2011 Conference Brochure

Brookes Learning and Teaching Conference & Exhibition: Engaging learning through graduate attributes: staff and student perspectives

Wednesday, 29th June 2011
Harcourt Hill Campus, Oxford Brookes University

The conference committee welcome you.

The overall theme of this year’s event is ‘engaging with graduate attributes’. These attributes form a cornerstone of the new Strategy for Enhancing the Student Experience (SESE, 2010) and are set to become far more explicit in the programmes we offer. There will be plenty of opportunity to meet and discuss current innovations with colleagues from across the University. The rich and varied programme for 2011 includes an opening keynote talk by Jude Carroll on why and how we might raise the game in our internationalisation endeavours. Our external keynote speaker is David White from the Technology-Assisted Lifelong Learning group at the University of Oxford who will be challenging us to consider how we might better guide students on the use of technology for learning.

Other themes running through the conference demonstrate our concerns for feedback and assessment, as well as an array of responses to the role of technology in higher education - including a formal debate organised by a set of colleagues from Health and Social Care.

We are delighted that you have joined us here today and are helping to build on current conversations across the University about how we best enhance the student learning experience.

With very best wishes,

The Conference Organising Committee

Frances Deepwell (Chair) Jan Haines
Richard Francis (Exhibition) Marc Howe
Helen Walkington (Papers) Irmgard Huppe
Roy Grant (Administration) Samia Kamal
Liz Drewett (Website) Berry O’Donovan
Jill Pawlyn
Greg Benfield George Roberts
Maureen Brookes Chris Rust
Mark Burgess Jane Spiro
Sally Davis Marion Waite
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**Welcome and Keynote Talk - 9.15-10.00**

**Internationalisation: are we being prodigious enough?**  
*Jude Carroll, OCSLD*

One Australian Pro-Vice Chancellor described internationalisation as 'a task of prodigious intellectual and practical effort' (McTaggart, 2003). Brookes has been investing some effort recently: a new internationalisation strategy plus global citizenship as one of the five graduate attributes in the Student Experience strategy.

What will it take to move from rhetoric to reality? This short presentation will explore how other HEIs are doing a similar task, look at national and international resources to support the ‘prodigious effort’, and suggest some actions at the level of campus, programme and classroom, which probably will have an impact on the everyday experiences of students and staff at Brookes.

GA: Global citizenship

**Parallel Session 1 - 10.05 -10.40**

**From cross-cultural group work towards global citizenship: Challenges, pitfalls & solutions**  
*Louise Green, OBI & OCSLD*

Global citizenship, according to OBU’s Strategy for Enhancing the Student Experience 2010 – 2015 (SESE), requires ‘knowledge, skills and... cross-cultural awareness, valuing human diversity’. The SESE also states that ‘particular importance will be given to international perspectives and the views of those from a variety of cultures’. Cross-cultural capital and international perspectives are now readily available through the multinational and multilingual diversity of Brookes students.

However, how can global citizenship be developed and international perspectives exploited in the classroom? In reality, students from different countries may be resistant to working in multinational groups. For some, the long-term benefits of collaborating with non-native speakers of English in group tasks, particularly assessed ones, may not necessarily be that obvious.

Cross-cultural group work therefore presents a number of challenges in terms of task design and classroom management. To exploit the diversity available to the explicit benefit of all learners may well require new ways of thinking, planning and evaluating.

This active and hands-on workshop aims to:

- Identify some of the common challenges in cross-cultural group work
- Analyse why problems can occur
- Consider ways of addressing difficulties & conflict
- Share and document concrete examples of good OBU practice
The session will include a number awareness raising strategies, or ‘empathy exercises’ (Carroll & Ryan, 2005), to offer academics opportunities to appreciate some of the challenges faced by international students. Activities will mainly be group-based in order to maximise participant interaction. It is hoped that the workshop will be attended by staff from a range of disciplines, providing an opportunity to share successful and rewarding cross-cultural teaching practices. Some international students will also be invited to offer their perspectives and experiences.

GA: Global citizenship

Virtually there: Supporting and assessing the development of digital literacies through virtual groupwork
Debbie Witney, Business

This practice paper describes experiences of students and staff engaging with digital and information literacy within a large first year module in the Business School. ‘Managing in a Diverse Global Environment’ is a campus based core module in which students engage with on-line communication tools and the creation of a collaborative document using a wiki. Building on previous research in this context (Witney and Smallbone, 2011) the design of the module incorporated opportunities to learn how to use the relevant features of Brookes Virtual and explore the nature of collaborative skills. Students were required to submit for assessment a report examining the challenges of virtual group working in a business context. Both the product of collaboration (50%) and the individual contribution to the collaborative process (50%) were assessed.

The value of the online assignment in facilitating the development of digital literacy skills was evaluated using data from assessment feedback, module evaluations and the Business School’s review of its Groupwork Policy. Overall the assignment was well received from both student and tutor perspectives and moderately successful. However, the strength of student preferences for face-to-face meetings and dividing up the work (co-operative working) is a developmental hurdle still to be overcome. The paper concludes with proposals for development of e-tivities for building trust and approaches to collaboration within virtual teams and invites further discussion of the management of e-moderating activities in the context of large classes and marking teams.


GA: digital and information literacy

Optimising Student Performance in Assessment Through Assignment Brief Design
Fiona Gilbert & Garry Maguire, Oxford Brookes International

This paper derives from Brookes-funded research into hand-in assignment tasks. The research focused at the outset on the discourse characteristics of assignment texts with the aim of developing a taxonomy of types to aid lecturers in setting, and
students in completing, assignments, and thus facilitating academic literacy skills development. It has since drawn on and made connections between literature in the fields of linguistics, academic literacy and cognitive psychology. Having analysed a wide range of undergraduate assignment instructions and exemplars, feedback survey data and structured interviews of students investigating assignment task processing, it has become evident that the clarity of assignment briefs is key in the assessment task process.

Interpreting the brief is vital for students when performing assignment tasks, often requiring significant cognitive resource allocation to interpreting requirements. If a proportion of these resources can be reallocated towards actual task performance, then more can be freed up to invest in targeting the intended academic literacy development outcomes thus facilitating greater engagement with the relevant graduate attributes.

This talk will provide a brief overview of the range of assignment text types found and provide opportunity for participants to discuss issues in assignment setting and completion this raises. Having, reflected on their own assessment practice and evaluated an exemplar assignment brief, participants will then be provided with a detailed rationale, based primarily on cognitive load theory and the project research data, of the importance of the effectiveness of the brief itself. A means to work towards achieving this end will then be proposed.

GA: academic literacy

Using an ‘Induction Wiki’ to improve the undergraduate student experience: features, reflections and future developments
Lindsay Williams & Belinda Platt, Faculty of Business

Exhibition presentation

In the Faculty of Business, over 900 new students (UK and International) embark on a range of undergraduate business-related modular programmes every September. Given the size and diversity of the incoming student body, the induction and orientation process needs to be logistically sound, content accurate and experientially meaningful. In 2009, the induction team developed an ‘Induction Wiki’ to help with this process and appeal to the increasingly techno-savvy Generation Y student population. The wiki, similar in look to a website, provided students with a central place to access live induction information and explore at their leisure other content areas (such as ‘Meet your teaching Team’, ‘How to get the best out of University’, ‘Frequently Asked Questions’). Evaluation data was collected via SurveyMonkey (30% response rate) and overall student feedback for both induction and the wiki was positive.

Since the launch of the ‘Induction Wiki’, other Faculties within Brookes have developed and implemented their own versions. For the Faculty of Business, attention has been devoted to improving both content and navigation of the original wiki. Features now include a ‘chat’ function enabling students to communicate with each other pre-arrival and during induction week. Audio-visual content has also been uploaded, allowing new students to view and hear the experiences of existing Brookes students.

The wiki is about to encounter its third incarnation, building on the evaluation data and usage statistics from both 2009 and 2010. The aim of this paper is to present a summary of our findings in relation to our plans for September 2011, and
demonstrate aspects of the wiki in practice. Whilst of particular interest to those already working with new technologies, this presentation is essentially concerned with improving the student induction experience (via the use of technology), and therefore relevant to both the experienced and novice technology user.

GA: digital and information literacy

**I do and I understand: delivering hands on information skills training to large groups**

*David Bell, Learning Resources*

Exhibition Presentation

Business students not only need the academic books and journals that all students need, but also require economic and financial data, global news and market research on companies, consumers and markets. We have a wide variety of commercial databases that answer these needs.

As the number of students grew in the late 90’s we found that the logistics of training face to face became impossible. A workbook was used for three years and the opportunity was taken to convert it into a Virtual Learning course. Every student can now engage “hands on” with the databases at a pace and time convenient to them. A major advantage of the course is being able to monitor student’s use.

The aim of the course is to develop basic database searching skills and to enable students to appreciate the variety of information available, much of which they might not imagine existed. In particular, students soon recognise the importance of searching databases effectively to retrieve more focussed and relevant results. The information literacy that this engenders underpins all of their subsequent research and learning.

Berry O’Donovan, Head of Teaching and Learning in the Business School, successfully used the course with undergraduates in her Sourcing Information module, and added her own course requirement test which students were required to pass. It has since been extended with great success to Global MBAs. Evaluation has been obtained by modular evaluation forms and informal feedback.

The course has also recently been extended to students in collaborative FE colleges: Abingdon and Whitney, Solihull and Swindon. We are hoping to continue exploiting this resource by getting it embedded in undergraduate introductory modules.

GA: digital and information literacy

**Parallel Session 2 - 11.00 – 11.35**

**Beyond the curriculum - in search of authentic settings to disseminate undergraduate research. The case of departmental, school and national conferences.**

*Helen Walkington, Anthropology & Geography*

Research paper
In order to deepen an understanding of the research process and to enhance communication skills, undergraduate research needs to be disseminated. The range of extra curricular settings for sharing student (and especially undergraduate) research has grown dramatically in recent years in the UK. However, little has been done to systematically evaluate the impact of the mode of research dissemination, and the setting in which this occurs on the student learning experience. Undergraduates are increasingly being invited to participate in sessions with academics at conferences to demonstrate student engagement. In April 2011 there was the first British Conference on Undergraduate Research (BCUR).

This paper considers the undergraduate research conference as an authentic setting to disseminate research results. Three undergraduate research conferences were held in the School of Social Sciences and Law in 2008, 2009 and 2011. Interview data reveals that students gain confidence as they become recognised as researchers, they benefit from immediate in-depth dialogic feedback from academic staff and peers, and describe their experience in terms of graduate attributes and employability skills. Tacit knowledge of how to communicate in a new scholarly format is also gained. This paper asserts that the informal dialogic format of a poster conference enhances research literacy and other graduate attributes. The presentation will end with questions for delegates to discuss: Should we adopt undergraduate research conferences as a model across the university? Should conferences include (and perhaps be run by) postgraduate students? Are student research conferences most effective at departmental, faculty, university or national level? Could conferences be part of our community engagement strategy?

GA: research literacy, academic literacy, critical self-awareness and personal literacy

Looking back and looking forward – preparing for Moodle
Irmgard Huppe, Health & Social Care & Emma Coles, Business

Workshop

Soon we will be venturing into a new VLE – Moodle.

In the School of Health we offer MOTs (health checks) for VLE courses (see https://mw.brookes.ac.uk/display/hsc/MOT+for+VLE+modules+in+HSC). The Business School offers a rather similar service, called Dr Em (see https://sites.google.com/a/brookes.ac.uk/business-school-learning-resources). In our MOT/Dr Em sessions we meet up with lecturers to have a closer look at our portals/gateways and modules, what they offered, how they went about it, and what they might have missed out on. We want to ask our audience what they expect from a VLE in the future.

We will start with a short presentation of our experience with the MOT/Dr Em service, and the conclusions drawn from it. This will be followed by a discussion with our audience in a joint attempt to answer the questions:

- Are there any lessons from the past we can take forward into our future with Moodle?
- How will Moodle support us in working towards providing “technologies that empower students’ development as self-regulating, digitally literate learners, able to shape their own learning interactions and author their own digital artefacts”? as requested in SESE (Strategy for Enhancing the Student Experience 2010 – 2015)
• What other expectations do we share for venturing into Moodle?

Apart from presentation software, the additional tool of the trade we intend to use is *TurningPoint*. The main outcomes will be to receive feedback from lecturers for our future work as learning technologists.

**GA:** digital and information literacy

**Investigating assessment literacy in Oxford Brookes University's learning communities: what is it and how can it be developed?**

*Margaret Price & Birgit den Outer, ASKe/Pedagogy Research Centre, Business School*

**Workshop**

“I can’t really complain because I’ve got a 70% pass mark and if that was a degree that would be a First. So I should be happy with what I’ve done, but I’m not really because I feel that I’m capable of so much more” - Diarist

Assessment literacy is seen as key to life-long learning but how do students become assessment literate and how can it be developed? This research is part of a wider joint ASKe/OCSDL project at Oxford Brookes University that includes an evaluation of the Assessment Compact, designed to reorient assessment culture over several years among staff and students. In our research project we are tracking the assessment experiences of undergraduate students via audio diaries. Our aim is to gain an insight into factors that influence the development of assessment literacy.

With a working definition of assessment literacy as understanding the nature and standards of assessments, our research is underpinned by the following assumptions:

• Assessment literacy is informed by historical, social, and cultural narratives of the individual (cf. ‘constructedness’ of performance patterns, Shay 2008); it therefore matters who does the understanding.

• It can be developed via the ‘right’ type of experience as part of, and in response to a (learning) community to which students belong; an assessment literacy process is therefore situated, experiential and developmental (Dreyfus and Dreyfus 2005).

• It goes beyond that of the learning institution and is embedded in wider competencies and knowledge, and is therefore transferable, see for instance academic and pedagogic literacies (Lea and Street 1998, 2006; Ivanič et al. 2007; Maclellan 2008)

For the conference session, members of the audience will be invited to participate in a short activity. In small groups, they will be asked to discuss quotes from the diaries to help tease out what might be the building blocks of becoming assessment literate. In so doing, participants are invited to comment on how assessment literacy is developed in their own departments.

**GA:** academic literacy
Learning legacies

John Buswell, HLST Subject Centre & Steve Burholt, mediaworkshop

Exhibition presentation

The HE Academy Subject Centre for Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism (HLST) was awarded funding by the JISC for the development of Open Educational Resources (OER) on the theme of the legacy of the Olympic and Paralympic Games. There is a range of resources in this collection:

Case studies and discussion starters produced by Dr Elesa Argent (London Metropolitan University) for the Olympics and Paralympics SIG

Official documents: resources (official plans, publications and documents) from LOCOG related to the planning of the 2012 Games

Research: Other resources which underpin and promote research into the Olympics and Paralympics including a series of research papers by Canterbury Christ Church University and a range of Routledge publications.

John Buswell, the Project Director and HLST Subject Centre Assistant Director, and Steve Burholt, Media Workshop, will show off the resources that have been published as a Special Collection in the Brookes RADAR repository.

GA: research literacy, digital and information literacy

Ripple project – OERs in action

Peter Robinson, Oxford University Computing Services & Richard Francis, mediaworkshop

Ripple is a JISC-funded project led by the Learning Technologies Group, Oxford University Computing Services, University of Oxford. Its aim is to inform the strategies developed at other UK HE institutions contemplating the release of Open Educational Resources by the sharing of effective practice.

The team responsible for the successful delivery of OER at Oxford, led by Peter Robinson of OUCS, has provided expert support and guidance to two partner institutions, Oxford Brookes University and Harper Adams University College.

Peter and Richard will describe how Ripple is helping Brookes to understand the implications of and investigate local solutions for sustainable OER release, to develop effective engagement and dissemination strategies which will engender a culture of openness, and to release some of our teaching and learning materials under a Creative Commons licence in the RADAR repository.

GA: digital and information literacy

Exhibition presentation
"Digital literacies? I just type it into Google..."

David White, University of Oxford

We know that the majority of students use the web extensively for their studies but we are less sure about what captures their attention or what they find most helpful. Recent research indicates that digital literacy and information literacy are not closely linked and learners who are ‘good with technology’ are not necessarily adept at finding and analysing relevant sources of information: ‘I just type it into Google and see what comes up’ appears to be a common approach.

It is crucial we recognise new modes of engagement and information seeking that the web makes available, taking a lead in promoting online learning literacies. Drawing on research-in-progress this talk will discuss student’s methods of engaging with the web to support their studies and suggest how we might help them to navigate the abundance of content and opportunities to communicate online.

David has worked in the overlapping space between education, technology and media for nearly 16 years. He co-manages Technology-Assisted Lifelong Learning (TALL), an elearning research and development group at the University of Oxford based in the Department for Continuing Education.

Parallel Session 3 - 13.40 -14.15

Practice Makes Perfect – An active learning & research collaboration case study

Tom Farrell, Business

Second year marketing and business students at the Brookes Business School were able to bring theory to life by undertaking an exciting research project on behalf of Oxford United Football Club this semester. Prompted by a bill going through parliament, football clubs and fans throughout the UK are trying to assess the potential of introducing 'safe standing' areas at football grounds. This is a change to the 'all seater' stadia introduced as a result of the unfortunate events at Hillsboro when 96 Liverpool football fans died.

In collaboration with Oxford United Football Club and its Supporters, the Brookes students, as part of their Marketing Research Module, designed and implemented a unique market research investigation aimed at assessing the potential for 'safe standing areas' being incorporated into the Oxford United stadium. This innovative research study included students conducting surveys of Oxford fans at three live games and on-line; in addition focus groups and ethnographic participant observation studies were used. The 97 students involved successfully analysed and presented their findings back to the client and have not only helped the club make the right decisions but also potentially have an impact in the national debate on this important crowd safety issue. This active leaning project was a great opportunity for
our students to practice what they are learning, work together as team and engage in real-life research into a 'local and national issue. This presentation reflects on the benefits and issues arising for teaching staff who also wish to undertake similar projects to help students engage in practical, relevant and topical 'live' projects in their subject area.

GA: academic literacy, research literacy, self-critical awareness and personal literacy

The Power of Experience: implementing and evaluating the use of a mobile approach for enhancing student’s learning in urban design.

Laura Novo de Azevedo, Planning with Tobias Fett & Nina Sharp. Undergraduate students in Planning

Research paper

In this paper students and lecturers involved in the undergraduate module 'City Design and Development' in Planning discuss the initial outcomes of the pilot of the project 'The Power of Experience'. The project was aimed at developing and implementing a mobile approach for teaching and learning in built environment disciplines. It departed from the realisation that although urban design aims to improve the sensory experience of the urban environment, its teaching mostly takes place indoors, fully insulated from outside. While most students are capable of applying taught principles to the design of urban areas, it was argued that this could simply be a result of a direct transference of 'accepted wisdom' imparted during lectures. A series of mobile lectures and a skills development programme focused on video for research and communication in urban design were developed alongside the already established content of the module to facilitate a move from a 'recipient' to a 'critical thinking' approach to learning.

An open learning environment (www.urbandesignexperience.com) was designed for hosting the Mobile Lectures and a wiki was intensely used by all involved in the module. Preliminary results show that the format of the module had a positive impact on the engagement of most students. The use of mobile lecturers also increased students’ awareness of urban design issues, which would, in the context of the classroom, be very difficult to experience. Finally it indicates that the digital components of the module can impact knowledge construction by creating a dialogical environment where lecturers and students assume the responsibilities of learning and teaching.

This project is being funded by an Innovation in Teaching grant from the Higher Education Academy.

GA: academic literacy, research literacy, self-critical awareness and personal literacy
Extending the mode of report formats used by learners in assessments: exploring the challenges

*Eric Cassells & Karen Handley, Business School*

Workshop

Employers want graduates who communicate well in a variety of modes appropriate to the business context, yet our assessment regime has scarcely progressed from the norm of 'report or presentation'.

This paper reports on the comparative evaluation of an innovative student assessment undertaken as part of an MBA class. Learners were initially required to submit a "traditional" written report on a well-structured analytical task on an organization with which they were familiar, before being asked to complete their analysis on organizational complexity, uncertainty and change in the same context through a mixed audio-visual format report, comprising a single diagram (or rich picture) combined with a short explanatory and reflective audio report.

The assessment strategy was designed to encourage learners in their use of visualisation techniques to explore, analyse and evaluate a real case scenario, and to extend the range of conventional written or slide-based presentation techniques used by learners to audio and other visual media. The approach addresses the needs to engage with digital media as submissions were all made through a VLE, as well as the use of visual representation for critical awareness of the learners own working context.

'Authentic' assessments (Brown, Collins and Duguid, 1989) such as these enable students to develop desirable graduate attributes, but present several challenges. For academics, how can we ensure constructive alignment (Biggs, 1999) for these innovative forms of assessment (e.g. how can we be sure that the learning outcomes can be achieved using this new media). For learners, what formative opportunities can they have to practise using this authentic form of communication before they complete their summative assignment?

Comparative evaluation data, as well as examples of both the diagrams and audios will be presented at the conference.

References


GA: academic literacy, digital and information literacy

**English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and the Web**

*Peter Saunders, OBI*

**Exhibition presentation**

This session looks at how powerful new technology is transforming English for Academic Purposes (EAP) pedagogy. There will be a practical demonstration of the use of online concordances and Antconc, the freeware concordance programme. These tools offer unique autonomous learning benefits and are particularly useful in acquainting students with genre and discipline requirements in their writing.
Simulation and Experiential Learning in Law: Student Client Interviewing
Marc Howe, Department of Law with Law Department Students

Exhibition presentation

Student participation in client interviewing helps to develop the graduate attributes of academic literacy, research literacy, and critical self-awareness and personal literacy. Students in the law department have the opportunity to develop the skills of client interviewing as part of the undergraduate curriculum, and also in the context of extra-curricular activity. Interviewing activity helps to deepen disciplinary knowledge and understanding, reinforces learners’ engagement with a learning community by mirroring real-world professional practices, and enhances students’ employability and transferable skills.

The undergraduate module ‘Communication Skills for Lawyers’ is concerned with communication skills in the context of client interviewing and advocacy. The course involves the use of DVD recording, analysis and reflection upon learning. Weekly small group workshops establish an effective and supportive community of learning, and allow students to develop their oral skills and receive feedback through a combination of self-assessment, peer assessment and tutor-led assessment. Assessment includes a client interviewing exercise in the context of a fictional case study.

All law students also have the opportunity to participate in the Brookes internal client interviewing competition, with the winners representing the University in the National Client Interviewing Competition. The competitions involve students in teams of two interviewing and advising a client about a fictitious legal problem. In the National Competition students are observed by panels of three judges, each panel consisting of one ‘academic’, one ‘practitioner’ and one ‘counsellor’. In 2009 and 2011 Brookes students achieved third place in the National Final. In 2010 Brookes students won the National Final and represented England and Wales in the International Final in Hong Kong, where they came second in the world.

The conference session will involve contributions from students as well as filmed extracts of Brookes students’ participation in the ‘Communication Skills for Lawyers’ module, and in the National and International Client Interviewing Competitions.

GA: academic literacy, research literacy, self-critical awareness and personal literacy

Parallel Session 4 - 14.35 -15.10

Engaging Students with Personal Literacy by Incorporating Personal Development Planning into the Curriculum
Mary McAlinden, School of Technology

Paper

Personal Development Planning (PDP) has been defined as: “a structured and supported process undertaken by an individual to reflect upon their own learning,
performance and / or achievement and to plan for their personal, educational and career development” (QAA, 2001). As part of their HE experience students may meet PDP as an add-on to their academic studies or may find it more closely integrated into their course studies. Since September 2005 PDP has been incorporated into the curriculum of Mathematics degree programmes at Oxford Brookes by including a strand of PDP in a final year double module. The mathematical content of the module runs in parallel with the PDP strand, which is assessed but does not have any allocated contact time.

Within the PDP strand of the module students follow a structured programme of activities. This is designed to encourage students to focus their attention on future careers and to actively promote personal literacy by improving students’ critical self-awareness of the skills being developed throughout the degree programme. The activities included in the programme have developed with experience and in response to student feedback. In the last year the PDP content and the nature of the assessment have been completely redesigned with a view to encouraging deeper levels of student engagement and reflection. This talk will discuss the impact of these changes and provide details of how the actual PDP component of the module is structured and assessed.

References


GA: academic literacy, self-critical awareness and personal literacy

Debate: This House Believes that Full Scale Online Education Will Inevitably Become Fully Integrated and Thus Indistinguishable, From Mainstream Education.


Debate

John Sener (2011:4) proposes that online education will ‘become a routine, commonplace and integral part of educational experience’. This has been a point of debate and reflection within the MSc Nursing Studies team. Our recent evaluation of online learning within the School of Health & Social Care has focused on the student experience and caused us to explore the issues that Sener raises.

Our own personal experience as a team has highlighted inherent differences between blended learning and fully online distance learning. These variables include student experience, staff development needs, resources, technical challenges and indeed what we are trying to achieve by the delivery of online learning.

This session aims to provoke discussion by presenting two different perspectives on the future role of online learning. Should fully online learning be a necessary and inevitable component of the higher education experience? The current university strategy (SESE 2010) is focused on the student experience and graduate attributes; the consequent challenge for academic and support staff is to provide the appropriate mode of delivery to prepare learners for life and discipline specific practice in the 21st century.
We will run this session as a formal debate, which presents both sides of the argument and will include an opportunity for some participant discussion and a vote for or against the motion. Findings from our recent evaluation of online learning will also be integrated into the debate.

GA: academic literacy, digital and information literacy

‘Golden opportunity’ or ‘Lead Balloon’? Evaluating and evolving a module’s formative assessment and feedback strategy
Dan Butcher, School of Health and Social Care

Evaluating the effectiveness of formative feedback has been characterised as ‘difficult and perhaps impossible’ as a result of the contrasting perspectives of staff and students (Price et al, 2010, p287) and yet the ability to effectively utilise feedback is essential for the development of a graduates’ critical self-awareness and personal literacy. While the transfer of pedagogic research into programme, faculty and university assessment strategies can be challenging, educators who ‘take note of students’ views on assessment matters’ can evaluate and evolve innovations that support student learning through assessment (Brown, 2010, p348).

In this paper we seek to evaluate embedded assessment feedback strategies adopted in a Year 2 practice related Adult Nursing module which utilises a summative presentation. Multi-staged assessment forms a framework for learning and the development of new academic skills.

An adapted Assessment Experience Questionnaire (Gibbs & Simpson, 2003) was used to gather data from those who engaged with the formative feedback processes. Surprisingly over 30% of students chose not to take what staff perceived to be a ‘golden opportunity’ of development feedback during the preparation of their presentation. This necessitated the development of an additional section to better understand why some students might have seen this more as a ‘lead balloon’ and underpinned by strategic decisions concerning engagement with the feedback process.

This information provides valuable evidence for module developments and the planned introduction of a strategy using exemplars, marking criteria and feedback as well as informing subtle adjustments in terms of timing and plan format (after Rust et al, 2003; Hendry et al, 2011).

GA: self-critical awareness and personal literacy

Academic literacy: tutor perceptions of the word-based boundaries of plagiarism
Mary Davis, Oxford Brookes International

Academic literacy is regarded as a key graduate attribute and an essential element of HE. However, the teaching and learning context of academic literacy has to confront the complex issue of plagiarism. The guidelines given to students about plagiarism often refer to the need to ‘use your own words’, and most of the attention given to plagiarism occurs at the word level (Angélil-Carter, 2000). However, these guidelines are less clear about explaining where the word-based boundaries of
plagiarism lie. Furthermore, the words and phrases employed in writing belong to the discourse community of the discipline, and many would argue that it is good practice for student writers to learn to identify commonly used formulaic word combinations that may be re-used in their own writing (Swales and Feak, 2004).

However, questions remain about how perceptions of this practice differ across disciplines, and, in cases where the practice is viewed as being acceptable, what parameters relating to phrase length and degree of specificity may be applied. In an attempt to gain a greater understanding of this area, academics were surveyed at Oxford Brookes University and the University of Manchester, representing a broad range of disciplines (n= 42). Commonly occurring phrases of different lengths and different degrees of content specificity were presented, and respondents were asked to consider each item separately and then indicate whether they thought its re-use would constitute plagiarism. Results suggest that some word-based boundaries of plagiarism can be established, which could inform the teaching and learning of academic literacy. Participants will be encouraged to discuss their own views of these word-based boundaries and to consider how they may apply to their own teaching and learning context.

References


GA: academic literacy

4E: Enhancing and Evaluating the Electronic Learning Experience

Dominic Corrywright & Tom Cosgrove, Philosophy and Religion

Exhibition presentation

The purpose of this presentation is to critically examine and review an innovative ongoing project that links themes related to learning and teaching in Religion and Theology: firstly the development of electronic resources to enhance student learning; secondly to review a related study visit to India and student research emerging from the project.

For a number of years Corrywright and Cosgrove have been working with Jyoti Sahi, a theologian and painter based in southern India, whose work reflects a number of key themes such as enculturation, marginalisation, primalism, Dalits and dispossessed, and the relation between art and spiritualities. This project has led to the creation of a series of web-based multimedia learning objects, utilising Sahi’s work to explore these themes.

The learning objects are being trialled on the Religion and Philosophy department’s VLE for use Research Topics modules at levels five and six, before being released on the RADAR repository, for wider use across the University and as an open educational resource. It is argued that the packages are appropriate for use by students studying on anthropology, culture, communications, philosophy, sociology, art, geography, and education programmes.

The BA Religion and Theology programme includes modules which encourage and develop the student as an independent learner. A learning object, or selection of
these objects, will be used by students for independent research topics. The exciting possibilities of these resources feed into a longer term plan to develop and build student research projects on themes emerging from the learning objects and regular study visits to Sangam, based near Bangalore, India. Corrywright and Cosgrove have organised study visits to Sangam that enhance Religion and Theology as well as other programmes. The meaning of Sangam, as Sahi puts it, is 'a meeting place, a confluence', this aspect has the potential to impact powerfully and beneficially on the work of students and staff. Students gaining global perspectives on religions, cultures, ethics and the environment in a holistic manner will be better placed to retain these insights and carry them into their wider communities and future employment.

The project is international in nature and embeds internationalisation of the curriculum in learning and teaching. Digital literacies are also implicit in this project, offering the student enhanced methods of using information technology as a communication and learning tool and embedding the ability to use IT to access and manage information.

GA: research literacy, digital and information literacy, global citizenship

Cultivating community: social learning space in the New Library and Teaching Building

_Berry O'Donovan, Business with John Ridgett & Richard Jobson, Design Engine_

Exhibition presentation

The influence of ‘built pedagogy’, the design of learning spaces, is now acknowledged as having a powerful impact on student learning and engagement (Kuh et al, 2005). Traditionally, the learning spaces in UK universities have been built with very specific and distinct purposes in mind: lecture halls; refectories; libraries, etc. Recently however, an increasing focus on student-centred collaborative and informal learning has promoted a growing recognition that such spaces may be neither adequate nor appropriate (Chism and Bickford, 2002). Indeed, Astin in his large-scale research to determine what really matters in the university student experience found that student-to-student and student-to-staff interaction (academic and social, formal and informal) the most potent of the environmental variables affecting students’ overall satisfaction with university and their academic success (Astin, 1993). Consequently, it is conjectured that social learning spaces which allow and encourage such interactions are of great value even if they appear to confer no specific, measurable, educational functionality (O'Donovan et al., 2008).

This presentation will briefly introduce the concept of social learning space proposing a working definition as “a physical and/or virtual area that is not predominantly identified with either social or work/study perspectives but transcends both and facilitates both formal and informal student-centred collaborative learning” (adapted from Chism, 2006; Oldenburg, 1991 cited in Williamson and Nodder, 2002). Subsequently, Design Engine, architects for the New Library and Teaching Building at Gipsy Lane, will display and explore the social learning spaces and facilities within the new build. Of particular focus will be the creation of varying spaces in which the individual is invited to respond differently and how the juxtaposition of these spaces creates a positive dynamic and flexible environment. Participants will be encouraged to question and comment upon the proposed spaces and consider how colonisation of the spaces may affect the student learning experience.