stage 'i' (after the fair; $p < .0005$ and $p < .0005$, respectively). From stage 'a' (before brief) to stage 'h' (prior to the fair), reported means for all three factors of motivation, control and confidence significantly increased ($p < .0005$, $p = .007$ and $p = .002$, respectively).

Interestingly, in terms of performance in the Nutrition Fair assessment tasks, on average females achieved significantly higher marks in the proposal pitch (worth 20%; $p = .020$) and overall (100%; $p = .023$) but there were no significant between-gender differences in marks awarded for the written business proposal (worth 30%) or the Nutrition Fair itself (worth 50%).

Fig. 2: The Student Learning Journey



Females were significantly more motivated than males following the initial briefing ($p = .002$) but at no other stage. There were no significant differences in mean levels of perceived control or confidence between genders at any stage.

Students can study this module from three different BSc routes: Food and Nutrition (F&N), Public Health Nutrition (PHN) and Nutrition, Health and Lifestyle (NHL). F&N students are most likely to have completed a placement year. PHN students achieved significantly higher marks than NHL students at the Nutrition Fair itself ($p = .023$). F&N students' marks at the Nutrition fair did not differ significantly from the other those achieved by students on the other routes. There were no other significant differences in marks achieved by students studying different routes. When comparing levels of motivation, control and confidence between the routes at different stages, it was interesting to note that the PHN students, relative to the F&N students, were significantly less motivated before the thought shower ($p = .024$), significantly less in control and less confident after the thought shower ($p = .009$ and $p = .005$, respectively) and significantly less confident after receiving feedback from the proposal stages ($p = .013$). There were no other significant differences in motivation, control or confidence between routes.

Comments from the student focus group were varied but certain comments mirrored the students' learning journey (see Figure 2). After the brief students felt "excited" demonstrated by the high levels of motivation at this stage. Once they had started their topic after the thought shower they felt a little "confused" and reported this as "quite scary". The students suggested that the proposal pitch was "formal" and they had "never done it before" which could account for the very low levels of confidence reported before the proposal pitch. On the day of the Fair the students were "frantic" and felt they were "running on adrenaline". It is interesting to note that these feelings coincided with relatively high levels of motivation, however.

Overall the students felt that the experience had helped them to develop a number of key skills and competencies including how to "work under pressure...and how to relate to the public", develop "face to face confidence", to be "more independent" as well as other "transferable skills".

Overall, the learning journey for this 'live' assessment leads to high levels of motivation, control and confidence prior to the final assessment. Some students may find this journey as learners more rewarding than others. This may depend on gender or BSc route of study.

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Project Case Study

Disseminating Good Practice through Learner Autonomy and Enquiry Based Learning on a History Programme.

Roger Lloyd-Jones

History Subject Group

Faculty of Development & Society

Sheffield Hallam University

Abstract

This case study examines the dissemination of Learner Autonomy (LA) and Enquiry Based Learning (EBL) across an undergraduate History programme. The 'seed' module, the Level 5 Historians & Research (H&R), was used as the model to extend LA/EBL both to incoming level 4 students and final year learners. Approximately 75 students take the H&R module, and the process is now rolled out to some 80 to 90 first year students and in the region (it will vary from year to year because of option choice) of 50-60 final year students.

Introduction

The undergraduate experience of LA requires 'careful scaffolding' if students are to become producers of meaning rather than passive consumers of knowledge (see Walkington, 2008). The decision to embed LA/EBL across a programme of study therefore required a systematic approach which addressed the following issues:

1. LA is not reducible to independent study and is more securely located in the sphere of active learning where autonomy can progress and evolve in a stimulating environment (Savin-Baden, 2007).
2. Careful consideration must be given to the design of assessment systems (see Section 6) so they are aligned to the students development as an autonomous learner (Booth & Hyland, 2000; Timmins, Vernon, Kinealy, 2005).
3. The timing of implementation is a critical factor, and detailed discussion of LTA initiatives take place during key phases of the re-validation cycle and provide the opportunity and space to review and explore 'good practice'.
4. To encourage the participation of younger members of staff/new lecturers in curriculum design which has specific LA/EBL focus. In short, investing in the future and therefore **addressing the issue of sustainability**.

Background

The History programme has an intake of about 110 students a year (80 single honours stream) and in aggregate there are approximately 280-300 students registered on the whole programme. The 'seed' module H&R which was introduced in 2000 (and was included in the original CETL bid) is taken by all level 2 single honours students. Subsequent curriculum developments in LA/EBL have followed both vertical and horizontal paths across the programme. For example, the level 4 compulsory module Making History 2 (85-90 students), at level 5 in addition to H&R the Imperial Economy (24), and at level 6, Britain and the Great War (40-65), Inventing British Democracy (25), and Northern Soul (27).

Rationale

The initial challenge was twofold:

1. To encourage students to take greater control over their own learning (Benson & Voller, 1997) in a core module focused

on research and project work; and

2. To use the module as a 'seeding device' to enable the dissemination of LA/EBL more extensively across the History programme.

The intended benefits of the core module are associated with an approach to learning which invites learners to choose and develop their own research project, and to set their own aims, objectives and research questions. In other words, the learners themselves are asked to define the challenges/constraints and to set goals (Walliman, 2005). The rationale for the module is that research is not taught, but rather it is the learner who reflects on, and who searches for the solutions to the challenges that confront any research project. The skills and capabilities are embedded through learning-by-doing, so that the learners acquire the capacity to act autonomously. Yet crucially important within this learning environment is also the recognition that it is collaborative both between learner and tutor, and between learners themselves. It is important to foster a partnership approach to learning. The rationale for the dissemination process was to capitalise on the 'good practice' of the core module in the context of a re-validation event and the appointment of two new members of staff.

The Approach

The Core Module

A key driver of the module is that students must choose and design their own research project; it is made clear at the outset that tutors do not provide one for them. Consequently, in the early weeks of the module it is essential to cultivate student confidence. Tutors were aware in the design stage of H & R that it would take students outside the comfort zone of more conventional modules. (One student reflected in her final report: *'although the project provided a great opportunity to under take self-supported work, it was difficult to know where to start.'*) The design and delivery called for robust 'scaffolding': how was this done and how successful has it been?

The mode of delivery was divided into two sections. In the first four weeks the focus is on collaborative learning, where students share responsibility in small groups (up to no more than four per group) and prepare for the transition to individual activity (Barker, Mclean & Roseman, 2000; Allen & Lloyd-Jones, 1999). At the end of week four students make their case for selecting their individual project, justify their choice and are allocated a tutor as mentor. Over the remaining eight weeks of the semester drop-in-sessions are available and feedback tutorials are provided on their first and second assignments (see section 6). In the critical first period (weeks 1 to 4) student groups foster collaborative learning, discussing between themselves and with tutors the feasibility of their chosen project, and sharing ideas and testing out potential research projects. In addition, there are practical exercises set and there is a group assessment element (see section 6). After week four students develop their own individual project focusing on design, challenge and reflection, which is, on the process of 'doing' a project rather than on producing a finished product. Students can use the opportunity of the drop-in-sessions to seek advice and support from tutors who are always available for consultation at set times. The four parameters which support the 'scaffolding' for the module are:

Confidence: the cultivation of a learning environment that enables students to take greater control of their learning

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Collaboration: using group activity to foster the sharing of responsibility and to prepare for the transition to individual work

Innovation: the student makes the case for a research project and justifies their choice

Autonomy: students are weaned away from conventional sessions, are responsible for developing and reflecting on their project, but operate in a framework of support offered by tutors. It is important to stress that students are not required to attend drop-in-sessions; it is up to the student to decide whether to take-up the opportunity to use them.

Student responses to the module have been positive.

Student Comments

'Above all being more responsible and more accountable for my own work and level of commitment'

'When first starting this module I thought thinking about research ideas and having to do an individual case study a daunting prospect, but...taking on this project has made me much more confident and positive about this kind of research.'

'Working to be more involved in group activities will help me to contribute in group work in level 6'.

'The nature of the module is independent learning and it has helped me in introducing my own questions and aims'.

'To formulate objectives and research questions new skills were developed as I never previously had to take a topic, break it down to set my own objectives and form questions I intended to answer'

The student responses suggest a twofold outcome: a growing student awareness and confidence in their responsibilities as learners; and a growing acceptance by tutors in the student's capabilities as autonomous learners. Both processes are mutually reinforcing and provide another example of how the scaffolding enables the development of learning as a partnership between learner and tutor. The opportunity for students to frame their own questions and be prepared to answer them is the development of a practice where they do take greater charge of their own learning.

Disseminating Good Practice

H&R acted as a 'seed' module enabling the dissemination of an EBL approach to LA to be embedded at other levels of the History programme. Some of the modules adopting this approach are briefly described below:

Making History 2: This is a core module for all level 4 single honours students in semester 2 (total numbers for 2008/9 academic year - 85 students). The aim of the module is to develop autonomous learning skills through students working on a group project related to an aspect of public history in the Sheffield region. The module handbook states: *'The tutors will be there to facilitate your work, not to tell you what to do, when and how to do it'*. Lectures are provided in the first four weeks (following a similar template to the H&R module) and are then supplemented by a series of fortnightly seminars. The purpose of the latter is to ensure that project groups are working smoothly and that all group members are aware of the demands of team work. The module ran for the first time in the 2007/8 session and feedback from students have been positive.

Britain and the Great War: This level 6 module is in its third year of delivery and is modelled on an EBL approach where students are engaged in exercises in informal groups. For example, groups are invited to prepare short reports and briefing papers on various aspects of the economic, political and military dimensions of the war. As a student commented in his seminar log: The main task was for the group to act as *'a small sub-committee advising the War Cabinet. The purpose of the exercise was to view the decisions undertaken by the war time cabinet from their (students) perspective to reach an understanding as to why decisions are made...'* This is an example of an EBL approach enhancing the development of deep learning and students gain understanding by meaningfully taking charge of their own learning (see Wenden, 1998). Student response to the module has been very favourable, comments on module questionnaires include: *'The layout of the seminars - structures and activities have been fantastic as they allow you to engage in the topics being discussed'. 'Seminars were much better than other modules - encouraged participation'. 'The quiz was a great introduction to the seminar and was carried out well by the group work and we had good discussions at the end'. 'Enjoyed the discussions because you find different views and perspectives on topics that differ to the ones you think of'*. The external examiner in his 2007/8 report observed that the module required the *'students to reflect on their seminar work and structure what they had learnt'*.

Inventing British Democracy and Northern Soul: These two modules were designed by two new young members of staff who were mentored by Roger Lloyd-Jones, and who also worked with Sally Bradley from the LTI using their approach to LA/EBL in curriculum design to apply for membership of the HEA. One tutor has already gained membership and the other was awarded a small project grant from the CPLA and has recently taken up the role of History group LTA co-ordinator. Both modules will start in semester 2 of 2008/9 and have attracted 24 and 27 students as their first intake.

Assessment

Critical to the successful design and implementation of modules adopting LA/EBL is that the approach must be aligned to the mode of assessment. As Boud has argued student decisions about what and how well they learn is informed by assessment (Boud, 2002; Booth, 2000) and one might add that asymmetrical alignment leads to a significant fall in student confidence.

Assessment and the H & R Module

In the H & R module a three tier assessment package is used: the first exercise is group based and students complete a number of tasks using on-line search engines from the module blackboard site. The exercise is designed to enhance learning by the group using its own initiative (Nicholson & Ellis, 2000) to search for historical sources and to produce a short report. The exercise is submitted in week 5 and tutors guarantee return and feedback by week 7. The second exercise is an individual research proposal which is designed to prepare students for planning and writing the final report - this is submitted in week 7 and students are asked to return proposals and provide feedback in week 9. Exercise 3 is the final report which invites students to comment on their learning experience, what they consider to be their positive achievements (see 5.2) and what they consider to be their less successful outcomes (these frequently refer to time management issues). Students are also asked to comment on what ways the project has changed since the proposal in week 7 and to explain why changes have been made.

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The assessment package is not simply a 'test' of what the students have achieved but an opportunity for learners to demonstrate their ability to reflect on their own learning and plan ahead for their final year. As one student put it in the final report: *This module has taught me how a dissertation is different from an essay, because it involves more independent study and unlike an essay is not based on a subject learnt about in lecture or seminar work. The kind of study is dependent upon the student setting out the objectives of research*'. The external examiner observed *'The assessment criteria were very appropriate' and 'provide 'a stimulating intellectual environment, and 'part of that is the support and feedback system'*

New Modules

Assessment portfolios in the new modules using an EBL approach tend either to use a group presentation and an individual self-reflective report evaluating the learners contribution to the presentation (MH2 & Northern Soul) or seminar logs (Great War; Inventing British Democracy). Seminar logs introduce an element of choice into the assessment system, in both the Great War and Inventing Democracy modules. Students are able to select any 3 of the 5 thematic seminars to write up their log. The logs focus on what has been learnt in the seminar, how the activities have contributed to the learning process and how students have arrived at their conclusions or judgements. They also provide a different approach to assessment compared to the more traditional essay/examination format. In terms of evaluating student assessments, consideration is given more to reflection. For example, what is achieved in the seminar, how was the topic approached, how valuable were the group activities and discussions in facilitating learning; rather than focusing on content and narrative. In his 2008 report on the Great War module the external examiner reported: *'May I start by saying what an excellent form of assessment I think this is - it requires the students not only to attend seminars but engage in them actively, and reflect on learning. Exemplary test for graduate level skills'*.

Summary and Conclusion

To successfully embed LA in programme curriculum it is essential to see the LTA approach as a partnership between tutor and student. Rather than independent learning LA, is more to do with interdependent learning where students can learn from each other. Equally important, and why this approach can be recommended, is that tutors gain the confidence to wean students away from over-directed teaching and assessment, which tends to turn students into passive recipients of knowledge. The outcome for the History programme at SHU over the last few years has been to disseminate good practice in the form of LA/EBL at all levels of the curriculum and there has been a progressive embedding of these initiatives. The core level 5 module H & R was used as an exemplar and the opportunity of the re-validation cycle and the appointment of new lecturers were capitalised to disseminate good practice across the programme. Tutors are encouraged by greater participation and activity in seminars (student responses), a significantly more varied assessment portfolio and this is reflected in student work and performance (external examiners). These initiatives have also been enhanced by significant investment in Blackboard (an LTA history group action plan for 2007/8) and this formed part of the 'scaffolding' so crucial for supporting the partnership between students and tutors. For tutors and students this has been an important journey, the embedding of LA/EBL has been challenging, thought-provoking,

and risky, and like all interesting journeys the means are as significant as the end.

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Project Case Study

Media Literacy Skills For Discovering, Evaluating And Re-Using Visual And Sound Resources.

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Abstract

Digital and visual literacies are now recognised as core skills for undergraduates. However, it is also recognised that students need support in developing those skills, partly because they do not always have them before they start university, and partly because they show a lack of awareness in key issues such as copyright compliance. To enable student autonomy in the area of visual communication we designed an online resource called VIA (Video Image and Audio). This report describes the project which involved a design phase and an evaluation phase to which undergraduates, postgraduates and Information Advisers participated. We received useful feedback to improve the resource, and overall, the VIA resource was well accepted by all stakeholders.

Background

We live in an increasingly media rich society and students are entering the University with an expectation of accessing and reusing media resources in their work. They are used to having film, TV, radio and images at their fingertips particularly via the internet. However, students tend to be naive and inexperienced in how to discover quality resources and the factors to consider when critically evaluating and reusing them. The instinctive approach is to undertake a Google search, and copy and reuse any resources which match the subject requirement without regard to provenance, copyright and technical limitations.

Approach to learning

In general, students exercise autonomy when they become engaged in all aspects of the learning process – planning, implementing and evaluating (e.g. Little 2003; Scharle and Szabo 2000; Thanasoulas 2000). The VIA resource can be used flexibly in helping students plan and evaluate their use of visual and audio materials by raising questions such as: what purpose do the visual/audio materials fulfil? Do they comply with copyright legislation? VIA also offers advice regarding implementation (image ratio, file size), although this is secondary to the key purpose which is to enable students to handle visual and audio materials correctly and confidently. We envisage learning with VIA to be a 'constructive process that involves actively seeking meaning from (or even imposing meaning on) events' (Thanasoulas 2000).

Intended benefit

The aim in designing the VIA resource was to support learner autonomy, that is, self-direction and engagement in learning, in relation to the use of visual and audio media in coursework – and beyond, in students' professional lives. Because its potential target audience encompasses all SHU students, VIA can be considered transdisciplinary. It was conceived to be used by students from all disciplines as well as Advisors in the Learning Centre or Student Support in order to guide students needing help with the visual and audio aspect of coursework. We also envisage that lecturers will use it as a reference or as a teaching tool, while recognising that they may want to use additional materials to focus more specifically on the issues arising in some disciplines (e.g. use of visual artefacts in the visual arts or media studies, visualisation of data in the sciences or business studies). The VIA resource can be integrated in the design of autonomous learning experiences which neither let students flounder nor attempt to guide them rigidly, but instead 'allow them to struggle to construct a self in relation to a discipline or a profession' (Wilcox 1996:174).

Rationale

Purpose and goal of the VIA project

The aim of the project is to develop student understanding and awareness of finding, critically evaluating, selecting and reusing (in terms of legal compliance) videos, images and sound. We developed VIA to raise student awareness of the key skills which distinguish a 'media literate' student. We also wanted learners to "develop a sense of responsibility and also, encourage learners to take an active part in making decisions about their learning" (Scharle and Szabo 2000: 4), which here relates to the use of audio and visual material.

Our research question was: does the VIA resource address student needs? And secondarily: what could we do to improve it, based on student feedback? We tested the VIA resource with three groups of people:

- undergraduates selected randomly for a focus group;
- a specific group of postgraduate e- learners taking a Visual Communication module; and
- Information Advisers in the Learning Centre.

Resource limitations meant that, regrettably, we could not involve academic staff in the study. In any case the focus of the study was on students' digital/visual literacies and involved first and foremost a mapping of what these might be. A second phase of the project would be to conduct a multi-case study about the VIA resource in teaching; this would develop the initial case study presented here.

The VIA concept

At the outset we agreed to utilise good quality resources which already exist. Several excellent tools have been developed by authoritative bodies like the JISC and Digital Media (formally TASI). There seemed little point in reinventing the wheel, and felt that it was far better to capitalise on appropriate materials which have been developed with more resources and expertise than were available to us. We used our expertise to link to these resources at appropriate stages and tailor them into a unique package to address the specific needs of SHU students, particularly though not exclusively those of undergraduates. Given the nature of the resource we decided to present VIA in a visual way, adopting a comic book style rather than using blocks of text.

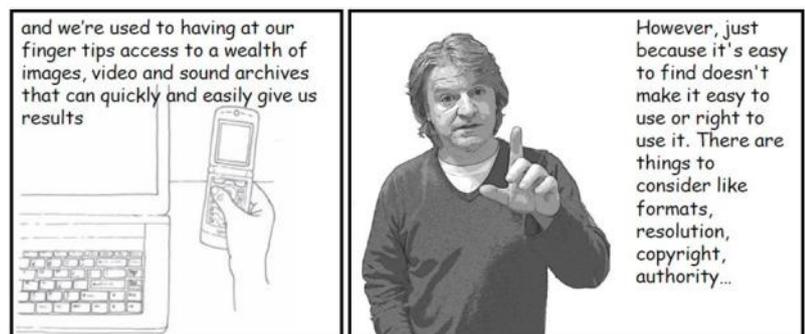


Figure 1: sample page from the Click resource

We used examples of external sources of video, sound and images materials which have good provenance and have appropriate rights cleared. Original materials were also designed. For maximum flexibility, we used PowerPoint, so that the final product can be printed or consulted electronically as a PDF file.

Evaluation approach

The evaluation was located in the interpretive paradigm, and took the form of a case study using a hybrid approach to data collection, to ensure optimal validity. The aim for deploying a mixed-method strategy was essentially 'complementarity, or examining overlapping and different facets of a phenomenon' (Tashakkori and Teddlie 1998:43).

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Undergraduate focus groups (in two phases)

Ten students volunteered to participate in the evaluation. The group covered a range of disciplines and levels of study, as shown in the table below.

Table 1: composition of the undergraduate focus group

| Course | Year | No. of students |
|---------------------------------------|------|-----------------|
| BA Hons Planning Studies | 2 | 4 |
| BSc Business Modelling and Management | 4 | 1 |
| BSc Business and ICT | 1 | 1 |
| BSc IT Management | 1 | 1 |
| BA Business and HRM | 4 | 1 |
| MSc IT | 1 | 1 |
| MSc Pharmacology | 1 | 1 |

At the time of volunteering they were unaware of the nature of the activity. At the beginning of Phase 1 of the focus group, students were given a brief introduction with the minimum of information as to the purpose of the focus group. They undertook an activity which required them to find 'visual material' to enhance what was presented as the first page of a formally assessed assignment on cycling helmets. They were also asked to make a note of what they did. The students then undertook a very short self assessment of their IT and media literacy skills.

Phase 2 started with giving students an explanation of the purpose of the focus group (using and evaluating VIA). The students then worked through VIA and then repeated the activity, again making a note of the steps they took.

Figure 2: Students working with VIA (phase 2)



To complete phase 2, students were divided into two groups for a discussion about what they had learnt, the usability of the material and the content of the material.

Online heuristic evaluation by Master's students

Students enrolled on the MA Professional Communication programme were invited to evaluate the VIA resource, as part of their studies on the 'Visual Communication' module. Seven students agreed to contribute (four women and four men) to the evaluation. Their task was to select a visual analysis tool (e.g. Kostelnick and Roberts 1998; Rose 2007) and use heuristically to comment on the appropriateness of the VIA resource for a student audience. Heuristic evaluation is a method for assessing design quality in the user interface of software applications or websites (Dumas and Redish 1999; Nielsen and Mack 1994). It is carried out by several evaluators who, in parallel, assess the interface using a set of principles (or 'heuristics'). Several evaluators are needed because a single evaluator cannot identify all possible problems. Each evaluator works alone, evaluating the interface against a list of heuristics, normally well established principles. Findings are

aggregated, to identify the commonality and severity of the problems they have identified. In the case of our study, MA students took on the role of evaluators, and reported their conclusions in a discussion on the Blackboard site support their studies.

Online interviews with Information Advisers

The third group of people who evaluated the VIA resource were Information Advisers. These are information professionals who are either based in a faculty team, working closely with teaching staff to tailor information skills sessions to meet the needs of the specific cohort of students, or based in a functional team ensuring services, systems, and processes best meet teaching and learning needs. Each year they deliver approximately 1,500 hours of information literacy sessions, across all levels from Level 4 to postgraduate.

Table 2: composition of the Information Advisers' panel

| Team | No. of Information Advisers |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Head of Academic Services | 1 |
| ACES Faculty team | 1 |
| Health and Wellbeing Faculty Team | 2 |
| Sheffield Business School Team | 1 |
| Systems Team | 1 |
| Virtual Learning Centre Team | 2 |

Information Advisers were asked to evaluate VIA and provide feedback on the scope of the content, its value as a tool for developing media literacy skills, and also the overall look, feel and navigability of the resource.

Findings and discussion

Overall

On balance, feedback was positive. We received useful suggestions for improvements, such as: consistency in the use of the comic metaphor, replacement of idioms, addition of branding and ownership, more use of colour to aid navigation, value of some reference links. Comments on the resource name prompted to give a more meaningful title, so that 'Click, copy, create' became 'VIA' ('Video, Images and Audio')

Undergraduate perspectives

The students assessed their IT skills as either good or very good. Nine of the ten students had been asked to insert images into their coursework, and had on other occasions chosen to do so on their own initiative in order to enhance their work.

In phase 1 of the focus group, all students chose to search for a graphic and their approach was to use Google. Issues such as copyright, referencing and technical information were not addressed. In phase 2, after using VIA, students selected from the wider range of resources which they had been introduced to. In their commentaries on the second attempt:

- one student mentioned that is "not right to copy and paste information"
- one student took on board technical information about size, colour, and distortion
- one student used "academic resource" in their list of search words for Google.

The second attempts also included some form of referencing for the image, either immediately under the picture or at the end of the document.

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In summary all students were positive and offered comments such as “not bad”, “like it the way it is”. They liked the look though most would have liked colour to be used, finding the grey “unattractive”. Navigation was easy, but it was difficult to go back or to remember how far back something was. They liked the friendly language used and one commented positively on the “use of the man who seems to be explaining things”. The amount of context was “about right”, but the mention of semiotics put students off even though they understood the point of tailoring a message to an audience. The importance of sourcing and acknowledging the source was clearly recognised.

Feedback from the undergraduate focus group was used to amend VIA before the next phase of the evaluation by MA students.

MA students' perspectives

Of the three groups of participants, this was the most negative overall – perhaps because they were asked to evaluate VIA as an artefact, rather than as a tool to support their learning. Also, they worked with a visual analysis grid, which encouraged critical evaluation.

Overall, the product was deemed well targeted at its audience and the visual delivery was essentially appropriate. For most students, the combination of visuals and text was seen a particular strength: “The text and the images complement each other very well throughout the document” (Student P). Yet this was not everyone’s preference: Student J thought the resource could be presented more succinctly as a series of bullet points, particular for mature students. While Student P agreed about the length, she believed that “a mixture of text and pictures” was appropriate.

The most commonly discussed feature was the use of an “anchor man”: this was mostly seen as a success factor because he “leads the user throughout the entire document... [and] contributes to ethos as he establishes a “visual connection” with the audience/ user” (Student C); his “posture and gestures... reinforce what the text is stating or asking” (Student P). However, Student J (an older learner) felt the anchor man’s presence “insulted his intelligence”. The MA students identified a number of areas where revisions could be made:

- The ‘iPhone’ format should either be discarded in the first two pages, or kept throughout the 54 pages (Students S and J)
- navigation was perceived as somewhat problematic, notably across the different chapters and with the ‘home page’; however, the navigation icons “are immediately recognisable as they are the same icons commonly found on videos, computers, etc” (Student P)
- typographic choices needed to be more limited, to create consistency across the VIA resource, but the choice of Comic Sans MS was seen as “juvenile” (Student S and J) or apposite because it “establishes a ‘colloquial’ tone to the document which is in line with the target audience” (Student C)
- the use of the SHU logo needs to be more carefully considered
- format issues were also considered; notably, Student C suggested to “give the user the choice to either select a Flash format with real video and sound extracts, or a static HTML format which would include a downloadable PDF at the end in case the user needs to print it out or send it via email” – a view supported by other students.

Information Advisers' perspectives

Overall, Information Advisers thought the content was comprehensive with the right level of information and detail; the comic style approach had unanimous appeal. One said that “the links to external resources are good too and provide a different approach and further information if you need to follow it.” The Adviser who supports the Arts area said she would use it within her literacy sessions, and others said they would find it useful to refer

lecturers and students to should the need arise. Another Adviser said “the knowledge contained within the resources is very useful for myself.”

As in the other two sets of participants, opinion was divided in some aspects. For example, whilst one Adviser favoured the predominantly black and white approach with colour only used to add impact, the others thought more use of colour would improve the resource. One person said navigation was easy, but several people commented that they couldn’t navigate to specific sections (clearly they hadn’t realised that it is possible to do so from the ‘menu’ on the opening screen).

Conclusions

The Project Team remained focused, worked well together and produced a valuable resource within the budgetary constraints. In the early planning stages there was a temptation for enthusiasm to push the boundaries of the project; the scope had to be redefined to a realistic level for the time and resources available. Even so, we underestimated the time need for the production. In trying to be all encompassing the end product may not have as great an impact as it would if it had been targeted at a specific subject group and had greater depth. Overall the VIA resource was well received by the three user groups involved, in the sense that the resource helped develop awareness of media resource use. A number of presentational issues were noted (and acted upon) but these did not deter from the main messages.

Further Development

Keeping VIA up-to-date is essential. Whilst the basic principles will remain true, external links to useful ‘tools’ and sources of reusable materials will need to be reviewed and updated over time. This work will be undertaken by the Media Materials and Copyright Team and can easily be done as the resource has been developed in an editable format. However, the impact and value of VIA will only be realised if the resource is widely available. Learning and Information Services are currently working on an Information Literacy Strategy and as part of that project are looking to bring together the full range of resources and learning objects which have been developed to enable the development of literacy skills. VIA will be included in that portfolio and thereby made widely available to the SHU community.

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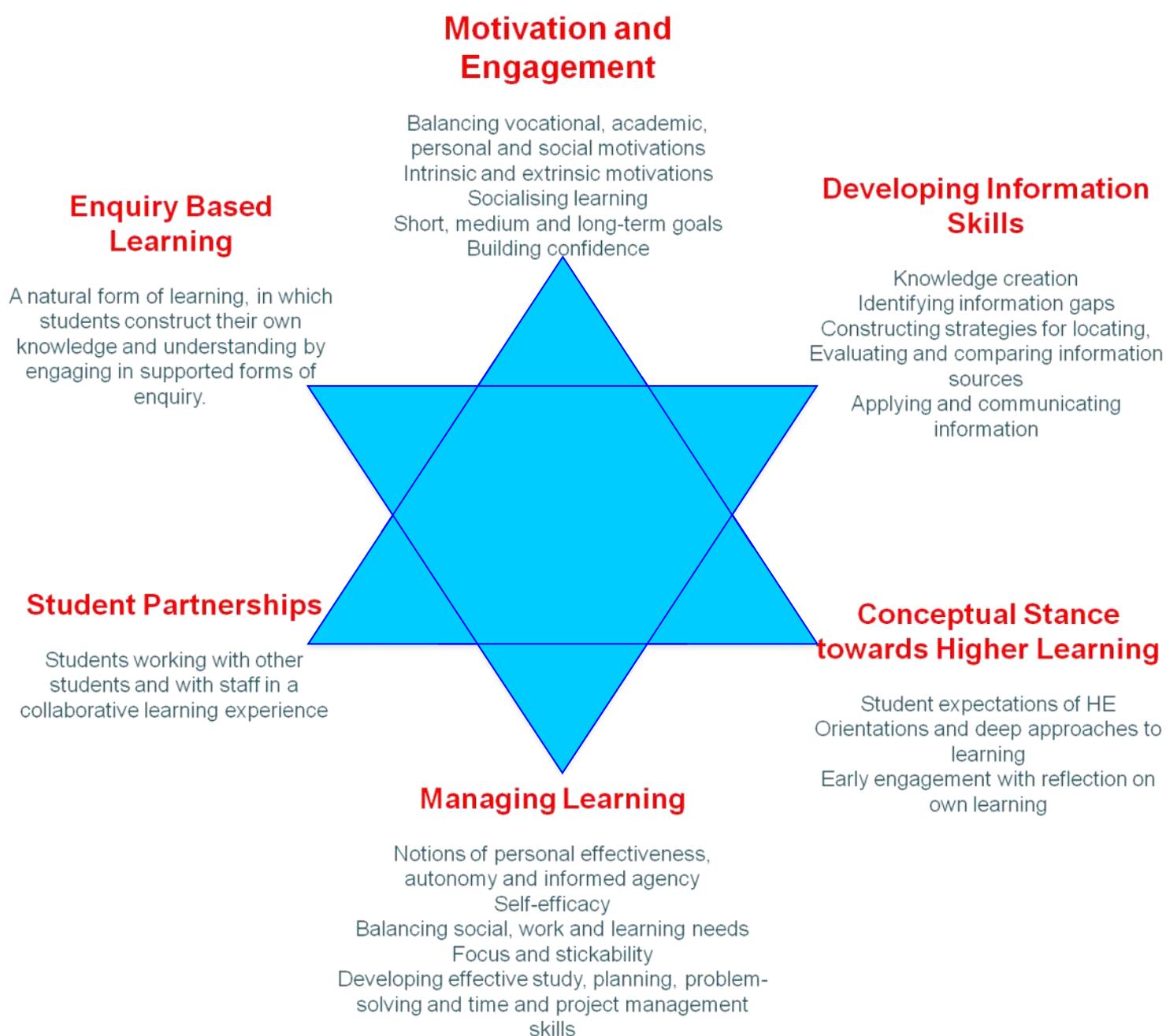
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STAR Project Scheme

Over the course of two academic years, this team will be undertaking an analysis of existing literature relevant to Learner Autonomy, as well as identifying good and emerging practices, both within SHU and beyond.

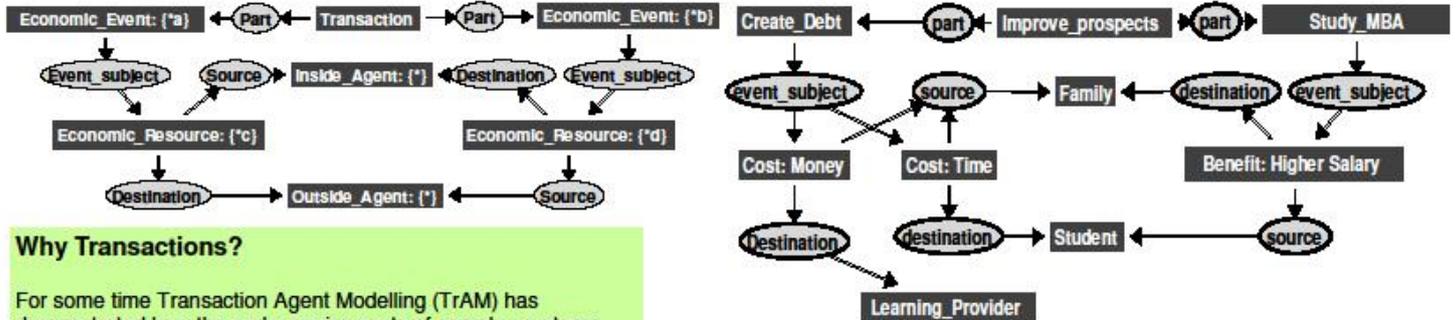
The purpose of the research is to develop a set of resources around each theme, including principles, guidelines, case studies and approaches to developing Learner Autonomy.

On the following two pages you will find some examples of ongoing work within the STAR Project .



STAR Theme: Developing a Conceptual Stance Towards Higher Education

Colin Beard, Richard Hill & Anne Nortcliffe



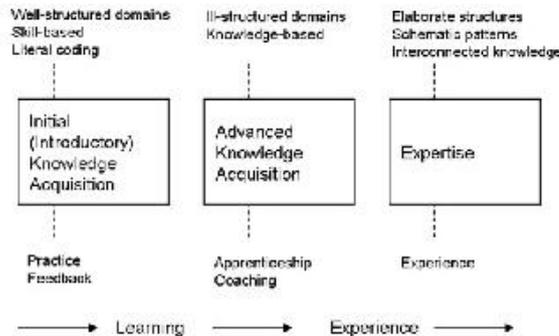
Why Transactions?

For some time Transaction Agent Modelling (TrAM) has demonstrated how the early requirements of complex systems can be captured and described in a lucid yet rigorous way.

Using Geerts and McCarthy's REA (Resource-Events-Agents) model (Polovina 2009) as its basis, TrAM manages to capture the 'qualitative' dimensions of learning transactions and processes.

These dimensions (e.g. 'student experience') don't lend themselves to be measured entirely in monetary terms, but need to be factored into approaches that can usefully describe the dilemmas of learners.

Are Existing Conceptual Models Useful? (Jonassen 1993)



Are Learning Styles Helpful?

David Kolb (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

A Critique of Kolb:

Smith, M. K. (2001). *David A. Kolb on experiential learning*. Retrieved December 22nd, 2008, from <http://www.infed.org/biblio/b-exolrn.htm>

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 Polovina, S. and Hill, R. (2009). A Transactions Pattern for Structuring Unstructured Corporate Information in Enterprise Applications. *International Journal of Intelligent Information Technologies*, S. Polovina and R. Hill (eds), IGI Global, USA, in press.



Enquiry Based Learning - STAR Project



Developing Learner Autonomy through Assessment and Feedback in Problem Based Learning

Heather Wilkins, Claire Craig and Kiefer Lee

Aim of the Study

The literature identifies assessment and feedback as important tools in the development of learner autonomy (Black and Williams 1998, Boud 1995, Hinett and Thomas 1999, Knight and Yorke 2003)

Much of this work has focussed specifically on autonomy in the context of self assessment. In our study we wanted to explore feedback in the context of PBL.

Who was involved:-

There were two phases to the study.

Phase One :- students from OT, midwifery and marketing.

Phase Two :- practitioners from around the globe.

Data Collection Methods:

Focus Groups

Interviews



Findings

Feedback is a core element in promoting learner autonomy -

"Feedback is great for learning... good for making me study"

Feedback can build confidence -

"it tells me what I'm good at"

"so I know I make progress in the right direction."

Feedback works on multiple levels -

"tutor led" - Feedback is great for learning. Good for making me study

"peer led" - it's useful for exchanging different ideas... and gaining different perspectives.

"Self-reflection" - identify gaps in our own learning.

The next phase of this work is to analyse the data collected by Kiefer at the 2nd International PBL symposium Singapore, to develop a set of guidelines around assessment for tutors using PBL and produce a series of journal articles to share our findings.



Sheffield
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Centre For Excellence in Teaching and Learning
Centre For Promoting Learner Autonomy
www.shu.ac.uk/cetl

Faculty Project Scheme

The CETL is working very closely with all four faculties of the university on large scale faculty-wide projects. These two and a half-year projects are now underway, and are being developed by the faculties in areas where engaging with learner autonomy will have a significant impact on students' learning experience. The project teams have a designated project leader, who is responsible for managing initiatives that typically involve a complete degree programme or a substantial part of one. The projects' rationales are underpinned by an existing theoretical framework informed by principles of learner autonomy, and will contribute to each Faculty's strategic LTA development.

Faculty of Arts, Computing, Engineering and Sciences

"Enquiry Based Learning (EBL) - Developing and Embedding Effective Practice in ACES"

Project Leaders: Prof Allan Norcliffe and Justin Lewis

This project builds on the recognition of EBL as a means of enabling students to become more autonomous in their own learning. The aim of the project is to identify relevant areas of provision where EBL could be introduced and embedded at module and course level within Art, Design, Communication, Media, combined with courses in Engineering and Computing. In particular, key to the EBL project will be identifying opportunities for students to work with those from another discipline with an EBL approach to learning and teaching. As part of a coherent and aligned strategy for LTA development, the EBL project will provide resources and support for programme leaders, course leaders and module leaders to introduce elements of EBL in the curriculum.

Faculty of Health and Wellbeing

"Encouraging and Enhancing Learner Autonomy"

Project Leaders: Claire Craig and Karen Booth

The overall aim of this project is to develop a 'toolkit' for staff which will support teaching and learning strategies for promoting learner autonomy. An initial literature review will identify skill and attributes of autonomous learners and an action research approach will be used to identify how these are being supported within the Faculty, using six courses as the primary focus. Working with the staff and students, areas/strategies related to good practice in learner autonomy will be identified and these will be evaluated. Findings will then be embedded within an overarching framework to inform and develop an appropriate LTA strategy around learner autonomy.

Faculty of Development and Society

"Enquiry Based Learning (EBL) - Developing and Embedding Effective Practice in D&S"

Project Leader: Phil Askham

The project focuses on using EBL as a vehicle of introducing and embedding elements of learner autonomy at module and course level. Case studies in key areas of provision are utilised to produce guidelines and recommendations on how good practice developed on a small scale can be expanded to encompass the faculty as a whole, providing resources and support for programme leaders, course leaders and module leaders to introduce elements of EBL in the curriculum. While the focus of the project remains on the learner, the project will also address staff experience in relation to learner autonomy. To this end, the establishment of the Learning Common Room is an essential part of embedding practices which support the development of learner autonomy.

Sheffield Business School

"Developing and Embedding Learner Autonomy within the Postgraduate Curriculum to Enhance Learning and Professional Development"

Project Leader: Godfrey Craik

The project will focus on the development of module activities and assessment within the Sheffield Business School's Business and Management programme in order to maximise the input of students in their learning through, for example, the negotiation of learning outcomes, and the opportunity to choose or design activities and/or assessment tasks including assessment criteria, working collaboratively with peers without or in partnership with tutor(s). These developments will be closely integrated at course level with a rolling induction and a PDP process, and support the development of skills and attributes that define an autonomous learner.

Learner Autonomy In Health & Wellbeing

(Faculty of Health & Wellbeing)



Who are we?

A project team from across the Faculty of Health and Wellbeing representing: sport, bioscience, health and social care. The project leaders are Claire Craig and Karen Booth. Other members are Robert Wilson, David Crowther and John Cleak.



What do we aim to do?

The overall aim of this project is to develop a 'toolkit' for staff which will support teaching and learning strategies for promoting learner autonomy.

Why this approach?

We are aware that a great deal of work around learner autonomy is already occurring in the Faculty. However this work often occurs in 'pockets' and isn't widely celebrated. The toolkit will capture and share existing good practice that is occurring throughout the Faculty. The toolkit will be a way that staff can learn about best practice and build on this within their own subject area. It will be particularly valuable to new staff working at the University.

Achievements to date:

We have successfully undertaken a literature review to untangle the phrase learner autonomy and to identify the skills and attributes of autonomous learners

Administered and analysed questionnaires examining motivation and preparation for learning

Interviewed students from across biosciences, operating department practice, occupational therapy and sport and exercise science to look at factors that helped and hindered learning

Analysis of these interviews has highlighted a number of themes including:

The importance of induction in helping students to manage this first transition period into higher education

The role of the wider learning environment in supporting students

The need to include a range of learning activities which reflect the varied learning styles of students

The inter-relationship between the social, academic and professional dimensions and how these impact on learning and on the student experience

If you would like to find out more about this work do not hesitate to contact....



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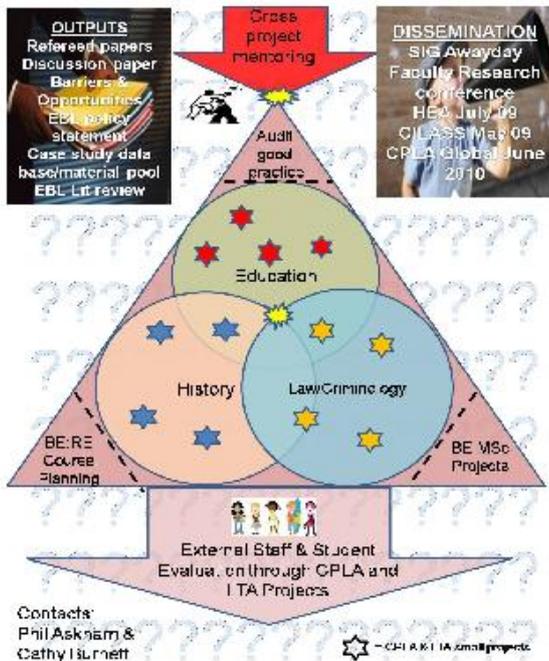
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Embedding Enquiry Based Learning in D&S: The Half-Time Score

(Faculty of Development & Society)



Outputs/ Dissemination

Conferences

PBL Finland, Tampere April 2009
 HEA, Manchester June 2009
 LTEA, Reading July 2009 (2 papers)
 (FIG, Sydney, April 2010)

Papers

(EBL Manifestations and Possibilities)

Embedding

(Identification of Departmental Advocates in three programme areas due for validation in 2009/2010)

Working with Curriculum Development Group and UG Programme Leaders Group

Support

Learning Common Room workshop
 June 2009

Set up blog at

<http://learningcommonroom.wordpress.com/>

Staff Narratives from small projects
 (to be developed into case studies)
 (next event Autumn 2009 half day externally facilitated workshop exploring Reflection)

Exploring links with learning hubs

Learner Autonomy : A Holistic study

The Journey to Independent Learning

(Sheffield Business School)



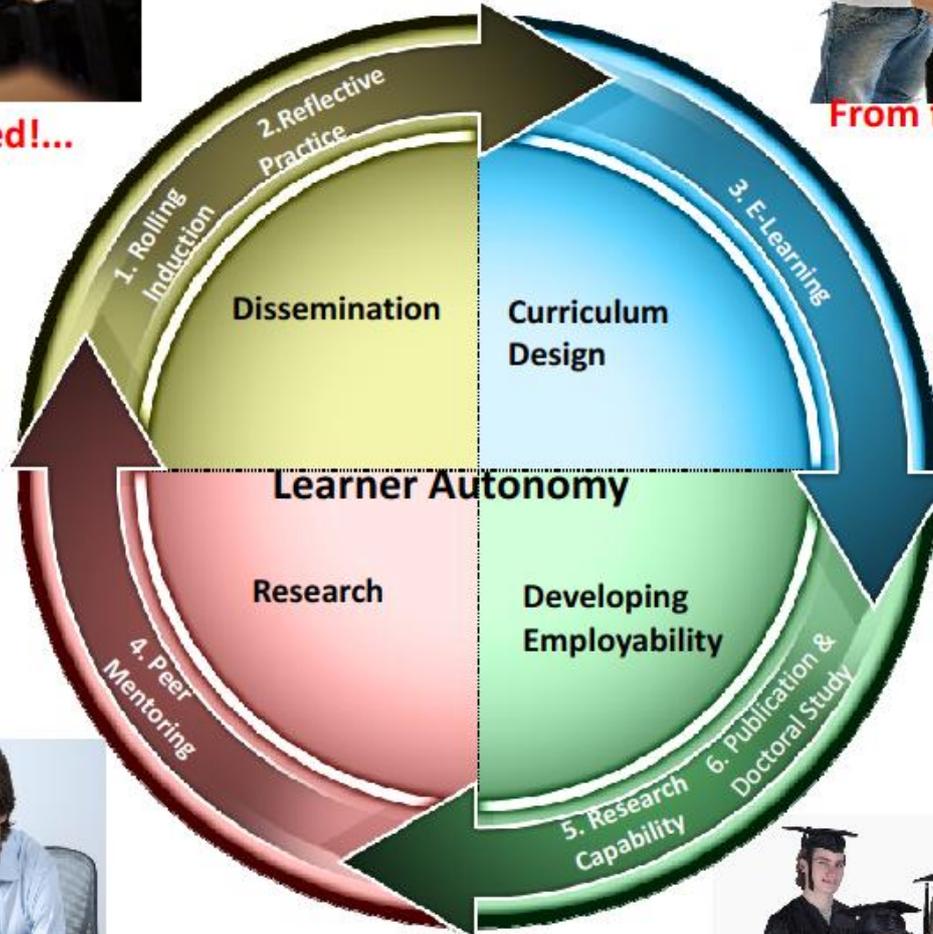
Sheffield Business School— Six CPLA research project



From Tutor Led!...



From first thoughts!...



...to student centred support!

For more details please contact:
Godfrey Craik— g.h.craik@shu.ac.uk
0114 225 5153



...to making the grade!



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Autonomy themes

Enquiry Based Learning, feedback on assessment, curriculum design for learner autonomy, or student engagement and motivation.

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Educational Development themes

developing communities of practice, leading change, or creating enabling environments

And they say there's no such thing as a free lunch

