

Enquiry Based Learning - Developing and Embedding Effective Practice (Faculty of Arts, Computing Engineering & Sciences)



Aim: To enhance student learner autonomy through the use of enquiry based learning (EBL)

Objectives

- embedding EBL ideas within the curriculum of new and existing courses
- providing a bank of resources and support to encourage staff to introduce EBL
- developing staff in their LTA practice
- disseminating best practice

Expected learning

- Enhanced knowledge by staff of EBL approaches
- Heightened understanding of learner autonomy by staff and students
- A greater understanding of support needs for staff development

Rationale

The rationale for the project lies in the strong resonance that exists between the characteristics and benefits of EBL and the development of student learner autonomy. This project should improve retention, employability and achievement. EBL will also improve the attractiveness and marketability of faculty courses.

Characteristics of EBL:

- Learning is student-centred; individual and group participation
- Lecturers are facilitators: moderating, guiding, advising, encouraging, motivating
- Students formulate their own lines of enquiry to achieve given learning outcomes
- Students tackle real-world problems

Benefits of EBL are the following:

- Students take more ownership, are more enthusiastic and engaged
- EBL allows students to develop a more flexible approach to their studies
- Students develop team leadership and time management skills
- Self-directed learning develops research skills
- Forces staff to reflect on the learning process and the changing needs of students

Expected impact on conceptions and practice

- Introduction of student centred learning approaches across a wider range of modules
- Enhanced learning opportunities for students
- Significant LTA engagement for module leaders and course leaders
- Closer alignment of academic and central (LITS) services
- Staff development opportunities
- New curriculum developments
- Cross faculty collaboration and dissemination

Dissemination

- Ongoing within Faculty, through LTA committee, Programme Leadership Group
- Ongoing within institution, through the LTI and CETL
- Ongoing external, dissemination through relevant HEA subject centres and HEA conferences

What's happening in 2010?

Creative Media Practice:

EBL project work is already embedded in the four new degree courses in this area (BA Animation, BA Games Design, BA Film and Visual Effects, BA Digital Media Production).

Project 1 Outline: The First Year Integrated Project focuses on the application of digital media to a permanent exhibition held in the Millennium Galleries metalwork gallery. First year students working in teams are responsible for developing the collection around a digital framework; to enhance, entice and excite the collection through the creation and use of digital media (animation, games, video, audio, streaming media and 3D). The project is being conducted with the generous help of Museums Sheffield.

Staff: John Hayes & Chris Hall from SHU + Claire Strike from Museums Sheffield

Project 2 Outline: Research Methods Semester 1 & Critical Analysis Semester 2: Integrating Creative Practice, Critical Analysis and Academic Writing Skills through Enquiry-Based Learning via Critical-Studies modules that assist students' development as active, independent and digitally-literate researchers, using the existing Critical Studies modules as a vehicle for enquiry-based learning.

Staff: Oksana Fedotova- Dean Summers- Debbie Ballin- David Williams- Katy Carroll- Richard Hill

What's happening this year.....continued

Fine Art: Dialogue. Outline: The aim of this module is to provide an experience of 'wisdom building' as well as for students to understand potential relationships between the artist and the art industry. The objective of this module is to activate in the student new ways of autonomous thinking about the relationships between the Institutions (one of which is the University itself) that make up the 'art world' and, as importantly, their position within such a matrix. **Staff:** Helen Blejerman, Hester Reeve

Information Systems Group & Learning Technology Institute project team Investigate the potential for collaborative technologies to facilitate meaningful, satisfying and autonomous group work experiences. Gain further understanding of the application of collaborative technologies such as virtual classrooms (Elluminate), VOIP (Skype), Instant messaging and synchronous wikis that may enable students to develop their autonomy through working together remotely and synchronously. Develop further understanding of student preferences in the use of these technologies to support group work and the potential to develop the autonomous learner. **Staff:** Cheryl Middleton - Helen Rodger - Dr Mike Gibson.

DDEL (Designing & Developing e-learning) E-learning materials for Databases [killer modules]. Final-year students producing e-Learning materials for second-year students in databases. **Staff:** Cheryl Middleton & Mike Gibson

Staff development support offered

In consultation and collaboration with the CPLA CETL, the Faculty of ACES will work closely with the Faculty of Development and Society to design and develop a series of professional development programmes for relevant staff. It is anticipated that external expertise will be sought and invited to advise on this programme of activity.

A one day short course run by Faculty staff entitled **'Management using Myers-Briggs business psychology'** is available via the Training Foundry within ACES.

How is the ACES Project to be evaluated?

- Continuous evaluation by Project Manager - Operational
- Strategic evaluation by Steering Group including student reps
- Student Module feedback
- How best to evaluate the Project's overall aim of enhancing student learner autonomy is currently the subject of research and debate in the wider University

Emerging issues

- Working across different courses and programmes imposes timetabling constraints
- Modifying existing courses is not always straightforward
- Assessment of group work is always difficult
- Measuring the acquisition of learner autonomy is still the subject of debate
- Freeing up staff time to engage in LTA activities is not easy